



Incredible Lineup of Acclaimed Vintners and Top Chefs Unveiled for 26th Annual Naples Winter Wine Festival on January 30, 2026 through February 1, 2026

This year's Naples Winter Wine Festival Honored Vintners Shahpar and Darioush Khaledi and Chef de Cuisine Dustin Valette will headline an all-star lineup of world-renowned winemakers and celebrity chefs, including vintners Pablo Álvarez Mezquíriz, Barbara Banke, Candice Bernard Cathiard, Deborah Harlan, and Jesse Katz, along with chefs Dave Beran, Cassidee Dabney, Rogelio Garcia, Doug Psaltis, and John Tesar

NAPLES, FL (August 19, 2025) – The Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, is pleased to unveil the incredible lineup of world-renowned vintners and award-winning chefs who will be participating in the 26th annual Naples Winter Wine Festival at The Ritz-Carlton Naples, Tiburón on January 30, 2026 through February 1, 2026.

With the theme “Picture This,” the 2026 Naples Winter Wine Festival returns showcasing the finest wines, impeccable cuisine, and rare and exotic auction lots, all to benefit the most vulnerable children in Collier County. Vintners, chefs and featured sommeliers hailing from five different countries will set the stage for a weekend of unique, one-of-a-kind wine and culinary experiences.

Heading the list of participating vintners are Shahpar and Darioush Khaledi, 2026 Naples Winter Wine Festival Honored Vintners and founders of the acclaimed Napa Valley winery Darioush.

The couple founded Darioush at the southern tip of the Silverado Trail in 1998, 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. For their line-up of exceptional fine wines, the Khaledi's ventured into the unexplored territory of southern Napa Valley. In the years since, the couple's continued investment has empowered the craftsmanship of intriguing Bordeaux-style wines that delight guests known and new — a commitment that still guides the winery today.

Joining them is a global roster of esteemed vintners from iconic wine regions, including California, Oregon, France, Italy, Argentina and beyond. The esteemed list of vintners includes a number of first-time Naples Winter Wine Festival vintners, such as André Esteves, Bernardino Sani, Juan Pablo Torres-Padilla, and Jean and Nicole Trimbach, as well as long-time supporters, including Grace Evenstad, Laura Catena, Carissa Mondavi, Shari and Garen Staglin, and more.

Throughout the weekend, patrons will have the opportunity to sample a stunning assortment of regions and varietals, from bold Cabernet Sauvignon and elegant Pinot Noir to age-worthy

Brunello di Montalcino, refined Bordeaux blends, world-class Malbec and celebrated Old World expressions. These visionaries and stewards of their estates bring a deep commitment to heritage, innovation and excellence, shaping the future of fine wine on an international scale.

This year's other featured dinner vintners include:

- Michelle & Robin Baggett of **Alpha Omega** in Saint Helena, California
- Jesse Katz of **Aperture Cellars** in Healdsburg, California
- André Esteves and Bernardino Sani of **Argiano** in Montalcino, Italy
- Giampiero Bertolini of **Biondi-Santi Tenuta Greppo** in Montalcino, Italy
- Barbara Banke and Chris Carpenter of **Cardinale** in Oakville, California
- Laura Catena of **Catena Zapata** in Mendoza, Argentina
- Grace Evenstad of **Domaine Serene Vineyards & Winery** in Willamette Valley, Oregon and **Château de la Crée** in Burgundy, France
- Candice Bernard Cathiard of **Château Smith Haut Lafitte** in Pessac-Léognan, France and **Cathiard Vineyard** in Saint Helena, California
- Aymeric de Gironde of **Château Troplong Mondot** in Saint-Émilion, France
- Carissa Mondavi of **Continuum Estate** in Saint Helena, California
- Dominique Arangoits of **Cos d'Estournel** in Saint-Éstephe, France
- Naoko Dalla Valle and Maya Dalla Valle of **Dalla Valle Vineyards** in Oakville, California
- Valerie Boyd & Jeff Gargiulo of **Gargiulo Vineyards** in Oakville, California
- Kelley & Jim Bailey of **Knights Bridge Winery** in Sonoma, California
- Carlton McCoy, Jr. of **Lawrence Wine Estates** in Saint Helena, California
- Marilisa Allegrini of **Marilisa Allegrini** in Verona, Italy
- Deborah Harlan, Amanda Harlan and David Cilli of **Promontory** in Saint Helena, California
- Maud Rabin of **Rare Champagne** in Champagne, France
- Beth Novak of **Spottswode Estate Vineyard & Winery** in Saint Helena, California
- Shari & Garen Staglin of **Staglin Family Vineyard** in Rutherford, California
- Juan Pablo Torres-Padilla of **Sullivan Rutherford Estate** in Saint Helena, California
- Alberto Tasca of **Tasca d'Almerita** in Sicily, Italy
- Nicole & Jean Trimbach of **Trimbach** in Alsace, France
- Pablo Álvarez Mezquíriz of **Vega Sicilia** in Valladolid, Spain

"These featured vintners represent some of the most prestigious wine producing regions around the world," said Bill Cary, 2026 Vintner Committee Member. "We are delighted our patrons will have the opportunity to meet these renowned winemakers and sample rare and outstanding wines, setting the stage for what we anticipate will be another extraordinary weekend of generosity."

