Wine Relief 2009 - □880,000+!

15 Mar 2009 by Jancis Robinson

Wine Relief 2009 has, amazingly, already raised more than £880,000 - a quite stunning record total, every penny of which will go straight to Comic Relief's carefully chosen and monitored projects designed to help disadvantaged people in Africa and the UK to help themselves.

Big thanks are due to everyone who bought wines chosen to be part of Wine Relief 2009, whether selected Wine Relief wines in Wine Rack and Majestic, or the special Red Nose Red and White bottlings. Big, big thanks also due to everyone involved in those Red Nose wines, whether sourcing it (SAAM Mountain Vineyards and their UK importer Bibendum Wines), shipping it (J F Hillebrand), bottling it (Quinn Glass), capsuling it (Erbin), labeling it (Multiprint) - and of course those retailers who committed themselves to buying it (Tesco, Somerfield, Waitrose, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Booths and, in a break with tradition, Marks & Spencer).

All sorts of people have got behind this wine-related fundraising campaign, from the likes of Winedirect.co.uk who have been offering a couple of Liberty's Mitolo wines with £3 going straight to Wine Relief, to Rose Murray Brown whose wonderful Wine Relief event in Edinburgh raised £4,500 [**20 Mar** - and now the total looks as though it will surpass £8,000! Meanwhile, Fiona Morrison MW and Eva Kaluzynska held a wine tasting evening in Brussels which raised 500 euros - spreading Red Nose Red and White to the continent].

While millions of Britons were watching what sounds like a distinctly superior night of comedy in aid of Comic Relief on BBC1, I spent last Friday evening in the cellars of Berry Bros in St James's, London at the wonderful Ch Latour dinner which, with its small number of hand-picked, rare auction items and some *extremely* generous bidders, managed to raise the extraordinary total of £143,472, including the sums raised by selling Berrys' Good Ordinary Claret during the fundraising period and the famous Chunky Monkey campaign which has seen sponsored weight fall off the likes of Jasper Morris MW and Simon Staples.

We had a great evening, and the wines, from a series of less celebrated vintages, showed superbly, and fully vindicated Ch Latour's reputation for consistency. See my tasting notes Ch Latour 1964 to 1991.