

# Mansion Displays Label and Display Information for Volunteers

On View: June 7, 2025-January 4, 2026

The exhibition, *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, opens to the public in the Adirondack building on Saturday, June 7, 2025. In tandem with the special exhibition, the mansion rotations are also being updated to reflect and reinforce the exhibition's themes. These changes are expected to be completed by June 2, 2025.

To better equip volunteers in answering questions and promoting the exhibition and mansion displays, this document is provided in advance of the exhibition opening. It includes the text visitors will see in the mansion. Minor edits may be made to the label text featured in this document. Thumbnail images included here are not featured on the labels unless otherwise noted.

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## Dining Room

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### A TABLE SET FOR AN IMPERIAL MEAL

The dining room table is set to illustrate the atmosphere of a reception in the home of a member of the Russian imperial family in the late 1800s. A highlight of the table is the newly acquired porcelain set bearing the crowned monogram of Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovich (PA in Cyrillic), father of Princess Natalie Paley, whose life is celebrated in Hillwood's exhibition *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026).

While Princess Natalie's parents were well-known for the parties they organized in their mansion in Boulogne, on the outskirts of Paris, the set on view here was probably ordered for Grand Duke Paul's first marriage with Grand Duchess Alexandra in 1889 and used in his St. Petersburg palace on the English Embankment. The monogram stands for Paul and Alexandra or Paul Alexandrovich. It is also present on the set of napkins on the table and on the menu reproduced here of one of the dinners Paul and Olga gave while living in France.

The set is arranged with a selection of period pieces of silver and glassware from Marjorie Post's collection.

To learn more about Princess Natalie Paley and her family, please visit the Adirondack building and the other displays in the mansion.



(Image is on label)

1908 menu with Grand Duke Paul's monogram, probably Russia, ca. 1889, private collection.



**Vase**

Russia, 1800s

Glass

Gift of Eleanor Close Barzin, 1996 (23.496.1–2)



**Four candelabra vases**

Firm of Aucoc (French, 1821–after 1960)

André Aucoc, silversmith (French, 1856–1911)

Paris, ca. 1889

Silver gilt, glass  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.308.1–4)*



**Four footed dishes**

Bohemia, 1800s  
Glass, gilding  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (23.418.1–4)*



**Salt cellars and pepper shakers**

J. D. Schleissner & Söhne (German, 1817–Present)  
Germany, early 1900s  
Silver gilt  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.295)*



**Four dishes**

James Vickery (British, active 1851–89)  
London, 1889  
Silver gilt  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.291.1–4)*



**Glassware**

France, 1700s  
Glass, gilded decoration  
*Gift of Eleanor Close Barzin, 1975 (23.312–315)*



**Silverware from Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich's Service**

Martin-Guillaume Biennais (French, 1764–1843)

François-Dominique Naudin, silversmith (French, 1788–1840)

Paris, ca. 1819

Silver gilt

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.289) Museum purchase, 2021 (2021.1)*



### **Plates and gravy boat with Grand Duke Paul's monogram**

Probably Labesse (French, active 1873–96): porcelain blanks

Imperial Porcelain Manufactory (Russian, 1744–present): decoration

Limoges and St. Petersburg, 1887–89

Porcelain

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.174.1–2)*

*Museum purchase, 2024 (2024.12.1.1–12)*

### **Napkins with Grand Duke Paul's monogram**

Probably St. Petersburg, 1887–89

Cotton

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.34)*

*Hillwood thanks D. Porthault for the generous contribution of this tablecloth.*



(Image is on label)

## **Breakfast Room**

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### **A TABLE SET FOR AN IMPERIAL MEAL**

