

'Best community wine auction in the country'

Respected auctioneer Michael Fridjhon puts seal of approval on Rotary Club of Gately's annual sale in aid of charity

TED KEENAN

Well run charities are businesses packed with volunteers and the Rotary Club of Gately (East London) is no different, though its annual wine auction might set it apart.

Last week, auctioneer Michael Fridjhon set the bar pretty high.

He wanted the bidders to dig deep and spend more than last year's R1m, all destined for charities.

To reach the target, 60 wine lots, averaging 30 wines each, had to sell for about R20,000 each, he said. The top bid, at

R34,000, beat it handsomely. This year's auction yielded R1.15m, the first time in its 30-year history.

"In my opinion this is the best community wine auction in the country," Fridjhon said.

"Some Cape auctions might have bigger turnover, but they are lifestyle-based, while this one's lots are mostly great wines."

Fridjhon has wielded the gavel since 1998 and has not missed a year since then.

It is widely accepted that his auctioneer pedigree and immense wine knowledge probably add 30% to the takings.

As his contribution to the auction, he pays for his own travel and adds the last auction lot, always wine-associated, which this year fetched R6,000.

Rotarian Eugene McNamara said that while the amount was

most gratifying, what it could do for charity was much more so.

Fridjhon rubs shoulders with numerous international wine colleagues, vineyard owners, fellow wine tasters and judges and enthusiastic amateurs.

He said Gately had developed a reputation for giving back to the wine community.

It supported several charities in wine areas and a few years ago had purchased a bus for a wine charity.

Locally over the years Gately has supported African Angels, Berea Gardens Retirement Foundation, Buckaroo, CANSA, the Carel du Toit Centre, the Down Syndrome Association, Guardians of Hope, Masithethe, NSRI, Robin Good Initiative, Salem Baby Care Centre, St Bernard's Hospice, Umoya as well as several other charities.



ON CLOUD WINE: From left, Eugene McNamara, Phillip Bartlett (NFB), Michael Fridjhon (auctioneer), Lukhanyo Qwabe (Club President), Anthony Godwin (NFB) and Travis McClure (NFB) at the Rotary Club of Gately wine auction. Picture: SUPPLIED

Fridjhon said most people were not aware of the flood of requests to top wine estates for donations, many getting up to

50 to 60 a week. "They cannot give to everyone. Many estates now produce special auction bottles that are

only available from the estate. "They are used to supporting select events and Gately's auction is among them."

Many years ago Gately gave the wine estates pineapples from Gatelyan Corder Tilney's farm. Not quite a fair exchange

for wine, but the estate staff loved the idea, and it has become a ritual.

"There is an agricultural connection, an exchange between the fruits of the land. The net effect is a wonderful sense of synergy," Fridjhon said.

"It is unique in my experience, possibly because so many senior business people are involved and they do it for charity."

He said the wine industry hit hard times during the pandemic and, aside from a relatively small number of highly successful estates, the balance were facing tough times.

Medium-sized estates mostly break even, but grape growers, with a few wineries thrown in, are struggling.

Numbers have dropped from 4,700 in the 1990s down 2,500 today.

Brave Icons heroes conquer gruelling fundraising challenges

LULAMILE FENI

There was much fanfare as the brave runners who conquered the gruelling eight-day 400km Icons Challenge that cuts through the Eastern Cape's Liberation Heritage Route arrived at the Nelson Mandela Museum on Sunday.

The route, from the University of Fort Hare in Dikeni to Mthatha, traces the late icon's footprints during his formative years.

There were no official winners of the 400km race as, of the 12 participants at the start, the eight men and women that finished all crossed the line together.

More than 100 runners competed in the 103km race from Clarkebury High School near Ngqobo, where Mandela was schooled, which like the 400km, 35km, 14km, and 7km versions, finished at the museum in Mthatha.

The event formed part of the Icons Journey Foundation's activities marking Madiba's 105th birthday and 10th commemoration of his death (December 5 2013).

Aching bodies and feet, exhaustion, and having to battle gale-force winds that ripped through the province causing havoc at the weekend did not dampen the spirits of those taking part.

Those brave enough to take on the 400km and 103km distances said running for a good cause to raise funds for underprivileged children had spurred them on.

The pain and suffering they had to push through was nothing like that which Mandela and his comrades had to endure during the liberation of the country, they said.

In an incredible feat, Tumelo Kgwete, of Mbombela in Mpumalanga, ran the 161km Washie on Saturday and the 103km Icons Challenge on Sunday.

"I am doing it for the sake of those who are less fortunate."

"This is also to celebrate my 40th birthday which will be on August 4. The total of 264km is a sacrifice and endurance I am doing to celebrate Nelson Mandela. Last year, I participated in the 400km Iconic Challenge," Kgwete said.

The Western Cape's Michelle Mvinjelwa, 42, cried when she crossed the 400km finish line.

"This is the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life, but also the most humbling. I never thought I would ever finish so many kilometres. The spirit of doing it for Madiba and for disadvantaged children kept me going."

"Now, the mission has been accomplished," Mvinjelwa said, crying with joy, as race founder Prince Bandile Vulithuba Sangoni, himself fighting back tears, congratulated her.

Ecstatic 103km women's winner, Makhosazana Mhlongo, of Hollywoods Club in KwaZulu-Natal, said she did not expect to win.

"I am amazed. This is my first time running an ultra marathon. I am still a baby in



MAN OF STEEL: Tumelo Kgwete, of Mbombela in Mpumalanga, is in incredible form — completing the 161km Washie on Saturday and the 103km Icons Challenge on Sunday. Picture: LULAMILE FENI

this race. All I wanted was just to run for Mandela and disadvantaged children. Winning is a big surprise for me.