This year's list of celebrity chefs is led by Chef de Cuisine Dustin Valette, the acclaimed Chef-Owner of Valette and The Matheson in Healdsburg, California. A fifth-generation Sonoma

County native, Valette carries on a family legacy that dates back to the 1820s, when his great-grandfather opened bakeries in the same buildings that now house his celebrated restaurants.

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Valette honed his craft under renowned chefs like Thomas Keller and Laurent Manrique before returning home to wine country. In 2015, he and his brother fulfilled a childhood dream by opening Valette, a fine-casual restaurant that quickly became a local favorite. He later launched Valette Wines and opened The Matheson in 2021, an upscale, micro-seasonal dining destination grounded in deep-rooted connections to local farmers and artisans.

Joining Valette is a stellar lineup of award-winning chefs from across the country, each bringing their own distinctive style and culinary vision. Representing both coasts and regions in between, the roster includes James Beard Award winners, Michelin-starred talents and pioneering restaurateurs such as Karen Akunowicz, Dean Fearing, Nancy Oakes and Joe Flamm.

From the refined Southern cuisine of Blackberry Farm's Cassidee Dabney and Blackberry Mountain's Joey Edwards to the modern Italian flavors of Angelo Auriana and the progressive tasting menus of Dave Beran, the diverse group reflects the cutting edge of American fine dining.

This year's list of celebrity chefs includes:

- Karen Akunowicz of **Fox & the Knife** in Boston, Massachusetts
- Angelo Auriana of **The Factory Kitchen** in Los Angeles, California
- Elliot Bell of **Charlie's** in Saint Helena, California
- Dave Beran of **SELINE** in Santa Monica, California
- Stephen Coe of **Ciba Matta** and **1756 Grotto** in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
- Cassidee Dabney of **The Barn at Blackberry Farm** in Walland, Tennessee and Joey Edwards of **Three Sisters at Blackberry Mountain** in Walland, Tennessee
- Dean Fearing of **Fearing's Restaurant** in Dallas, Texas
- Joe Flamm of **Day Off Group** in Chicago, Illinois
- Rogelio Garcia of **Auro** in Calistoga, California
- Beau MacMillan of **CALA Scottsdale** and **The Americano** in Scottsdale, Arizona
- Nancy Oakes of **Boulevard** in San Francisco, California
- Doug Psaltis of **Eat Well Hospitality** and **Asador Bastian** in Chicago, Illinois
- Andrew Quinn of **The Noortwyck** in New York, New York
- Michael Reed of **Poppy & Seed** in Anaheim, California
- John Tesar of **Knife Steakhouse** and **Knife Italian** in Dallas, Texas
- Philip Tessier of **PRESS Restaurant** in Saint Helena, California

"The Naples Winter Wine Festival has earned a reputation for attracting many of the nation's top award-winning chefs, and this year is no different," said Kelley Bailey, 2026 Chef Committee Chair. "Our lineup includes a number of celebrity chefs who have consistently participated in the NWWF for several years along with a handful of fresh new faces who are making their debut."

The three-day Festival officially kicks off with the annual Meet the Kids Day on Friday morning, when guests will have a chance to hear from some of the children who have received support

from NCEF funds and see how their generosity has positively impacted the community. Following the presentations, guests will meet vintners and taste their fabulous wines at a luncheon.

This year's Meet the Kids Day luncheon vintners include:

- Sarah & Michael Browne of **CHEV. and CIRQ. Estate** in Windsor, California
- Desirée Del Dotto of **Del Dotto Family Wineries** in Napa, California
- Tom Gamble of **Gamble Estates** in Oakville, California
- Jeff Cova of **The Setting Wines** in Napa, California

On Friday evening, guests will enjoy one of 17 intimate Vintner Dinners hosted by NCEF Trustees in elegant, private homes and other landmark settings throughout Naples where guests will experience beautifully curated multi-course dinners and wine pairings under the careful direction of award-winning chefs and legendary winemakers and poured by featured sommeliers.

Following Friday's opening festivities, guests will flock to the Festival's main event—Saturday's famed live auction, featuring some of the most incredible, one-of-a-kind wine, travel and culinary experiences in the world. All proceeds from the live auction will benefit charities that improve the physical, emotional and educational lives of the most vulnerable children in Collier County.

The unforgettable weekend will conclude on Sunday morning with the perfect ending to a perfect experience — a sumptuous Champagne Brunch featuring Festival chefs, vintners and sponsors.

Ticket packages for the 26th annual Naples Winter Wine Festival start at \$17,500 per couple for a Double Magnum package and \$40,000 for two couples to experience a Jeroboam Package. For additional information, please visit: napleswinefestival.com/about-the-festival.

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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.

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 385,000 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.

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.