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Napa Barrel Auction a great success

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Posted by *steve* on Jun 3, 2013 in *Napa Valley, News, Opinion, Recent Activities* | [2 comments](#)



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The 2013 Auction Napa Valley Barrel Auction now is history, and what a grand event it was.

I drove up early, because it was at [Raymond Vineyards](#), where I hadn't been despite having been invited umpteen times by **Jean-Charles Boisset**, so I really wanted to see it: the crystal room and the red room and everything else. Almost as soon as the shuttle bus let me off, I saw Jean-Charles on the lawn, being interviewed by a camera crew. He saw me, and the next thing I knew he was personally touring me. When I saw his Frenchie Winery--with spacious pet kennels--I realized I could have brought **Gus**. If you're a dog-loving family touring Napa Valley, Frenchie/Raymond is a great place to visit.

The first part of my experience was eating. OMG I can't tell you how good the food was. I tried everything (burp) because I want to write about my 5 or 6 favorites in [Wine Enthusiast](#) (with recipes). There was a single disappointment, and from the most unlikely of restaurants: Meadowood, a little paper cup stuffed with green peas and other tiny pieces of garden veggies, dressed (I think) in a Champagne vinaigrette, with a sad little chunk of feta adrift in a vegetable sea. When restaurants have finger foods at an event like the Napa Valley auction, those munchies should be dazzlingly Wow!, but this wasn't. I can understand keeping things simple, but not to the point of bland.

Much was made of the temperature. It was a toasty 98 degrees on my car thermometer by mid-afternoon, but much cooler in the cellar where the actual tasting occurred. I myself didn't drink anything [except lots of water]. Ran into **Bob Cabral**, from [Williams Selyem](#), who told me this was his first time ever "crossing the hill" for the Napa auction and he was looking forward to tasting Cabernet. Since he lives in Healdsburg, I asked if he wasn't concerned about drinking and driving, and he assured me he wouldn't have come unless his winery had supplied a car and driver. Bob knows perfectly well you cannot drink at an event like this and then drive home. The roads were crawling with CHP and Sheriff's Dept. personnel (as well they should have been) and I for one was glad they were there. Which reminds me: Jean-Charles said he's starting a new brand called Sheriff. Must find out what that's all about.

I didn't see as many winery proprietors or principles as I'd expected. This is probably because auction week is really a protracted, exhausting affair, and the owners and winemakers must attend to their nightly dinners and the live auction itself (as opposed to the barrel auction), so maybe not going to the latter provides them some respite. Certainly Premier Napa Valley is a more "glamorous" affair, in that you see more famous faces.

The buzziest conversational topic at the auction: How a turned-around economy is good for business. Everyone seemed happy that, after so many stagnant years, things are selling again. Domaine Chandon told me they can't keep up with demand for bubbly, especially rosé. Let the good times roll!

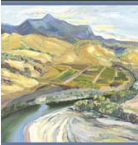
Shoutouts:

- Garen Staglin**, for chairing this year's auction and his family's charitable generosity over the years.
- Barbara Banke**, **Gina Gallo**, **Elias Fernandez**, **Janet Viader** (drop-dead gorgeous in Argentine tango couture), **Jay "Party Party Party"** and **Tim Mondavi**. It's always nice to see them.
- The one and only **Jayson Woodbridge**. He wasn't at the auction, but we had dinner Wednesday night at his home. World-class raconteur, fascinating conversationalist, able to absorb the fullness of Heimoff (as I am of Woodbridge), a dervish of creative energy and riveting charm. Jayson truly is in a class by himself.
- The great, divine **Genevieve Janssens**. There she was as always, standing by her barrel, pouring for guests, inspiring and educating. A legendary Napa icon. Genevieve introduced me to Mondavi's new red winemaker, a very young woman named **Nova Cadamatre**.



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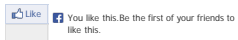
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- » whom I just had to congratulate. Imagine getting a job that important and having the opportunity to study with Genevieve Janssens!
- » A final shoutout to Jean-Charles Boisset. When he moved into Napa Valley with the purchase of Raymond, I thought there might have been some raised eyebrows. Napa's a pretty insular place: who's this wealthy outsider and what is he going to do? I think Jean-Charles wisely decided to show the valley that he's a team player. And he did. He's done a great job, and people respect him for that.
- » I tend to name drop (as Party Party Party reminded me), so I want to give a huge shoutout to all the hard-working people from marketing, sales, P.R. and other less visible positions. They are in many ways the heart, soul and vital infrastructure of the industry. Without them, nothing happens, including Auction Napa Valley. I know and like many of them, and they read this blog, which makes me happy, so thank you.. You guys may not be in the spotlight, you may not get the hurrahs, but you make it all happen. Salud!



2 Responses to "Napa Barrel Auction a great success"



Cato says:
June 3, 2013 at 9:24 am

Nova Cadametre, a fun, fun person, worked with Ed Killian at Treasury Estates facility near Cloverdale at historic Asti Winery. This is a huge facility where Beringer's bulk wines are made as well as Chateau Souverain, Cellar 8, Chateau St. Jean and sometimes (at least in the past) some Gallo wines have aged. Nova introduced and made the Emma Pearl line of wines for Treasury. Nova is indeed lucky to work with Genevieve Janssens, such a nice person as well.

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A note to new readers, and old ones too

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Here comes Napa Auction week!

DTC, SEO and loyalty

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