

THE ART OF FINE WINE LIVING

LE·PAN

9 HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AUCTION NAPA VALLEY 2015

By Mira Advani Honeycutt on June 12, 2015



The much heralded Napa Valley auction, a four-day extravaganza of wine and food is the "Davos of luxury lifestyle," according to David Pearson, CEO of Opus One a top Franco-American winery in the Valley.

Pearson and team Opus One served as the honorary auction chairs of the 2015 Auction Napa Valley – The American Wine Classic.

Held in America's premier wine region, the auction raised an astounding \$15.8 million over June 4-7.

Under a giant white air-conditioned tent at Meadowood Resort's fairway, more than 850 wine lovers gathered and raised their paddles for a good cause at Saturday's live auction.

Now in its 35th year, the auction has donated more than \$145 million to community health and children's education in California's Napa County.

Here are the 2015 auction highlights.

Raymond Vineyards' spectacular package



John Legend assisted in the bidding on Lot 31, offering up a performance of two songs if the bidding got to US\$1 million.

Photo by: Mira Advani Honeycutt

Lot 31 muscled in star power, as Grammy-award winning singer-songwriter John Legend surprised the crowd and performed his popular hit, "All of Me," minutes before auctioneer Fritz Hatton took the bid all the way up to \$850,000.00.

Legend joined the auctioneer, encouraging the excited crowd to raise the bid to a cool \$1 million. "Can we make it a million dollar party?" mused the singer. "I have a proposal," he added. "If you raise it to 1 million, I'll do two (performances)."

It didn't make that mark, however, Raymond Vineyard's package offered by proprietor Jean Charles Boisset included six double magnums of LVE (the Legend Reserve red wine blended by Boisset and Legend) and dinner and private performance by the singer for 30 guests at Boisset's luxurious Napa estate.

The previous day at the barrel auction, the dashing Boisset offered a tasting of this special blend, with a limited production of 3,000 cases each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay available through the winery's website.

Napa's generosity

"It's the best luxury lifestyle event," said Pearson, adding that visitors this year included wine connoisseurs from Japan, Hong Kong, South Africa, Dubai, France and Canada.

Pearson worked with the Opus One team and corralled support of other Napa vintners such as Darioush Khaledi of Darioush Winery to develop wine lots for the auction.

"We didn't force anyone, we said please donate if you can," said Pearson of the lavish wine and lifestyle auction packages, adding that 85 percent of the Napa Valley Vintners Association members were involved in the auction in some way or another.

"The energy of the vintners is what makes this happen."

Among other beneficiaries Pearson said that US\$10 million will go to rehabilitate the damage in the aftermath of the August 2014 earthquake in Napa Valley.

"It's spread out in three tiers – immediate recovery, rebuilding and future prevention," said Pearson.