**Vin de François 2017 Breaks Auction Record**

With premium wine auctions having become all the rage on the South African landscape over the past few years, the Naudé family’s annual auction of its exclusive Vin de François Pinotage which led the way 12 years ago is as successful as ever. At this year’s auction, held on the Cape Town Foreshore in the Zip Zap Circus Tent, the total amount raised from sales of the select Vin de François Pinotage 2017 came in at R1 995 710,00 – a 16% increase on last year’s revenue.

This year’s volume up for auction was the same as last year – 2 400 bottles, although the lots were auctioned in six-bottle cases and not in cases of 12, as has been the custom since the maiden event in 2008. The wine itself remains one of the most sought-after reds from South Africa, Pinotage expert François Naudé Snr seeking out selected barrels from the Cape’s top-producers to blend a unique wine bearing his personal stamp of approval and reflecting “the best in Pinotage the world has to offer”.

The Vin de François 2017 is a blend of barrels sourced from Beyerskloof, Delheim, Grangehurst, Kanonkop, Lanzerac, L’Avenir, Rijks and Simonsig.

According to Naudé it is an honour to see that 12 years after the first Le Vin de François Auction, the event is still regarded as a highlight on the wine calendar. “I’ve got to call myself a lucky man in that this wine has now reached the status where the auction manages to continually attract international and local buyers willing to pay top dollar for South African Pinotage,” he said.

“This year we had in attendance wine collectors from, among other, Germany, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom and Belgium, these international buyers purchasing 35% of the total volume on auction. Our biggest buyer was Singita, one of the most selective fine wine purchases in the country who successfully bid on R150 000 worth of wine.”

Le Vin de François attained an average price of R680 per bottle. The star lot of the evening was the R23 000 paid for 12 bottles, one of each vintage of Le Vin de François since its inception up until the 2017 offering.

“For myself and my son François Jnr and daughter Melissa it is extremely satisfying seeing this project continuing to grow from strength-to-strength,” he said. “When we kicked-off the venture all those years ago, talk of premium South African wine commanding high prices was not as ubiquitous as it is today. People thought we were crazy trying to arrange a black-tie auction for one bloody wine! To thus see the Le Vin de François Auction being touted a highlight on the Cape wine calendar and attracting interest from around the world is a just reward for my children’s hard word and underscores the quality of the wine in the bottle and the reputation it has garnered.”

Each year the auction identifies a worthy charity to benefit from the event, this year being the Ruth Prowse School of Art which received R23 000 in cash as well as in wine. Quite a relevant charity, as the Le Vin de François 2017 is described as a work of art itself. Over to François’s description:

“Deep intense dark red colour with a purple rim. A big and intense nose of black fruits, spice & perfume, with touches of integrated oak aromas. The palate is big and bold with flavours of black cherries, blackcurrant and herbs, perfectly combined with smooth ripe tannins that finishes with a lingering and balanced dry aftertaste.  A great example of an excellent vintage!”

Going, going…..gone!