

Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction's online pivot raised funds for the Willamette Valley Wineries Association and the James Beard Foundation's Open for Good campaign

(August 18, 2020; Newberg, Ore.)—When auctioneer extraordinaire Fritz Hatton virtually “hammered” the final lot of the Willamette: the Pinot Noir Auction, cheers could be heard throughout the Willamette Valley. Not only were critical funds raised to support the Willamette Valley Winery Association’s (WVWA) education and marketing initiatives, but an additional \$100,000 was raised to support the James Beard Foundation’s Food & Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans, part of the larger JBF Open for Good campaign. The basis for the auction lots was the spectacular 2018 vintage, and members of the wine trade from across the country bid on these one-of-a-kind lots.



Fritz Hatton hosts Willamette: the Pinot Noir Auction

WILLAMETTE
the pinot noir auction

Bidding began on August 11 and continued through August 13, when the event culminated in a live, virtual close. The Auction offered 74 lots of one-of-a-kind Willamette Valley Pinot noir from the 2018 vintage, and six lots of collaboratively produced Chardonnay made by current and former Auction chairs. All wines were produced in quantities of just five, 10 or 20 cases, and were exclusive to the Auction.

“2018 was a delightful vintage, it was warm but not hot through the whole summer, the grapes were ripened in cool weather, you had a freedom to pick when you felt the balance was exactly what you were looking for,” said Owner and Founder of Adelsheim, David Adelsheim in one of the 2020 Auction Preview Tastings August 4. “The one thing we can all say with surety is that the wines of the 2018 vintage will age incredibly well, these are bottles I am excited to come back and visit 10, 20 and 30 years from now.”

The Auction’s live close kicked off with a greeting from Domaine Drouhin Oregon’s Managing Director and 2020 Auction Chair David Millman. Following the kick off Millman welcomed the Auction’s first ever ambassador Portland Trailblazer star and the Willamette Valley’s newest winemaker CJ McCollum who made a statement encouraging bidders to help raise funds for the Auction’s beneficiaries. Throughout the sale there were guest appearances from benchmark Willamette producers and past Auction chairs such as David Adelsheim (Adelsheim Vineyards), Josh Bergstrom (Bergstrom Wines), Pat Dudley (Bethel Heights), Laurent Montalieu (Soléna Estate and Hyland Estate), Shirley Brooks (Elk Cove), Eugenia Keegan (Jackson Family Wines), Alison Sokol Blosser (Sokol Blosser Winery) and Tony Rynders (Tendril Wines).

With its \$100,000 donation, Willamette: the Pinot Noir Auction is one of the founding donors to the James Beard Foundation Food & Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans, part of the broader JBF Open for Good campaign. The money will be used to provide grants to food and beverage businesses owned by Black and Indigenous Americans to rebuild an independent restaurant industry that is more equitable as it reopens post-pandemic. In total Willamette: the Pinot Noir Auction raised \$503,000 through sponsorship and sales of the 80 one-of-a-kind Chardonnay and Pinot noir lots from the 2018 vintage.

“The continued success of the Willamette: the Pinot Noir Auction, even in a year like 2020 and in such a different format, speaks volumes about our amazing bidders, industry sponsors, participating wineries and WVWA team. We are so proud to be donating a substantial sum to the Open for Good Campaign, to support Black and Indigenous restaurateurs,” says Millman. “I can’t wait to help incoming co-chairs Jess Endsworth and Rob Alstrin in whatever way I can to make 2021 an even greater success!”

The 2021 Willamette: The Pinot Auction will be co-chaired by Jess Endsworth of Northwest Wine Company and Rob Alstrin of Adelsheim Winery. Licensed sellers, including retailers, restaurateurs and wholesalers, can find more information or request a ticket by visiting www.willamettewines.auction.

The 2020 Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction sponsors included: Beck Family Estates, Dreyfus, Ashby & Co., Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits And Young’s Market Company (Jeroboam Sponsors); G3/Diam, Cadus, Davison Winery Supplies, Galaxy Wine Company – Wilson Daniels, Ken Wright Cellars, Mitchell Wine Group, Oregon Wine Services, Perlo Construction, Rex Hill, Saverglass and Saalfeld Griggs P (Magnum Sponsors); Trisaetum (Winery Sponsor); Hagan Hamilton Insurance, Irvine & Co and Northwest Farm Credit Services (Standard Sponsors).

About Willamette Valley Wineries Association

The Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA) is a non-profit industry association dedicated to achieving recognition for Oregon's acclaimed Willamette Valley as a premier Pinot noir-producing region. Currently, the WVWA has nearly 250 members representing wineries and tasting rooms throughout the Willamette Valley region from Portland to Eugene. To learn more about The Willamette Valley Wineries Association visit: willamettewines.com



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