



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sonoma County Wine Auction, Presented by Visa Signature®, Breaks Records and Raises Over \$5.7 Million at Annual Charitable Fundraising Event**

Proceeds raised at Sonoma County's largest fundraiser benefit local nonprofits and fire relief efforts, focused specifically on post-fire housing solutions

**SANTA ROSA, CA** (September 22, 2018) – The Sonoma County Vintners Foundation and George F. Hamel, Jr., 2018 Sonoma County Wine Auction Honorary Chair, are excited to announce over \$5.7 million was raised at the 2018 [Sonoma County Wine Auction](#), presented by Visa Signature®, breaking records. The Fund-A-Need paddle raise dedicated to rebuilding Sonoma County focused on housing solutions raised an incredible \$2.5 million.

The live auction event held at La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard, was the culmination of a three-day affair in Sonoma County that included a kickoff, revival-themed party hosted at Paradise Ridge Winery and vintner dinners hosted throughout the county. Named one of the nation's top charitable wine auctions by *Wine Spectator*, proceeds raised today will support more nonprofit organizations in Sonoma County than any other local fundraising event.

"We are thrilled with the results of this year's auction and are grateful to our generous bidders, wine community, sponsors, donors, and volunteers for their support and participation in this event," said Michael Haney, Sonoma County Vintners Executive Director. "Every year the proceeds raised by our auction benefit local nonprofit organizations that support our community's most pressing needs."

Including today's results, the Sonoma County Wine Auction has raised nearly \$35 million to help fund charitable organizations focusing on literacy, education, arts and culture, environment and health and human services since its inception.

The live auction was hosted by auctioneer, John Curley, who entertained and enthused guests from around the country to bid generously and competitively. Auction lots ranged from revered wine collections to once-in-a-lifetime experiences and incredible, far and away travel adventures.

Honorary Chair, George Hamel, Jr.'s Lot No. 14, Peanuts and George Winston. One Night Only. Ever., featuring the music of legendary San Francisco jazz musician Vince Guaraldi performed by Grammy Award winner George Winston was the top selling lot of the day, fetching \$460,000 with 46 couples paying \$10,000 each to attend this once-in-a-lifetime event.

The auction's top wine-only lot was Winemaker Michael Browne's Lot No. 7, Back to the Future with CIRQ. Estate and Michael Browne, an exclusive and rare collectible lot comprised of CIRQ. Estate library wines in mixed formats, celebrating Michael's pursuit of the highest quality Pinot Noir, which garnered \$80,000.

Other top lots included:

- Lot No. 11, a trip to Wimbledon including dinner with Wimbledon legend, Tim Henman, which was generously acquired by David Shimmon for \$190,000.
- Lot No. 34, an exclusive dinner with Chef Honoree Nancy Oakes, with a multicourse meal prepared by some of her close friends, including: Gary Danko, Michael Tusk, Emily Luchetti, and Tyler Florence among other celebrity chefs of the region reached \$95,000 before being doubled for a total of \$190,000.
- Lot No. 16, Christopher Creek Winery's dream trip to Italy complete with a stay in an Italian castle, and spontaneous add-on from Culinary Chair Dustin Valette of Valette Healdsburg to fly to Italy to cook an exclusive dinner for the lucky winner peaked at \$95,000.

Brothers George Hamel, III and John Hamel, representing the Hamel Family Foundation, kicked off the Fund-A-Need paddle raise with a donation of \$300,000, which was quickly matched by the Jackson family. Additional, donors included E&J Gallo at \$150,000 followed by \$100,000 donations by Stewart Resnick, Landmark Vineyards; Mac McQuown, Stone Edge Farm; Joe Anderson and Mary Dewane of Benovia Winery; Francis Ford Coppola Family and Winery; and Jim Bailey of Knights Bridge Winery. Once all bids were finally in, George Hamel and David Shimmon graciously rounded out the Fund-A-Need paddle raise to \$2.5 million.

"More than 5,000 Sonoma County homes were lost to the October fires last year, and we know recovery needs to be looked at through a longer-term lens," said George Hamel, 2018 Honorary Chair. "Housing is a basic and fundamental necessity for everyone, and my family all feel strongly about supporting this effort. We are humbled and grateful to everyone who raised their paddles today."

For anyone who was unable to attend and is interested in making a donation towards this year's Fund-A-Need or community grants program can do so by sending contributions to: Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, 400 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 500, Santa Rosa, CA 95403 or by visiting: <https://sonomacountywineauction.com/legacy/>.

Save the date for the 2019 Sonoma County Wine Auction to be held September 19-21 at [La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard](#) in the heart of the Russian River Valley.

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### **About Sonoma County Wine Auction**

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. Named one of the nation's top charitable auctions by *Wine Spectator*, the proceeds raised benefit local Sonoma County charitable organizations. Since its inception, the Sonoma County Wine Auction has raised nearly \$35 million to help fund charitable organizations focusing on literacy, education, arts and culture, environment and health and human services and have supported more nonprofits than any other fundraising event in Sonoma County. Learn more at [sonomacountywineauction.com](http://sonomacountywineauction.com).

### **About Hamel Family Wines**

Hamel Family Wines ("HFW") is committed to producing a limited-quantity of exceptional estate-grown wines from its Sonoma Valley and Moon Mountain District vineyards. Farming meticulously with organic and biodynamic practices, HFW is dedicated to producing wines that reflect a true sense of purpose, passion, place and time, and the fun had making them. For more information on Hamel Family Wines, visit [hamelfamilywines.com](http://hamelfamilywines.com).

### **About Visa Signature®**

Visa Signature® and Visa Infinite® cardholders enjoy a range of benefits that provide special access including Sonoma County Wine Auction 2018. 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, access to the Visa Luxury Hotel Collection and exclusive offers related to fine wine and food, travel and sports. For more information on Visa Signature, Visa Infinite and other Visa® offerings, please visit [Visa.com](http://Visa.com).

**Additional Sonoma County Wine Auction Sponsors Include:** Tricorbrown Winepak, American AgCredit, Biagi Bros., Butterfly Aviation LLC, First Republic Bank, Flexjet, Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards, La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard, Pack n' Ship Direct, Paradise Ridge Winery, Pure Luxury Transportation, Rodney Strong Vineyards, Silicon Valley Bank, T.W. Boswell, *Wine Spectator* and Wright Contracting.

### **About Sonoma County Vintners Foundation**

The Sonoma County Vintners Foundation provides support to our local community through philanthropy and charitable giving. Our fundraising efforts have a direct impact in the areas of literacy, education, health and human services, the environment and arts and culture. Our signature fundraising event, Sonoma County Wine Auction has been recognized as one of *Wine Spectator's* Top Charity Wine Auctions in the United States. Learn more at [sonomawine.com/foundation](http://sonomawine.com/foundation).

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