

Naples Winter Wine Festival hits a record of more than \$23 million

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The 22nd annual Naples Winter Wine Festival “Rise Up: Twenty Twenty Together” culminated on the Jan. 29-30 weekend following an amazing live auction, hitting a record of more than \$23 million for underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County. This brings the total amount raised by the NWWF to nearly \$245 million since its inception in 2001.

Festival attendees once again came together under the big tent just outside The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples to bid on 43 unique, one-of-a-kind auction lots, many of which included exceptional wine lots from some of the most revered vineyards across the globe. All proceeds will support more than 50 of the most effective nonprofit organizations in the community and provide more than 275,000 local children with the services and resources they need to excel.

This year’s top luxury auction lot was the “Million Dollar Meal: All for the Kids,” which sold for \$1 million. Forty lucky couples contributed \$25,000 each for the chance to partake in the first “Million Dollar Meal” at Bleu Provence in Naples in November 2022. After an intimate cocktail and wine reception, a fabulous multi-course meal will be prepared by executive chef and owner, Lysielle Cariot. Each course will highlight one of NCEF’s initiatives and will be paired with the finest wines carefully selected by Lysielle’s husband and co-owner, Jacques Cariot.

Additionally, three rare automobiles — the very first 2022 Bentley Flying Spur Mulliner delivered to North America with a VIP tour of the English and Scottish countryside; a brand new 2021 Mercedes Benz G63 AMG Wagon with a Diamond White Metallic exterior and Espresso Brown interior; and a 2021 First Edition Ford Bronco complimented with Magnums from each of the participating 2022 NWWF vintners — went for \$680,000, \$600,000 and \$280,000 respectively.



The “Miracle on the Adriatic” lot, an 8-night adventure by air, land and sea aboard the 201-foot superyacht Katharine through Croatia, sold for \$950,000



PHOTOS COURTESY NAPLES WINTER WINE FESTIVAL
Mike Bieker makes an enthusiastic bid for one of the 43 incredible auction lots offered at the 22nd annual Naples Winter Wine Festival.

On-the-spot donations supporting this year’s Fund a Need, “Raise the Grade,” brought in contributions of more than \$4 million to support NCEF’s education initiatives for underserved children, including Early Learning, Out-of-School Time, and Career and College Readiness.

Additional live auction highlights included:

■ “Miracle on the Adriatic” for \$950,000 - Five couples will travel Roundtrip, Private Air for a once-in-a-lifetime, 8-night adventure by air, land and sea through Croatia. Guests will spend four nights, divided between the beginning and end of the trip, aboard the 201-foot superyacht Katharine with 16 crew members attending to their every need. In between, they will spend four nights at the 5-star Relais & Châteaux Korta Katarina Villa and Winery. They also will explore the remote islands and hidden harbors of Croatia like Trogir, Hvar, Polače and Sveta Marija while enjoying the very best in food, wine and hospitality.

■ “A Day at the Races” for \$750,000 (doubled for \$1.5 million) - Three couples will be treated like kings and queens during a 6-night Royal Ascot experience on Friday, June 10 to Thursday, June 16,

2022. First, they will spend two nights at the Mandarin Oriental in Knightsbridge and indulge in the city’s high points: private shopping at Harrods, a tour of the Queen’s Household Cavalry Barracks, dining at the most exclusive London clubs and a meal at the Michelin-starred Dinner by Heston Blumenthal. When the bugle sounds for the races, they will be seated in Barbara Banke’s private box in the Royal Enclosure. Guests will take home four Salmanazar bottles of wine from Lokoya’s 2018 vintage: one each of Diamond Mountain District, Howell Mountain, Mount Veeder and Spring Mountain.

■ “In the Footsteps of the Antinori Family” for \$580,000 (doubled for \$1.16 million) - Two couples will take a six-night Italian excursion to visit the Antinori family estate. The journey will begin with two nights’ accommodations in Apartment Suites in Florence at Palazzo Antinori, with dinners, lunch and a tour of the Uffizi Museum. They then continue to the heart of Chianti Classico for a two-night stay at Tenuta Tignanello, home of the vineyards for both Tignanello and Solaia. Tours and tastings are included and dinner at the Michelin-starred Osteria di Passignano. The couples then will travel via helicopter to Bolgheri on the Tuscan coast for a visit to the estate of Guado al Tasso for one evening. The trip concludes with another helicopter ride to Umbria plus a tour, tasting and dinner at Castello della Sala. The winning bidders will take home three Double Magnums of Tignanello (one each: 2011, 2015 and 2017) and three Magnums of Guado al Tasso Bolgheri Superiore DOC (one each: 2012, 2014 and 2018).

The 2022 NWWF kicked off Thursday evening with an exclusive Grand Crew Party hosted at Campiello in Old Naples.



Robert Maier, right, celebrates his winning bid with auctioneer Humphrey Butler at the 2022 Naples Winter Wine Festival.



A 2022 Bentley Flying Spur Mulliner delivered to North America with a VIP tour of the English and Scottish countryside lot sold for \$680,000.

This year, the festival honored James Beard Foundation Award winner Nancy Oakes, executive chef/owner of Boulevard Restaurant in San Francisco, as its Chef de Cuisine. Also celebrated were nearly a dozen long-time Legacy Vintners who have contributed so much toward the success of the Festival since the its inception in 2001.

On Friday, Festival attendees got the chance to witness first-hand the life-changing impact of the NWWF at the annual “Meet the Kids Day.” The morning culminated in heartfelt presentations showcasing remarkable success stories that NCEF’s grants have made possible, followed by a delicious luncheon highlighting fabulous wines presented by acclaimed vintners.

The night before Saturday’s live auction, nearly 20 celebrity chefs, 20 world-renowned vintners and 17 of the world’s elite master sommeliers paired off to prepare exquisite, intimate dinners at the stunning local homes of festival trustees and some of Naples’ most iconic destinations.

Using the funds raised from this year’s auction, NCEF will award grants to local organizations and fund strategic initiatives supporting Collier County children in need on March 14. ■

For additional information on the Naples Children & Education Foundation or the Naples Winter Wine Festival, contact Lisa Juliano at lisa@napleswinefestival.com or 239-514-2239.

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