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Hospices de Beaune Charity Auction Raises $15.2 Million

Celebrity Support Boosts Hospices de Beaune Charity Event Amidst Harvest Challenges

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Eva Longoria and Zabou Breitman

The Hospices de Beaune charity auction, held on November 17, raised $15.2 million to support healthcare organizations, despite a challenging vintage year that reduced the number of barrels available for bidding. This event, the oldest of its kind in the world

and organized for the fourth consecutive year by Sotheby's, remains a cornerstone in Burgundy. The proceeds will benefit the Hospices Civils de Beaune hospital network, with a portion directed toward international causes, including Doctors Without Borders and the Global Gift Foundation.

The auction attracted celebrities such as Eva Longoria, Dominic West, Jean Reno, and Zabou Breitman, who encouraged bids on the presidential barrel, a Beaune premier cru Les Bressandes that fetched over $377,000. This special lot will fund a dengue prevention project in Honduras led by Doctors Without Borders. Notable donors included Alaor Pereira Lino, owner of Anima Vinum in Brazil, who described his contribution as a personal commitment given the impact of dengue in his home country. Additionally, Francine Picard of Domaines Famille Picard made an extra donation of nearly $105,000 after being moved by a video about the Global Gift Foundation's work.

Although the total raised was lower than in previous years ($32 million in 2022 and $27.4 million in 2023), the figure reflects the reduced number of barrels available following a low-yield harvest in 2024. This year, 447.5 barrels were auctioned compared to 753 in 2023. However, the average price per barrel exceeded $33,000, a slight increase from the previous year. Among the top lots, three barrels of Bâtard-Montrachet Cuvée Dames de Flandres sold for more than $372,000 each, setting a record.

The year 2024 was particularly challenging for Burgundy. The organic certification of the Hospices de Beaune's 150 hectares of vineyards coincided with adverse weather conditions, resulting in a smaller but high-quality harvest. Ludivine Griveau, the estate manager and head winemaker since 2015, described the certification process as demanding but rewarding. According to Griveau, the efforts to meet organic standards reinforced the team's dedication, producing wines noted for their purity, depth, and elegance.

The auction also highlighted growing international interest in Burgundy wines, facilitated by a new online bidding platform developed by Albert Bichot. This innovation allowed participation from over 700 buyers in 32 countries, including small-scale

buyers, marking a significant shift from previous years.

The festive atmosphere at the auction emphasized Burgundy's sense of community. For Eléonore Latour of Maison Louis Latour, purchasing a barrel of Volnay Santenots Jéhan de Massol was a meaningful experience, echoing her family's historic acquisition in 1871. The event also revealed intriguing dynamics, with substantial price variations within the same crus, surprising regular participants like Mounir Saoma.

Despite the challenges faced in both the vineyard and the market, the 2024 auction reaffirmed Burgundy's enduring appeal and its commitment to charitable causes. The event's success, even in a difficult year, underscores its unique role in blending viticultural excellence with philanthropy.