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# Napa's Keller, Kostow Feed Guests at Record Wine Auction

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Over the weekend in luxurious corners of California (<http://topics.bloomberg.com/california/>)'s wine country, the annual Sheraton Napa Valley raised a record \$18.7 million for local charities, including Queen of the Valley Medical Center where co-chairman Kary Duncan was treated for a brain aneurysm earlier this year.

"I also sampled the 911 system," Duncan, a dermatologist, leaning on crutches next to her husband David, said after Saturday's raucous session of paddle-raising that ended in a shower of multi-colored confetti inside an air-conditioned tent at Meadowood Napa Valley resort in St. Helena, California.

The sale, which raised almost 11 percent more than last year's tally, was led by Lee Anderson, chairman of New Brighton, Minnesota-based API Group Inc. He shelled out the most for a single lot, paying \$600,000 for 125 bottles of Promontory, Harlan Estates founder Bill Harlan's new offering scheduled for a fall 2014 debut.

"It takes that pioneering spirit" to stay on top of the congenial though competitive world of Napa winemakers, Harlan said in an interview after the live auction concluded.

Anderson also paid \$400,000 for a lot including three-liter double magnums of cabernet sauvignon 2009 from the Duncans' Silver Oak Cellars and co-chairs Jeff and Valerie Gargiulo's eponymous vineyard, Remington rifles, Winston fly-rods and Fender guitars.

## Golf Course

David and Jeff's band, the Silverado Pickups, entertained guests after a 10-course dinner Saturday night, served beneath pines and oaks on Meadowood's golf course.

Other top lots included tickets to Super Bowl 50 at Santa Clara, California's new Levi's Stadium, double magnums of Casa Piena cabernet sauvignon and getaway stays in San Francisco and Napa, which garnered \$420,000.

Raymond Vineyard's lot of three double magnums and a nine-liter Salmanazar of cabernet sauvignon, plus tickets to the 2015 Academy Awards and the Golden Globes, sold for \$420,000. The auction featured 1,200 lots and drew 1,200 bidders who tied for the right to pay \$420,000 apiece.

Napa Valley Vintners, the St. Helena-based trade group for the region's almost 500 winemakers, organized the 34-year-old charity event costing \$1,700 per person for Saturday only or \$3,000 for a four-day auction pass.

Festivities kicked off on Thursday evening with receptions hosted by vintners, followed by a Friday barrel tasting of the 2012 vintage featuring lots from 100 member wineries. Brand Napa Valley brought in \$83,050, followed by Shafer Vineyards at \$55,200 and Continuum Estate at \$52,750.

## Michelin Stars

"We think of philanthropy as a luxury but it's actually a responsibility," the three-Michelin-starred chef Thomas Keller, who took part in his 18th auction, said on Saturday as guests nibbled on his signature salmon cornets at an al fresco lunch. "When we have those resources, we have to share with those around us."



Photographer: Jason Tinacci/Napa Valley Vintners via Bloomberg  
Jean-Charles Boisset at the Auction Napa Valley Live Auction.



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Food for the meal was also prepared by Cindy Pawlcyn of **Mustards Grill** (<http://mustardsgrill.com/our-team>) in Yountville, Stephen Barber of Farmstead in St. Helena and other Napa chefs.

Keller, mobbed for three hours in summer-like heat as his charges served the treats, also spoke of the importance of mentoring, echoing several vintners.



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Meadowood Napa Valley's Christopher Kostow, also a Michelin three-star chef, pulled off Saturday night's feast after the last gavel. A meal of smoked pork with pommes sautees, baby carrots, beans with nasturtium, grain-and-wild-bird dumplings and roasted beets with yogurt washed down by free flowing wine.

## Triple Crown

He took a brief break from his labors to join guests watching California Chrome's failed bid for the Triple Crown, broadcast on large screens inside the auction tent.

Sunday's concluding event was a champagne brunch for winning bidders hosted by Opus One winery, a joint venture between **France** (<http://topics.bloomberg.com/france/>)'s Mouton Rothschild and Robert Mondavi Winery. Opus Chief Executive Officer David Pearson and winemaker Michael Silacci will chair next year's auction.

Joe Schoendorf, a partner in the venture capital firm Accel Partners in Palo Alto, California, said there was "a high correlation" between the auction's fortunes and those of technology companies based 100 miles south in Silicon Valley.

With those stocks making up about 19 percent of the Standard & Poor's 500 Index, Schoendorf, whose firm was an early investor in **Facebook Inc. (FB)** (<http://www.bloomberg.com/quote/FB:US>) and Spotify Ltd., said he doesn't see an equity bubble just yet. Dot-coms comprised 36 percent of the measure during the 2000 peak, he said. In between is the bubble.

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