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Cellars Aid Health At Heart's Delight Wine Tasting And Auction In DC



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More than \$20 million has been raised for the American Heart Association since the event's inception in 1999.



Credit: Heart's Delight/Group Gordon

Auctioneer Jamie Ritchie at a previous Heart's Delight auction in 2017

A pivotal inspiration for my own interest in wine came from my mother, who joined a wine club during her 70's and became a discerning aficionado before she passed away, years ago, from heart disease. When informed recently about the [Heart's Delight Wine Tasting and Auction](#) taking place between May 9th and 12th in

Washington, DC, I therefore put aside Friday afternoon tasks to learn more about the event.

This somewhat exclusive gathering lasts four days and includes winemakers (including a serious contingent from Bordeaux in France) who provide auctionable vintages to raise funds for the [American Heart Association](#). The list of participants is a Who's Who of buzz makers in culinary, wine and also diplomatic circuits. [More than two dozen American and international winemakers](#) from Napa Valley, Champagne, the Willamette Valley, Saint-Estèphe, Monticello (Jefferson would be proud), Pauillac, Amity in Oregon, Sauternes and several other locations renowned for stellar vintages will join forces with [20 chefs](#) from a half dozen U.S. states to lay out this benchmark food and wine event. These restaurants include [Tosca from DC](#), [Maple & Ash from Chicago](#), [Gramercy Tavern from New York](#) and [Bluecoast from Delaware](#).

“A very loyal group of Bordeaux producers come every year or two, with an equally loyal group of attendees—wine enthusiasts, collectors and connoisseurs,” Aline Baly said when we spoke recently. As a third generation proprietor and the marketing strategist for First Growth [Château Coutet](#) of Barsac-Sauternes in France, her enthusiasm for the event is high. Representatives from a dozen wine châteaux from Bordeaux and at least one from Champagne will be in DC to share time and vintages at the gathering.

“It’s a lot of fun,” Baly continued. “There are two auctions during the weekend. The first occurs during the Friday night gala dinner, where every year there’s a Bordeaux First Growth in the spotlight. This year it’s going to be [Château Margaux](#) who is providing the wines for dinner. [Jamie Ritchie from Sotheby’s](#) will hold an auction of large format wines brought by Bordeaux producers. Very good ambiance. The Saturday night event is more informal and there’s going to be a second auction by Bordeaux and also American vineyards. It’s very, very social compared to the Friday night gala ambiance with long dresses and tuxedos. We can be relaxed, and formal, during the weekend.”

The event features a BYO Collectors Dinner (at [Charlie Palmer Steak](#) on Wednesday), an Embassy & Winemakers Dinner Series (Thursday), a [Vintner’s Dinner & Auction](#) (Friday, with Thibault Pontalier of Château Margaux and Chef Daniel Boulud), and a Bordeaux Master Class & Grand Tasting (Saturday). The Friday dinners will take place at 18 separate locations—residences, restaurants and embassies—each with a host, winemaker and chef. These events and dinners will be held at different locations with ambassadors from the Netherlands, Italy, Gabon, Mexico, Haiti, Lichtenstein, Korea and Germany at venues that include the Ritz-Carlton, the

Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, several embassies and the Supreme Court of the United States.



Credit: Heart's Delight/Group Gordon

Attendees of a previous Heart's Delight auction holding a 1997 Ridge wine from California

Sponsors of the event include private individuals, corporations (such as [Volkswagen Group](#)) and organizations (such as the [National Air Traffic Controllers Association](#)).

The festivities successfully merge bonhomie with generosity. More than \$20 million has been raised for the American Heart Association since the event's inception in 1999. 🐦 Although the association does not conduct research, it has funded research projects (to a value of \$4 billion since 1949), including those associated with 13 Nobel Prize winners. Cardiovascular disease accounts for about one in three deaths in the U.S., or an average of about one death every 40 seconds. The disease claims more lives than all of cancer and chronic lower respiratory diseases combined. The average annual direct and indirect costs associated with this disease in the U.S. exceeds \$200 billion.