



NWWF chairpersons 2001 through 2013: (L to R) Jeff Gargiulo, Shirlene Elkins, Kathleen Rooney, Cynthia and Bruce Sherman, Bob Clifford, (right of podium) Joan Clifford, Scott Lutgert, Don Gunther, Linda Malone, Terry & Bob Edwards. Not pictured: Francis Rooney, Jim Malone, Connie & Tom Galloway, Brian Cobb, Tom Wajnert and Grace Evenstad. | Photo credit: Mila Bridger

TOPS \$106 MILLION in 12 years for children's charities

Live auction at 2012 event raises more than \$12 million

Surpassing the \$100 million mark in charitable giving was cause for celebration at the 12th annual Naples Winter Wine Festival charity auction, which raised \$12.2 million during the live auction and reached a grand total of \$106.7 million raised since 2001. One hundred percent of auction proceeds benefit Collier County's underprivileged and at-risk children through Naples Children & Education Foundation, the festival's founding organization. Wine Spectator has ranked the festival the most successful charity

wine auction in the nation since 2004.

Gathered at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples, in the Grand Lawn Pavilion, winning bidders were among 580 guests. Lot totals ranged from \$35,000 to \$1.2 million for 67 auction lots. The top money-raising lot captured multiple bids in a modified Dutch auction that totaled \$1.2 million for a private concert by Grammy-award winner LeAnn Rimes. The concert and reception will be held at a Naples beachfront estate, with cuisine prepared by Tom Colicchio of "Top Chef."

The top wine lot fetched a total of \$1.1 million. The original lot featured eight rare bottles of Château Haut-Brion from 1935, 1945, 1959, 1961, 1975, 1989, 1990 and 2009, and six bottles each from the 2010 vintage of Haut-Brion Blanc and Rouge nestled inside a hand-carved red wine console. Following spirited bidding, a second identical lot was donated. Each captured a bid of \$550,000.

This year's highest non-wine bid raised \$600,000 for a lot featuring a Baltic Sea cruise for six couples aboard a



Bidding frenzy: Shirlene Elkins, Retta Singer, Sandy Stillwell, Mary Susan Clinton, Cheryl Copham and Mark Suwyn. Photo credit: Marisa Lane

private, 201-foot Feadship yacht.

“The festival’s theme of ‘Believe in the Magic’ came true thanks to the generosity of patrons, sponsors, donors and other supporters who conjured up life-enhancing bids for thousands of children in need,” said NCEF trustee Bob Clifford, festival chair with his wife, Joan. “We are thrilled and profoundly grateful to our supporters, and we look forward to presenting grant checks to more than 20 charities this spring.”

“Every bid changes a child’s world,” said Joan Clifford. “When a paddle is raised at the \$50,000 level, 100 children are assured a safe, nurturing after-school program and not left wandering the streets. A \$150,000 bid means 200 foster children receive year-round academic tutoring, and a \$300,000 bid guarantees that thousands of children suspected of abuse and neglect receive therapeutic counseling.”

Other top wine lots were \$320,000 for a 35-bottle vertical spanning 84 years of Haut-Brion; \$240,000 for a wine vertical that included a bottle from each vintage released from Rutherford’s Dana Estates and an estate visit; and a rare collection of Shafer’s Hillside Select and a stay in Napa Valley that auctioned for \$220,000. An instant cellar of 556 bottles of U.S.

West Coast wines – the most bottles ever in a single festival lot – captured a winning bid of \$150,000.

Other high bids extended to a custom-crafted 2012 Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster fetching \$450,000. Lifestyle lots that enticed high bids included an 11-night Italian extravaganza for four couples, with four nights in Milan at Bvlgari Hotel, Serpenti watches, tailored suits from Saint Andrews, that went for \$400,000. Access to Elton John’s White Tie & Tiara Ball at his Windsor, England estate for two couples, with Wimbledon Centre Court tickets and Chopard keepsakes, captured \$320,000.

On-the-spot donations raised \$280,000 for a fund-a-need lot to bring improved vision to children in low-income schools and targeted early childhood centers, where 90 percent of students who need eyeglasses do not have them.

Festival events spanned three days, including a tour of children’s charities; intimate vintner dinners at NCEF

Playing out the theme, Believe in the Magic, is MisterVino Festivus. | Photo credit: Tom Harper





trustees' homes where celebrity chefs including Tony Mantuano and Wolfgang Puck prepared the cuisine, with wines personally poured by winery proprietor HRH Prince Robert of Luxembourg and other internationally acclaimed vintners; a wine-down party post-auction; and a celebratory Sunday brunch.

NCEF's mission is to create and expand charitable programs serving underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County. The foundation currently supports more than 20 grantees and provides grants for long-term strategic initiatives focused on children's early learning, medical/oral health, out-of-school programs, behavioral health and childhood hunger. As a direct result of NCEF investments, more than 150,000 children have had their lives improved. NCEF has 69 trustees that govern the foundation and host the festival.

The 2013 festival will be held Jan. 25-27. For more information, visit www.napleswinefestival.com.

1. The Lovin' Spoonfuls with children from NCEF-supported charities
Photo credit: Tom Harper
2. NWWF guest Shelly Stayer bidding on the LeAnn Rimes concert.
Photo credit: Tom Harper
3. Prince Robert of Luxembourg congratulates winning bidder at 2012 NWWF
Photo credit: Tom Harper
4. NWWF featured chefs and sous chefs (l to r) Benjamin Moody, Jason Goldsmith, Keith Kirk, Cathy Manutano, Tony Mantuano, Joseph Lenn, Jason Carlen, Sarah Grueneberg, Lisa Resch and Meredith Patterson.
Photo credit: Marisa Lane