

**Geneva, April 10, 2014**

### AJF Patrons in Watchland



As the Geneva region has been considered the cradle of horology since the 15th century, it is no surprise that Watchland, located in Genthod, is the heart of all Franck Muller brand timepieces.

On March 28, the unique watchmaking village, overlooking Lake Geneva and the Mont Blanc, received AJF's latest patrons: President and CEO of Adamant Company, Hrach Avakyan, and his spouse Hasmik Avakyan; businessman and community leader from Saint Petersburg, Karen Mkrtchyan; and businessman Armen Mkrtchyan, and his spouse Yulia Mkrtchyan.



Guided by Mr. Harout Missirian of Franck Muller, the AJF delegation led by Board of Trustees Chairman Pierre Akkelian, Regional Director Aza Babayan, and Communications Coordinator Anne Nahabedian accompanied the guests on the inspirational tour, taking in the site's exceptional panorama, and viewing all the various stages of creating a timepiece: conception, watchmaking, assembling, engraving, customer support.

After the tour, everyone gathered around a table, and keeping with Armenian tradition, enjoyed a glass of Armenia's fine cognac Kilikia, and sipped on Armenian coffee. And what does the conversation turn to when a group of Armenians convene? A little about business, of course, but mainly the theme always finds itself around our Homeland, Armenia.

Head of the Armenian community in Saint Petersburg, Karen Mkrtychyan, spoke about an effort to publish the encyclopaedic volume *Armenian Traces Around the World*, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Vartan Sirmakes's father, Nazareth recounted his family's history and roots from Istanbul. The group also got a chance to meet and chat with Nicholas Aznavour, son of international singer and Armenia's ambassador Charles Aznavour, who's chance timing turned into a wonderful "rendezvous" for all those present!



On behalf of the Armenian Jewellers Foundation and the visiting delegation, Mr. Akkelian thanked Vartan Sirmakes for his hospitality and steadfast support. Mr. Sirmakes, a founding member of the Armenian Jewellers Association and its first treasurer, said: "We are pleased to receive such a distinguished group of visitors and very proud to be associated with such a great cause."



Vartan Sirmakes, Karen Mkrtychyan, Pierre Akkelian



Vartan Sirmakes, Hrach Avakyan, Pierre Akkelian



Vartan Sirmakes, Armen and Yulia Mkrtychyan



Pierre Akkelian, Vartan Sirmakes, Karen Mkrtychyan, Hrach Avakyan, Armen Mkrtychyan



## Lost Treasures of Armenia Revealed in Basel

AJF Chairman Pierre Akkelian gave a special AJF presentation on the Lost Treasures of Armenia initiative, undertaken in partnership with the St. Petersburg Ethnography Museum, during the AJA annual Baselworld gala event on March 29, 2014.

Unseen photos from the 1916 Miller Collection not yet published were shown for the first time thanks to AJF's funding. Mr. Akkelian outlined the objectives of the initiative, as well as the promotional events AJF is planning. The publication will be ready during the Yerevan Jewellery Show in October. However, its formal launching will be made during the opening of the exhibit in St. Petersburg in April 2015, commemorating the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.



Mr. Akkelian recognized the patrons who were present and thanked them for supporting AJF's mission. Patrons such as Edmond Avakian, Hrach Avakyan, Alecco Bezikian, Armen Mkrtychyan and Karen Mkrtychyan, who spent the evening among AJA members, also posed for pictures with AJF trustees including Vartkess Knadjian and Gagik Gevorkyan. Following the presentation, AJA members and guests had the chance to see the exclusive Franck Muller watches.

The Lost Treasures of Armenia presentation can be viewed [here](#)



Pierre Akkelian, Gagik Gevorkyan, Vartkess Knadjian, Aza Babayan, Edmond Avakian, Gaetano Cavaliere, Alecco Bezikian, Hrach Avakyan, Yulia and Armen Mkrtychyan, Karen Mkrtychyan, Anne Nahabedian

## AJF History Corner

### Calouste Gulbenkian and René Lalique: A Golden Friendship

The following article, by art historian and jewellery designer Philippe Bouasse, was published in the March issue of AJA International Magazine. It was provided by AJF as part of its historical research program. Lalique's friendship with the Armenian philanthropist has been a source of inspiration for both the artist and the legendary art collector.



*"Throughout the 50 years of our friendship, René Lalique's talent never ceased to amaze me ... I feel privileged to own what is arguably the largest collection of his pieces." When the Armenian art collector Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian's treasure trove of Lalique's jewellery, art and glassware was unveiled, it took the art world by storm. Despite today's ongoing infatuation with Art Nouveau, the tale of the two men's friendship and mutual admiration remains under explored. ...*

Read the full article by Philippe Bouasse, Brand Director at Nishi Pearls [here](#)



Rene Lalique, Calouste Gulbenkian

