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Heart's Delight Charity Wine Auction Raises \$1.5 Million for the American Heart Association

The four-day extravaganza, gathering politicians, vintners, chefs and wine lovers in Washington, D.C., has generated more than \$18 million since 1999.



Photo by: Courtesy Heart's Delight

Chef Daniel Boulud (center), vintners and other honored guests showed off big bottles of Bordeaux at the 2018 Heart's Delight auction weekend.

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There was something for every type of wine lover at the annual Heart's Delight charity wine tasting and auction in D.C. The 2018 event, held May 9–12, delivered four days packed with three sets of auctions, master classes, and large and small wine dinners featuring top vintners and chefs. In total, it raised \$1.5 million for the American Heart Association, with more than \$488,000 coming from live-auction bids. The event has raised more than \$18 million for the AHA since its inception in 1999.

"It's been tremendous to see how many returning winemakers and chefs we have on an annual basis," Brian Kearney, executive committee member, told *Wine Spectator*. "It's one of those events that you know once you become a part of it, chances are you're going to be a part of it for a very long time."

That's certainly the case for Aline Baly, of Château Coutet, who playfully battles with her dad each year to determine who will attend on behalf of her family's Bordeaux winery in Barsac. She won this time, leading one of the 20 Embassy & Winemaker dinners, alongside Château Lagrange and Gabonese ambassador Michaël Moussa-Adamo, pouring vintages from both 2009 and 1989. "We try to [include] vintages that are going to be rare and maybe a bit harder to find for the connoisseurs that are coming to this event," Baly said.

The embassy dinners, welcoming new members this year like South Korean ambassador Yoon-je Cho, continued to demonstrate "what makes D.C unique," said Kearney. So did the Congress Has Heart reception and auction the night prior, showcasing top American wineries like Bevan Cellars and Coeur de Terre Vineyard, with members of Congress from both parties in attendance, including Senator Lisa Murkowski, Republican of Alaska, and Rep. Mike Thompson, Democrat of California.

"It just kind of symbolizes the D.C. community, and that politics don't necessarily matter when it comes to supporting such a great cause," Kearney added.

Top lots of the four days included a jeroboam of Château Margaux 2005 that sold for \$42,000, and a surprise lot donated by chef Daniel Boulud that sold for \$22,000 and offered a 10-person wine dinner.

There was also a vintner's dinner and auction that gave special focus to Château Margaux, alongside a menu created by Boulud. Saturday, following a 2015 vintage Bordeaux master class and other wine seminars, chefs from around the country served dishes paired with top wines from California, France, New York, and Oregon at the Grand Tasting dinner and auction.

Among participating chefs was Danny Grant, co-owner and chef of *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence winner Maple & Ash, who also donated a two-night, four-person dining package in Chicago that sold for \$9,500 at the Grand Tasting live auction. "You can just tell [the organizers] care about it," said Grant. "It makes it easy for me to care about it."

For many attendees it's the cause that brings them back every year. "I've seen firsthand how important it is to be able to take care of people who suffer from strokes," said Baly. "I realize how personal a lot of people's contributions, time and participation are with the American Heart Association and Heart's Delight."

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