

AUCTION

Vintners surprised by bidders' generosity, new auction records

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ST. HELENA — Even the most optimistic among the 500 members of Napa Valley Vintners didn't expect Auction Napa Valley to set new revenue records this year.

Off the record, those associated with the 34th annual Auction Napa Valley said they'd be happy if proceeds totaled \$10 million.

Last year, the nation's most successful charity wine event more than doubled the previous year's take, raising \$16.9 million for local health care and children's education programs.

Imagine their surprise early Saturday evening when all learned the sum of their fundraising efforts added up to \$18.7 million, more than 10 percent ahead ahead of 2013. Records were also set at

See **AUCTION**, Page A6 Friday's Barrel Auction and the event's Fund-A-Need, where bidders receive no wine or tangible rewards for their bids.

"We're thrilled," said Valerie Gargiulo, who co-chaired this year's auction with husband Jeff, along with vintners Kary and David Duncan of Silver Oak and Twomey Cellars. The Gargiulos own Oakville's Gargiulo Vineyards.

Adding that he was pleased "with how things

went today," David Duncan said he and others who produce the annual fundraiser were gobsmacked when the valley's newest vintner stepped onto the auction stage to add his contribution to Fund-A-Need. Kieu Hoang — who revealed last Thursday he'd purchased the Michael Mondavi Family winery and vineyard in Carneros — pledged \$1 million, telling all in the huge white auction tent, "I really like this business."

The only nonprofit community health center in Napa County and the auction's top funding recipient, "Clinic Ole is the primary source of medical services for 1 in 6 Napa County residents," Dr. Kary Duncan said. "It impacts almost everyone in our community in one way or another and these services would not be as widely available without auction funding." Her words drew an emotional response from bidders, resulting in a record \$3.8 million raised for Fund-A-Need.

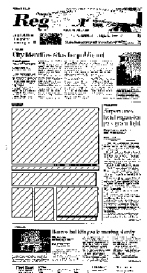
Friday's Barrel Auction set a new record of \$1.7 million, with four bidders taking home five-case lots for bids in excess of \$50,000. Top lot was Brand Napa Valley at \$83,050; followed by Shafer Vineyards, \$55,200; Continuum Estate, \$52,750; and Gargiulo Vineyards, \$51,400.

This year's e-auction also set a new record, bringing in \$490,000 from online bidders.

Wined and dined to a fare-thee-well for a couple of days beforehand, bidders and guests packed a giant white air-cooled tent on the fairway at Meadowood Resort shortly before 2 p.m. Saturday. Smooth jazz multi-instrumentalist and recording artist Brian Culbertson and a combo that included saxophonist Michael Lington revved up the crowd prior to auctioneers Fritz Hatton and Humphrey Butler soliciting bids for the 50 lots put together by generous vintners.

Staged by the 500-member vintners group and an army of volunteers, this year's 34th annual charity event attracted hundreds of wine collectors, business executives, movers and shakers and a phalanx of investors eager to spend money for the lots on the auction block. Some said the stock market registering an all-time high put everyone in the right mood.

"Auction Napa Valley allows us to turn three days of the best of Napa Valley into 365 days of well-being for our community," stated Russ Weis, current chairman of the Napa Valley Vintners board of directors and general manager of Silverado Vineyards.



“The Duncan and Gargiulo families worked for more than a year to ensure the success of this year’s amazing event and we are grateful for their collaborative spirit, which inspired NVV members to donate their finest Napa Valley wines and breathtaking experiences, which in turn invigorated our bidders to raise their paddles and their generosity to an unprecedented level.”

The top 10 bids at Auction Napa Valley 2014:

1) \$840,000 – a year of Hollywood glamour that includes film premieres and tickets to a private Oscars party offered by Raymond Vineyards’ Jean-Charles Boisset; the lot was doubled with two bidders paying \$420,000 each.

2) \$660,000 – a historical six-decade vertical tasting of Mayacamas Vineyards wines, five jeroboams of older vintages plus a magnum of 1964 cabernet sauvignon, two dinners for 12 and a two-night stay for six couples at the Mayacamas estate on Mount Veeder; the lot was doubled with two bidders paying \$330,000 each.

3) \$600,000 – the first case of Bill Harlan’s new Promontory wine venture from vintages 2009-2018, plus five double magnums from 2009-2013, along with VIP celebrations and a dinner for 30 at the estate; purchased by Midwest philanthropist Lee Anderson.

