

Fancy cars expected to rev up Naples Winter Wine Festival

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NAPLES, Fla. - Auto aficionados have three very special automobiles to rev up their bids at the Jan. 28 – 30 Naples Winter Wine Festival charity auction. A 1956 Corvette Convertible and 2011 Ferrari 458 Italia sports coupe are being auctioned along with fine wine lots, once-in-a-lifetime experiences and other luxuries. The raffle prize at the festival, which benefits underprivileged and at-risk children through the Naples Children & Education Foundation, is a 2011 Lexus IS 350 Hardtop Convertible F-Sport.

2011 Ferrari 458 Italia sports coupe auction lot

Named “Car of the Year” by BBC’s Top Gear Magazine and dubbed “the new sports car benchmark” by Britain’s Autocar magazine, the 2011 Ferrari 458 Italia has shined brightly in tough test drives on both road and track.

Thanks to a new 4,500cc V8 engine that punches out 570 horsepower, the two-seater 458 Italia boasts an extraordinary power-weight ratio, allowing it to sprint from 0 to 60 mph in under 3.4 seconds and hit a maximum speed of 202 mph. It delivers superb vehicle dynamics with an ideal weight balance for a sports car with a mid-rear engine – 42 percent front, 58 percent rear. The electronic control systems also help guarantee maximum performance in all driving conditions. Its new suspension setup is tuned for ultimate road holding and superlative handling. This ensures the 458 Italia is extremely responsive and maintains superior ride comfort. The interior is purely focused on the driver, with new steering wheel and dash layout coming directly from racing practice.

Vintage Corvette auction lot

The Venetian Red, restored 1956 Corvette Convertible comes with two automatic tops and has a factory-upgrade four-jet carb V8 engine with extra horsepower. The Corvette was completely redesigned in 1956, with “sexed-up” styling, including popular bodyside coves, roll-up windows and a waffle-pattern interior.

The lot also includes an unforgettable Napa Valley VIP experience. The winning bidder receives first-class airfare for two to Napa Valley, paid round trip shipping of the Corvette so the winner can ride through Napa in style, and four nights at Meadowood. While in the Valley, the winner will be treated to special dinners at La Toque, REDD, The French Laundry and Restaurant at Meadowood. Personal tours and tastings are on the itinerary at Kongsgaard Wine, BOND Estates, Colgin Cellars, Araujo, Spottswoode and Kelly Fleming, and Nancy Andrus Duckhorn will personally host the winners on VIP tours and tastings at Scarecrow Wine and other wineries. Memorable lunches at Cindy’s Backstreet Kitchen, Bottega Napa Valley, Bouchon and Sunday brunch at Ad Hoc round out the culinary adventure. Also included are a hot air balloon ride and *an original oil painting to be created by Ann Rea of the winner’s favorite Napa winery’s vineyard.*

2011 Lexus IS 350 Hardtop Convertible F-Sport raffle prize

For a minimum suggested donation of \$3,000 per ticket, festival guests take a chance on winning a 2011 Lexus IS 350 Hardtop Convertible with F-Sport package. No more than 350 tickets will be issued. The drawing will be held Jan. 30 at noon at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort and ticket holders need not be present to win.

The IS 350 convertible has strong appeal for performance enthusiasts looking for power, agility and style. It delivers optimum balance, control and enhanced performance through quick turn-in, responsive steering and cornering ability. Its throaty growl speaks to performance enthusiasts who will also appreciate its increased horsepower. With a three-piece hardtop that retracts in approximately 20 seconds, the winner will lose no time when ready to enjoy an open-air ride. The IS 350 convertible also boasts aggressive styling with a low center of gravity and an exclusive dark graphite finish and attention-getting forged 19-inch lightweight aluminum wheels.

The Naples Winter Wine Festival begins with Meet the Kids Day – an opportunity for guests to see how children benefit from festival proceeds. Friday evening, 17 top chefs and 28 renowned vintners preside over intimate dinners at the homes of NCEF trustees. The festival culminates on Saturday at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples – a festival founding sponsor – with a culinary showcase and wine tasting followed by the live auction of 70 cannot-be-duplicated auction lots. A “wine-down” party follows, and the festival closes after a Sunday celebration brunch.

The Naples Winter Wine Festival was founded in 2001 and is hosted annually by NCEF trustees. Festival proceeds have helped nearly 100,000 children through grants to children’s charities and collaborative funding of major projects including a pediatric dental center and early learning center. The festival is ranked by Wine Spectator as the most successful charity wine auction in the nation since 2004 and a top 10 event for wealthy Americans by the Luxury Institute.

Festival ticket packages are \$7,500 per couple; \$20,000 for reserved seating at the same vintner dinner for two couples. For a festival schedule and other information, visit www.napleswinefestival.com or call the wine festival office at 888-837-4919. Details on all 70 auction lots are posted on the festival website.

Read more: <http://www.winknews.com/Local-Florida/2010-12-15/Fancy-cars-expected-to-rev-up-Naples-Winter-Wine-Festival#ixzz18KwaLHQp>