

Grinzane in-barrel Barolo auction raises record €1.14mn

Posted on November 2, 2026 by Alexander Van Der Byl

GRIZANE CAVOUR, Piedmont — The last barrel of this year's Barolo en primeur goes under the hammer on November 8 at the World White Truffle Auction, linked live to Hong Kong, after the first 14 barrels and seven communal lots raised a record €1,140,500 for charity at the Castle of Grinzane Cavour, Piedmont.

In the castle, and remotely through Christie's in London and New York, bidders bought wine none of them can open before 2029. "A lot of the fun is in the anticipation as much as in the drinking," said private bidder Chris Smith, a longstanding Christie's wine client.

"With many in the wine world looking to the worrisome aspects around changing consumption and the future, it is encouraging to see collectors willing to pay now and wait many years for the reward," said Annie Edgerton of Edgerton Wine & Spirits Appraisals.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/grinzane-in-barrel-barolo-auction-raises-record-e1-14mn/



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Various, bidders (*Credits: Alex Van Der Byl*)

Callum Day, who heads wine sales at Christie's in London, called buying en primeur, or while the wine is still in the cask, "a three-year commitment." "When you finally get it in bottle it'll be a real special reward," he said.

Bidders choose which charity their money funds. Since 2021 the sale has raised €5,674,800 for more than 120 projects, according to the organisers, Fondazione CRC Donare and Fondazione CRC, with the Consorzio di Tutela Barolo Barbaresco Alba Langhe e Dogliani.

Cavour's vineyard

The wine comes from Vigna Gustava, almost four hectares below the castle, once owned by Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, mayor of Grinzane for 17 years before he helped unify Italy. Oenologist Donato Lanati vinified each barrel separately, and each will yield about 270 bottles after the 38 months of ageing that Barolo's rules require.

Cristiano De Lorenzo, director of Christie's Italy, took the bids, and the top lot fetched €90,000.

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Christies (*Credits: Alex Van Der Byl*)

Private bidder Luca Cavalier, whose family already owns four barriques, was outbid on his favourite lot. “All the good things in life take time to be good,” he said. His father won a barrel, and they will choose its charity together.

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Italy vinyards and auction (*Fondazione CRC Donare*)

Sergio Germano, president of the Consorzio, said the result “says a lot about how Barolo is perceived around the world.”

This year’s money also backs the Accademia della Vigna, a training scheme run by social enterprise We.Co., and a night shelter in Alba for homeless people and seasonal workers, many of them vineyard hands.

The wine will rest until 2029. The money was never meant to wait.

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