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Auction Napa Valley Raises \$16.9 Million for Healthcare and Youth Education In Napa Valley

Posted on June 7th, 2013 2:20pm by Hayley Hamilton
Filed under [Travel](#), [Wine & Spirits](#)



Dallas is a city that loves Napa Valley wine. It is one of the great aspects of being here and being a wine lover – you can go into pretty much any restaurant in town and see a number of

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SideDish is a food-related discussion among editors at *D Magazine* about the Dallas-Fort Worth dining scene -- everything from good meals to bad service, kitchen gossip to restaurant news, chefs' secrets to culinary trends. *Bon appetit.*

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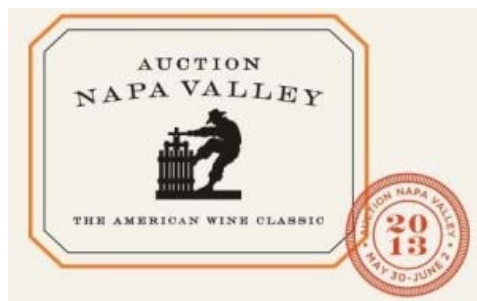
Events

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recognizable Napa Valley brands. We also love our Texas wine, our Oregon wine, our Spanish wine, our French, Italian, Argentine, and so forth, but when in a pinch, a quality wine from Napa Valley is easy to find, with even some of the smallest producers finding their way on to our store shelves and wine racks.

And, the people are the real deal. Though the phrase “not bad for kids from the sticks,” coined by Jim Barrett of [Chateau Montelena](#) after winning the 1976 Judgement of Paris with his 1973 Chardonnay, isn't quite the pace of Napa today, it is still a community filled with farmers embracing the friendships and camaraderie that made Napa what it is today. This is why it is so rewarding to see the Valley come together for a cause, and there is none better in Napa Valley than supporting the workers who help vineyard managers and winemakers create their legendary wines.

Every year since its start in 1981 [Auction Napa Valley](#) has done this by creating an event focused on food, wine and hospitality with opportunities for any wine lover to get in on the fun. The 4 day event of live auction lots, barrel auction, automobile raffles, and an e-auction online benefits children's healthcare and education charities, as well as improving healthcare and workers assistance in the Napa Valley. I was able to attend this year as a guest of the [Napa Valley Vintners](#), the organization made up of over 400 Napa Valley wineries that puts on the event each year.



The festivities started with a fantastic barrel auction day and marketplace filled with bites from restaurants scattered throughout Napa hosted by the charming and always stylish Jean-Charles Boisset at his lavish [Raymond Vineyards](#) estate, with winemakers and owners from throughout the Valley pouring their current releases and bidders able to taste future releases as part of the barrel auction. The 2000+ attendees enjoyed a balmy 90+ degree day on the manicured estate lawn, snacking on [Redd Wood](#) fire roasted pizzas and [Goose and Gander](#) Thai shrimp with watermelon and herbs, while sipping refreshing [Lail Sauvignon Blanc](#) with Robin Lail or [Far Niente Chardonnay](#) with Beth



Jean-Charles Boisset (left) of Raymond Vineyards and Boisset Family Wines with the iconic Michel Rolland

Nickel.

Then guests moved on to the cool Raymond barrel rooms to taste the next release of wines from dozens of Napa wineries while still in the barrel and bid on their favorite for the chance to receive a case once the barrel is bottled. Top 10 bids receive a case.

Top bids this year went to Shafer, Realm and Continuum, with one of my favorites coming in the top 10 as well, the [Promise 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon](#) created out of a promise from owner Stephen McPherson to his wife Jennifer on their wedding day that one day he would follow his dream to make wine...The Promise was kept and now he makes a smooth, lush and balanced Cabernet filled

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Stephan McPherson and his wife Jennifer of Promise

with dark cherry, blackberry, chocolate and espresso notes...not bad for a wine that still has a bit of time left in the barrel before bottling to help round it out even further. The auction lot went for \$31,000; the Shafer barrel (always one of the favorites at the barrel auction) received \$78,000.



