

David Stoneberg photos

LEFT: Vintner Karen Cakebread, left, enticed her friend, winemaker Paula Kornell, to pour her Ziata Sauvignon Blanc on Friday afternoon at Raymond Vineyards in St. Helena. CENTER: Greg Cole, Celadon owner and chef, and Marcos Uribe, chef de cuisine, served up tasty bites during Friday's Napa Valley Barrel Auction. They were one of 47 Napa Valley chefs showing off their work to the 2,000 people who attended the event. RIGHT: Gemstone's Vanessa Conlin. The winery donated a live lot, a five-night stay in Sun Valley with an 11-year vintage vertical for the Live Auction and a barrel of 2011 cabernet sauvignon, crafted by Philippe Melka, for the barrel auction. The barrel was in the top 10, selling for \$34,100. The live lot sold for \$120,000.

Generosity is event theme

BARREL AUCTION BREAKS RECORD, RAISES \$1.7 MILLION

By David Stoneberg

EDITOR

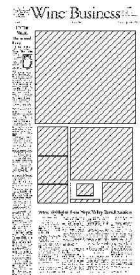
On Friday, a day when the temperatures soared in the mid-90s, some 2,000 people wandered throughout the Raymond Vineyards property to eat, drink and bid on 100 barrel lots as part of Auction Napa Valley Barrel Auction.

The second day of the four-day Auction Napa Valley featured samples of wines from 102 vintners, culinary bites from 47 Napa Valley restaurateurs and barrel samples of 2011 and 2012 cabernets. The latter were available in 10-case lots for bid-

ders. The main event of ANV, the live auction, was held Saturday afternoon at Meadowood Napa Valley.

Overall, Auction Napa Valley raised \$16.9 million, a new record; the barrel auction raised nearly \$1.7 million; and the 170 lots that made up the E-Auction raised more than \$430,000. The top E-Auction lots were:

- \$15,200, Sherwin Family Vineyards
- \$8,129, Domaine Chandon
- \$8,000, Larkmead Vineyards
- \$7,600, Grgich Hills Estate
- \$7,227, Beringer Vineyards



Garen Staglin and his family were honorary auction chairs of the 2013 Auction Napa Valley, presented by the Napa Valley Vintners. Of the barrel auction, he said the 2012 vintage is "one of the absolute great years in the Napa Valley." He thanked Jean Charles Boisset and the Raymond Winery team for hosting the barrel auction. "They were so generous, they emptied out their barrel room and put all their wine in another storage facility offsite so we could have the room," he said.

The Staglin family has been a key part of Auction Napa Valley and other charity wine auctions for years. Staglin was asked why. "I grew up as the son of an Italian immigrant. I was the first person from our family to graduate from college and I feel blessed to live in this wonderful country that provides the opportunity to work hard and stay focused. We have had some suc-

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cess, we feel it is important to give back to our community and causes we care about."

He added, "Being generous gives us way more joy than anything we could possibly do, so why not?"

Vintner Darioush Khaleedi, who donated one of the 46 live lots that was auctioned off Saturday, said he has participated for years in Auction Napa Valley. Why? "Because this is our valley, we are fortunate to have it, now we have to participate and help those who need it." In its 32 years — since 1981 — Auction Napa Valley has given away more than \$110 million to local nonprofits that provide health care, youth education and affordable housing.

The Darioush lot is a 14-day cruise on "The World," the largest private megayacht on earth. As with most of the lots, it comes with Napa Valley wines, meals and overnight stays. Khaleedi said his lot last

year sold for \$280,000. "We are hoping to pass it," he said. It did as it sold for \$400,000.

Ivo Jeramaz, vice president, Vineyards & Production for Grgich Hills Estate, was pouring a chardonnay made from 23-year-old Wente clone vines that he obtained from Larry Hyde. He said Grgich Hills Estate has participated in 27 auctions because they're great charity events.

"It's not about a particular vintner, but about the Napa Valley and all the money goes to local charities," he said. "Heaven forbid that you should need to go to a local hospital, but if you do, lots of money goes there and it's better than hospitals in San Francisco."

Karen Mitchell, owner of Model Bakery in St. Helena and Napa, said she has served food at all the wine auctions and in fact served picnic lunches in big baskets at the first one with Narsai David and Molly Chappellet at Meadowood. Why does she continue to participate in Auction Napa Valley? "Because I believe in the community. The wineries all support us as a business and they are all our friends," she said. "It's part of living here in the valley."

Doug Weatherall, general manager of Red Wood, and his crew brought 250 pizza doughs to serve to some 1,600 people. The pizzas, cooked in a portable brick oven, were made of fresh mozzarella with tomato basil. Weatherall said 2013 was the restaurant's first year

participating in Auction Napa Valley, since it's only been open 16 months. "I want to be involved in the community," he said.

Jeffrey Jake, executive chef for Silverado Resort & Spa, brought enough food to feed 1,000 people and added, "I can cut it a little thinner if it's supposed to be more." Why does he participate in Auction Napa Valley? "I grew up in the Napa Valley and this is what we do for hospitality, giving back to the community." He said the event raises a lot of money for good causes. "Being here with all the great wineries and restaurants, why wouldn't you be here?"

Vintner Paula Kornell, who recently left Oakville Ranch Vineyards and started her own wine consulting business, was slumming it on Friday. She was pouring Ziata Sauvignon Blanc for her friend and Ziata owner Karen Cakebread. Kornell has been to every auction and has always been on the organizing committee, except for the last two years.

What is her favorite memory? "Oh my God, there are so many of them," she said. "Probably the best memory was the old tradition of the entire organizing group getting in the Meadowood pool after the auction was finished. Those days are long gone, but they were really great."

