



Founders of Darioush Winery to be Celebrated as Honored Vintners at 26th Annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 30, 2026 through February 1, 2026

Naples, FL (July 15, 2025) – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is pleased to announce it will celebrate Shahpar and Darioush Khaledi, founders of the acclaimed Napa Valley winery Darioush, as its Honored Vintners at the 26th annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 30, 2026 through February 1, 2026.

Born and raised in Iran, Darioush Khaledi trained as a civil engineer and is a lifelong entrepreneur. His fascination with wine was instilled at an early age by his father's winemaking efforts and the cultural history of winemaking in Shiraz, the fabled city of gardens and poetry. Shahpar and Darioush emigrated to the United States in the late 1970s in search of the American Dream.

Shahpar Khaledi is experienced in fashion and boutique retail, cultivated over decades as founder and creative director of Echelon, an influential women's boutique that offered European designers. For Shahpar, treating clients and guests well is more than a cultural tradition, it is a way of life. She has used this welcoming philosophy in adding the Darioush hospitality experience.

As the Festival's 2026 Honored Vintners, Shahpar and Darioush Khaledi will be recognized for their determination, experimentation and commitment to pursue challenging opportunities, first in the grocery business in California and later at Darioush. Their family-owned and operated boutique winery stems from the foundational intersection of viticulture, hospitality, cuisine and art.

"We are truly humbled to be recognized as the Honored Vintners for the 2026 Naples Winter Wine Festival, which attracts wine enthusiasts and loyal supporters from all over the world," Darioush Khaledi said. "We have participated in the NWWF since 2012 and have experienced the tremendous impact it has in transforming the lives of the most vulnerable children in the local community."

The founding of Darioush was inspired by the namesake's lifelong love for the wines of Bordeaux, France. For their line-up of fine wines, the Khaledi's ventured into the unexplored territory of southern Napa Valley, selecting sites that span three distinct AVAs — high atop Mount Veeder, nestled in a pocket of Oak Knoll, and down in the maritime-influenced floor of the valley. In the years since, the couple's continued investment has empowered the craftsmanship of intriguing wines that delight guests known and new — a commitment that still guides the winery today.

“Shahpar and Darioush founded their Napa Valley estate winery at the southern tip of the Silverado Trail in 1998 and have built a legacy for producing exceptional wines that celebrate the terroir and are made with the highest craftsmanship,” said Bill Cary, 2026 Vintner Committee Chair. “Their participation as this year’s Honored Vintners helps set the stage for what promises to be another amazing three days.”

The 2026 NWWF comes following the record-breaking event in January 2025 at which over \$34 million was raised. Spanning three days, the Festival will once again showcase dozens of award-winning chefs and acclaimed vintners who generously donate their time and talents at intimate private dinners throughout Naples, plus an incredible live auction with one-of-a-kind auction lots.

This year’s theme “Picture This” reflects the NCEF’s mission of transforming the lives of children in need. It is a call to imagine and to believe in what is possible when compassion meets action. The theme challenges Festival supporters, vintners, chefs and donors to picture the impact their generosity can have in creating a world of endless futures for children in our community.

The 2026 NWWF Co-Chairs are Nena and Bill Beynon and Ashley and Adam Gerry. Both couples are well-known community supporters who have actively participated in the past several Festivals.

Ticket packages for the Naples Winter Wine Festival are sold for the entire weekend and start at \$17,500 per couple for a Double Magnum package and \$40,000 for two couples to experience a Jeroboam package. For more information, please visit: napleswinefestival.com/about-the-festival.

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About Naples Children & Education Foundation

The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is improving the educational, emotional and health outcomes of underprivileged and at-risk children. Through its annual grants and strategic initiatives, NCEF has impacted close to 90 of the most effective nonprofits in the local community, providing 350,000 children with the services and resources they need to excel. NCEF's unique approach, which emphasizes collaboration between organizations and bridges public and private resources, has become a blueprint for how to transform a community, one issue at a time.

About Naples Winter Wine Festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival (NWWF), one of the world's most prestigious charity wine auctions, offers a weekend of unforgettable memories. Guests enjoy world-class food and wine during intimate dinners in elegant, private homes and other landmark settings throughout Naples and are invited to bid on once-in-a-lifetime travel and wine experiences during an electrifying live auction. Since its inaugural event in 2001, the NWWF has raised more than \$336 million, making a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in Collier County.

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.