Diaries kept by members of the Russian imperial family and their correspondence with close relatives confirm the significance of intimate family meals—such as breakfasts, luncheons, tea parties, and private dinners—as cherished breaks in an endless day of formal duties. This table setting is meant to evoke the elegant simplicity of a daytime imperial table. The table is set with a porcelain service commissioned in France in the 1880s, with later additions provided by Russia's M. S. Kuznetsov Company. The porcelain bears the gilt crowned monogram of Grand Duke Sergei and his wife, Grand Duchess Elizabeth, their initials, SE, appearing in Cyrillic as CE. Sergei was Emperor Nicholas II's uncle and an elder brother of Grand Duke Paul, whose porcelain service is set on the nearby dining room table. Elizabeth was Empress Alexandra's sister. Both became custodians of Grand Duke Paul's children after his exile to France in the early 1900s.

To learn more about Grand Duke Paul and his family, please visit the exhibition *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026), and the other displays in the mansion.



**Pair of candlesticks**

Russia, ca. 1840

Gilt bronze, crystal

*Gift of Madame Augusto Rosso, 1966 (14.245.1–2)*



**Pair of double salt cellars**

Germany, late 1800s–early 1900s

Silver gilt

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.293.1–2)*



**Cruet set**

Russia, 1830–50

Glass, silver

*Gift of Madame Augusto Rosso, 1970 (23.457.1–6)*



**Glassware from the Country Service**

Imperial Glass Factory (Russian, 1777–1917)

St. Petersburg, after 1823

Crystal

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (23.59, 23.60, 23.61, 23.63)*



**Silverware from Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich's Service**

Martin-Guillaume Biennais (French, 1764–1843)

François-Dominique Naudin, silversmith (French, 1788–1840)

Paris, ca. 1819

Silver gilt  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.289)*



**Plates and dishes with Grand Duke Sergei and Grand Duchess Elizabeth's monogram**

M. S. Kuznetsov Factory (Russian, 1889–present): covered dish  
Russia, ca. 1900: covered dish  
Probably France, 1884–85: plates and small dishes  
Porcelain  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.232, 233, 235, 236)*

**Tablecloth and napkins embroidered with imperial crown**

Probably Russia, ca. 1900  
Cotton  
*Loan from Kathy Durdin*  
*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.31)*



(Image is on label)

## Second Floor Library

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**PRINCESS IRINA PALEY**

The second child of Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his morganatic wife, the former Olga von Pistohlkors, Princess Irina Paley was born in exile in Paris in 1903 before the family moved to Russia in 1914. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, she settled in Paris with her mother and her sister, Princess Natalie. In 1923, Irina married her cousin Prince Feodor of Russia; his parents were Grand Duchess Xenia, sister of Emperor Nicholas II, and Irina's cousin Grand Duke Alexander, both of whom are featured in this case with objects and documents related to their life before and after the Russian Revolution. While working as a translator for Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), Irina met Count Hubert de Monbrison, with whom she fell in love. Irina and Feodor divorced in 1936, and she married Monbrison in 1950.

To learn more about Princess Irina and her family, please visit the exhibition *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026), and the other displays in the mansion.



**Framed photograph of Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna, Prince Feodor's mother**

St. Petersburg, 1914  
Photograph (replica), wood, silver, glass  
*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.29)*



**Photograph of Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, Prince Feodor's father, with his children Prince Andrei and Princess Irina (the future Princess Yusupov)**

St. Petersburg, ca. 1898

Photograph (replica)

*Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens Archives and Special Collections*



**Tumbler with Grand Duchess Xenia's monogram**

R & S Garrard & Co. (British, 1735–present)

London, 1891

Silver

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.92)*



**Vase with flowers**

Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna (Russian, 1875–1960)

France, 1933

Watercolor on paper

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.26)*



**Miniature portrait of Prince Feodor Alexandrovich of Russia**

St. Petersburg, ca. 1900

Silver gilt, enamel, watercolor, ivory, glass, metal

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.17.1–2)*



**Tea set with Prince Feodor Alexandrovich of Russia's monogram**

Nikolai Kalyagin, silversmith (Russian, active ca. 1900)  
St. Petersburg, 1898–1903  
Silver, cord  
*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.85.1–3, 2022.2.86.1–3; 2022.2.90; 2022.2.91)*



