

The logo for the Sonoma County Wine Auction is a green square with the text "SONOMA COUNTY WINE AUCTION" in white, stacked vertically. A faint, stylized circular graphic is visible behind the text.

**SONOMA
COUNTY
WINE
AUCTION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sonoma County Wine Auction Raises Record-Breaking \$6.1 Million for Local Charities
*Chef John Ash and Winemaker Merry Edwards Honored for their Passion and Expertise***

Santa Rosa, CA (September 21, 2019) – The Sonoma County Vintners Foundation along with 2019 Sonoma County Wine Auction Honorary Co-Chairs Gina Gallo of E. & J. Gallo Winery and Christopher Jackson of Jackson Family Wines are excited to announce \$6.1 million was raised at the 2019 Sonoma County Wine Auction, presented by Visa Signature®. Overall, more than \$36 million has been raised to date to support charitable organizations focused on education, health and human services, the environment, and arts and culture in Sonoma County.

For the first time ever, live auction bidding wrapped up with the Fund-A-Need lot. The crowd was moved to tears following a short speech and beautiful rendition of the song “Make You Feel My Love” by 12-year-old Juliette, a former foster care child and Boys & Girls club member. In an outpouring of heartfelt generosity, \$1,613,000 was pledged in direct donations ranging in amounts from \$250,000 to \$500. For this year’s Fund-A-Need initiative, guests were contributing to the construction of a new club in Roseland for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma - Marin that will offer academic enrichment programs, a STEM & Technology lab to inspire future career plans, a fully functioning community center for families to access key services, learning opportunities and gathering spaces.

"We are humbled and grateful to everyone who raised their paddles today," said Christopher Jackson, 2019 Honorary Co-Chair. "It was incredibly emotional under the tent this year. My heart is full knowing that my passion for the Fund-A-Need paddle raise was met with unbelievable contributions. As a result, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma - Marin can make the dream of Roseland Club construction a reality providing a monumental impact on the community."

"The Sonoma County Wine Auction is always distinguished by its authenticity and true sense of community. It's this collaborative, welcoming community that drew my grandfather to put roots down here," said Honorary Co-Chair Gina Gallo. "During the Auction weekend, Chris Jackson and I welcomed guests throughout all the different events, celebrating Sonoma County's wonderful wine and culinary culture. It was a pleasure working together with Chris, joining two incredible, historic families of Sonoma County wine to showcase the best of what our vintners, growers and chefs can produce and how we can support our community."

This charitable gathering was the culmination of a three-day affair that included an exclusive kickoff party on Thursday evening hosted with the Cline Family at Jacuzzi Family Vineyards and intimate Friday evening Vintner Dinners throughout Sonoma County and San Francisco.

Today, 400 auction guests were welcomed to the grounds of La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard with sunny skies and exceptional Sonoma County wines. Local chefs, including James Beard award-winning Chef Honoree John Ash, prepared an array of decadent bites while guests mingled with non-profit beneficiary organizations.

After the reception, guests were paraded to the auction tent by the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts Mariachi Ensemble. Auctioneers John Curley, renowned auctioneer with more than \$100 million dollars raised for charities around the country, and Humphrey Butler, 43-year veteran auctioneer recognized as a leading international charity auctioneer, encouraged and enthused guests from around the country to bid generously and competitively under the tent. The 40 auction lots included revered wine collections, luxurious travel excursions, meals prepared by world-class chefs, exclusive experiences with industry and community pillars such as Winemaker Honoree Merry Edwards, Chef Honoree John Ash, Steve Young and Ronnie Lott, as well as rare behind-the-scenes experiences with major sports teams and world-famous musicians Lady Antebellum and Brad Paisley.

"I'm truly inspired and grateful to our Honorary Chairs, our wine community and all the auction participants who have demonstrated phenomenal generosity and support for our Foundation," said Michael Haney, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation Executive Director. "We are thrilled to help support the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma – Marin as well as our many other Sonoma County nonprofit organizations with the funds raised."

2019 Top Five Results in the Live Auction Included:

1. Lot No. 13, "G.O.A.T. Sonoma County Bordeaux Varietals – Past, Present & Future" featuring a 378-bottle collection of Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varietals was the highest-selling individual lot in the auction's history, fetching \$520,000.
2. Lot No. 14, "An Intimate Nashville Evening with Brad Paisley! (And a Trip You'll Never Forget!)" featuring Lasseter Family Winery earned \$320,000.
3. Lot No. 21, "Lady Antebellum Private Wine Country Experience" featuring Stonestreet Winery and a private evening with the country music superstars at Wing & Barrel peaked at \$300,000.
4. Lot No. 27, "Wine & Dine Extravaganza with Gina Gallo & Jean-Charles Boisset" sold for \$210,000. The buy-in lot featured a custom dinner crafted by three-star Michelin Chef Kyle Connaughton of SingleThread at Gallo and Boisset's Napa Valley home.
5. Lot No. 18, "The Ultimate Texas Ranch Getaway" featuring Aperture Wines, Flexjet, JL Bar Ranch Resort & Spa brought \$170,000.

2019 Honorees:

Chef John Ash Accolades:

- Two-time James Beard Award Winner
- 2014 "Sustainable Seafood Educator of the Year" by the Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Inductee, the Guilde Internationale des Fromagers

- Writer of IACP Julia Child Cookbook of the Year
- 2008 “Cooking School Teacher of the Year” by the International Association of Culinary Professionals

Winemaker Merry Edwards Accolades:

- Inductee, Vintners Hall of Fame by the Culinary Institute of America
- James Beard Award Winner for “Outstanding Wine, Beer or Spirits Professional”
- One of the “50 Most Influential Winemakers in the World,” *Wine & Spirits Magazine*
- “Winemaker of the Year,” *San Francisco Chronicle*

For those interested in donating to the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, contributions may be made by sending a check to Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, 400 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 500, Santa Rosa, CA 95403 or by visiting: http://bit.ly/SCWA19_MakeADonation

Exciting 2020 Announcements

The evening ended with the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation announcing the Honorary Chairs for the 2020 Sonoma County Wine Auction. Clay Mauritson of Mauritson Family Wines, Mark McWilliams of Arista Winery and Jake Bilbro of Limerick Lane Cellars will chair the 2020 auction weekend scheduled for September 17-19.

"As the President of the Board for Sonoma County Vintners Foundation I have had the privilege of seeing the remarkable grants that have been distributed throughout Sonoma County," said Clay Mauritson of Mauritson Family Wines. "It is unbelievable having all these generous individuals come together for another monumental Sonoma County Wine Auction. I am beyond motivated to work with my friends Mark McWilliams and Jake Bilbro to curate an unforgettable 2020 Sonoma County Wine Auction that continues to support our community."

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View photos from the weekend:

<https://sonomawine.smugmug.com/Sonoma-County-Wine-Auction/2019/2019-Sonoma-County-Wine-Auction>

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About Sonoma County Wine Auction

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. 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 over \$36 million to help fund charitable organizations focusing on education, health

and human services, the environment and arts and culture, and has supported more nonprofits than any other fundraising event in Sonoma County. Learn more at sonomacountywineauction.com.

About Visa Signature®

Visa Signature® and Visa Infinite® cardholders enjoy a range of benefits that provide special access including Sonoma County Wine Auction 2019. 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.

About Sonoma County Vintners Foundation

The Sonoma County Vintners Foundation provides support to our local community through philanthropy and charitable giving. Fundraising efforts have a direct impact in the areas of education, health and human services, the environment and arts and culture. The 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.

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