

Decanter

Naples Winter Wine Festival 2016: Rolls Royce Dawn takes top spot

Elin McCoy February 1, 2016 0 Comments

Fierce bidding and a carnival atmosphere have seen this year's Naples wine auction make more than \$10m so far, reports Elin McCoy from the annual festival in Florida.



Naples Winter Wine Festival 2016 auction gets underway. Credit: Naples Winter Wine Festival / Naples Children & Education Foundation / Twitter

When bids for the first Rolls Royce Dawn reached \$750,000, the wealthy crowd at the glitzy **Naples Winter Wine Festival 2016** charity auction went wild, shaking tambourines and fancy rattles.

This glamour car, not a stellar wine lot, was the monetary peak last Saturday. The winning bidder Julian Movsesian, who's from California, told me, "I came intending to get this, no matter what the price."

Most of the live auction's 64 lots, many offered by famous vintners from five countries, included rare wines paired with fabulous trips, sparkly jewels, lavish golf holidays or VIP sports or concert tickets.

The auction was only one piece of a glittering, non-stop \$10,000 per couple weekend that included vintner dinners hosted at private local mansions, with food cooked by all-star chefs, and, for an extra dollop of cash, a panel tasting celebrating the 1976 Paris Tasting.

This year's total take had topped \$10m by Saturday night, according to organisers – less than the all-time record of \$16.4 million in 2007. But, an online auction was still taking place. All proceeds go to about 50 local children's charities.

Bidding was fierce and noisy, especially for the second top lot, "Rocking at BottleRock," which pulled in \$720,000 after the sponsor tripled it to satisfy the three warring bidders. Each one ended up with the combo of Gargiulo wines (from Napa), VIP tickets to the valley's four-day music festival, and a bespoke guitar.

Cars and celebs took the next two spots. The new Ferrari F88 Spyder went for \$650,000, while a private cooking class and dinner with chef Mario Batali and actress Glenn Close brought \$400,000.

The most expensive single wine-focused lot – \$350,000 – was a 10-day Chilean and Argentinian winery tour with Shari and Garen Staglin, naturally included magnums of their Napa cabernet.

To my surprise, vintners even ponied up for one another's lots. Barbara Banke, owner of Jackson Family Wines, picked up Jean-Charles Boisset's tour of Burgundy.

Master sommelier Larry Stone, who was pouring at the event, summed it up best, "The conspicuous consumption gets crazy, but remember, it's for a good cause."