**Princess Irina Paley's love letter to Count Hubert de Monbrison (in French)**  
1933  
Paper, ink (replica)  
*Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens Archives and Special Collections*



**Princess Irina Paley's passport**  
Bayonne, France, 1949  
Paper, photograph (replica)  
*Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens Archives and Special Collections*



(Image is on label)

## Adam Dressing Room

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(On stand near case)

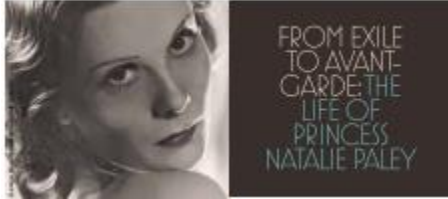


**Pieces from Princess Irina Paley's traveling dressing table set**  
Pintaux, silversmith (French, active 1906–after 1925)



Paris, ca. 1923  
Silver, crystal  
*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.7.1–5)*

To learn more about Princess Irina Paley, her sister Natalie, and her family, please visit the exhibition *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026), and the other displays in the mansion.



(Image is on label)

## Adam Bedroom

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### A TRUNK FILLED WITH IMPERIAL LINEN

In 2022, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens acquired the Paley/Romanoff collection containing more than three hundred mementos and other objects from the family of Princess Natalie Paley. The collection included a rare selection of precious linen, which had been carefully stored in the nearby leather trunk for decades. It revealed a collection of tablecloths, napkins, bed sheets, handkerchiefs, and other elegant accessories, which bear witness to the richness of a fully furnished aristocratic home in the late 1800s–early 1900s. A selection of these exquisite household linens is displayed in the nearby case, in the lace case in Marjorie Post’s bedroom suite, and on the dining and breakfast rooms tables as well as in the exhibition *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026).



### Linen with imperial monogram

France and Russia, late 1800s–early 1900s

Linen

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2)*



### Trunk

Probably France, ca. 1900

Leather

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.30)*



(Image is on label)

## Second Floor Gallery

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### **Deacon's vestment (stikhar)**

Firm of Sapozhnikov (Russian, 1837–1919)

Moscow, 1896

Silk brocade, cotton, gold- and silver-wrapped threads, silver gilt

*Gift of Dina Merrill Robertson, 1977 (44.35)*



### **Miter**

Russia, ca. 1900

Silk, metal-wrapped silk thread, oil on paper, seed pearls, mother-of-pearl, paste stones

*Museum purchase, 2000 (44.66)*

During the late 1930s, when Marjorie Post was married to the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, the Communist government in Moscow was in the process of selling off vestments and altar cloths confiscated from the nation's churches and monasteries to help fund the country's industrialization. A collector of textiles and lace, Post set out to save beautiful examples of ecclesiastical attire and wares dating to imperial Russia.

In the Russian Orthodox Church, a deacon who is junior to a priest wears a long tunic, or *stikhar*, like the one here. The prominent textile firm of Sapozhnikov produced the tunic adorned with the imperial double-headed eagle for the 1896 coronation of Nicholas II, the last emperor of Russia.

The bulbous-shaped miter covered with fabrics and adorned with religious figures and precious elements, as seen on the headdress presented in this case, was worn by higher members of the clergy.

# Marjorie Post's Bedroom Suite

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## Large Closet



### Wedding dress

Purchased at Bergdorf Goodman (American, 1899–present)

New York, 1935

Silk velvet, silk satin, fur

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (48.80)*

Marjorie Post wore this gown trimmed in white fur for her December 1935 wedding to Joseph Davies at her apartment in New York, among family and close friends. Note the gown's fitted bodice gathered at its center front panel, which loops over the neckline to evoke a knotted scarf. This is held in place by a hidden dress weight at the neckline interior. Additional dress weights are sewn into the inside of the skirt, a technique applied to control the delicate fabrics and complicated drapes of the 1920s and 1930s.

