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Sotheby's Sells the Most Valuable Bottle of Japanese Whisky

A Bottle of Karuizawa 52 Year Old Cask #5627 Zodiac Rat 1960

Achieves £363,000 / \$435,273

Strong Demand for Bordeaux and Burgundy

Two Cases of the Legendary Cheval Blanc 1947

Bring Combined Total of Almost £500,000



Karuizawa 52 Year Old Zodiac Rat
Cask #5627 1960



Cheval Blanc 1947

“Against a backdrop of extraordinary circumstance, the persistence and commitment of collectors came through in yesterday’s sales, where a bottle of Japanese whisky became the most valuable ever sold, accompanied by strong prices for Scotch whisky, led by the Macallan in Lalique Decanters. Collectors also continue to compete for the world’s greatest wines, and when there is an opportunity to acquire the very best the market has to offer, as with the two cases of the legendary Cheval Blanc 1947, they are willing to stretch to the highest level.”

Jamie Ritchie, Worldwide Head of Sotheby's Wine

LONDON, 19 March 2020 – Yesterday’s sales of *Finest & Rarest Wines and Spirits* at Sotheby’s in London brought a combined total of £3.7 million / \$4.4 million (est. £2.8 – 3.8 million / \$3.3 – 4.5 million). A substantial proportion of lots achieved prices above their high estimates, and in a category where online bidding is traditionally strong, over 50% of the buyers placed their winning bids online.

AUCTION RECORD FOR JAPANESE WHISKY

- A new auction record was achieved for a bottle of Japanese whisky, with a bottle of ‘Karuizawa 52 Year Old Zodiac Rat Cask #5627 1960’, sold for £363,000 / \$435,273 to an Asian private collector, and far exceeding its pre-sale estimate of £160,000-220,000. The oldest Karuizawa to have been released, this iconic bottle is one of only 41 that were produced, each uniquely identified by an individual netsuke carved from the oak cask head of cask #5627.

SALES AT A GLANCE

- *Finest & Rarest Spirits* totalled £1,401,122 / \$1,680,085 (est. £1 – 1.45 million / \$1.2 – 1.7 million)
 - 45% of lots sold achieved prices above the high estimate
- *Finest & Rarest Wines* realised £2,264,018 / \$2,714,784 (est. £1.8 – 2.3 million / \$2.1 – 2.8 million)
 - 51% of lots sold achieved prices above the high estimate

TOP LOTS

- The auctions were led, respectively, by two landmarks in the world of whisky, and one of the most legendary Bordeaux:
 - The Macallan in Lalique Six Pillars Collection, rarely seen in an unbroken vertical, sold for £423,500 / \$507,819 (est. £320,000-480,000)
 - A decanter containing the oldest whisky ever to be released from The Macallan Distillery – The Macallan Lalique Genesis Decanter 72 Year Old – brought £84,700 / \$101,564 (est. £70,000-100,000)
 - A bottle of Karuizawa 52 Year Old Zodiac Rat Cask #5627 1960 became the most valuable bottle of Japanese whisky ever sold, achieving £363,000 / \$435,273
 - Two cases of Cheval Blanc 1947 – considered the greatest Cheval Blanc of the 20th century – each made £242,000 / \$290,182 (12 bottles, est. £140,000-190,000) and £229,900 / \$275,673 (11 bottles, est. £130,000-170,000)

STATISTICS ON BIDDERS & BUYERS

- Participants hailed from 21 countries, from across Asia, Europe and North America

IMAGES AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)

About Sotheby’s Wine

Sotheby’s Wine’s annual worldwide sales in 2019 significantly exceeded \$100 million for the second consecutive year, led by a 20% increase in auction sales to a total of \$118 million – the highest-ever annual total in Sotheby’s history.

Sotheby’s Wine, with a store located within the auction house’s worldwide headquarters on New York’s Upper East Side, offers a carefully curated selection of wines from the world’s most prestigious producers and important regions. Expertly assembled by Sotheby’s experienced specialists, the ever-evolving selection is built upon lasting relationships with winemakers from across the globe, with prices beginning at just \$13.95. With bottles that are ready for immediate consumption, in addition to investment-worthy wines from highly sought-after vintages, each wine is chosen for its expression of its region and value for money. Each bottle selected by Sotheby’s specialist team must pass the brand’s signature “three-glass” tasting guideline, meaning that the tasters must like it enough to want to drink three glasses, or the standard amount enjoyed when sharing a bottle.

The Sotheby's Wine Store in New York City is located at 1334 York Avenue, and is open Monday through Friday from 10AM to 7PM and Saturday from 10AM to 6PM. Along with a retail location in Hong Kong Sotheby's Wine also offers all bottles online, 24 hours, at www.sothebyswine.com.

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