Berkshire Museum presents the biennial Wine Gala and Auction Celebration

Three nights of superb wines, fine dining, and exceptional auction lots

[Pittsfield, Mass.] — The 2015 edition of the Berkshire Museum’s biennial Wine Gala and Auction celebration will feature three exciting events on Thursday, June 25; Friday, June 26; and Saturday, June 27. Proceeds from these festive evenings of wine receptions, live and silent auctions, and sumptuous culinary offerings will benefit the Museum’s education programs, which provide more than 16,000 educational experiences for students and teachers from the wider Berkshires region every year. This year’s festivities feature guest of honor John Kolasa, managing director of Château Rauzan-Ségla and Château Canon in Bordeaux, and special guest Denis Toner, president of Bâtard et Fils imports.

The first event will take place on Thursday, June 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the brand new Hotel on North in downtown Pittsfield. An evening of “Wine, Food, and Fun,” it serves as a celebration of all things Burgundy, complemented by the cuisine of Chef Brian Alberg. Remarks will be made by special guest Denis Toner.

On Friday, June 26, the second event will feature a dinner at Wheatleigh in Lenox with the guest of honor, John Kolasa. The dinner is a private event for the Gala sponsors.

The Gala will begin on Saturday, June 27, at 5 p.m. in the second floor galleries at the Museum where a delicious wine and hors d’oeuvres reception will serve as the backdrop for the Silent Auction. At 6:45 p.m., guests will be escorted to
the Theater for the Live Auction. The auction is followed by the Celebratory Wine Dinner in the Ellen Crane Memorial Room, catered by Chef Peter Platt of Old Inn on the Green, and will feature selections from Château Rauzan-Ségla Margaux and Château Canon Saint-Émilion 1er Grand Cru Classé, provided by the guest of honor.

Auctioneer Marie Keep of Skinner will lead the live auction of more than 30 lots of rare and fine wines, unique vacations, and exclusive dinners. Highlights of the auction’s offerings include a 6 liter bottle of 1997 Dominus Estate; 2 bottles of rare Bordeaux; and Jeroboams from the guest of honor John Kolasa, direct from the Château Rauzan-Ségla Margaux and Château Canon Saint-Émilion 1er Grand Cru Classé. Additional items include an exclusive Riviera small ship cruise tour of France, Italy and the Isles; and a Metropolitan Opera experience, which includes tickets and backstage access.

“The Berkshire Museum Wine Gala and Auction is a marvelous opportunity for collectors and wine enthusiasts to acquire the best wines and enjoy an excellent dinner with good company,” says Van Shields, Berkshire Museum’s executive director. “This year’s three events will certainly be a grand celebration of wine, fine dining, and community, all in support of our valued education programs.”

Sponsorship Packages, including tickets to all three events, begin at $2,000. Individual tickets to the June 27 Gala for the entire evening, including the Celebratory Dinner, start at $350. Tickets to the wine and hors d’oeuvres reception plus silent and live auction are $100. Tickets for “Wine, Food, and Fun” at Hotel on North are $75. For more information or to make reservations, please call 413.443.7171, ext. 313, or visit: www.berkshiremuseum.org/2015winegala.
Guest of honor John Kolasa is the managing director of Chanel-owned Château Rauzan-Ségla in Margaux and Château Canon in Saint-Émilion. Born in Scotland, Kolasa’s love of France and his first career as a French teacher brought him to Bordeaux in 1971. His career in wine began when he worked in the quays in Bordeaux and began to study oenology. After several positions in the French wine industry, in 1987 Kolasa was asked to become commercial manager at Château Latour in Pauillac. He remained at Château Latour until 1994, when he was brought on to oversee operations at Chanel’s newly acquired Château Rauzan-Ségla Margaux. In 1996 Chanel purchased Château Canon, and Kolasa has overseen the renovations there as well. Kolasa is a member of the Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc et des Graves Sauternes et Barsac and was recently inducted as a member of the Jurade de Saint-Émilion.

Special guest Denis Toner is the founder of the Nantucket Wine Festival and president of Bâtard et Fils Imports. Toner is regarded as one of the foremost experts on Burgundy wine and cuisine. He is a freelance wine writer and radio and television personality and he has served as producer for a number of wine documentaries including Coming of Age (2007), Harvest: Napa and Sonoma (2006), and The Tuscan Way (2005). In 2005, the French government awarded Toner the prestigious Mérite Agricole, an order bestowed for his outstanding contributions to agriculture.

Marie Keep returns as the auctioneer for the Museum’s Auction, a role she filled for the 2013 event. Keep is the founder and director of Fine Wines at Skinner, the only major auction house in New England to offer fine wines at auction. As a director, she oversees 60 auctions and events annually. Through her active involvement with the food and wine community in Boston, she established Skinner’s collaboration with its retail partner, Lower Falls Wine Company.
Volunteer chairs and committee

Wendy and Peter Gordon and Heidi and Jim Nejaime are the chairs for this year’s Gala.

The Gala Committee members are Courtney and Mike Addy; Bonnie and Joel Berman; Ursula Ehret-Dichter; Renee and Steven Erenburg; Nancy Edman Feldman and Mike Chefetz; Marcia and Jonathan Feuer; Jim Finkel; Isannne and Sanford Fisher; Audrey and Ralph Friedner; Alexandra Fuchs and Gideon Argov; Elizabeth and Aristides Georgantas; Marita and David Glodt; Joshua Greene; Hannah and Mark Gross; Jennifer and William Hines Jr.; Sandra Krakoff; Donna and John Krenicki; Arlene and Jerome Levine; Lynn and Michael Mazzeo; Elizabeth and Robert McGraw; Karin and David McShane; Mary Mullen and Larry Oberwager; Suzanne Nash; Marianna Poutasse and Eric Korenman; Carol and Sheldon Rabin; Camilla Smith and Robert Hillson; Marilyn Sygrove and Dennis Greenstein; Jacqueline and Albert Togut; Stacey Gillis Weber and Jeffrey Weber; and Marc Wilhelm.

About Hotel on North

Pittsfield’s first and only boutique hotel – and the newest lodging property in the region – the Hotel on North blends Berkshire roots and cosmopolitan style to bring a new vibrancy to North Street. With cozy lounges, lively oyster bar, tranquil art gallery, dramatic event spaces, and nooks and crannies filled with character at every turn, the Hotel on North is the perfect backdrop for the June 25 event. From the bustling kitchens of the hotel’s creative new restaurant, Eat, Chef Brian Alberg has delicious surprises in store to showcase the memorable Burgundy celebration.

About the Berkshire Museum
Located in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at 39 South St., the Berkshire Museum, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is $13 adult, $6 child; Museum members and children age 3 and under enjoy free admission. For more information, visit www.berkshiremuseum.org or call 413.443.7171.

In association with the Smithsonian since 2013, Berkshire Museum is part of a select group of museums and cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share the Smithsonian's resources with the nation.

Established by Zenas Crane in 1903, Berkshire Museum integrates art, history, and natural science in a wide range of programs and exhibitions that inspire educational connections among the disciplines. Immortal Present: Art and East Asia is on view now through September 7, 2015. Objectify: A Look into the Permanent Collection is currently on view. Little Cinema is open year-round. Spark!Lab, Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, Worlds in Miniature, Aquarium, and other exhibits are ongoing.

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