

# Wine Spectator

## Sonoma Harvest Charity Wine Auction Raises \$4.6 Million

Big spending and a Marrakesh-themed live auction cap a three-day weekend



Photo by: George Rose

Bidders compete at the Sunday live auction for top lots, including exclusive dinners with winemakers.

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The Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction at **Chateau St. Jean** in Kenwood danced with color Sunday, thanks to a lavish Moroccan theme and extravagant spending to match. The live auction raised a record \$4.6 million, exceeding last year's haul of \$4.5 million.

With its "From Sonoma to Marrakesh" theme, complete with belly dancers, a live camel and a Moroccan-style market, the auction was the highlight of Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, a three-day celebration of wine, food and fun. The weekend overall raised \$5.7 million to benefit local charities.

The air was electric inside the auction tent as a bidding war broke out over the highest-grossing lot, which included a trip for four to Los Angeles with VIP tickets to the Golden Globes afterparty, a private film screening and large-format bottles, all sponsored by **Buena Vista Winery**. Bedecked in a red suit and matching shoes, owner Jean-Charles Boisset took to the stage to fire up the crowd. In the end, he agreed to duplicate the lot, honoring the top bids of two couples—Lori and Steven Bush, owners of the Oso Sonoma restaurant, and Joe Anderson and Mary Dewane of **Benovia Winery**. Combined, their bids raised \$220,000.

Anderson, who was last year's honorary cochair with Boisset, said his bid was to help this year's chairman. "We had to make sure Dan [Kosta] beats us this year," he said. "It's all about the children."