Vintner Carole Meredith of Lagier Meredith poured two wines on Friday: a 2010 syrah, which was one of the wines in the E-Auction lot, and a 2012 rose, which, she said, "was

chilled and perfect for a warm day like this. I love being here because of all the fantastic food. I like to make forays out and taste fantastic things.”

Vintners John Shafer and Bill Phelps have been involved with Auction Napa Valley since it began more than 30 years ago. Shafer was pouring sips of his 2011 Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon in the relatively cool barrel room on Friday. “I’m involved because we got in the wine business early on and want to be part of the community,” he said. “I’m especially interested in the non-profits in the Napa Valley and what the auction does for them.” About his wine, he said, “We think it’s first rate, right up there where it needs to be.”

In the barrel room, which was noticeably cooler than underneath the shade trees, winemaker Jon Emmerich was pouring a 2011 Stag’s Leap Cabernet Sauvignon from a Heritage clone. What does he think of the wine? “I love it, it’s very lean and angular and dippy and it’s just what I think makes people love cabernet. It’s an old-school classic.”

Bill Phelps, son of winery founder Joseph Phelps, said the family has been involved in Auction Napa Valley since the beginning. “We were chairs six years ago — it’s hard to believe it, that it’s been six years,” he said.

The toughest part of chairing the event was “calling on all your friends to help you out when you know they have so much to do anyway,” he said. But,

in the end, everyone always comes in and helps out, he added.

If nothing else, Auction Napa Valley has always been about the wine and Phelps recently went to Puerto Rico to participate in a complete retrospective of Insignia, from 1974 through 2010. That’s quite rare, because those older bottles of Insignia just aren’t available, not even from Phelps. “The tasting was so involved it took two days,” he said, adding the 1974 was an amazing wine and it tasted like it was half its age, instead of nearly 40 years old. Phelps called all the wines fascinating and said, “It was a wonderful chance to taste the evolution of the wines over 40 years.”

This year the winery is celebrating its 40th anniversary, and he added wistfully, “We are very low on library wines. Like all our peers, we wish we had done a better job of holding onto them.”

St. Helena’s Fritz Hatton shared Saturday’s auction duties with Ursula Hermacinski and Humphrey Butler, whom Hatton said he’s known for 35 years. Hatton, who’s been the ANV auctioneer for more than two decades, said Friday he didn’t know what to expect for the live auction the following day.

“It’s very difficult to predict. I never know exactly what to expect, that’s why I keep doing this because charity auctions are full of surprises,” he said. “But, there’s going to be quite a bit of action in the tent tomorrow.” He added the incredible

amount of work put in by the Staglins, the Gargiulos and the Napa Valley Vintners staff will “pay off one way or another. I think there’s going to be some satisfaction at the results.”

It turns out he was right.

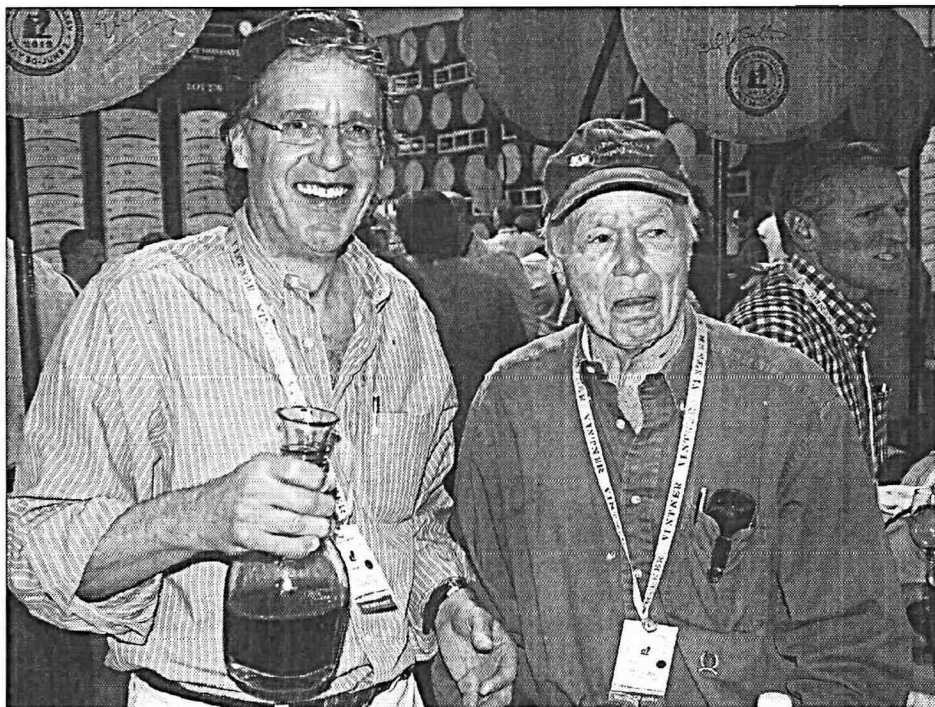
“Being generous gives us way more joy than anything we could possibly do, so why not?”

Garen Staglin,
honorary auction chair,
Auction Napa Valley 2013

\$1.7 million barrel auction total

Top 5 barrel auction lots

\$78,000 Shafer Vineyards
\$61,350 Realm Cellars
\$59,200 Continuum Estate
\$52,500 Ovid Napa Valley
\$44,550 Cardinale



Doug and John Shafer poured their 2011 Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon on Friday afternoon to entice people to buy their wines. It must have worked, since the barrel sold for \$78,000.