

NAPLES WINTER WINE FESTIVAL

Get your bid in for thrills and chills

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Gala and fundraising season is in full swing in Southwest Florida, which means it is time for the Naples Winter Wine Festival.

The festivities kick off next week, and while not everyone can attend the auction or vintner dinners, you can view and bid on the online auction lots. Amazing wine collections, unbelievable dinners at restaurants near and far, trips and cruises and tours are all ready for bidders (and lookers).

Just in case you have a bit of holiday cash leftover, or happen to know one of the Powerball winners, here are a few can't-miss items from the Naples Winter Wine Festival online auction.

For the thrill seeker: Top Gun Fighter Jet Experience

Learn to fly an L-39 jet in this three-hour experience, including preflight training, a 45-minute flying lesson and post flight training. You'll get to control the plane (briefly) during the lesson, then hang on to your stomach as your driver does a few loops, rolls, dives, steep climbs and more. Package 1502, current bid \$7,500

For the chill seeker: Ice Driving with Aston Martin

Head to the Elevation Hotel & Spa at the base of Mount Crested Butte for two nights and save one day for the third annual On Ice Experience with the Aston Martin driving team. You and a guest will hone your skills on a custom-built ice track, learning to brake, corner, slalom and skid on ice, then complete the Autocross Challenge and Hot Laps. Date specific: Feb. 18-20, or February 2017 (to be determined). Package 1508, current bid \$10,000.

For the Champagne drinker: A. Jaron Fine Jewelry 'Diamonds and Champagne'

Combine your love of champagne and diamonds with this 18K gold handmade diamond, champagne custom-designed ring by Amanda Jaron. The size 7 ring resembles a Champagne cork cage goes to the highest bidder, who can celebrate with a private Champagne tasting for 8 hosted by Amanda at her Naples studio. Package 1405, current bid \$2,500.

For the castle sleeper: Chateau de la Barre in the Loire Valley

As guests of Count and Countess de Vansaay, enjoy your three-night stay at Chateau de La Barre, their family home in France since 1404. Relax in the midst of a 100-acre private park and enjoy a daily English breakfast before touring the Loire Valley. Package 1702, current bid \$2,500.

For the elegant (neck) sweeper: William Boyajian for Port Royal Jewelers

These one-of-a-kind Gold Vine earrings were created for the Naples Winter Wine Festival by designer William Boyajian. The sweeping 3½-inch pendants are



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Part of the online auction, these 18K gold earrings with diamond accents are designed by William Boyajian for Port Royal Jewelers.

made of 18K solid yellow gold with diamond accents. Package 1403, current bid \$7,500.

For the golf ball sinker: Guys Golf Getaway at Casa de Campo

Head to the crown jewel of the Caribbean for a four night, five day stay at a private villa for four or more guests. Hop on your personal golf cart and head out for

three rounds of golf: one round on Teeth of the Dog, Dye Fore, and The Links. Book March through August. Package 1701, current bid \$10,000.

For the sunset dreamer: Sunset Dinner Cruise aboard the Susanna Bella

Step on board the 106-foot Susanna Bella with seven of your luckiest friends for an evening of elegance. Enjoy dinner prepared by a private chef then linger in the lounge or stroll the deck as you enjoy the views of the Gulf of Mexico. Sunset is always memorable, and this full, private luxurious vessel makes this a once-in-a-lifetime event. Package 1301, current bid \$5,000.

For the history keeper: A Triple Crown of Historical Proportion

This historical set of six wines, two from each of the great chateaux and estates of Bordeaux First Growths (Lafite, Latour and Margaux), is sure to be the centerpieces of your collection. Highest bidder will receive 2 750mL Chateaux Margaux (1-1953 and 1-1969), 2 750mL Chateaux Lafite (1-1976 and 1-1977) and 2 750mL Chateaux Latour (1-1969 and 1-1990). Package 1005, current bid \$3,000.

Bidding is open now through Jan. 31. To view all online auction lots, donate to Fund A Need (an NCEF Learning Initiative), or for more information about the Naples Winter Wine Festival, visit napleswinefestival.com.

