

the drinks business

PRICES SOAR AT NAPA AUCTION

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An auction organised by Napa Valley Vintners has raised \$15.8 million for charity, breaking several records in the process.

The four-day Auction Napa Valley event started last Thursday with welcome parties hosted by wineries and was interspersed throughout with live music performances and dinners created by top chefs such as Pierre Gagnaire.

Friday saw a barrel auction, where around 2,000 guests were able to taste barrel samples of 120 Napa Valley wines from producers such as Atelier Melka, Mayacamas Vineyards and Spottswoode Estate, before raising \$1.9m in the sale itself.



Saturday saw 850 guests attend a lunch and auction of 51 lots. One of these featured a 35-year vertical collection of Opus One magnums, as well as a two-week tour of Napa and European estates. Selling for \$2.4m, it represented the annual event's highest ever sale price for a single lot.

Other highlights included a surprise performance by John Legend of his hit "All of Me" ahead of a lot donated by the singer in collaboration with Raymond Vineyards. This featured six etched bottles of wine and a dinner party for 30 with a private performance by Legend, which sold for \$850,000.

Alongside the live events was an online auction, which closed after hitting its own new record of \$612,000. Top selling lots from this "E-Auction" included offerings from Scarecrow, Grgich Hills Estate and Dalle Valle Vineyards.

In the 35 years since it was first held, Auction Napa Valley has raised more than \$145m to support community health and education programmes.

David Pearson, 2015 honorary Auction Napa Valley chair and CEO of Opus One, said of this year's event: "While \$15.8 million is a number that reflects the abundance of giving that we will extend to families in Napa Valley, I am reminded of a singular example of how far these funds go in creating a strong, cohesive community."

Recalling the earthquake that hit southern Napa last August, he noted: "an immediate cash infusion of just a few thousand dollars to the American Canyon Family Resource Center provided essential food and emergency supplies to a multitude of families in dire need. Imagine what we can continue to provide for our community with this year's Auction Napa Valley's proceeds."