



Cornell University  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
New York State Agricultural Experiment Station

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **GALA DINNER RAISES \$17,000 FOR VINIFICATION & BREWING LAB AT GENEVA**

by Linda McCandless



Thomas Henick-Kling (r), director of Cornell University's enology program, explains some of the virtues of one of the auction items displayed by Roger Cullen (l), during the gala auction for Cornell's Vinification and Brewing Technology Lab. More than \$17,000 was raised for the lab. Credit: Hickey/NYSAES/Cornell

**FAIRPORT, NY:** The ice storm cut into attendance, but, over \$17,000 was raised for the Cornell Vinification & Brewing Technology Laboratory, during the 6th Annual Gala Dinner and Wine Auction, held at Casa Larga Winery, in Fairport, NY, on Friday, April 4. "The icy roads and flickering lights heightened people's sense of adventure," said Kathy Russell, of Aftak, Inc., who chairs the event.

Harris Wilcox (Cornell class of '43) and his son, Craig, auctioned off 50 items donated by New York wineries, breweries, and associated industries. They included ice wines, late harvest muscats and vigneoles from Hunt Country, Heron Hill, and Atwater Estate; mixed and vertical cases of Riesling, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay, from Hosmer, King Ferry, Lucas, and Lakewood; Sled Dog Trippelblock from Wagner's and Saranac from FX Matt; dining opportunities at Red Newt, Sheldrake's Café, the Rose Inn, and Geneva on the Lake; overnight stays at The Inn at Glenora and Friends Lake Inn; grapevines, limo rides, crystal goblets, wine tours, and more. A 5 liter bottle of 2001 Reserve Pinot Noir, donated by Fox Run Vineyards, in Geneva, NY, went for \$525, and received the highest bid of the evening.

"This is a great cause," said Scott Osborn, owner of Fox Run. "New York wineries make these donations in hopes that people are going to come out and bid on them to support the V&B Lab at the Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva. To have a state-of-the-art facility where wineries can conduct commercial experiments and students can be trained in cool-climate winemaking is enormously important for our industry."

Researchers at the Geneva Experiment Station have been conducting research on viticulture since the early 1900s, and on winemaking since the 1960s. The goal of the lab is economic development through applied science and technology combined with training programs for the wine and brewing industries. Proceeds from the auction enable the Experiment Station to equip, staff, and support students in the new facility.

The dream of having a facility devoted exclusively to research, teaching, and extension activities for wines and beers was launched in 1997 with a \$5,000 donation from the Seneca Lake Wine Trail. At the time, the experiment station sought \$250,000 to \$500,000 in start-up funds, and hoped to establish a \$1 million endowment for staff and programming. To date, more than \$324,000 has been earmarked for the project from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. With this year's auction, over \$135,000 has been donated by industry and local wine trails, including \$10,000 from the Seneca Lake Wine Trail. In

addition, industry has donated over \$181,000 worth of equipment. The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food established a \$26,538 endowment for scholarships for industry representatives to attend workshops.

The 2,000 sq. ft. pilot plant opened in March 2000, and the Station's wine research program moved into the facility. Work includes evaluating new wine grape cultivars, analyzing the effect of viticulture and vinification practices on wine quality, testing the effect of grape diseases on wine quality, testing drought stress and its effect on Atypical Aging, evaluating winemaking techniques, as well as faculty and graduate student projects.

Progress has also been made on the brewing side. A beer analyzer was donated by Paar Physica USA last October, and the pilot brewhouse that was donated by Cargill Corporation, along with some fermentation and lager tanks, has been mounted and is awaiting utility connections.

In remarks made during dinner, Susan A. Henry, Ronald A. Lynch Dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, acknowledged the important partnership of industry, Cornell, and the state of New York in nurturing the Empire State's wine industry. "We should all be proud of how far we have come," she said. "In 1976, just prior to the passage of the Farm Winery Act, there were 19 farm wineries in New York. Now there are more than 160. These wineries contribute over \$500 million in gross sales to the New York economy."

The Dean also announced that Cornell's undergraduate enology and viticulture program scheduled to start in the fall of 2003, offered by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, is temporarily on hold, due to budget constraints.

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