During the 1930s, film had a major impact on fashion and design. Hollywood stars, including Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich, and others, inspired consumers to wear slinky, feminine silhouettes cut from glamorous and luxurious textures such as velvets and furs that would photograph well on the silver screen. Princess Natalie Paley, the subject of Hillwood's current special exhibition, had a fleeting yet stylish run in 1930s cinema. To learn more about her career, visit *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026), and the other displays in the mansion.



(Image is on label)

Source: Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Archives and Special Collections

*Marjorie Post in her wedding gown, with granddaughter Marjorie "Marwee" Post Durant at left and daughter Nedenia Hutton (later known as Dina Merrill) at right. The trio poses on the staircase of Post's Upper East Side apartment, the venue for the occasion. The wedding cake was reportedly the same hue as the bride's attire.*



(Image is on label)

## Small Closet



### Day dress

Purchased at Gervais Importers (American, active 1920s–30s)

Probably Paris, 1929

Silk crepe de chine

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (48.71)*

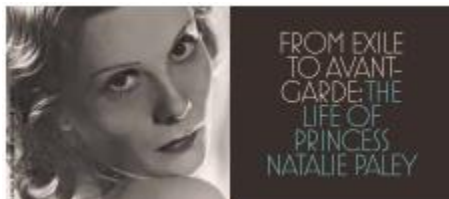
This deceptively simple dress, stenciled with vivid tropical flowers, was purchased at a New York import shop that carried designs from Paris. The dress is wrapped onto the body at the waist, and an additional back panel creates the ruffled, cape-like effect at the shoulders. Marjorie Post wore it in Palm Beach in 1930 when she hosted a costumed children's dance event at her home, Mar-A-Lago. Her youngest daughter, Nedenia Hutton (best known as the actor Dina Merrill), performed at the event, a recording of which is held in Hillwood's Archives and Special Collections.

The dress design might have originated from a French couturier of the late 1920s, connecting it contemporaneously to fashion icon Princess Natalie Paley, subject of the current special exhibition. For more about her, please visit *From Exile to Avant-Garde: The Life of Princess Natalie Paley*, in the Adirondack building (June 7, 2025–January 4, 2026).



(Image is on label)

*Marjorie Post wore a similar printed silk day dress during the late 1920s with a matching jacket and chic cloche. The final touches: jewelry and her dog!*



(Image is on label)

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## Jewelry Case



### Bracelet

David Webb (American, 1948–present)

New York, 1961

Amethysts, turquoises, diamonds, gold, platinum

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.67.4)*



### Bracelet

David Webb (American, 1948–present)

New York, 1966

Peridot, diamonds, gold

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (2016.7)*



### Bracelet

Harry Winston (American, 1932–present)

New York, 1961

Turquoises, diamonds, platinum

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.73.2)*



### Bracelet

Joël Helft (French, active 1920s–1930s)

Paris, 1939

Zircons, diamonds, platinum

*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.72.2)*



NO IMAGE

### Earrings

Attributed to Van Cleef & Arpels (French, 1896–present)

Paris, about 1935; altered, 1950s

Diamonds, sapphires, platinum  
*Gift of Nina Rumbough (2021.6.6.1–2)*



**Earrings**

Van Cleef & Arpels (French, 1896–present)  
New York, 1948  
Diamonds, platinum  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.77.1–2)*



**Earrings**

Cartier (French, 1847–present)  
New York, 1950–51  
Amethysts, turquoises, diamonds, gold  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.67.2–3)*



**Ring**

Harry A. Meyers (American, active 1950s)  
New York, 1958  
Diamonds, platinum  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.79)*



**Ring**

Purchased from de Sedles (American, active 1920s–1970s)  
New York, 1936  
Zircon, diamonds, platinum  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.72.6)*



