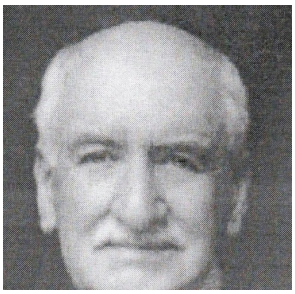
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Portrait of Maurice Fenaille.

Maurice Fenaille (1855-1937), born in Paris on June 12th, 1855, was a **great art collector, connoisseur, patron, and philanthropist**. He was a successful pioneer of the petrol industry.
In 1883, he inherited his family's company *"Fenaille et Despeaux"* that specialized in importing, distilling, and selling petrol. Maurice Fenaille's father had introduced "saxoléine", a mineral oil used for lighting, to the market. Maurice Fenaille commercialized new lubricants, "oléonaphtine" and "saxol", as well as "Benzo-Moteur", an oil for automobiles and airplanes. By the end of the First World War, he was running one of the most important oil companies in France. His company continued to expand and took on the name *"La Pétroléenne"*, followed by *"Standard Française des Pétroles"* in 1936, and finally *"Esso Standard"* in 1952.

His great fortune allowed him to support many contemporary artists, including **Auguste Rodin**, **Antoine Bourdelle**, and **Jules Chéret**, from whom he bought artworks to decorate his many estates. He also acquired many works of art from past centuries that he later gave to museums. He was very helpful to certain museums, for example by lending 150 000 Francs without interest to the **Louvre** so that the museum could purchase the ***Bain Turc* by Ingres.**



Plaster bust of Madame Fenaille by Auguste Rodin, Rodin Museum, Paris.

His biggest achievement was salvaging and restoring the **Château de Montal in the Lot Department** that he bought in 1908. Constructed by Jeanne de Balzac between 1523 and 1534, the castle was the region's best example of Renaissance architecture. However, the castle had been abandoned long ago and was completely dismantled at the end of the 19th century. Its pieces were sold separately at various auctions. When Maurice Fenaille purchased it, he decided to try his best to get all of the pieces back together. He used his extensive art collection to exchange with other collectors, and got some artworks that had belonged to the castle back from national museums, such as the **exceptional sculpted 32-meter frieze that belonged to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Museum of Decorative Arts) in Paris**. Finally, he had **Auguste Rodin replicate elements** that were kept in foreign museums.

In 1887, he had married **Marie Colrat**, who came from Montrozier, near Rodez, in a Department called Aveyron. He purchased the family castle that she had been raised in to make it their Summer residence. He then became very attached to Aveyron. **In 1912, he built a sanatorium on the deserted Engayresque in Sévérac-le-Château**, where Parisian inhabitants of Aveyron suffering from tuberculosis could be taken care of. In May 1938, the facility was given to the Department and was named the *"Sanatorium Fenaille"*. The exceptional fireplace made of Alabastro di Busca with gilded bronze lion heads available on our website was placed in the meeting room.



Chateau of Montal restored by Maurice Fenaille.

Looking to encourage the region's economic development, he also founded a school of agriculture and an upholstery workshop. In 1913, Maurice Fenaille purchased a splendid mansion in the historical city center of Rodez, the **"hôtel de Jouéry"**, that he massively renovated. He then donated it to the *Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron* (Literature, Science, and Arts Society) in 1929, that used the building to exhibit its collections. On October 30th, 1937, at the very end of the philanthropist's life, it became the *"musée Maurice Fenaille"*.

See also

Alabastro di Busca — Renaissance style — Louis XIV style — Gilt bronze

See our antique fireplaces



Hotel de Jouéry in Rodez which became the Musée Fenaille.



Meeting Room in the Sanatorium Fenaille, showing the exceptional antique fireplace made out of Alabastro di Busca with bronze ornaments.



This exceptional antique fireplace was in the meeting room of the Sanatorium Fenaille in Sévérac-le-Château.