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By: [PRWeb](#)

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## Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction Shatters All Records Raising \$4 Million

PRWeb

Sonoma County, CA, September 3, 2014 -- With a mood under the tent that combined intense excitement with a generous community spirit, over \$4 Million was raised at the Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction at Chateau St. Jean sponsored by TricorBraun WinePak, on Sunday, August 31. The total more than doubled the record-breaking 2013 total of almost \$1.5 Million. Over 700 guests from across the country gathered with vintners and growers to raise record-breaking funds for a multitude of Sonoma County charities. Auctioneer Scott Robertson urged bidders to bid high for the extraordinary lots, ranging from highly-sought wines to priceless experiences. Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, which includes the Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction, is presented by Visa Signature(R).

Vintner leaders from across Sonoma County played a key role in both contributing and inspiring others to bid generously, including Joe Anderson of Benovia Winery, Barbara Banke, Matt Gallo, the Zanin Family of Bennett Valley Cellars, the Hamel Family and the Klein Family of Rodney Strong Vineyards. When the total of the day was announced as being almost \$4 Million, Joe Anderson made an additional pledge and challenged others to dig a little deeper to hit the \$4 Million mark. The last pledge came from Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance Board Member Gary Buffo, and the goal was achieved.

The presence of bidders and supporters from outside Sonoma County also played a key role in this year's Auction success. Some of the day's top bidders came from Arizona, New Mexico, Florida and Oklahoma to share their passion for Sonoma County's wines and charities. In addition, Joe Anderson invited the leadership of the Southwest Florida Wine Auction from Fort Myers, Florida to support the Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction. Southwest Florida Auction board members purchased several lots throughout the afternoon and generously supported Fund the Future.

The Fund the Future Lot, which supports child literacy, received over \$1.6 Million this year, which more than doubled last year's \$700,000 total. The final figures included a rally of six figure donations from wine industry leadership to get the momentum going. Matt Gallo and Katie Jackson each stepped up with initial leadership commitments. Next, Joe Anderson of Benovia Winery pledged a surprise group donation, and Honorary Chair Tom Klein of Rodney Strong Vineyards matched individual contributions to \$100,000. Additional contributions from Francis Ford Coppola Winery, the Hamel Family, and an anonymous donor each added to the tally. Additionally, auction guests Gary Nelson of Sonoma Valley and Deb and Robert Chase, guests of Kamen Estate and Enterprise Vineyards, joined the momentum and made significant contributions during this leadership round. The bidding continued for ten minutes as paddles were raised across the tent in all directions. The crowd stood and cheered for every new bidder while children from beneficiary reading programs stood on the stage and experienced the spectacle firsthand.

The largest grossing auction lot of the day was the Hamel Family Wines' "Six Cooks in the Kitchen", featuring a private dinner at their newly constructed winery for 50 with six top James Beard Award-winning chefs, which 25 couples bid \$10,000 each to experience, bringing the lot

total to \$250,000. The largest individual lot was the Gallo Family's "Amazing Africa" lot featuring a luxurious safari to top destinations, which sold for a total of \$220,000 to two bidders each bidding \$110,000. It was followed closely by Honorary Chairs Rodney Strong Vineyards' "Rock Out with Rodney Strong" concert and dinner with celebrity chef Hugh Acheson, which generated \$212,000. Other top lots of the day included the "Stars of Moon Mountain" lot which featured an array of experiences with vintners and growers of Moon Mountain District, "Holiday in Hong Kong and Macau with Jean-Charles Boisset and Buena Vista", Williams Selyem's "Escape to a Gourmet Hideaway at Blackberry Farm", and the Ferrer Family's Honorary Chair Lot, "Sparkling Barcelona".

The highest grossing wine-only lot was a "Hanzell Heritage Tribute" donation from Hanzell Vineyards honoring long-time winemaker Bob Sessions, who passed away in May. The lot included three, 3-Liter bottles of Hanzell Vineyards Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, and sold for \$80,000.

Under the focused leadership and commitment of Sonoma Wine Country Weekend Co-Executive Directors Honore Comfort (Sonoma County Vintners) and Maureen Cottingham (Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance) and their Boards of Directors, gross proceeds are expected to be in excess of \$5 Million for the entire Sonoma Wine Country Weekend once final tallies are calculated, which creates another new record for the event as earnings more than doubled over last year.

"We made history in Sonoma County today," said Maureen Cottingham. "Along with our vintners and grape growers, it took the leadership of our incredible honorary chairs, the Ferrer Family and the Klein Family, who led our community this year, to support our kids and our county."

"Our wine community pulled out the stops to showcase the wine, food and community of Sonoma County this weekend," Honore Comfort said. "Through collaboration, and a little bit of well-meaning competition, our vintners and growers set out to show their support for the children and families of this region and that resulted in our record-breaking success."

