

WINE AUCTIONS

Miami Wine and Food Festival Turns Up the Heat

Florida's coldest winter in three decades failed to douse the conviviality at Miami's South Beach Wine & Food Festival, which sailed over attitudes of economic trepidation with dozens of enticements for gourmands and enophiles. Kicking off on Feb. 25, the four-day festival attracted some 50,000 food fans, according to Lee Brian Schrage, event organizer and a vice president of Southern Wine & Spirits of America.

At the Best of the Best event, sponsored by *Wine Spectator*, the 70-strong winery roster included 16 top Champagne houses, and the Hon. Pierre Vimont, French ambassador to the United States, was on hand to spread the *joie*. Other events included Dim Sum & Disco at the Setai with chefs Ming Tsai and Jonathan Wright, and an "interactive dinner" at which guests prepared their own four-course meals

under the tutelage of PBS star Lidia Bastianich and her restaurateur son, Joseph.

The numerous charity events held during the packed program raised more than \$2 million for the Florida International University School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, which operates the Southern Wine & Spirits Beverage Management Center. In addition, more than 1,000 students work at the SBWFF offices and events, gaining course credit and career experience along the way. "The exposure that it brings to the school, and the dollars that it raises for the school," said Schrage, "is really why we do this."

Preparations for next year, the event's 10th anniversary celebration, are already under way, and hopes have only been fanned higher by this year's success.

—Ben O'Donnell



Wine Spectator's Best of the Best tasting at the Fontainebleu Hotel

PORTLAND CHARITY AUCTION NETS \$2.3 MILLION

The gradual recovery of wine charity auctions after a challenging 2009 seemed in evidence at Portland, Ore.'s Classic Wines Auction on March 6. The event raised more than \$2.3 million, matching the total from the auction's 25th anniversary celebration last year. "We were just over the moon that we could get back to a similar number," said auction director Heather Martin. Fifty-two live lots netted an estimated \$650,000, while the silent auction pulled in \$58,000. A fund-a-need program boosted the sum an additional \$737,500. Beneficiaries include Metropolitan Family Service, New Avenues for Youth, Friends of the Children, Trillium Family Services and the YWCA Clark County.

Several encyclopedic wine packages went on the block. A Savor Western Europe collage of 90 French, Italian and German wines fetched \$11,000. A set of 60 California Cabs, including Joseph Phelps, Staglin, Chateau Montelena and Caymus, garnered \$12,000 and counted among the auction's biggest wine-only sales. A different sort of "cab" took top honors, however: The Checker Taxi Cab: Icon of the Road Meets Hollywood lot sold for \$20,000. The 1982 Checker Marathon had supporting roles in all three *Spiderman* movies, among others. To sweeten the deal, five cases of Mendocino Wine Co. Cabernet Big Yellow Cab 2005 were stowed in the trunk. —B.O.



Mouton Magnums Raise Money for Haiti Relief

To further aid Haitian earthquake relief, Baroness Philippine de Rothschild donated two magnums of 1986 Mouton from the estate's cellar for a special weeklong auction at WineSpectator.com in February. The donated bottles, rated 99 points on the *Wine Spectator* 100-point scale, raised \$7,400 for quake victims.

The 1986 Mouton label has special significance in that it showcases the hand of the late Haitian artist Bernard Séjourné, who, according to Rothschild, "found himself on one of the greatest vintages of Mouton ever made." Every year since 1945, the chateau has invited an accomplished artist to decorate its label in exchange for 10 cases of the wine. As such, Séjourné is in the company of Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall and Keith Haring.

The bidding, which was conducted on *Wine Spectator* European bureau chief James Suckling's blog, closed on March 1 after 11 antes. Claus Wessel Jensen and Sander Joniau, two Europe-based bidders, emerged the winners, with \$3,800 and \$3,600 offers respectively.

Wrote Jensen in an e-mail message, "I feel humble and happy that I won the auction and a chance to give a donation to the people of Haiti. It brings tears to my eyes watching the devastation and suffering they are going through." Joniau echoed, "I felt compassion after hearing about the devastating tragedy in this already impoverished nation."

The money is on its way to Fondation de France's Haiti Solidarity relief and rebuilding initiative. The '86 Moutons, meanwhile, join Joniau's and Jensen's collections.

"I will give it a VIP treatment in my cellar for a couple of decades," Joniau said, describing his plans for the bottle. "Then I hope to enjoy it with my wife, kids, family and friends. And I hope Haiti will be fully recovered and flourishing by then."

—B.O.

WINESPECTATOR.COM

Keep tabs on the market. Web site members can check the latest auction highlights and track prices for more than 12,000 collectible wines in our Auction Price Database. Get it all at www.winespectator.com/053110.

