

BEST OF THE BEST

OUR PICKS FOR THE MOST NOTABLE MOMENTS OF 2012

by Anne Claire Shilton

IF THE MAYANS ARE CORRECT AND PLANET EARTH is just weeks away from its end, at least Neapolitans can rest easy knowing we went out with a bang. 2012 has been a terrific year. The glittering galas were as fantastic as ever — as if someone forgot to tell Naples that the country is actually in a recession. New venues and themes stole our hearts and our pocketbooks, while tender moments during donation award ceremonies reminded us why it is we party so hard.

In 2012, social life collided with social good in a big way, and we couldn't let the end of the year slip by without reliving at least a few of our favorite moments. So what do you get when you put a dozen Naples Daily News editors in a room and ask them to agree on their favorite moments from the past year? The answer is a lot of opinions and one heck of a list for the Best of the Best from 2012.

BEST THEME

NAPLES WINTER WINE FESTIVAL — BELIEVE IN MAGIC

Naples Winter Wine Festival Chairperson, Joan Clifford stewed for weeks over coming up with a theme for the annual event. “It’s the first thing you have to do as chair, but whatever theme you come up with, you have to be able to come up with variations on that theme for the smaller sub events. I dwelled and dwelled on the theme for about two months,” Clifford admits.

But what she eventually came up with was magic. Literally magic.

“I thought about what we do and I thought, we put a lot of magic into a lot of lives. And I wanted to do something that would be kid inclusive because it’s all about the kids,” she says. The “Believe in Magic” theme translated perfectly to the private vintner dinners and the Thursday night VIP party. At the annual Meet the Kids Day, youngsters performed magic tricks for guests wearing the top hats and wands they’d been given by the foundation. “The kids really got into it; there was an autistic child who never spoke and he spoke while doing magic, it was really heartwarming.”



Volunteers work the floor during the auction at the 2012 Naples Winter Wine Festival at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in North Naples on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2012. This year’s theme was “Believe in Magic.” photo: Tristan Spinski