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Luxury Brands And Nonprofits Connect With Wine Lovers At Auction Napa Valley

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Confetti and streamers celebrate a winning bid at Auction Napa Valley - Alexander Rubin for NVV

Katy Perry kicked off the bidding at Saturday's live Auction Napa Valley with a reminder to "Be kind and drink wine," a reference to the auction's aim of raising money for local nonprofits. An acoustic set for around 900 guests that included hits such as "Teenage Dream," "Firework," and "Roar" energized the crowd and got the auction off to a frenzied start. Perry also scored herself a prized glass of Opus One with a shout out aimed at the storied Napa wine brand's table and a mention that it is among fellow pop superstar Beyoncé's favorite wines.

This year's auction—including Friday's Barrel Auction, Saturday's live auction, and a weekend-long online auction—raised close to 12 million dollars for area non-profits such as OLE Health, Rianda House Senior Activity Center and the local branch of Aldea Children & Family Services. As bidding on opulent wine packages and one of a kind experiences drew to a close, wine lovers were treated to a short video about OLE Health before local youth who have been helped by the service came to the stage and one young beneficiary thanked the crowd and shared his story.

Most recent totals for moneys raised at Auction Napa Valley are \$13.6 million in 2018 and \$15.7 the year before. The 2018 total was boosted by an unexpected gift by vintner Samantha Rudd in honor of her father, Leslie Rudd, who had passed away several weeks before. This year's number of live auction lots was also trimmed slightly in order to accommodate Perry's performance, and there was an absence of lots that were doubled or tripled.

Auction Napa Valley weekend is prime time for representatives from area nonprofits, which since 1981 have received more than \$185 million from proceeds of the auction, to make direct contact with benefactors. For example, at a Vintner's Dinner hosted by Jean-Charles Boisset at his just opened 1881 Napa tasting room, Kerry Ahearn, CEO of Aldea Children & Family Services in Napa, told the story of a client she called Daniel in order to illustrate Aldea's work and mission. The telling of this young man's narrative delivered a somber note to an otherwise lively evening and brought tears to several attendees' eyes. However, thanks to the generosity of those who contribute via Napa Valley Vintners and to the intervention of Aldea, Daniel is now clean and sober and thriving in school.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Auction Napa Valley is also an excellent opportunity for luxury brands, hotels and travel companies to partner with top-tier vintners in order to connect with high net worth individuals. Those who regularly drop upwards of \$500 on a single bottle of wine or who can consider bidding hundreds of thousands of dollars are the ideal target market for purveyors of bespoke fashion, jewelry, and travel. Lot Number One, which garnered \$530,000, celebrated 100 years of Mondavi family heritage and its Italian roots in a partnership between Continuum Estate and several Italian properties and brands, including Bulgari. A trip to Rome, Florence and Tuscany for three couples offered transport in Rome in Bulgari's vintage papal limousine, a private cocktail reception in Rome's Bulgari store, and a personal viewing of Nicola Bulgari's collection of vintage

American cars.

In addition to six magnums of Opus One from five vintages (a total of 30 1.5 liter bottles), a trip for two to Paris and Bordeaux, and a wine tasting and dinner with the Rothschild family, Opus One paired with jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels for the creation of a custom jeweled butterfly clip. The crafting of this unique brooch may take up to one year, and it will be presented to the top bidder (who offered \$475,000) at a dinner for 12 at Opus One after its completion.

On top of 28 bottles its wine, St. Supéry Estate's lot offered two tickets to a performance by New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center with a glamorous twist. The maximum bidder is also entitled to a full makeup application for two at New York's Atelier Beauté Chanel and a Chanel Fine Jewelry Camélia Precieux white gold and diamond bracelet and Chanel Fine Jewelry Bouton de Camélia white gold and diamond earrings. Colgin Cellars' lot provided a private visit to the Louis Vuitton historic workshop, lunch at the Louis Vuitton family house, a private visit to La Fondation Louis Vuitton, and dinner at the invitation-only LVMH apartment. As if that were not enough—on top of several magnums of Colgin wine—a round trip helicopter ride from Paris to the family home of Christian Dior and a visit to the Christian Dior private archives are also included.

Rick and Elaine Jones, proprietors of Jones Family Vineyards, joined forces with TCS Travel, the leader in luxury jet expeditions, which offers around the world or regional tours on customized private aircraft. As the Jones family has traveled to Africa several times, they worked with TCS to create an itinerary with experiences as varied as winery visits in South Africa's Cape Winelands, a safari in Zambia, and a desert journey in Namibia, all reached via an Airbus 318 private jet with first-class flatbed seating. In homage to the years they traveled through southern Africa, the Jones family also provided the winner with magnums of their Cabernet Sauvignon from 2000, 2004, 2005, and 2015. This extraordinary package was had for a relative bargain at \$250,000.