

Luxury hotel auction nets 3 mln euros in Morocco

Thursday, 28 May 2009

(Audio Article)

Some 5,000 items from La Mamounia have sold at auction for three million euros (4.2 million dollars) ahead of the reopening of the legendary Marrakesh hotel in September, auctioneer Claude Aguttes said.

Featuring a treasure trove of art deco and oriental furniture and fittings, the four-day auction that ended Sunday at the Marrakesh convention centre generated huge interest in Morocco and abroad.

"Never were there fewer than 300 people in the auction hall," said Paris-based Aguttes, as the hotel -- owned by Moroccan state railways -- undergoes a complete renovation.

Opened in 1992 in what used to be a Moroccan prince's residence, the five-star La Mamounia has welcomed a host of entertainers and politicians including Josephine Baker, Edith Piaf, Orson Welles and several US presidents.

Britain's wartime prime minister Winston Churchill was a regular guest, too, which could explain one item that went under the hammer -- a ceramic English bulldog.

AFP