For those who could not attend the Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction, yet would still like to participate in the charitable effort, an online auction of additional lots, including many of Sonoma County's finest large format wine bottles and exclusive experiences, is open for bidding through September 12, 2014 at <https://www.biddingforgood.com/auction/auctionhome.action?vhost=sonomawinecountryweekend>

Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is Sonoma County's inimitable Labor Day Weekend event, August 29-31, celebrating the region's winegrowers, winemakers and chefs. Sonoma Wine Country Weekend brings America's leading wine and food destination to life, while giving back to essential local charities. To date, more than \$12 million has been raised to support the future of Sonoma County. The event offers unique, elevated experiences interwoven with the region's indie spirit. It is inclusive and generous, mirroring the Sonoma County community, itself. Visa Signature(R) is the Presenting Sponsor of Sonoma Wine Country Weekend. To purchase tickets and plan your Sonoma Wine Country Weekend celebration, please visit:

<http://SonomaWineCountryWeekend.com/>

\*Like Sonoma Wine Country Weekend on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/winecountryweekend>, Instagram at @SonomaWineCountryWeekend, and follow on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/SonomaWCW>; @SonomaWCW. Hashtag: #SWCW.

#### About Chateau St. Jean

Founded in 1973 in the Sonoma Valley, Chateau St. Jean is the quintessential Sonoma winery. Chateau St. Jean produces an extensive portfolio of Sonoma County wines as well as vineyard designated wines, limited production Reserve wines, and the flagship Cinq Cépages Cabernet Sauvignon. Winemaker Margo Van Staaveren, who was named "Winemaker of the Year" for 2008 by Wine Enthusiast Magazine, has been with Chateau St. Jean for over 30 years. Chateau St. Jean is the first Sonoma winery to be awarded the prestigious "Wine of the Year" award from Wine Spectator Magazine for its 1996 Cinq Cépages, a Bordeaux style blend of "five varieties" and has long been recognized as a leader in vineyard designated wines. For more visit:

<http://www.chateaufstjean.com>.

#### About 2014 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend Presenting Sponsor Visa Signature

Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is presented by Visa Signature. Visa Signature offers account holders a range of benefits that provide special access and can save time and money. In addition to points, miles, cash back and other premium rewards offered by Visa Signature partners, account holders enjoy perks such as 24/7 complimentary concierge services, the Visa Signature

Luxury Hotel Collection and exclusive offers for fine wine and food, travel, and sports and entertainment events. For more information on Visa Signature and issuers offering Visa Signature, visit <http://www.VisaSignature.com>.

#### About 2014 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend Sponsors and Beneficiaries

A partnership between Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Foundation and Sonoma County Vintners, Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is California's premier wine, food and social event, taking place over Labor Day weekend each year. The events comprising Sonoma Wine Country Weekend have raised more than \$12 million in support of local charities dedicated to children, the environment and health in our local communities. The 2014 Sonoma Wine Country Weekend is presented by Visa Signature. (R) For a complete list of beneficiaries and sponsors, please visit <http://www.SonomaWineCountryWeekend.com>.

About Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance and Foundation and Sonoma County Vintners  
The Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance (SVVGA) is a non-profit trade organization serving more than 500 members who share a mission to promote awareness of Sonoma Valley's grapes, wine and history as the birthplace of the California wine industry. The Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Foundation (SVVGF) is a non-profit 501c.3 organization that has raised more than \$8 million for local Sonoma Valley charities. For more information on the SVVGA and SVVGF, please visit <http://www.SonomaValleyWine.com>.

Sonoma County Vintners (SCV) is the leading voice of Sonoma County wine, dedicated to raising awareness of Sonoma County as one of the world's premier wine regions, noted for its heritage of artisan winemaking, distinct growing regions and extraordinary quality. Founded in 1944, SCV represents more than 250 wineries and affiliated businesses throughout the county. Learn more about SCV at <http://www.SonomaWine.com>.

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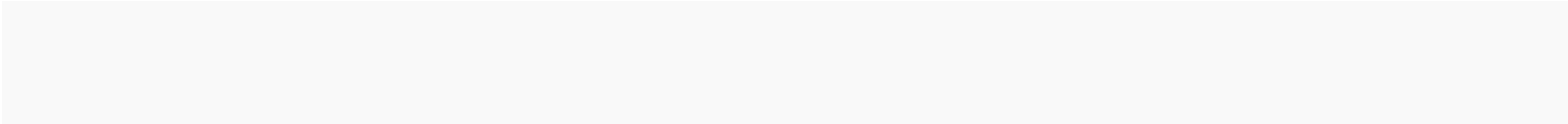
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