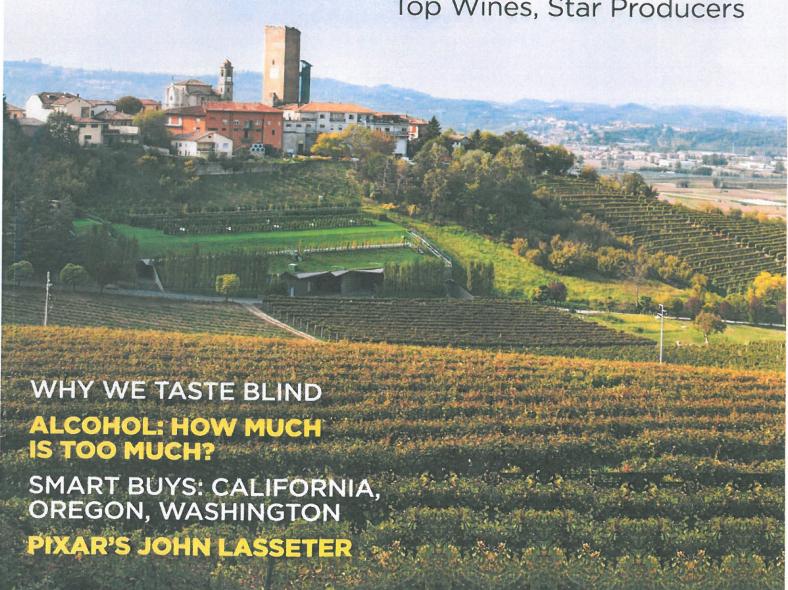


BARBARESCO

GREAT REDS OF ITALY'S PIEDMONT

Top Wines, Star Producers





WINE AUCTIONS

Top 10 Charity Auctions of 2011

Naples Festival helps push yearly total up 16 percent

he past few years have seen ups and downs in the world of charity wine auctions. Following the record-setting highs realized in 2007 and the subsequent lows seen in 2009, many auctions are rebuilding, and while auction totals in 2010 showed signs of economic recovery, those of 2011 showed only a slight upward movement from 2010, suggesting that a return to full form might still be a few years away.

The combined total raised among 2011's 10 highest-earning events by way of live auction bidding was \$23,552,075, up 16 percent over last year's total. However, much of the difference can be credited to the Naples Winter Wine Festival, last year's top-earning auction as tracked by *Wine Spectator*, which brought in \$11,285,000, an impressive increase over the \$7,118,000 it raised in 2010.

With the exception of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Champion Wine Auction, which, after grossing \$1,165, 500 made the list for the first time since 2008, the Top 10 of 2011 is nearly identical to that of 2010. In addition, most of the auctions showed only a moderate fluctuation in their respective live auction totals.

Be that as it may, organizers were far from discouraged. "It'd be nice to raise \$1.5 or \$1.7 million like we did, but that's just not happening right now," said Rusty Staub of the namesake auction in New York. "But to raise \$900,000-plus at an auction is pretty damn good."

Central Coast Wine Classic chairman Archie McLaren agreed, adding that the consistency over the past few years has been particularly reassuring. "Given the fact that it's a time when the economic climate is challenging and variable, we're beyond pleased," he said, referring to the CCWC's \$726,325.

Though perhaps not a banner year, 2011 nonetheless gave auction-goers reason to celebrate. The annual Wine Auction and Dinner benefiting the Rusty Staub Foundation Emergency Food Pantries celebrated its 20th anniversary, an occasion that Staub marked by opening several wines that he'd saved especially for the occasion during the event at New York's Le Bernardin.





Monetary records were set as well. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo bested its record price of \$120,000 for a wine lot when a 9L bottle of 2006 Alexander Valley Vineyards Cyrus sold for \$210,000.

Although Auction Napa Valley came up about a million dollars

shy of last year's take, it celebrated surpassing the \$100 million mark in total donations for local health care, youth services and affordable-housing programs. And the V Foundation, which grossed a total of \$1,371,200 at its 2011 live auction, raised an overall event total of \$4, 125,893—more than twice as much as last year—for cancer research.

Looking ahead, early indicators point to additional milestones in 2012. The Naples Winter Wine Festival kicked off the year by raising a cool \$12 million, and, just as Auction Napa Valley had done six months before, passing the \$100 million mark in donations to support the Naples Children and Education Foundation.

Though he was quick to acknowledge his excitement, NWWF cochair Bob Clifford also noted that the focus of the auction is never solely monetary and expressed gratitude to the auctions loyal sponsors and supporters.

"We never anticipated any set numbers," said Clifford. "We were grateful for what we got."—Lizzie Munro

TOP 10 U.S. CHARITY WINE AUCTIONS OF 2011

LOCATION LIVE BIDS' Local children's charities Naples, Fla. \$11,285,000 **Naples Winter Wine Festival** \$4,700,000 Napa County Health and Wellness St. Helena, Calif. Auction Napa Valley \$1,371,200 Oakville, Calif. V Foundation Wine Celebration The Jimmy V. Foundation for Cancer Research \$1,165,500 Houston Local, educational and agricultural programs Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo \$1,125,000 Atlanta The High Museum Atlanta High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction New York \$904,200 Rusty Staub Foundation Emergency Food Pantries Rusty Staub Wine Auction and Dinner New Orleans \$795,000 Carnivale du Vin Emeril Lagasse Foundation \$783,850 Burbank, Calif. Evening with the California Winemasters Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Avila Beach, Calif. Healing, performing and studio arts charities \$726,325 Central Coast Wine Classic New York \$696,000 A Toast to Good Health The Mount Sinai Hospital