Note: This article was edited to replace the Final Four Basketball Package with the Guys Golf Getaway; the Final Four package is temporarily unavailable for bidding.

In brief

COLLIER COUNTY

Park partially closed to fix storm damage

Due to recent storm damage, a portion of Golden Gate Community Park at 3300 Santa Barbara Blvd., Naples, is closed until further notice.

County staff is securing the area of any hazards with the fitness center, pool, baseball diamonds, boat ramp and the eastern half of the walking path to remain closed until the area has been deemed safe.

The racquetball courts, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground and the western half of the walking trail are open.

All other Collier County parks remain open. A full list of parks, including fitness centers can be found at collierparks.com. For additional information on park amenities, call 239-252-4000.

Two women hurt in single-car crash

The driver of a car eastbound on U.S. 41 Wednesday was seriously injured as was a passenger in the 2011 Hyundai Sonata after the vehicle hit a tree head-on.

A report from the Florida Highway Patrol said that Amy Bigler was driving on 41 at Thomasson Drive when it swerved left, exited the road and hit the tree.

Bigler and her passenger, Christine Abbajay, 45, were both seriously hurt and flown to Lee Memorial Hospital. Both were listed in fair condition Wednesday afternoon.

The FHP is continuing an investigation into the crash and charges are pending.

State briefs

17 Burmese pythons caught so far in hunt

MIAMI - Officials say so far, 17 Burmese pythons have been caught during the hunt for the invasive species in Florida's wetlands.

The South Florida Sun Sentinel reported that Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission announced the tally Tuesday.

The state's second public hunt for the exotic snakes started Saturday and ends Feb. 14. Over 500 people have registered to look for pythons across a swath of state lands in South Florida. Some authorized hunters also are allowed to extend the hunt into Everglades National Park.

Spokeswoman Carli Segelson says so far, the hunt is accomplishing its goals, both in catching snakes and raising awareness about the threat invasive species pose to native Florida plants and wildlife.

Baby's body found in freezer

HOMESTEAD - Authorities said they found a baby boy dead in a freezer at a South Florida home following his mother's suicide threats.

The Miami Herald reported that Paola Vargas-Ortiz, 37, remained under mental evaluation at a Miami hospital Wednesday.

Authorities say Vargas-Ortiz was poised to jump from the Seven Mile Bridge in the Keys Sunday afternoon when she told them that she had tossed her 4-month-old son in first. Wildlife officials and the U.S. Coast Guard conducted a brief search before she changed her story. After Monroe County deputies took Vargas-Ortiz into custody, officials say she told them the child was actually dead in a freezer.

— Associated Press

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Sarah Owen, President and CEO
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Dean Piccirillo, Principal and Senior Financial Advisor
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Hero of the Year:
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 Cape Coral Fire Department

Hilde Heard, ALS Association Activist

Sister Marie Kelleher, Immigration Lawyer
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Business of the Year:
Gartner Inc.

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Scott Fischer, Founder of Scott Fischer Enterprises and Owner of Six Bends Harley Davidson

Trailblazer of the Year:
Sally Jackson, System Director Government and Community Relations, Lee Memorial Health System

Ann Pierce
 Smart Growth and Complete Streets Advocate

Fred Schaefer
 Principle Investigator, Neuropsychiatric Research Center of Southwest Florida

Public Official of the Year:
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Linda Doggett
 Lee County Clerk of Court

The Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers

Young Professional of the Year:
Glorita "Glo" Cuiffi, Chief Operating Officer
 Six Bends Harley Davidson

Danielle Lucht, Retirement Income Strategist
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Joe Nugent, Director of Sales and Marketing
 Holiday Inn Fort Myers Airport at Town Center

Rising Star:
Megan Galbreath
 Cape Coral High School

Wadley Pierre
 Lehigh Senior High School

Luke Turner
 Cypress Lake High School

2016 Persons to Watch:
Greg Adkins, Superintendent
 The School District of Lee County

Shelley Broader, President and Chief Executive Officer
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