













This French master of metalwork brought the decorative exuberance and elegance of Art Deco into the modern age.

BY IAN PHILLIPS

Flanking the Pont du Carrousel Bridge in Paris are four graceful bronze street lamps, created in the late 1930s by Raymond Subes. They were designed to lengthen to nearly double their height, telescope-style, to prevent the light they projected from disturbing the view of the Louvre at the

northern end. The mechanism functioned up until a few years ago, but the fact that they are there at all is largely thanks to Subes's prescience during World War II. "The Germans were looking for bronze to make artillery shells," recounts his daughter, Anne-Marie Millecamps. "So he arranged for the lamps

Alongside Edgar Brandt and Gilbert Poillerat,
Subes is considered to be one of the finest
French ironworkers of the 20th century. He

to be hidden in a passageway under the bridge."

was certainly one of the most prolific. Over the course of nearly 50 years, he created exquisite furniture characterized by trademark scroll-shaped legs. He also collaborated closely with designers such as Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann and Jean Dunand; he manufactured countless doors, balustrades, and balconies for buildings in Paris, from the Pasteur Institute to Le Bon Marché department store; and he was even responsible for the safety-deposit boxes at the Banque de France. He is perhaps best known, however, for his religious commissions and work on legendary ocean liners. The former included the pulpit at Rouen Cathedral and the gates at the Church of Saint-Germaindes-Prés in Paris; the latter entailed everything from the elevator cabs of the Normandie to a bar for the France.

