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WINE FOR

WINE AUCTIONS

Local Charities Get a Boost in 2017

Eleven live wine auction events break the \$1 million mark

BY VICTORIA SADOSKY

Wine lovers' support for charitable causes was unflagging in 2017. Many charity wine auctions achieved their highest totals ever last year, including Destin Charity Wine Auction, the Rusty Staub Foundation Wine Auction, Auction of Washington Wines, Classic Wines Auction, Sonoma County Wine Auction, Emeril Lagasse Foundation's Vale du Vin.

Of the 11 auctions, 11 raised more than \$1 million at their respective events, for a total of \$41 million. The U.S. charity wine auction market has multiple revenue streams, but the live-auction segment is the most common to date.

Destin Charity Wine Auction, based in Florida, has been steadily gaining momentum. In 2016, DCWA reached \$2.4 million, and in 2017, revenues rose yet again. Overall, DCWA raised \$2.7 million for local children's charities devoted to issues ranging from autism to homelessness to sexual abuse. "When we can tell those stories to people, they raise their paddles. That's why it's so amazing to do this and see the growth," said president John Russell.

Last year marked a new format for the Sonoma County Wine Auction, following the dissolution of the partnership between the Sonoma County Vintners association and the Sonoma Valley Vintners

and Growers Alliance. Despite the change, total earnings soared to \$5.2 million. The paddle raise proved to be one of the night's highlights, garnering over \$1.8 million for Fund the Future Literacy Campaign. "Our vintners really care about their workforce and the families that they have. Everyone in this community is committed to making it the best place it can be," said Kelin Backman, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation managing director.

The labor force was also a beneficiary of the Auction of Washington Wines, where a 37-vintage vintage of Leonetti Cabernet Sauvignon raised \$32,500 toward an endowment for a scholarship program for children of field workers in the wine industry. The auction, held at Chateau Ste. Michelle, marked its 30th anniversary by raising \$2 million in live bids. The Rusty Staub Foundation continues to cultivate a reputation for Big Garden wine lots, raising over \$1 million for hunger relief.

Other auctions came close to hitting the \$1 million mark, most notably Nashville Wine Auction and WinePawloca. WinePawloca has seen tremendous growth after only four years, with its emphasis on marrying animal advocacy and wine. In 2017, the auction raised \$990,000 in live bids for the Jameson Animal Rescue Ranch. Co-founder Monica Stevens attributed this success to the generosity of agricultural community. "It's a community that supports us, and the people that come to our event—collectors and animal lovers."

Other auctions that achieved \$1 million or more across all revenue streams included Côtes du Coeur, Harvest STOMP, An Evening with California Winemasters, Triangle Wine Experience, Toast to Your Health Fine Wine Auction and Sun Valley Wine Auction.

For the 2018 season, many auctions are planning to allocate a portion of funds raised to wildfire-relief efforts in California, and some have already provided assistance or made donations.

WINE AUCTIONS TALLYING \$1 MILLION OR MORE

BENEFICIARY	LOCATION	LIVE BIDS
Naples Children & Education Foundation	Naples, Fla.	\$13,491,324
Local health and children's organizations	St. Helena, Calif.	\$11,585,000
Children's charities in northwest Florida	Miramar Beach, Fla.	\$2,425,170
Various in Sonoma County	Santa Rosa, Calif.	\$2,424,000
Seattle's Childrens Hospital and WSU Viticulture Program	Woodinville, Wash.	\$2,424,000
Children's and family charities	Portland, Ore.	\$2,424,000
Rusty Staub Emergency Food Pantry		
Emeril Lagasse Foundation		
Gosilano Children's Hospital		
Houston Livestock Show		
High Museum		

LIVE AUCTIONS TALLYING \$1 MILLION OR MORE

AUCTION	BENEFICIARY
Napa Valley Wine Auction	Naples Children & Education Foundation
Classic Wines Auction	Local health and children's organizations
Rusty Staub Foundation Wine Auction	Children's charities in northwest Florida
Emeril Lagasse Foundation Wine Auction	Various in Sonoma County
Southwest Food & Wine Festival	Seattle's Childrens Hospital and WSU Viticulture Program
Rodeo Uncorked! Champion Wine Auction	Children's and family charities
High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction	Rusty Staub Emergency Food Pantry
	Emeril Lagasse Foundation
	Gosilano Children's Hospital
	Houston Livestock Show
	High Museum

Wine Spectator tracks the results of charity wine auctions, and the latter segment is the sole event common to them.