



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**2020 SONOMA COUNTY WINE AUCTION RAISES \$1.17 MILLION FOR
SONOMA COUNTY NONPROFITS**

*Fund-A-Need Program Focused on Education and Bridging the Technology Gap for Children in
Sonoma County to Help Ensure Learning from Home is an Option for Everyone*

SANTA ROSA, California – September 22, 2020 - Today, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation and Honorary Chairs – Clay Mauritson of Mauritson Wines, Jake Bilbro of Limerick Lane Cellars and Mark McWilliams of Arista Winery announce the results for the [2020 Sonoma County Wine Auction](#) with over \$1.17 million raised for the community. Over \$37 million has been raised since the auction’s inception, making a direct local impact on education, health and human services, the environment, and arts and culture. The 2020 virtual auction program included a Fund-A-Need campaign dedicated to education and addressing the digital divide among school-aged children in the community.

The auction kicked off with a virtual BEST. PARTY. EVER. on Thursday, September 17 where guests learned more about the 2020 Sonoma County Wine Auction Chairs and the mission of the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation. The auction chairs introduced this year’s Vintner Honoree Daryl Groom and Chef Honoree Charlie Palmer during the program where they were acknowledged for their decades of unparalleled expertise in their field and philanthropic commitments to Sonoma County. Event attendees had exclusive access to surprise guests who included former NFL player and Head Coach Mike Tice, Former San Francisco Giants all-star Rich Aurilia and President of Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery Julian Van Winkle. Numerous hilarious moments ensued and camaraderie was a clear theme for this fun, engaging evening.

“I was honored to share an incredible evening with my co-chairs on Thursday. We really enjoyed seeing treasured auction donors from across the United States while honoring our dear friends Daryl Groom and Chef Charlie Palmer,” said Clay Mauritson of Mauritson Wines. “It meant the world to me to host this program where I could share the crucial needs in our community and encourage donors to support the cause.”

On Saturday, September 19, Michael Haney, Executive Director of Sonoma County Vintners Foundation began the Virtual Auction Celebration by introducing the three Chairs followed by the Fund-A-Need and the live auction lots, which were closed in real time during the program. Over \$726,000 was pledged for the Fund-A-Need with donations for education needs in Sonoma County, while also addressing new challenges including a special focus to bridge the technology gap.

There were many heartfelt moments including Mauritson's announcement that his son saved chore money to contribute to the Fund-A-Need campaign. In addition to supporting the Fund-A-Need campaign, Mauritson's oldest son also partnered with the Bilbro and McWilliams' sons to create the 2020 Kids Krewe Cuvée wine in a unique fundraising project for 2020 fire relief in Sonoma County.

"My son Cruz is excited to start working on the "Kids Krewe Cuvée" red wine with his friends since birth. It is an honor to have this opportunity to instill the importance of giving with my children and their friends through this unique offering," said Jake Bilbro of Limerick Lane Cellars.

The most successful auction lot included a collection of Williams Seylem wines and tickets to the 2022 Super Bowl LVI which earned \$32,000 for the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation. "Dine with the Greats" auction lot, featuring dinner by Chef Honoree Palmer at his home with wines provided by Vintner Honoree Daryl Groom, raised \$30,000. One lucky bidder won a collection of CIRQ and CHEV wines for \$12,000 within the first hour of the virtual auction with the "Buy it Now" online bidding feature.

Online auction lots and buy-in lots closed on Sunday, September 20 and included critically acclaimed wines, highly sought after experiences in Sonoma County and more.

"Our world has had many challenges this year but we are incredibly grateful to the generous donors, philanthropic vintners and sponsors who came together virtually to provide support for important nonprofits of Sonoma County," said Mark McWilliams of Arista Winery. "I, along with my co-chairs, am humbled by the outpouring of generosity to support the community in Sonoma County!"

The 2021 Sonoma County Wine Auction will be held September 16-18, 2021. To learn more about the Sonoma County Wine Auction, visit sonomacountywineauction.com.

To make a donation, contributions may be made payable and mailed to: Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, 400 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 500, Santa Rosa, CA 95403 or donate online at <https://tinyurl.com/SCWA-Donate>.

Photographs from the 2020 Sonoma County Wine Auction, including behind the scenes moments at the Virtual Auction Celebration, are available [here](#).

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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 incredible 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 \$37 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 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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