



WA vineyards join forces with Australian wine industry to support flood victims

West Australian vineyards have joined forces with the Australian Wine industry in an unprecedented show of generosity by the industry for flood victims.

In total, three hundred vineyards and wineries have donated more than \$240,000 in exclusive wine, memberships, books and travel packages to the Australian Wine Trade Flood Relief Raffle – which is aiming to raise one million dollars for flood victims in Queensland and Victoria.

Launched by Brisbane based wine writer and author Tyson Stelzer with support from Australia's leading online wine and food travel guide, VisitVineyards.com, wine has been donated from almost every corner of Australia; with wineries from Europe and New Zealand also contributing.

Two hundred prizes are up for grabs – including three boxes of Wild Duck Creek Duck Muck Shiraz 2007 valued at \$1320 each, six three litre double magnums of Cullen Diana Madeline 2007 valued at \$500 each, an imperial of Kalleske Eduard Shiraz 2008 (retail price \$900) and a 12 bottle case of Leeuwin's 2006, 2007 and 2008 Art Series Chardonnay wines (valued at \$1000).

Stelzer says since putting out the call to the wine industry for support just weeks ago, he can't believe the generosity that has been shown, particularly given they've faced such tough times themselves.

"It hasn't been an easy year, as winemakers face widespread crop damage due to mildew and disease from the humidity, let alone direct damage to vineyards from rain and floods, all in the midst of a particularly challenging time in the market for everyone, so to see this kind of support is simply overwhelming."

Owner and winemaker of Hay Shed Hill, Michael Kerrigan, who donated dozens of its award winning wine for the raffle, says his distributors in Albion in Queensland were flooded out, with wine boxes floating across the factory floor.

"You can't rescue the wine when the labels are all falling off and the bottles have fallen from the boxes and are floating in dirty water."

He says it's devastating for the industry and the impact will be far reaching.

"Even here in WA, we are expecting a big financial hit, we'll lose up to four months sales in Queensland, bills won't be able to be paid by our distributors and that has serious ramifications down the line. It's a huge blow to the industry."

In order to help in anyway it could, Kerrigan says it also immediately launched its own raffle at the cellar door, saying things are tough enough for wine producers, let alone having a natural disaster.

Jim Gilbert of Gilberts who donated some of his popular Three Devils Shiraz (which is named in jest at his three adult sons) says after surviving the 2003 fires in Tenterden, they were more than willing to support the flood victims.

"The support when the fires were here was overwhelming, teams of people came out of nowhere to help you out, the district really had a lot of support and it inspires you to do what you can when others are suffering hardship."



VisitVineyards.com founder and CEO Robyn Lewis who is providing backend support, online raffle ticket services and donating memberships to its own online wine and food travel guide, which has 30,000 subscribers, hopes it will go some way to help drive visitors to cellar doors.

“Working in the wine industry and owning our own vineyard, we feel deeply for those affected by the floods and hope our involvement can in some way not only support flood victims, but go some way to assisting the wine industry through these trying times.

“But most of all, it’s about being part of the community and showing those affected that they are not alone.”

Tickets are \$30. For more information and a list of where tickets can be purchased via retailers (all States except TAS) see: www.winefloodrelief.com.au

For more information and online and phone sales (including Tasmanian sales), see: www.VisitVineyards.com/wineraffle

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