Russ Weis (left), GM of Silverado Vineyards and NVV and ANV Vice President with Bruce Cakebread, Owner Cakebread Cellars and NVV and ANV President

The main auction Saturday started with a hug and hello from the Staglin family of [Staglin Family Vineyard](#), Honorary Auction Chairs of the 2013 Auction Napa Valley (ANV), as well as members of the board including Napa Valley Vintners (NVV) and ANV President, the always smiling Bruce Cakebread of [Cakebread Cellars](#) at [Meadowood Napa Valley](#).

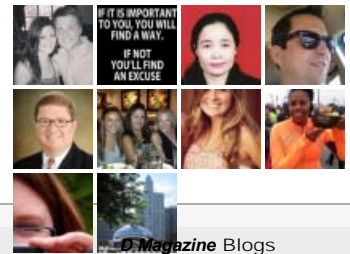
I had a chance to stay in this beautiful property in the hills of St. Helena off the Silverado Trail. A long time host and partner of the event, The Meadowood is the epitome

of Napa Valley elegance and sophistication, complimented with comfort, service and wonderful hospitality....making it difficult to leave when you have to, especially if you are able to have a meal with Chef Christopher Kostow at his Michelin 3 Star rated [Restaurant at Meadowood](#).

Under tents on the Meadowood lawn ANV welcomed Top Chef winners including Chefs Richard Blaise, Kristen Kish, Harold Dieterle, Ilan Hall and more to cook the pre-auction lunch while sipping Napa Valley Reserve Chardonnay and Rose from Cakebread, Gargiulo, Antica, even a rare Reserve Chardonnay from Gemstone. Then into the main tent where 1000 attendees readied their auction paddle for lots which included trips, large format bottles (including a 12 liter from [Screaming Eagle](#).) and wine country experiences.

My table was just off the main stage and hosted by [Gemstone Vineyard](#) with Director of Sales, Molly Roberts and Director of Hospitality, Vanessa Conlin pouring a magnum of their gorgeous Yountville Estate 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon. As bidding started the excitement filled the air with bidding happening big from start to finish. Though the usual suspects you would expect did very well (that 12 liter of Screaming Eagle fetched an impressive \$500K; the [Harlan Estate](#) lot which included 4 magnums of any bottle in the

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The Harlan Estate lot

Harlan Estate winery's library earned \$800K,) some fun ones did well too, including an opportunity to stage with Chef Thomas Keller at The French Laundry and at Chef Masaharu Morimoto's Morimoto Napa, with a stay at Auberge du Soliel, dinner at both places for four, and 40 bottles of [Shafer Vineyards](#) wine, fetching \$230K; and an impressive opportunity to blend wine with iconic international winemaker and consultant [Michel Rolland](#) at one of his Napa Valley properties creating a case of your own custom blended wine, along with magnums of Screaming Eagle, Bond, Araujo, BV, Harlan Estate and more, and dinner with Rolland afterwards went for just \$100K. I had a chance to meet Rolland (one of my wine icons) at the end of the auction and was immediately struck by his gracious and impeccably suave demeanor.



Though the wine and trips and things are always fun, the real heart of the event comes at the end of the night when all the main auction lots have sold and a final request comes in for the fund-a-need campaign directly benefiting those at risk in Napa Valley, this year made that much more heartfelt with Brandon Staglin, surrounded by his family, taking the stage to tell his story of dealing with mental illness and schizophrenia, along with Napa County district attorney Gary Lieberstein, who shared his story of his son's recent suicide after dealing with a difficult battle with mental disease.

This is where you see the hearts and kindness of people, with \$3.7 million raised just for the fund-a-need campaign, this year directly benefiting children's mental and physical health and education.

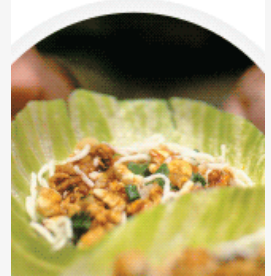
All in all the auction raised \$16.9 million, far exceeding the previous high of \$10.5 million in 2005, selling out in record time and proving why Napa is so loved both in the valley and from those around the world. Since its inception over \$110 million has been donated to health, youth and affordable housing non-profit programs through the proceeds from the multi-day event. Auction Napa Valley 2014 will take place the weekend of June 7, 2014. Details and tickets usually are available around the first part of the year on their [website](#), or you can sign up to receive updates through their site.

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