



SONOMA COUNTY WINE AUCTION ANNOUNCES GEORGE HAMEL, JR. AS HONORARY CHAIR

Annual Event to Be Hosted at La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard on September 22, 2018

The Sonoma County Vintners Foundation is pleased to announce George Hamel, Jr. of [Hamel Family Wines](#) as Honorary Chair of the 2018 [Sonoma County Wine Auction](#), the region's leading annual fundraising event. The event, presented by Visa Signature, will take place on Saturday, September 22, 2018 at [La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard](#). This is the second year this prestigious event will be held at La Crema, located in the heart of Sonoma County's Russian River Valley.

The Sonoma County Wine Auction has raised more than \$29 million since its inception and has been named one of the nation's top charitable wine auctions by *Wine Spectator*. Funds raised benefit local Sonoma County charitable organizations focusing on education, arts and culture, environment and health and human services. In addition, this year's event will also help to raise funds to aid wildfire recovery efforts.

"We are excited and, above all, honored to have George as our Honorary Chair in 2018," stated Michael Haney, Interim Executive Director of Sonoma County Vintners. "We are grateful for his and the Hamel family's commitment to this year's auction. We value George's expertise and appreciate the collaborative spirit he brings to this year's event." The Honorary Chair is recognized as an individual who demonstrates community leadership, is committed to helping others and is dedicated to being a voice for the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation and its fundraising efforts.

"It is an absolute privilege for me to serve as Honorary Chair of the 2018 Sonoma County Wine Auction," said George Hamel. "Thanks to the wonderful work done by Barbara Banke last year, as well as by the other esteemed vintners who chaired before her, the Sonoma County Wine Auction has become one of the largest community fundraisers in Sonoma County and raised a record-breaking amount of \$5.2 million last year," Hamel continued. "With a focus this year on wildfire recovery support, in addition to the many other not-for-profit beneficiaries, I'm committed to doing my part to help continue the upward trajectory of the Auction—with a goal of providing even more money to those in need in Sonoma County."

"We are also thrilled to be back at La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard," added Haney. "Our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation go to Barbara Banke and the Jackson family for their support and commitment to our annual fundraiser and for graciously hosting the event again this year. We are fortunate to have them involved again and hope to have another record-breaking year." La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard is widely cherished in the Sonoma County community for its storied vineyard and reputation for producing some of the finest grapes in the region.

The Sonoma County Wine Auction brings the region's most renowned winemakers and growers together with distinguished collectors and generous bidders for an opportunity to acquire some of Sonoma County's top wines and bid on once-in-a-lifetime travel experiences. Funds raised have supported [95 nonprofits](#) in Sonoma County.