

Tasting and Learning About Wine While Doing Good

One of the greatest privileges that I have had in my writing career is to be associated with great causes that began with wine.

Fifteen years ago, I unwittingly started a small wine tasting for charity that has now grown into one of the most prestigious wine tasting/fund raising events in the Mid-Atlantic region. Heart's Delight Wine Tasting & Auction, now in its 16th year, is a four-night affair in Washington, DC that attracts high-end wine connoisseurs and epicureans from across the United States and provides its guests with the ideal combination of exceptional wine and incredible food. And while everyone definitely has a great time, I am very proud that the event raises awareness and money for the American Heart Association's fight against heart disease and stroke.

The four night event begins on **Wednesday, April 22nd** with the United States of Wine celebration, which will showcase some of the best wines in America on the **rooftop of 101 Constitution Ave, NW**. Highlighted wines will be presented by owners and winemakers. The reception will be followed by a BYO-style Collectors Dinner in the company of the participating winemakers. The Collectors Dinner is a cellar-themed "bring your own" celebration for a select group of 50-80 guests at a luxurious setting. Each guest will share a bottle from their cellar in an attempt to impress and outdo their fellow diners in this friendly "competition."

Tickets for the Rooftop Tasting are \$200 each and tickets to the Collector's Dinner are \$500 per person.

Thursday night, April 23rd, takes place all over the Washington, DC metropolitan area in a "dine-around." This special evening includes intimate dinners at private homes, high-end restaurants and Embassies throughout Washington. Talented and fun winemakers attend each of the venues, which include the embassies of Argentina, Portugal and Australia as well as notable restaurants, such as the Blue Duck Tavern and 1789. Ticket prices vary based on venue.

On **Friday evening, April 24th**, Heart's Delight will be celebrating the 16th year anniversary with the traditional First Growth Bordeaux black tie dinner at the **Melon Auditorium** in Washington, DC. This year's event will feature the First Growth Bordeaux wines of Cheval Blanc and Château d'Yquem. The chateaux Managing Director, Pierre Lutron, will be on hand to oversee the wine selections. Noted French wine critic, Bernard Burtschy, will be in attendance to provide commentary on the wines. Winemakers from various Bordeaux chateaux will be seated at each table throughout the event. The evening will also include a live auction featuring trips to Bordeaux, Burgundy, Australia & New Zealand, a dinner with Robert Parker, and rare and highly sought-after wines as well as our much anticipated offering of large format bottles, signed by the winemakers at the event. Tickets are \$1,000 for this once-in-a-lifetime evening.

The fundraiser culminates on **Saturday, April 25th** at the **Omni Shoreham Hotel** in Washington, DC, with a formal seated tasting where Chateau representatives from Bordeaux will share wines from the 2012 vintage. The post-tasting Grand reception features food prepared by some of the nation's top chefs and wines from around the world as well as live and silent auctions where guests may bid on exclusive travel opportunities, dining experiences and rare and exceptional wines. Tickets are \$250 per person for either the Bordeaux Tasting or the Grand Reception and \$500 for both.

HOWEVER – for WTOP listeners, tickets for Saturday night are 50% off when you purchase your tickets online and enter the promo code WTOP.

You can purchase tickets online at <https://ahagwr.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2014-2015HeartsDelightWineTastingAuction/SaturdayTickets/tabid/675234/Default.aspx> or, for full details, visit www.heartsdelightwineauction.org