



Boston Red Sox

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Wines Named for Josh Beckett, Jacoby Ellsbury to Raise Money for Charity

by **Tony Lee** on May 11, 2010 7:46:27 PM

Entering Tuesday, the Red Sox have quietly won 13 of 20 games and begun to put behind them a rocky start to the 2010 season. What better time to raise a glass?

Perhaps a ZinfandEllsbury will do. Or maybe you're more of a Chardon-K kind of person.

Those two wines, named in honor of Red Sox outfielder **Jacoby Ellsbury** and star right-hander **Josh Beckett**, respectively, are the latest releases from Charity Wines, which has partnered with several athletes – including eight current or former Red Sox players --to create a vintage vino with proceeds going to the players' charities of choice.



Both wines were introduced during a tasting at the House of Blues on Tuesday afternoon, where Ellsbury took a few sips and talked about being able to join a long list of players involved with the initiative, including **Jason Varitek**, **Kevin Youkilis**, **Curt Schilling**, **David Ortiz** and **Tim Wakefield**.

"I've been blessed with the ability to be a professional athlete and to be able to give back," Ellsbury told the crowd, which sampled both wines and learned of the two players' charities.

For Ellsbury, there are three such charities. Sales of the ZinfandEllsbury will provide support for Project Bread, The Ellsbury-Read Character Strength Project and the Navajo Relief Fund. While the first two will provide nourishment for New England children and promote child abuse prevention, the last of the three hits home for Ellsbury.

The speedy outfielder, who is the first player of Navajo ancestry to play in the majors, was presented with a bracelet he said reminded him of his grandmother, who is 100 percent Navajo.

Ellsbury talked about spending time with his grandma as a child. He saw her weave rugs and shear sheep in 120 degree temperatures with no air conditioning. He always appreciated the hard-working lifestyle, but he also witnessed some of the issues which plague people on the Navajo Reservation.

Currently, unemployment on the reservation is between 40 and 50 percent. Nearly half of the high school students drop out. More than 40 percent of people are mired in poverty. Teen suicide and diabetes are well above the national average.

Ellsbury recognizes the influence someone like himself can have on the young population.

"It gives them hope," he said of children on the reservation seeing someone of Navajo descent playing in the majors. "Not only in sports but in school."

Beckett was unable to make it to the event as he was seeking treatment for a tweaked back suffered before Monday night's game against Toronto. But the Josh Beckett Foundation, which supports community-based programs designed to improve the lives of ill, disabled or impoverished youth, was central in the event.

The proceeds for sales of Chardon-K will assist the foundation, which recently created a Fenway Park-themed treatment room in the oncology wing at Children's Hospital of Boston.

"With my new contract here in Boston, it is going to give me a chance to pursue even more opportunities to help the children of New England with my foundation," Beckett said in a statement read at the event by **Jason Oberle**, the executive director of the Josh Beckett Foundation.

In addition to the wine, Beckett raises funds for the foundation annually through the Beckett Bowl, which will take place at Lucky Strike on July 29.

As for the actual wines, the Zinfandel Ellsbury is described as having hints of vanilla and white pepper, with aromas of cranberries, blueberries and cocoa. The Chardon-K greets one with the aromas of a tropical fruit salad and is described as "a wonderfully refreshing summer wine."

While such flavors kept those in attendance satisfied, it is the wines' potential that has the players on board.

"These charities are close to my heart," Ellsbury said.

About the Author

Tony Lee is NESN.com's Red Sox reporter and has also covered the Celtics and Bruins for the site. A former reporter with the Boston Metro newspaper, Lee also covered the Celtics during their 2008 title run and has covered the Bruins, Red Sox and local college sports for a variety of publications. Before moving back to Boston in 2006 he served as the college basketball and boxing editor for an ESPN news wire service in Bristol, Conn.

<http://www.nesn.com/2010/05/wines-named-for-josh-beckett-jacoby-ellsbury-to-raise-money-for-charity.html>