

ANOTHER STELLAR PERFORMANCE AT THE NINTH ANNUAL AUCTION CONFIRMS THE STATURE OF LE VIN DE FRANÇOIS

Arguably S.A.'s top Pinotage sets private buyers and collectors on fire.

It's a ticket that few get to lay their hands on - which means that buying wine at the annual private auction is an experience few get to have. This year was no exception, and the ninth annual auction of the coveted Le Vin de François on March 4th set the enthusiasts alight, producing record prices. Once again!

This year total sales were just shy of R2 million for a similar release as last year (195 cases), representing an increase of 9 percent on the previous auction. This equates to more than R9 050 for a case of 12, confirming the iconic status of Le Vin de François.

In what must truly be a remarkable strategy in the Cape's wine business and culture — and a very successful one at that - Pinotage master Francois Naudé and his family release a limited edition of a high-end, blended Pinotage every year. The contributing wineries this year were Beyerskloof, Delheim, Kanonkop, Lanzerac, L'Avenir, Rhebokskloof, Simonsig and Wildekrans. This happens at a carefully choreographed social event, which in itself has become an enticement among punters and wine collectors.

This year, 140 guests were, as has become traditional, transported to a 'secret destination' and magnificently entertained. Once the guests were delivered to La Paris Estate in an array of various Jaguars and Land Rovers they were treated to truly South African canapés and snacks prepared by famed artist and chef Lientjie Wessels. This was all done while patrons sipped Soutiran champagne and other wines from the Chateau Naudé cellar.

After an exhilarating dance performance by a local couple all the guests were transferred to Ex Nihilo, Paarl. The stylish setting, allowed for an entertaining afternoon and a very successful auction hosted and directed by skilled and seasoned auctioneer Mr. Philip Powell.

As has become custom, art works related to the various contributing wineries and various bottle sizes (even a 9 litre!) came up for auction. Most were well paid for. Another buyer paid R17 100 for a collector's case which included all previous vintages of Le Vin de François. The proceeds of the art works sold will again be donated to the Make a Difference Foundation. This out-reach aspect of the project is typical of the Naudé family's strategy of generosity as investment.

Foreign buyers accounted for 28.14%. Buyers from UK topped the list followed by France, Netherlands, Germany, Botswana, Namibia, Belgium and the Czech Republic.

Although most of the stock was bought for private collections, 5 cases of 12 x 750ml from the total production of 2400 bottles will be available directly from Chateau Naudé Wine Creation. For any further information, contact naude@levindefrancois.co.za or www.cnwc.co.za.