



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sonoma County Wine Auction Raises Record-Breaking \$5.2 Million for Sonoma County Charities

Sonoma County non-profit beneficiary partners are focused on literacy, education, health and human services, the environment, and arts and culture

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (September 16, 2017) - The Sonoma County Vintners and Barbara R. Banke, the 2017 Sonoma County Wine Auction Chair, are thrilled to announce that the 2017 [Sonoma County Wine Auction](#) raised a record-breaking \$5.2 million to support Sonoma County charities focused on literacy, education, health and human services, the environment, and arts and culture.

Named one of the top charitable wine auctions nationally by *Wine Spectator*, the Sonoma County Wine Auction was presented this afternoon at La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard by Visa Signature® and sponsored by Jackson Family Wines and TricorBraun WinePak. The festive philanthropic event was hosted by entertaining auctioneer John Curley, who inspired the energetic and generous crowd to bid competitively.

The auction tent buzzed with excitement with two lots that tied for the top lots of the day: Lot 11 "Winner's Circle Escape to the Kentucky Derby" donated by Barbara Banke, Stonestreet Farms, and Jackson Family Wines for \$210,000 that also doubled; and Lot 23 "Everything is Better with Bette: A Hello Dolly Adventure to New York" donated by Williams Selyem, Dr. Jeffrey P. Hays, and Mrs. Carole Shorenstein Hays which also sold for \$210,000 and doubled.

Always a special moment in the annual auction, the highest grossing lot of the day was the “Fund the Future” lot, which raised \$1.8 million for literacy programs in Sonoma County. The Jackson-Banke family kicked-off the Fund the Future lot with a bid of \$250,000. This was then quickly matched by the Gallo family and Lytton Rancheria. While supporting a broad range of non-profit partners, Sonoma Wine Country Weekend has made a special commitment to raising literacy rates among children, in an effort to build a more sustainable community. A comprehensive evaluation of the literacy programs supported by Fund the Future shows improved reading levels throughout the county – and increased frequency with which parents read to their children on a regular basis.

“We are grateful to the generous bidders who attended the Sonoma County Wine Auction and enthusiastically supported our beneficiary partners,” said Barbara R. Banke, the 2017 Sonoma County Wine Auction Chair, and Chairman & Proprietor of Jackson Family Wines. “Improving literacy rates among children is the key to building a successful, sustainable community. Our goal is for every child in Sonoma County to be reading proficiently by the third grade and today’s support of our innovative literacy programs was a big step toward supporting that goal. In addition, our Community Grants program changes lives in the areas of health and human services, environment, and arts and culture.”

Shining a light on the caliber of Sonoma’s most highly-regarded and elusive wines, the top wine-only lot today was Lot 19, a six bottle collection of rare large-format Kosta Browne 2014 single-vintage Pinot Noirs, which sold for \$37,000.

The day’s festivities also included a special tribute to Rodney Strong Vineyard’s Sommelier Star Program, celebrating 10 years of sommelier sponsorship. The Somm Stars program recognizes the integral role sommeliers play in wine education. “Sommeliers are our guides to wine enjoyment, offering wine selection advice and encouraging exploration. We have and continue to support sommeliers through sponsorships, scholarships, and grants due to our deep commitment to Sonoma County and wine education,” explained Rachel Thralls, Director of Wine Education for Rodney Strong Vineyards. Each year Rodney Strong Vineyards hand-selects an all-star team of sommeliers to support Sonoma Wine Country Weekend by hosting

educational wine tours and seminars at Taste of Sonoma and providing dedicated wine service during the auction.

The Sonoma County Wine Auction, as part of Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, is the region's largest charitable giving event, bringing together Sonoma County's top winemakers and growers. Since its inception more than \$29 million has been raised for organizations that benefit students, children, farm workers, and people in need within Sonoma County.

"We are thrilled with the results of the Sonoma County Wine Auction," said Jean Arnold Sessions, Executive Director of the Sonoma County Vintners. "We are so fortunate to live in a world-class wine region with such talented vintners and winemakers, who are also committed to caring for our local community."

Sonoma County Wine Auction Updates on Social Media:

Facebook: [facebook.com/winecountryweekend](https://www.facebook.com/winecountryweekend)

Instagram: [instagram.com/sonomawinecountryweekend](https://www.instagram.com/sonomawinecountryweekend)

Twitter: twitter.com/sonomawcw

Hashtags:

#SonomaCountyWineAuction

#SonomaWine

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About The 2017 Sonoma County Wine Auction

About Jackson Family Wines

Jackson Family Wines (JFW) is a family-owned and run company that crafts award-winning wines of distinct character and quality. With a focus on sustainable viticulture practices, responsible vineyard and natural resource management and unparalleled winemaking, the family's collection comprises more than 50 renowned brands, with substantial winery and vineyard holdings throughout the premier wine-growing regions of California and Oregon. JFW also crafts fine wines from Australia, Chile, France, Italy and South Africa. Founded in 1982 by wine pioneer, entrepreneur and philanthropist Jess Jackson, Jackson Family Wines and its wineries are led by Chairman Barbara Banke and the Jackson family. Learn more at

jacksonfamilywines.com.

The Sonoma County Wine Auction is presented by Visa Signature

Visa Signature and Visa Infinite® cardholders enjoy a range of benefits that provide special access and can save money. In addition to points, miles, cash back and other premium rewards offered by issuers, Visa Signature and Visa Infinite cardholders also enjoy perks such as 24/7 complimentary concierge services, the Visa Luxury Hotel Collection and exclusive offers for fine wine and food, travel and sports. For more information on Visa Signature, Visa Infinite and other Visa® offerings, please visit Visa.com.

About TricorBraun WinePak

TricorBraun WinePak has offices in Northern and Southern California, Oregon, Washington, Canada and Mexico. It has been serving the wine industry since 1982 and is the premier wine packaging supplier in North America, supplying packaging components including stock & custom bottles from domestic & global sources, Stelvin™ closures, capsules. Their on-site QA lab & experts ensures the highest quality. The company's facilities include a \$2 million repacking system that automatically transfers wine bottles from eight-foot high stacks of pallets to individual wineries' custom, 12-bottle cartons, offering the most flexibility in packaging options. TricorBraun WinePak is a division of TricorBraun (www.TricorBraun.com), one of North America's largest providers of bottles, jars, and other rigid packaging components. To learn more visit: [TricorBraun WinePak](#).

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About La Crema

La Crema was founded in 1979 as La Crema Viñera, meaning "Best of the Vine." For more than 35 years, the winery has focused exclusively on cool-climate coastal appellations, where ocean winds and fog allow grapes to ripen slowly on the vine. Using boutique, time-intensive techniques to produce distinctively balanced and elegant wines, La Crema combines consistent high quality and elegant flavor with a modern cosmopolitan personality. For more information, visit LaCrema.com.

About Sonoma County Vintners

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 200 wineries and affiliated businesses throughout the county. To learn more about Sonoma County Vintners, visit: SonomaWine.com.

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Media contacts: Zoe Watson, Sonia Sparks and Elizabeth Chow at Glodow Nead Communications, 415.394.6500 or SWCWPR@glodownead.com.