4) \$580,000 – tickets to the Tour de Smokies, a three-cycling adventure for two couples, four customized bicycles,

accommodations and meals at Blackberry Farm in Tennessee and use of Lexus vehicles; the lot was doubled with two bidders paying \$290,000 each for the NVV and Lexus-sponsored lot.

5) \$550,000 – a last-minute addition to the auction catalog came from Opus One – VIP ticket packages to Auction Napa Valley 2015 along with a trip to Chateau Mouton Rothschild, which partners with the Robert Mondavi Winery to operate Opus One. The Opus One family will chair next year’s Auction Napa Valley. Five couples opted to pay \$110,000 each for this offer.

6) \$520,000 – lunch for six at Araujo Estate and another at Chateau Latour with the new owners of Araujo Estate, a two-day tour of famed Bordeaux estates along with accommodations in Napa Valley and France.

7) \$440,000 – judge-ship at 2015 Robb Report Car of the Year and Culinary Masters competitions, five-night stays at Four Seasons Maui and Four Seasons Bora Bora, dinner for five couples with Darioush and Shahpar Khaledi at Darioush; the lot was doubled with two bidders paying \$220,000 each.

8) \$420,000 – four tickets to 2016’s Super Bowl 50 in Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, home to the San Francisco 49ers. Two couples will join former 49ers president/CEO Carmen Policy at the NFL commissioner’s pre-Super Bowl party, enjoy accommodations and meals and double magnums from Carmen and Gail Policy’s Casa Piena.

9) \$410,000 – a 10-day trip to New Zealand wine country put

together by Blakesley and Cyril Chappellet, including lodging, business-class airfare, dinners in New Zealand and Napa Valley, plus four double magnums of Pritchard Hill cabernet sauvignon.

10) \$400,000 – offered by the Duncans and Gargiulos, the quintessential American adventure at Colorado’s Diamond Tail Ranch, with horseback riding, fishing and hunting on the agenda, all meals provided by renowned chef Charlie Palmer and music provided by Grammy Award-winning artist Billy Dean.

Two vehicles were auctioned off as part of lots Saturday afternoon, both fetching \$200,000. Vineyard 7 & 8 offered a restored 1957 Chevrolet Corvette, while Napa Valley Vintners put a Polaris electric car on the block.

Other than Carmen Policy’s Super Bowl 50 tickets, several auction lots were tied to sports and events:

- Vintners Heidi Barrett and John Schwartz offered four tickets to a Miami Heat basketball game in Miami, first-class airfare, two nights at the Fountainbleau, a pair of 18-liter bottles of cabernet sauvignon and merlot and a jeroboam of custom Miami Heat blend. It sold for \$170,000.

- Blackbird Vineyards provided a Kentucky Derby experience for 2015 for one couple that includes hats,

clothing, accommodations, transportation and three imperials of red wine blends, snapped up by auction regular Jose Nazar for \$120,000.

- Shafer Vineyards is sending a quartet of golfers to the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Georgia, then hosting four couples at their wine estate when they come home. Winners were Kary and David Duncan with a bid

of \$220,000.

- St. Supery Estate Vineyards & Winery is providing tickets for four to the Formula 1 Paddock Race Club in Shanghai with accommodations and meals at top restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai. Top bid was \$120,000.

- Napa Valley Vintners put together lodging, business class airfare and meals for two who will attend the 2015 Loro Piana Superyacht

Regatta in the British Virgin Islands. Top bid was \$150,000.

- Staglin Family Vineyard is providing attendance for four at home games of the San Francisco Giants and the New York Mets, a tour of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, plus dinners in Cooperstown and New York. It sold for \$160,000.



J.L. Sousa/Register photos

Streamers rain down on the audience as the bidding gets started at Auction Napa Valley at Meadowood Napa Valley on Saturday afternoon.



A bidder raises his paddle at the live auction at Auction Napa Valley on Saturday.



J.L. Sousa/Register photos

Melanni Leary, left, of Blackbird Vineyards photographs Erin Prescott, center, and Kerry Brackett at Auction Napa Valley at Meadowood Napa Valley on Saturday.



Jamie McCourt, left, of Los Angeles and Carol Norfleet of St. Helena greet each other at Auction Napa Valley on Saturday afternoon.



A woman places a bid at Auction Napa Valley on Saturday afternoon.



A paddle awaits its bidder at Auction Napa Valley on Saturday.