

# A Charitable Evening of Aesthetic Delight

*In support of local charities in Hong Kong that serve the disadvantaged, the elderly, as well as women and children, friends and supporters of AmCham Charitable Foundation gathered on a Friday evening to celebrate the Chamber's years of continuous efforts in making a positive impact on society*

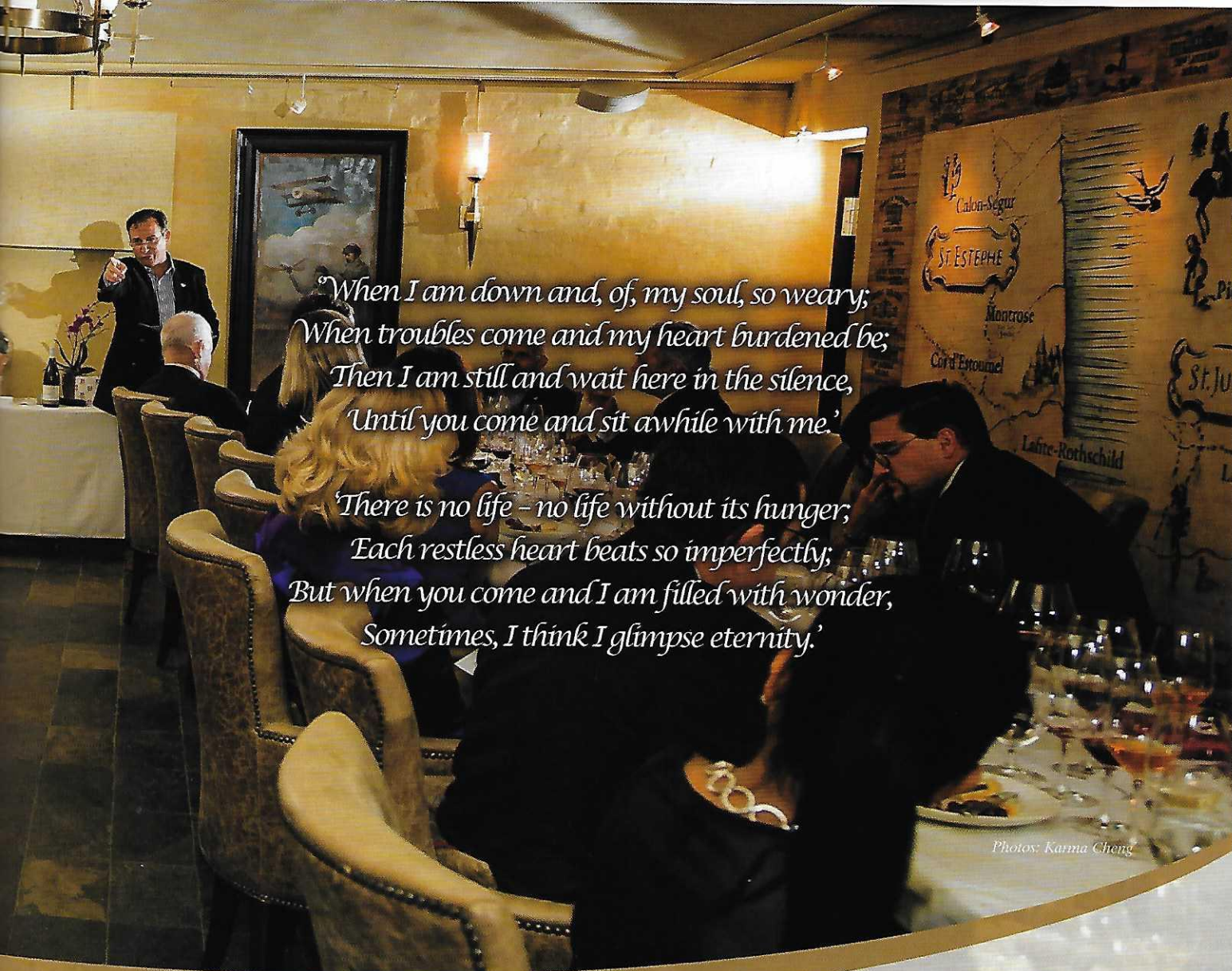
By **Queenie Tsui**

**I**f aesthetics is a philosophy of beauty and artistic taste, AmCham's Charitable Foundation Dinner is absolutely a representation of that: coalescing gastronomy, architecture, and beautiful minds in one setting in this season of Thanksgiving.

