

CWA Breaks Record Again

Classic Wines Auction raises over \$3 million to benefit charities

BY WINE PRESS STAFF

THE CLASSIC WINES AUCTION, one of the country's top charity wine auctions, continued its steady growth from its beginnings in 1982 when it raised \$9,000, to the current record of over \$3 million raised at the March 1 auction to benefit five Portland-area charities.

Weeklong events included a partnership with Taste Walla Walla, 33 winemaker dinners, the Ambassadors Dinner and Awards and the Gala Auction at the Oregon Convention Center. The five charities benefiting from auction revenues include Metropolitan Family Service, New Avenues for Youth, Friends of the Children, Trillium Family Services and YWCA Clark County. Auction chairs were Linda Hickey, Mark Miller and Dan Agnew.

"This year's auction went above and beyond our expectations," said Heather Martin, executive director of the Classic Wines Auction. "The dynamic auction lots,

generous guests and distinguished wine ambassadors created a one-of-a-kind event that showcases our commitment to helping children and families in need."

Portland-to-Portland Ambassadors Dinner

Steve Corry, chef/owner of Five Fifty-Five in Portland, Maine, and Gabriel Rucker, chef/owner of Le Pigeon in Portland, Ore., teamed up for the Ambassadors Dinner on Friday, Feb. 29, to create a menu featuring ingredients from both coasts, including oxtail marmalade on truffled brioche, creamy caramelized cauliflower and Maine potato soup with American sturgeon caviar and white truffle oil, Carlton Farms pork confit and honey bacon cornbread with maple ice cream.

The lineup of chef talent for the gala auction included John Gorham of Toro Bravo in Portland, Ore.; Daisley Gordon of Campagne in Seattle; Thierry Rautureau of Rover's Seattle; Jonathan Sundstrom of



Auction Co-Chairs, Mark Miller, Linda Hickey and Dan Agnew celebrate a record \$3 million. Photo by Brian Geraths.

Lark, Seattle, and Dominique Geulin of St. Honoré Boulangerie in Portland, Ore. The week prior to the gala, 33 winemaker dinners featured the best chefs in Portland and Southwest Washington paired with winemakers from Oregon, Washington and California.

Luxury Lots at Auction

Top lots at this year's Classic Wines Auction included a 1932 Ford High-Boy Roadster with custom tuck-and-roll leather interior and a custom removable top for \$115,000. Another transportation-themed lot featured two 2008 Smart Cars with trunks filled with a selection of organic wines. These sold for \$20,000 each. Renowned winemaker Peter Mondavi Jr. donated a weekend at his family's Charles Krug Winery along with private jet transportation, which sold twice for \$20,000 per package. A pair of "his and her" classic Harley Davidson motorcycles sold for \$29,000. The Art and Soul of Santa Fe Bombadier travel package sold for \$18,000 and included a tour of Santa Fe with Van Duzer vineyard owners Carl and Marilynn Thoma, and a trip aboard a Learjet 40XR from Bombadier Flexjet. The highest selling wine-only lot was a 30-bottle collection of Burgundy and Bordeaux from top producers in France and sold for \$20,000. And the "Raise the Paddle" bid brought in a record-breaking \$900,000.

ORVI and VINI Awards

The ORVI award was created to honor individuals who have helped the Oregon wine industry grow to world-class stature. The 2008 recipient was Bethel Heights Vineyard, established in 1977 by Terry and Ted Casteel and their wives, Marilyn Webb and Pat Dudley.

The VINI award honors individuals who have used their enthusiasm and support of viticulture to create an environment for the enjoyment of wine. The 2008 winner of the VINI award was Wally Rhines, chairman and CEO of Mentor Graphics, a board member of Classic Wines Auction and past co-chair of the auction.

The Koerner Rombauer Award

Koerner Rombauer of Rombauer Vineyards in California has been a longstanding supporter of Classic Wines Auction for more than 11 years and served as the California Wine Ambassador in 1998. In recognition of Rombauer's ongoing support and generosity, a new award was created in his name in 2007 to recognize individuals who have consistently served, funded and supported the Classic Wines Auction and its benefiting charities. This year's recipient, Karen Hinsdale, president of The Cellar Door, was not identified as the recipient of the award until she was announced at the Ambassadors Dinner. ☺

