

Antique of the MOMENT

Live the easy life and take a (reclining) back seat in this rare 18th-century French flamestitched sleeping chair

Chairs have a long and illustrious past that tells us as much about our social history as antique design trends. The rise of more affluent, leisure-seeking middle classes during the 1600s led to increased production of comfortable chairs - ones that were not only for pulling up at a desk or dining table. This rare walnut sleeping chair is one and a half times the size of your average wing chair and has a ratchet that drops the back into a reclining position. It's likely to come from a provincial area of France as it's slightly behind the times. The striking flamestitched pattern it's upholstered in was an old-fashioned design by 1760 when this chair was made. Ironically, it brings it bang up-to-date with today's upholstery tastes, about which you can find out more in our guide on page 76.

18th-century French walnut sleeping chair with original needlework, £26,000, Edward Hurst Antiques, The Battery, Rockbourne Road, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4LP. 01722 718859; edwardhurst.com

