

# LA GAZETTE DROUOT

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# EDITORIAL



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It will go down as an outstanding event in the annals of the art market – a famous house sale in the line of the ever-glorious Beychevelle, Ferrière and Castel Duino dispersions. But this "Chosen Pieces" auction staged at Drouot on 15 June could also be a fine exercise in nose-thumbing... Because Princess Mimie de Beauvau-Craon has decided to entrust Remy le Fur and his Paris auction house with selling forty-five masterpieces from her family collection, housed in the 18th-century Château d'Haroué, near Nancy. This château was "ruled over" for a while by one Laure, President of Sotheby's France and wife of the seventh Prince de Beauvau-Craon. In June sixteen years ago, for the first time on French territory, Sotheby's sold the collections of the Château de Groussay, owned by Charles de Beistegui. As we know, this feat of arms, which foreshadowed the end of the auctioneers' monopoly, was achieved by Laure de Beauvau-Craon. When the saga of the art market meets the roller coaster of the European aristocracy!

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## Hercules' sword by Biennais

Different venue, same level of excellence... Father and son Maîtres Rouillac will this year be hosting their unmissable garden party at the Château d'Artigny, 15 km from Tours. Several bids of over a million are expected at this new edition, notably for a 17th-century lacquer cabinet and a mechanical table made by Louis XV's cabinetmaker, Jean-François Oeben (*see Gazette International 47*). There will also be a lively battle for a remarkable sword "of the French court", from the First Empire/French Restoration period (1809-1819) with a gold and lapis lazuli mount, known as a "Hercules" sword because of the superb chased gold mythological decoration on the hilt and guard (€200,000/300,000). This rare work by the Emperor's goldsmith, Martin-Guillaume Biennais (1764-1843), is thought to have been given in around 1814 by the King of Spain to the Duke of San Carlos, José Miguel de Carvajal, a Spanish diplomat who took part in the secret negotiations for the Treaty of Valençay, which restored Ferdinand VII to the throne. Between 1823 and 1828, Don Carlos gave the ceremonial sword to his future son-in-law, Comte Charles de l'Es-pine, and it has remained in the family until now.

Caroline Legrand

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