"This is a beautiful route, the

scenery is amazing, and running here is so refreshing and beautiful. I enjoyed running on the gravel roads and hills," Mhlongo said.

King Sabata Dalindyebo mayor Nyaniso Nelani said the Icons marathon and Mandela Month celebrations helped boost Mthatha's economy.

Sport, recreation, arts & culture MEC Nonceba Kontsiwe said the marathon united people.

"The race is growing fast and

more youth are participating in large numbers.

"We wish there could be more initiatives that could bring hope to those less fortunate," Kontsiwe said.

we said.

Transkei Athletics president Neo KK Maxambela welcomed the Icons marathon initiative, saying there was a lack of sports events and activities in the region.

The Hollywood Foundation donated 250 pairs of school shoes to the fundraising initiative.

In the 103km men's category, Linda Zondi of KwaZulu-Natal clocked 7:29:01, followed in 7:54:00 by Sithembiso Mqele, who is originally from Mkhathazo in Xhorha and is based in KwaZulu-Natal. In third place was Mthandazo Qina, in 7:45:46.

In the 103km women's category, Mhlongo's first win was done in 9:21:16, followed by Zodwa Magidigidi in 10:04:23, and Leketseng Molefe in 10:15:30.

In the 35km men's category, Anelo Dlamini came first in 2:02:22, followed by Lindelani Mjwara in 2:03:43, with Kollisani Zamkele third in 2:07:12.

In the women's category, Lusanda Bomvana won in 02:58:46, followed by Lineo Chaka in 2:48:01, and Benele Mabizela in third, in 2:55:59.

More than R423,000 in prize money was up for grabs for all the categories including 95km cycling and 48km cycling events.

Nelson Mandela Museum CEO Dr Vuyani Boozi said relationships with other stakeholders had helped change perceptions about the institution which sought to assist communities.

Young social media singing sensation shines in competition

BRANDON NEL

An Eastern Cape teenager, who turned the international spotlight on Port Alfred after her rendition of a Beyoncé song went viral, sang her way into the top three of a local talent competition at the weekend.

Siyliswisi Futuse, 16, melted hearts with her version of the hit song *Running*, and the recording spread like wildfire on social media, raking up millions of views and catching the attention of SA singer Loyiso.

Futuse, originally from Peddie, clinched third spot in the Young Talent Explosion competition, which was held at the Titi Jonas Multi-Purpose Centre in Port Alfred on Saturday.

She said she was ecstatic about her spot on the podium. The BFabs dance group claimed the top spot.

"I feel happy because everyone wanted to be there and people were happy for me," she said.

"Being in the third place is a big, big thing for me because people have recognised my singing and I feel like doors are going to open."

"Receiving this trophy has motivated me to do more."

"It's a memory that I will never forget. I am forever grate-



SIYLISWISI FUTUSE

ful."

Competition organiser Karin Kahn said the talent-hunt event had been a success.

"It's all about changing lives and focus," she said.

"It's also all about changing the community and giving children the opportunity to dream and believe in themselves and I see this as a success because that is exactly what was accomplished."

Kyle KC Lelion Badenhorst from Sha Lau dance school, SASH May from Evergreen theatre and Tinashe Nzawanga, musician and singer, were the judges.

Actress Khabonina Qubeka, known for her roles in soap operas such as *Isidingo* and *Generations*, was also actively involved in the competition.

Futuse expressed her gratitude for the support of mentors

including last year's finalists Zikhona Dyasi and Noxolo Mthethwa, who provided guidance to the contestants.

It was Dyasi who initially captured the viral video of Futuse's extraordinary performance.

Khan said the video was such a success that well-known Loyiso had reached out to Futuse.

"Loyiso also made contact with her because people were sending him notes saying she's the female version of him," she said.

"It just spiralled from there." Futuse said she was in disbelief about the reaction the video had garnered on social media.

"It was just a video. I didn't know it was going to go viral. It's unbelievable," she said.

Khan said Futuse's outstanding talent at the Young Talent Explosion competition had opened doors of opportunity.

"With the continuous support of her mentors and newfound fans, her journey as a rising star is just beginning."

"The Young Talent Explosion competition has not only provided a platform for emerging artists to showcase their abilities, but has also ignited a sense of hope and ambition within the community." — HeraldLIVE

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2023 VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BONITAS MEDICAL FUND

After the success of the virtual AGM over the past two years, a decision has been made to hold the 2023 Bonitas Medical Fund AGM via a digital platform again.

Date: Wednesday, 16 August 2023
Time: 09h00

(The AGM Live Webcast streaming platform will be open from 08h30 and the meeting will commence at 09h00)

All Principal Members are invited to attend and will need to provide their SA Identity number or Bonitas membership number to attend the AGM virtually and vote via the digital platforms. Members are encouraged to contact the Bonitas Contact Centre on 0850 002 108 to update their contact details.

Further information can be found at www.bonitas.co.za.

If you have any queries regarding the AGM, please contact PwC on 011 297 0974 or email za_bonitasagm2023@pwc.com.

Bonitas
Medical Aid for South Africa

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH GOLF DAY

NOVEMBER 24, 2023
EAST LONDON GOLF CLUB

4 BALL ALLIANCE - 2 COUNT ON ALL HOLES
STAGGERED START FROM 11H00 TO 13H00

R3000 PER 4 BALL COVEY
TEE BOXES & GREENS ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES @ R1000 PER TEE/GREEN.

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