vinetur

Auction Napa Valley raises $6.5 million for youth wellness at 45th annual event

International guests and vintners support local children’s programs as live auction returns to pre-pandemic format in Napa Valley

Thursday, June 12, 2025



From June 5 to 7, 2025, the Napa Valley wine community hosted its 45th annual Auction Napa Valley, drawing nearly 2,000 guests from around the world. The event, organized by the Napa Valley Vintners (NVV), raised $6.5 million for the NVV’s Youth Wellness Initiative. The funds will support local non-profit organizations that provide after-school and summer programs for children and teens in Napa County.

Auction Napa Valley began in 1981 and has since raised $230 million for community services, with a focus on youth programs. This year’s honorary event chairs were Robin and Michelle Baggett, owners of Alpha Omega Winery. Robin Baggett described the results as “amazing,” highlighting the community’s commitment to supporting local youth and celebrating Napa Valley wines.

The event returned to its traditional format after changes made during the COVID-19 pandemic. The festivities started with intimate vintner dinners and a large-scale barrel auction on Thursday and Friday, followed by a live auction and dinner on Saturday at Domaine Chandon’s estate in Yountville.

The barrel auction took place at Louis M. Martini Winery, featuring samples from the 2023 and 2024 vintages. More than 100 vintners participated, including established names like Joseph Phelps and newer wineries such as Annulus. Proprietor Luke Evnin of Annulus expressed pride in supporting the community, noting his family’s 25-year history in the valley.

Over 700 online bidders joined in-person guests to compete for nearly 80 barrel lots. Top lots came from Chappellet, Pulido~Walker, Cardinale, Alpha Omega, Shafer Vineyards, Peter Michael Winery, B Cellars and Darioush. For each lot, the top ten bidders received a case of wine, with the highest bidder also taking home a signed barrel head.

Winemakers and guests praised the quality of the 2023 vintage, especially for Cabernet Sauvignon. Shafer winemaker Elias Fernandez called it one of Napa Valley’s greatest vintages in his four decades of experience. The extended growing season led to a harvest four to five weeks later than average, which Larkmead winemaker Avery Heelan said resulted in wines with strong tannins and color development.

Producers also showcased barrels from the 2024 vintage. Lee Hudson of Hudson Vineyards noted that after the late 2023 harvest, the 2024 season returned to a more typical schedule. Bella Union winemaker Brooke Price described their 2024 Cabernet Sauvignon as one of their best yet, with concentrated flavors and structured tannins.

The main dinner and live auction on June 7 featured dishes by Chef Christopher Kostow of The Charter Oak in St. Helena. Auctioneer Jacqueline Towers-Perkins led bidding on 14 lots that included not only rare wines but also luxury travel experiences, jewelry and exclusive event access. Top bids went to lots assembled by Antinori Napa Valley and Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, Alpha Omega and Bouchaine Vineyards, St. Supéry with Chanel, Darioush and Kenzo Estate.

After the final lot was sold, local children took the stage to share how auction-supported programs have impacted their lives. Their stories encouraged further donations from attendees.

Darioush Khaledi, owner of Darioush winery and next year’s honorary chair along with his wife Shahpar and daughter Sally, praised this year’s event for its organization and venue. The next Auction Napa Valley is scheduled for June 5 and 6, 2026.