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Premiere Napa Valley auction tops \$2 million in online and in-person event

Sasha Paulsen

Feb 27, 2022



Guests at Charles Krug Winery in St. Helena gathered to taste wines made for Premiere Napa Valley, in advance of the Napa Valley Vintners' annual trade auction on Saturday, Feb. 26.

Tim Carl LLC

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The Napa Valley Vintner's 26th annual Premiere trade auction raised just over \$2 million on Saturday in St. Helena.

Returning to its traditional February date, after COVID-19 disrupted its 2021 schedule, the auction was a hybrid of an in-person event, combined with online streaming, which allowed bidders from around the world to compete for 109 lots of unique wines, created just for Premiere.

Included were wines from the 2020 vintage as well as 2019, 2021, and multi-vintage wines.

Premiere is the trade organization's fundraiser that supports its educational and promotional activities for Napa Valley wines. It is open only to the trade, who then can sell these one-of-a-kind wines at restaurants and shops. In 2021, Premiere moved to June, because of COVID-19, and raised \$2.7 million with the sale of 149 lots.

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The in-person audience this year at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone was limited to "past successful bidders," according to the Vintners.

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In November 2021, Napa Valley Vintners announced a three-year partnership with Sotheby's Auction House, which conducted Premiere 2022. Viewed online, it showed rising bids, bouncing back and forth between online and in-person participants.

According to the Napa Valley Vintner's post-auction release, "Wines sold at the 2022 Premiere Napa Valley wine auction will make their way to 14 states and six countries."

While the Saturday auction was brisk and businesslike as the Sotheby auctioneers moved swiftly through the lots, the week preceding it was full of old-style hospitality, such as Lee and Cristina Hudson's "Chardonnay and Oysters," where guests could sample Hudson Vineyard's Premiere lot. Trillium, 60 bottles of 100% Chardonnay from three favorite sites in their Carneros vineyards, sold for \$15,000.

On Thursday, Louis Martini Winery hosted a Vintage Perspective Tasting of auction wines from 2001–2010, and Charles Krug Winery hosted a Grand Premiere Napa Valley Tasting on Friday morning. COVID precautions remained in effect at these large gatherings where guests were asked to take rapid-result COVID tests before entering the wineries.

At his Premiere preview, Jean-Charles Boisset gave guests a sneak peek of his new Chateau Buena Vista tasting room, opening in March in Napa. With him were Marc Mondavi and Peter Mondavi, Jr. from Charles Krug Winery, as well as Angelina Mondavi, the daughter of Marc and Janice Mondavi, who made Lot 14, with Brian Maloney from Buena Vista winery, from Napa Valley grapes.

Boisset described the lot, titled "Past, Present and Future," as a "reunion" between the two historic wineries. Charles Krug, who established Napa Valley's oldest winery, served as an apprentice winemaker for Agoston Haraszthy, the self-proclaimed "Count of Buena Vista," who founded California's first premier winery in Sonoma. Boisset bought and restored Buena Vista, and the Mondavi brothers today own Krug, which their grandfather purchased in 1943.

A new "count" was at the door of Chateau Buena Vista on First Street, Napa, to welcome guests. The tasting room, unlike any other in town, has all the trademarks of a Boisset creation, where a love of history and luxury meet. Boisset said it will serve "the four C's: Champagne, Caviar, Chocolates and Cabernet."

Lot 14 generated considerable interest at the auction, garnering one of the higher bids, at \$40,000 for 120 bottles.

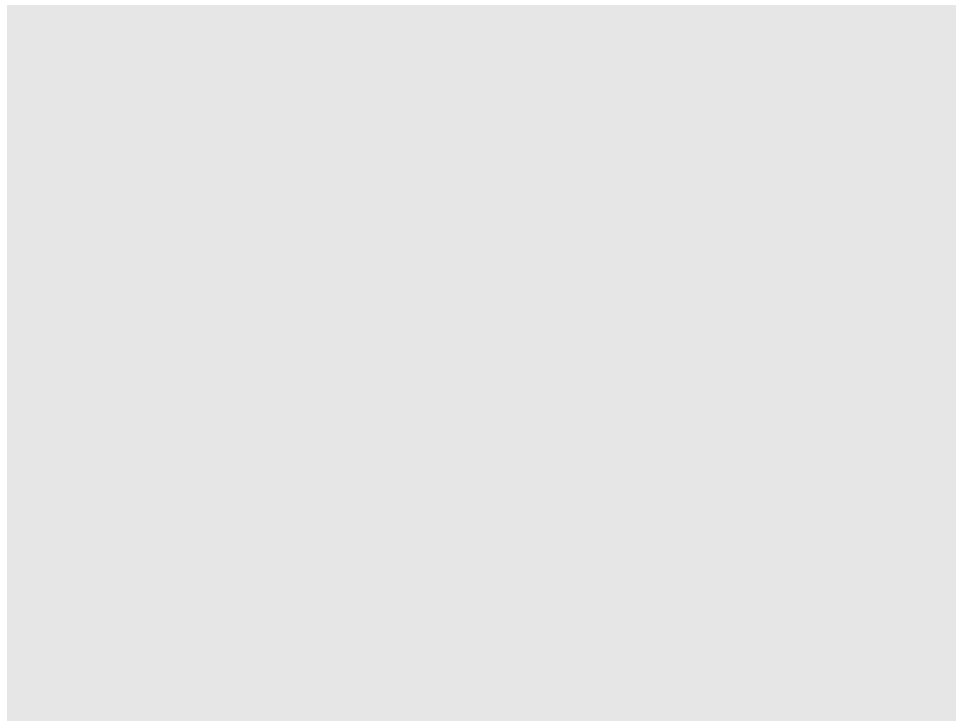
According to the Sotheby's website, the top lot was Shafer Vineyards, 60 bottles of 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon made by Elias Fernandez which sold for \$75,600, which includes a buyer's premium. Shafer was sold in February to Shinsegae Property, a luxury brand firm based in Seoul, South Korea.

From the Sotheby's list, a lot of 120 bottles of 2020 red table wine from Favia/Hourglass sold for \$54,000, as did the Heitz lot of 60 bottles of 2019 Cabernet. Silver Oaks' Better Together lot of 2020 Cabernet Sauvignon sold for \$70,200.

During the pandemic, the Napa Valley Vintners have been re-envisioning its fundraising platforms, including Auction Napa Valley, which raised millions that the Vintners returned to the community. Discontinued after 2019, this auction has been folded into the newly created Collective Napa Valley, which will present a year-round schedule of events, taking place in the valley but also welcoming global fans to participate. The first Collective event is coming up in March.

Check out the week in cartoons

Lisa Benson cartoon



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