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Christie’s New York sets record with $28.8 million single-owner wine auction

William I. Koch’s collection draws global bidders and surpasses estimates, highlighting strong demand for rare and historic wines

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Christie’s New York achieved a new milestone in the wine auction world last week, setting a record for the highest-grossing single-owner wine sale in North America. The auction, held at Christie’s Rockefeller Center from June 12 to June 14, featured the extensive wine collection of William I. Koch, a well-known American industrialist and

collector. The sale raised $28.8 million, nearly doubling its minimum estimate of $15 million.

The auction included 1,500 lots amassed by Koch over several decades. According to Christie’s, the collection featured significant quantities of rare and historic wines from some of the world’s most prestigious producers. Among the highlights were more than 750 large-format bottles and a range of vintages from Bordeaux and Burgundy estates. The sale also included notable selections from Champagne, the Rhône Valley, Italy, and top producers from the New World.

One of the standout moments was the sale of a Methuselah (six-liter bottle) of 1999 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Romanée-Conti, which fetched $275,000. Another lot containing three magnums of the same wine sold for $237,500, more than double its high estimate. Large-format bottles consistently outperformed expectations throughout the event.

Burgundy wines drew particular attention from bidders. Domaine Georges Roumier, based in Chambolle-Musigny, saw several lots exceed their high estimates. Six magnums of Bonnes Mares 1985 sold for $200,000—double their projected value—while a magnum of Bonnes Mares Vieilles Vignes 1988 reached $87,500, nearly ten times its low estimate. Other notable results included eight bottles of Domaine Leroy Musigny 1999 selling for $187,500 and six magnums of 1961 Château Latour achieving the same price.

Christie’s reported that interest in the auction was global and spanned generations. Forty-two percent of registrants were new to Christie’s wine auctions. Bidders participated online through Christie’s Live platform, by phone, and in person at Rockefeller Center.

Adam Bilbey, Christie’s Global Head of Wine & Spirits, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome. He described it as a “once-in-a-generation sale” that attracted collectors worldwide and generated strong competition throughout the three-day event. Bilbey also noted that this sale marked a successful return for Christie’s wine auctions to New York City after several years.

The Koch collection is recognized for its breadth and quality, reflecting decades of careful acquisition by William I. Koch. The success of this auction underscores both the enduring appeal of fine wine as a collectible asset and the growing interest in wine auctions among new buyers globally.