



Boisset Collection and Festival Napa Valley Support Wine Country's First Responders

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The recent wild fires burned more than 200,000 acres, leveled thousands of homes and destroyed or severely damaged some wineries. Still, as bad as it was, this disaster could have been far worse. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of wine country's emergency responders, both lives and property were saved.

"We are so grateful for all of the heroic acts from the firefighters, police officers, sheriffs and officials in Napa and Sonoma! They saved many lives and protected many places that mean so much to the community and for people's livelihoods... for example, our beloved and historic Buena Vista Winery would not be standing today if it wasn't for the bravery of firefighters," said Vintner Jean Charles Boisset.



To honor their bravery and commitment, Festival Napa Valley and the Boisset Collection sponsored *Wine Country Strong*, a free concert and chef's picnic honoring the region's first responders, emergency workers, hospital staff – everyone who worked endless hours to protect the wine country community.



Held Sunday at Yountville's Lincoln Theater, the concert featured Grammy award-winners Ozomatli, the popular six-piece band that joins rock, hip hop, Latin, jazz and other musical styles. They were joined by Oakville's The Silverado Pickups, local guitarist Morris LeGrande and the Bay Area's Cosmos Percussion Orchestra.



To show support for the event, Vintage House in Yountville donated 20 rooms for the talent.

"We were pleased to participate to say thank you to those who protect our community. Wine country is one of the most special places in the world, and it comes with certain responsibility to help not only the people who live here, but First Responders, our government and our own employees. It is our obligation to support the recovery efforts and to help bring business back to the Napa Valley," said Steve Davino, General Manager of Vintage House and Villagio Inn & Spa.

"Wine country is our haven," said Athena Blackburn who is a well-known Bay Area philanthropist. Her husband, Timothy Blackburn is the Festival Napa Valley Chairman, and the generous couple made sure to show unwavering support. "This event was important because we belong to this community and some of our friends have lost everything in the fire. Not to mention the great number of people who did not have much to start with and lost their homes," said Blackburn.



The concert was followed by a chef's picnic hosted by the Boisset Collection, with its culinary division, Atelier Fine Foods, as well as Ca'Momi, the Cindy Pawlcyn Restaurant Group, Hana, Valette, Woodhouse Barbeque and Woodhouse Chocolate - all serving up dishes. In addition to Boisset Collection wineries *JCB, Raymond, Buena Vista, DeLoach*, other wine was generously provided by Alpha Omega, Bouchaine, Castellucci, Darioush, Frank Family Vineyards, St. Supéry and Walther.



Boisset also highlighted Honoris, a limited edition Napa and Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon made by Brian Maloney (DeLoach and Buena Vista) and Stephanie Putnam (Raymond) to honor first responders and the wine country community. Only 3,600 bottles were produced and Boisset says all the proceeds will be donated to support the recovery.



"This was an unforgettable event. One of my favorite moments was when I saw a veteran in a wheelchair put a couple of dollars in a donation box for firefighters who lost their homes in the wildfires. And I saw kids drawing posters saying "Thank you first responders!" From young to old, everyone wanted to pour out their gratitude to the first responders and emergency workers who gave so much to serve - and save - our community," said Festival Napa Valley President Rick Walker.

Though the event was free, organizers strongly encouraged everyone to make a donation to the Napa Valley Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund, Sonoma County Community Foundation Resilience Fund, and/or a fire firefighter relief fund set up by firefighter unions from Santa Rosa and Marin County .



"Napa and Sonoma are very special regions, filled with pioneering and innovating people with strong spirits," said Boisset. "This community was only made stronger and more unified by the recent fires ... we are rebuilding and Wine Country will be even more magical than before!"