Wine Relief Part 6 - Sainsbury's show some initiative

4 Mar 2005 by JR

This is not, strictly speaking, a story for the average wine lover but it does illustrate quite starkly how much of the wine trade operates. As part of its mammoth fundraising programme for this year's Comic Relief, culminating in Red Nose Day this Friday, the Sainsbury's wine buying team are auctioning hours with themselves to the highest bidders from their supplicants, those who have wines to sell to one of Britain's biggtest supermarket chains.

Even a minute of these powerful individuals' time can be unimaginably valuable to an importer or producer with thousands of cases of wine to sell so bids are expected to bring in a substantial amount towards the funds Comic Relief continues to devote to trying to end poverty and social injustices. (See www.harpers-wine.com this week for a long interview with CR's chief executive Kevin Cahill.)

"Due to the sheer number of ambitious wine suppliers out there, and the internal pressures on the buyers' time," a weary spokesperson for Sainsbury's announced to the trade, "cold-calling the buyer can be an unrewarding experience. So, if you want to make Andrew Bird taste Moldovan sparkling wine, or make Laura Jewell sit through 100 PowerPoint slides on the growth potential of your new brand of Savoie après-ski wines, or even take Jane Hughes out to lunch, get your cheque books out and show us the colour of your money."

A good idea, to which I shall respond very soon.