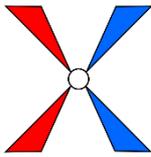


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<p><1202/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>‘very interesting experiment’ so far but felt that the company could build on the pool of new private (West) German buyers that had emerged from the sales. There are no plans at present for sales in Russia the situation is simply too unpredictable. Although he stressed that Sotheby’s had ceased their practice of guaranteeing items in January 1989 Mr Ainslie conceded that the company still owned works of art as a result of this policy. The current values of such items were audited annually but these figures were not made available. On the subject of the Pierre Matisse purchase he noted that less than half the collection had been sold but that Sotheby’s had recouped both the cost and associated taxes already. In Mr Ainslie’s opinion, the acquisition of the collection had protected the market from a ‘huge onslaught’ of works by twenty or so artists and the operation had been done in an ‘intelligent, systematic way’. Christie’s, London Is this the beginning of a Peninsula campaign? El Greco and Zurbarán in ‘Unique Spanish Sale’ on 28 and 29 May LONDON. The stars of Christie’s sale of Spanish Works of Art on 28 and 29 May, dubbed ‘The Unique Spanish Sale’ is this the beginning of a Christie’s campaign for the Spanish market? will be El Greco’s ‘Disrobing of Christ’ and Zurbarán’s ‘Christ and the Virgin in the house at Nazareth’, both offered anonymously. Both have figured in the last major exhibitions devoted to these painters. The sale includes Old Master paintings and drawings, nineteenth-century pictures, contemporary pictures and prints, objets de vertu, sculpture, shipwreck treasure (see p. 14), picture frames, arms and armour and ceramics. El Greco’s ‘Disrobing’ (estimate £1.5-2.5 million) is thought to be the first of the two small autograph versions of the famous altarpiece in the Toledo Cathedral baptistery, dating from 1577-80. The Zurbarán (estimate £1.2-1.6 million) is a recent rediscovery, and probably dates from the period of the painter’s greatest success in Seville around 1640. Other major names include Alonso Coello, Ribera, and Murillo, who is represented by both paintings and drawings. Paris Tajan clocks up a record \$3.8 million for the Haute Epoque Perrier sale The reasons for the success? ‘Firstly, my talent secondly, my talent; and thirdly, excellent organisation’ PARIS. Many art world professionals confidently predicted catastrophic results for the auction in Paris’s Drouot salerooms on 6 April of the medieval and Renaissance furniture collection of leading French collector and dealer, Bruno Perrier. The market was too bad, some said, to absorb such</p>
	<p>a quantity of high quality work</p> <p>at one gulp. The sale turned out to be the most important and most successful Haute Epoque auction in history, establishing a number of world record prices. Held by Jacques Tajan it made a total of FFr21.450 million (£2.2 million; \$3.8 million) and most prices were well above high estimates. Only one of the fifty-six lots, a seventeenth-century two-part walnut cabinet, was bought in at FFr750,000 (£77,950; \$135,600), just under its high and somewhat optimistic estimate. All leading dealers in the field attended the sale, only to be hopelessly outbid in every single case by private collectors who fought hard for what they wanted Swiss, French, Italians, Germans and five New York buyers were particularly in evidence. One of the latter acquired an exceptionally rare late seventeenth-century</p>

Piedmontese set of eight chairs, four armchairs and settee with beautifully preserved embroidered covers for FFr2.450 million (£249,400; \$434,000), way above its FFr1 million estimate. It was the sort of set Haute Epoque specialist dealers said they never expected to see again in their lifetimes. Another enthusiastic New York bidder, collector and dealer in Renaissance art and archaeology, Eduardo Almegià, bought a magnificently carved, late fifteenth-century Norman oak chest of State, extremely rare and in fine condition with a high estimate of FFr600,000 for FFr700,000 (£72,700; \$126,600). He also acquired an oak cupboard with linenfold panels of the same period made in Picardy for FFr380,000 (£39,500; \$68,730), more than three times its low estimate and said after the sale only those unexpectedly high prices had prevented him from going for more. ‘They will also prevent me from selling these pieces for a long time to come’, he said. Bidding for the second lot of the sale, a thirteenth-century oak cathedral chest with iron strapwork from Durham, tripled the high estimate to reach FFr1.1 million (£114,300; \$198,900), establishing a world record for English oak furniture. But the sale had its quirks too: enthusiasm among bidders for an inelegantly and oddly shaped sixteenth-century Lombard dignitary’s chair in walnut pushed the price all the way up to a staggering FFr900,000 (£93,500; \$162,700), a world record for a chair of the period and almost twenty times the estimate. Bids for an oak standing court cabinet made in Flanders around 1520 rose to a startling FFr2.5 million (£259,800; \$425,000), ten times its low estimate and another world record, while a more richly decorated and rich hued world cupboard with grotesque masks, Anjou work around 1600, went for a modest FFr400,000 (£41,200; \$71,750) (estimate FFr200-250,000). A thickly built oak and beechwood sixteenth-seventeenth century refectory table