### Ring

Harry Winston (American, 1932–present)  
New York, 1966 Emerald, diamonds, platinum  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.78)*



### Brooch

Probably French, about 1890  
Rubies, diamonds, emerald, gold, silver  
*Museum purchase in honor of Ellen Charles's 80th birthday, 2015 (2015.3)*



### Brooch and clip

Cartier (French, 1847–present), New York, 1950  
Diamonds, platinum: brooch  
Aquamarines, diamonds, platinum: clip  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.81–82)*



### Brooch

Van Cleef & Arpels (French, 1896–present)  
Paris, 1969  
Rubies, diamonds, gold, platinum  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.80)*



### Brooch

Harry Winston (American, 1932–present)  
New York, 1959  
Diamonds, platinum  
*Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (17.76)*

A serious connoisseur of impressive gemstones, Marjorie Post enjoyed acquiring individual specimens and delivering them to some of her favorite jewelers—among them Cartier New York, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Harry Winston—for them to create exquisite, unique accessories for her.

Post equally treasured antique finds and also worked with fresher, boutique firms and designers, such as David Webb. This display celebrates Post's dedicated pursuit of dazzling, bejeweled bracelets, earrings, brooches, and rings.



(Image is on label)

Source: The Bert Morgan Archive

*Marjorie Post and her husband Herbert May (1891–1968) attending a dinner, late 1950s. Post is wearing no fewer than six exceptional pieces of jewelry from her storied collection, several of them displayed here.*

## Marjorie Post's Bedroom Suite: Lace Case

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### Exterior Label

Open the drawers to view fine linens and lace treasures from the Russian imperial family.

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### Drawer #1



NO IMAGE

### Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna's handkerchief

Probably Russia, late 1800s

Cotton plain weave, hand embroidery and cutwork, bobbin lace trim

*Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens Archives and Special Collections*

This fine handkerchief belonged to Maria Feodorovna (1847–1928), wife of Alexander III and mother of Nicholas II, making her Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovich's sister-in-law. A fashionable fixture at imperial court, she emphatically disapproved of Grand Duke Paul's relationship with Olga von Pistohlkors, which developed during the 1890s. Extensive repairs to the textile are a testament to its affiliation with the imperial family; it was a treasured keepsake meticulously preserved by its previous owner.



(Image is on label)

Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, photographed by Alex Braun



*Detail of a Lady of Honor insignia featuring a miniature of Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, on view in the Icon Room (18.65).*

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## Drawer #2



### Prince Vladimir's bed sheets

France, 1900s

Flax and cotton plain weave, hand embroidery, bobbin lace trim

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.79, 2022.2.81)*

These exquisite bedsheets belonged to Prince Vladimir Paley (1897–1918), son of Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovich of Russia. His mother, Princess Olga Paley, Paul's morganatic wife, ordered (as did many members of the Russian imperial family) fine linens from the renowned Parisian shops to furnish their home at Boulogne, on the outskirts of Paris.

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## Drawer #3



NO IMAGE

### Prince Vladimir's pillow cover

France, 1900s

Flax and cotton plain weave, hand embroidery, bobbin lace trim

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.41.2)*



NO IMAGE

### Paley family pillow cover

France, 1900s

Plain weave flax and cotton, hand embroidery, drawn threadwork and cutwork

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.50)*



NO IMAGE

### Hand towel

Possibly Russia, 1900s

Dobby weave cotton, drawn threadwork and cutwork, fillet lace insertion and trim

*Museum purchase, 2022 (2022.2.53)*

These pieces once belonged to Prince Vladimir Paley (1897–1918), son of Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovich of Russia, and his family. The pillow cover at left comes from the same set as Prince Vladimir's sheets (in the drawer above) and features his monogram. A second pillow cover from the family is decorated with embroidered cutwork bows at each corner. The delicate hand towel could be used to wash up before retiring for sleep.