

The Press Democrat

Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction reaps record \$4.6 million

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The theme, "Sonoma to Marrakesh," featuring a live camel weighing more than a ton and a host of belly dancers, set the stage for Sunday's Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction at Kenwood's Chateau St. Jean that raised a record \$4.6 million.

The top group lot of the day among the 650 paddle-holders was "Fund the Future" for children's literacy at \$2.7 million, up from last year's \$1.9 million.

Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction live auction takes

2016 — \$4.6 million
2015 — \$4.5 million
2014 — \$4 million
2013 — \$1.5 million
2012 — \$730,000

The top single lot of the day was actually sold twice for a total of \$220,000. It featured two nights in Hollywood with VIP Golden Globe tickets and a private film screening. It also included a five-bottle collection of Buena Vista wine.

The total raised over the three-day Sonoma Wine Country Weekend was \$5.7 million. While record-breaking, it was eclipsed by Auction Napa Valley with its weekend take of \$14.3 million raised in June. Meanwhile Naples Winter Wine Festival raised \$11.1 million in January at its live auction.

Jean Sessions, co-executive director of the Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, said the auction organizers remain uplifted by this year's take.

"We are proud of our vintners and growers and thrilled with the generosity of our bidders," Sessions said. "The result is that this event continues to grow year after year."

She said changes are afoot for next year, with auction slated for Sept. 17, and a new location yet to be determined.

"In the end," Sessions said, "the combined contributions have a huge and long-lasting positive impact on our community."