

{ nashville auction }



*Hugh Davies of Schramsberg Vineyards watches the cork fly after kicking off the 2017 L'Eté du Vin live auction by sabering a Salmanazar of Schramsberg 2010 Blanc de Blancs.*

# Healing Melodies

## THE NASHVILLE WINE AUCTION MAKES BEAUTIFUL MUSIC FOR CANCER CHARITIES

by Pete Holland / photos by SheHeWe Photography

**NASHVILLE'S L'ÉTÉ DU VIN**, or "Summer of Wine," began in 1980 when a handful of altruistic wine lovers staged an impromptu auction. Since that night, the Nashville Wine Auction—now the 501(c)(3) charity's official name and the country's longest-running charity wine auction—has raised more than \$21 million for Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and other cancer charities in Tennessee and beyond.

An impressive roster of winemakers, including Paul Pontallier of Château Margaux and Chris Carpenter of Lokoya and Cardinale, as well as Gaia Gaja, have all visited Music City for the auction. This year's fête, themed "California Collectibles," welcomed Jasmine Hirsch of Hirsch Vineyards, Monique and Hugh Davies of Schramsberg Vineyards and John Conover of Plumpjack, CADE and Odette Estate wineries.

"The people are amazing. The hospitality has been incredible," said Hirsch of her first experience at the auction. "To be wel-

comed into this community means a lot."

The main events took place over the nights of July 20–22, beginning with the Thursday night Vintners' Tasting at the stately Richland Country Club where Hirsch, Conover and Hugh Davies led 140 guests through a tasting of current wines and rarities.

Nashville Wine Auction President/CEO Holly Whaley believes the auction's history—especially its focus on the wines— attracts its winemaker participants and donors. "We have an amazing reverence for the wine," she explained. "If someone's going to donate \$100,000 worth of wine to us, we're going to treat it like we should."

Friday's \$1,000-per-plate Patrons' Dinner took place at Nashville's newly-opened 21C Museum Hotel downtown, where Dan Hutchinson of Tennessee Fine Wine & Spirits led the team that poured Schramsberg, J. Davies, Hirsch, Plumpjack, CADE and Odette for two raucous dining rooms. Hutchinson has returned to the auction every year since 2011 for the

unique opportunity to mix with world-class winemakers. "It's not every day that you are able to drink Gaja with Gaia Gaja," he noted. "And I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to pour Margaux for [the late] Paul Pontallier."

Hugh Davies kicked off Saturday's live auction by sabering a Salmanazar of 2010 Blanc de Blancs in front of a crowd of more than 300 attendees at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel. Marquee lots included a dinner for ten featuring 18 100-point wines, as well as a \$5,000-per-person tasting of all 28 vintages of Tuscany's Masseto poured by a team led by Blackberry Farm Sommelier Andy Chabot. The event raised more than \$900,000 by the weekend's end.

In addition to the final tally, the generosity of the crowd showed in the hundreds of unique and rare bottles they brought to share over dinner. "Many people have remarked over the years that we should just auction the wines on everyone's table," Whaley joked. ❧