Friends and supporters of the foundation gathered at Crown Wine Cellars on a Friday evening to celebrate the Chamber's years of continuous efforts in making positive impacts on society through their work and support of local charities that help the disadvantaged, elderly, women and children.

Just before the dinner started, distinguished guests were greeted with a glass of Stellenbosch's premium





*'When I am down and, of, my soul, so weary;  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;  
Then I am still and wait here in the silence,  
'Until you come and sit awhile with me.'*

*'There is no life - no life without its hunger;  
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly;  
But when you come and I am filled with wonder,  
Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity.'*

Photos: Karma Cheng

bubbly as they stepped into the glass-housed conservatory to mingle under the stars while admiring the beauty of the architecture.

This is one of the world's most prestigious cellars and is the first underground club in Hong Kong. Known as 'Little Hong Kong', it was originally the Central Ordinance Munitions Depot and was the last place to surrender to Japan in World War II. The ex-military structure, declared in 2007 as a UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Site, was then taken over by Crown in pursuit of a visionary project to transform the historic location into a state-of-the-art wine storage and tasting facility.

As guests walked through the candle-lit tunnel to be seated in the

elegantly furnished underground bunker adorned with a hand-painted map of the Bordeaux region, President Richard Vuylsteke and Jon Zinke, Charitable Foundation Trustee and past AmCham Chairman, opened the evening. Everyone was treated to a music performance by budding musicians Jerry Sun and Andrew Cheung who beautifully sang *You Raise Me Up* that felt perfect for the occasion.

Zinke expressed his heartfelt gratitude to James E. Thompson, Charitable Foundation Trustee and Chairman of the Crown Worldwide Group, who for the fourth year hosted the dinner by sponsoring the extravagant venue, four-course dinner with wine pairings, as well as selected wines for the auction.

He also thanked AmCham Trustees James Sun, Robert Chipman, Thomas Gorman, Gage McAfee, and Governor Ryan Mai for their generosity in supporting the Foundation. (AmCham would also like to thank Zinke for his sponsorship.)

Before dinner began, Zinke announced the winner of this year's Ira Dan Kaye Community Service Award – Mike and Kay Rawbone, founders of Sailability Hong Kong. It is a locally-established international initiative that provides water-based experience and sailing instruction to the physically- and/or intellectually-challenged (see Page 34 for full story).

Along with an engraved silver plate, the winners received a check of HK\$30,000. "We're a voluntary





organization, we do not get government funding. [This] award makes a huge difference. It's the first award of this nature we've ever had and we would like to say thank you very much," says Mike Rawbone.

Additionally, it was announced that the Ira Dan Kaye Community Service Honorary Award will be given to Thompson as a recognition of his dedication and contribution to the community over the years.

"The Ira Dan Kaye Award, named after an AmCham Past Chairman who did so much for the community, is given out every year to recognize committed volunteers who serve the community generously," said Zinke.

The evening reached a pinnacle as

AmCham President Richard Vuylsteke gave out prizes for the lucky draw, followed by the long-awaited wine auction conducted by Gregory De'Eb. Seventeen lots of fine wine from Burgundy, Napa Valley, Bordeaux, Stellenbosch, Pauillac, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Saint-Emilion, South Australia, and Scotland were sold to wine-loving connoisseurs after rounds of competitive bidding.

With all the generosity from sponsors and guests, the Charitable Foundation Dinner added over HK\$200,000 to this year's fundraising campaigns for various philanthropic engagements throughout the year, including Prize Book Awards, Lyn Edinger US Scholarship, Scholar Awards for local

university students, as well as financial assistance to lesser known charities in Hong Kong serving the underprivileged every year.

Special thanks go to United Airlines for sponsoring two Business Class tickets to an Asian destination of the winner's choice; The Peninsula Shanghai for offering a two-night stay with daily breakfast for two and round-trip airport transfer by bespoke limousine; The Peninsula Boutique for giving a Peninsula Hamper and table prizes for all guests, Four Seasons Hong Kong for a dinner at Caprice with a bottle of wine at guests' choice; as well as Ritz Carlton for sponsoring a Dom Perignon Sunday Brunch at Ozone.





