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Goldman, Wolfgang Puck Help Charity Wine Weekend Toward \$100 Million Goal

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By Patrick Cole - Jan 24, 2012 9:01 PM PT



Richard Vines/Bloomberg

Wolfgang Puck at his restaurant CUT in Los Angeles.



Wolfgang Puck at his restaurant CUT in Los Angeles. Photographer: Richard Vines/Bloomberg

Jeff Kauck/Jarvis Communications via Bloomberg

Tony Mantuano, chef and partner of Spiaggia restaurant in Chicago.

Mantuano is the chef de cuisine at this weekend's Naples Winter Wine Festival, which seeks to raise money for the Naples Children & Education Foundation, a nonprofit that aids local disadvantaged and at-risk children.

Tony Mantuano, chef and partner of Spiaggia restaurant in Chicago. Mantuano is the chef de cuisine at this weekend's Naples Winter Wine Festival, which seeks to raise money for the Naples Children & Education Foundation, a nonprofit that aids local disadvantaged and at-risk children. Photographer: Jeff Kauck/Jarvis Communications via Bloomberg



Louis Venne/Jarvis Communications via Bloomberg

Naples Winter Wine Festival co-chairs Robert and Joan Clifford with children aided by the Naples Children & Education Foundation at the event's "Meet the Children" session. The

festival's ticket sales and wine auction raised \$12.1 million last year and a total of \$94.6 million for the foundation since 2000.

Naples Winter Wine Festival co-chairs Robert and Joan Clifford with children aided by the Naples Children & Education Foundation at the event's "Meet the Children" session. The festival's ticket sales and wine auction raised \$12.1 million last year and a total of \$94.6 million for the foundation since 2000. Photographer: Louis Venne/Jarvis Communications via Bloomberg

The [Naples Winter Wine Festival](#) sold out this year, thanks to Wolfgang Puck, Tony Mantuano and about 15 other chefs and a lot of wine.

The three-day Florida event, which raises money for disadvantaged children, will serve high-end food and wine to 600 ticketholders who paid \$8,500 to \$20,000 per couple. One of the top charity wine auctions in the U.S., it raised \$12.1 million last year and has brought in \$94.6 million since it began in 2000.

“Wolfgang Puck is a name that attracts a lot of attention,” Robert Clifford, the event’s co-chairman and founding partner of the Chicago-based Clifford Law Offices PC, said by phone. “To have him throw in his time and talent for this charity is something we’re so grateful for.”

Before the three-day event starts, there will be a wine tasting and lunch tomorrow (also sold out) honoring Prince Robert of Luxembourg, the president and chief executive officer of Domaine Clarence Dillon, parent company of [Chateau Haut-Brion](#) and its adjoining property, Chateau La Mission Haut-Brion. Attendees who paid \$2,500 will sample wines from five of its most acclaimed vintages: 1961, 1982, 1989, 1990 and 2000.

[Goldman Sachs Group Inc. \(GS\)](#) will host a Friday event that will introduce some of the attendees to the children aided by the event’s parent organization, the [Naples Children & Education Foundation](#), and nonprofits it supports. Also on Friday, Puck and other chefs will prepare meals for groups of 40 in the homes of the foundation’s trustees and supporters.

‘Treasure Chest’

On Saturday, wine collectors will compete for rare and prized vintages and luxury travel experiences at an auction that in recent years has raised an average of \$8 million in five hours, Clifford said. The highlights include prized bottles from the [Verite Vineyard](#) in California; a Haut-Brion “[Treasure Chest](#)” which includes a mix of reds, whites and older vintages; and a two-week [voyage](#) for four aboard a luxury ship with a private chef.

Clifford said he hopes the event will raise the 12-year total past the \$100 million mark. (By comparison, the annual [Auction Napa Valley](#) in [California](#) took 31 years to reach that milestone.)

Mantuano of [Chicago](#)’s Spiaggia, a President Barack Obama favorite and known for his masterful interpretations of classic Italian dishes, is the festival’s chef de cuisine, an honor bestowed on him for his service in five festivals. He will serve caviar with burrata cheese and Wagyu steak with a porcini mushroom salad.

“Chefs and restaurateurs like me do so many charity events, and there’s nothing more rewarding than helping children,” Mantuano said by phone.

Among the other chefs are New Yorkers Nick Anderer of Maialino, Justin Bogle of Gilt and Bill Telepan of Telepan; Nancy Silverton of Osteria Mozza and Joachim Splichal’s Patina, both from [Los Angeles](#); Charles Phan of the Slanted Door in [San Francisco](#); Stephan Pyles of his Dallas namesake; and Rick Tramonto of Restaurant [R’evolution](#) in [New Orleans](#).

(The sold-out festival runs Friday through Sunday. There’s a waiting list in case of last-minute cancellations. Information: +1-239-514-2239 or <http://www.napleswinefestival.com>)