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## **Collier County Gets a Boost from over \$15 Million Raised at 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival**

***2017 McLaren 570 GT Takes Winning Bid at \$480,000  
Funds Still Coming in Through Online Auction; Closes January 31 at 8pm***

Naples, FL – January 30, 2017 – At the close of an exciting afternoon, the tally for the 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival’s live auction hit \$15,066,000, bringing the total amount raised since the Festival’s inception in 2001 to \$161 million. Funds are still pouring in through the Online Auction, which closes on Wednesday, January 31 at 8pm and has already seen eager participation from bidders near and far.

“When we started planning this event nearly a year ago, we hoped for a successful auction, but the amount of money raised exceeds all expectations,” said Denise Cobb, co-chair of the 2017 Naples Winter Wine Festival. “We are so thankful—from our big-hearted guests, to the talented chefs and vintners who make this event truly special, this was a great collaboration from all involved. These funds make a lasting difference for children in our community.”

Donations to this year’s Fund a Need, Children’s Healthcare, closed out the thrilling day, bringing in on-the-spot contributions that raised \$1.6 million. These funds will ensure that all children receive the high-quality, in-depth medical attention they deserve in the areas of oral health, mental health, primary care and vision.

Guests from around the world came together to bid on 62 jaw-dropping auction items ranging from exceptional wine and culinary experiences to limited-edition cars and exotic travel packages. All auction lots were generously donated, and all proceeds from the Festival support the Naples Winter Wine Festival’s founding organization, the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), which has given annual grants to over 40 non-profit organizations and impacted the lives of more than 200,000 children.

The auction’s top single bid of **\$480,000** went to the **2017 McLaren 570 GT**, the latest edition of the recently-launched Sports Series, the most luxurious and refined McLaren ever made.

Additional auction highlights:

- Two separate bidders will enjoy a week-long cruise to either the Bahamas or the Caribbean aboard a 126-foot Feadship yacht formerly belonging to Malcolm Forbes, all for a total of **\$600,000**.

- A private jet trip to Italy's Amalfi Coast went for **\$460,000**, featuring dinners at Michelin-starred restaurants as well as a host of other exclusive fashion and wine experiences.
- **\$450,000** was raised for a live performance by country music legend Darius Rucker, plus a private dinner prepared by Silver Oak Chef Dominic Orsini and a custom guitar signed by Darius Rucker and David Duncan of Silver Oak.
- **\$360,000** was the winning bid for the first Audi MY18 R8 Spyder to be physically delivered in the United States, a sleek machine that races to 124.3mph in just 11.8 seconds.
- In celebration of the National Parks' 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a winning bid of **\$340,000** will bring travelers on a luxury excursion through our nation's most striking landscapes.

"From the minute our auction opened to the last winning bid, the excitement was palpable and the energy was infectious," said Bill Cary, 2017 Festival co-chair. "We owe our success to the many people who donated extraordinary items to this event, and to those who bid with immense generosity. Thank you!"

The weekend began with a special pre-Festival tasting and luncheon that gave a select few guests the chance to experience a vertical tasting of ten celebrated vintages of cult winery Harlan Estate, including extraordinary 100-point vintages from 2001 and 2007. The master class tasting was overseen by a panel of experts including Napa Valley pioneer and Harlan Estate proprietor Bill Harlan, and led by his son Will Harlan, along with estate director Don Weaver and winemaker Cory Empting. Moderating the event was internationally renowned wine critic Antonio Galloni of *Vinous*.

Throughout the Festival, guests enjoyed wine from more than 30 of the finest wineries representing three continents, five countries, and 12 wine producing regions. They were led by this year's Honored Vintner, fourth-generation Bordeaux winemaker Pierre Lurton. Culinary master Wolfgang Puck returned to the Festival, this time as Chef de Cuisine. He was joined by 17 additional celebrity chefs with a collective 11 Michelin Stars, 13 James Beard Awards, and 10 James Beard Award nominations.

"The entire Festival weekend was elevated by the talents and generosity of so many wonderful vintners and chefs," added Jeff Gargiulo, 2017 Festival co-chair. "Their efforts make a huge difference in this community."

Using the funds raised from this year's auction, NCEF will award grants to local organizations serving Collier County children in need on March 13.

#### About the Naples Winter Wine Festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival is the most successful international charity wine auction in the world, bringing together renowned vintners and chefs with wine enthusiasts and philanthropists for a three-day Festival that raises millions of dollars for underprivileged and at-risk children. Every dollar raised under the tent funds the Festival's founding organization, the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), whose annual grants and strategic initiatives have provided more than 200,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. For more information, please visit [Napleswinefestival.com](http://Napleswinefestival.com).

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