



Chesson Hadley gives back to Napa community with help from local winery



September 15, 2021

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INSIDE THE PGA TOUR

Chesson Hadley's PGA TOUR journey

Forget Disneyland. What does the Super Bowl MVP know, anyway?

When Chesson Hadley was asked how he was going to celebrate after winning the Albertsons Boise Open in 2017 to lock up his PGA TOUR card, he knew exactly what to say.

“We’re going to wine country,” Hadley told the interviewer from the Golf Channel, reiterating a promise he had made to his wife Amanda. Then he even named the vineyards he wanted to visit – Alpha Omega, Frank Family and Far Niente.

Robin Baggett, an avid golfer who owns Alpha Omega with his wife Michelle, was watching on TV, and it wasn’t long before their phones started blowing up with text messages from people who had seen the shout out. And Michelle – “I’m a planner,” she says – leapt into action.

She reached out to friends at the other two vineyards and then contacted Hadley on social media. Later, she sent him and Amanda a lengthy email with restaurant and hotel recommendations and set up visits to wineries when they came to Napa a week later.

“They didn’t know us from Adam,” Amanda says. “... She’s like the most hospitable person I’ve ever met in my life. She basically planned our whole trip.”

The two couples got together that week, and a fast friendship was formed. The Hadleys have spent time at the Baggett’s homes in Pebble Beach and Lake Tahoe, and they are staying with them this week in the Napa Valley while Hadley plays in the Fortinet Championship.

“They’re awesome people,” Hadley says. “They have become great friends of ours.”

“A great relationship formed,” Michelle Baggett agrees. “I mean, we both have the same faith and the same values, and we both are very philanthropic with children’s causes.”

And when [**Hadley won the weekly RSM Birdies Fore Love competition**](#) at the PGA TOUR’s season-opener at Silverado Resort last year, he suddenly had \$50,000 to donate to charity. The competition lasts throughout the fall and the overall winner receives \$300,000 to give to the charity of his choice.



Michelle (far left) and Robin Baggett (middle left) with Chesson Hadley and his wife Amanda (far right). (Courtesy of Alpha Omega)

“That’s just one thing that’s so cool about the PGA TOUR and some of our partners and sponsors is that there’s stuff like this that we can do to give back and impact people,” Hadley says. “It’s really cool that have the ability to do that.”

He and Amanda decided to divide the donation. They knew they wanted to leave some of the money in the Napa Valley, a place they both love, the place where the tournament is played and a place that has suffered mightily in recent years from the raging wildfires in California.

So again, they turned to Michelle, who is the executive director of the Alpha Omega Foundation. They told her they wanted to make a \$20,000 donation to the winery’s charitable arm, but then they wanted the money to go to help young people.

Michelle suggested the Hadleys look at the Napa Valley Community Foundation’s website and one program stood out – the Fruit of the Vine Scholarship.

The Fruit of the Vine Scholarship program was established by a local grape grower who was able to graduate from UC Berkley back when tuition was just \$100. With that cost having increased exponentially, though, he saw a need to help – particularly those students who might be the first in the family to attend college and those whose parents work in viticulture.

Nearly 100 students have received scholarships, which generally run \$4,000 each year, since the program was established in 2014. Students have attended or are attending 19 different institutions, all but one of which is a California land grant university or college.

The Hadleys are among an estimated two dozen families who have made donations to the Fruit of the Vine Scholarship program. Terence Mulligan, the executive director of the Napa Valley Community Foundation, says their support “means a ton.

“Round numbers, it means one kid's going to be taken care of all the way through college,” he says. “A cool 20,000 is a really generous gift, and it means opportunity basically for these hard-working young people who are really the future of our community.”

Michelle Baggett agrees, saying the Hadleys “hit the ball out of the park,” when they decided to donate to Fruit of the Vine. The agriculture, hospitality and wine industries need bright young minds to learn and return to the area for it to continue to prosper.

“What a blessing for these kids to get a four-year paid scholarship for an undergraduate degree to hopefully come back to Napa and to continue the good work that we do out here,” she says.

Chesson and Amanda used the rest of the money that Hadley won in the Birdies For Love competition to make a \$20,000 donation to the Shriners Children’s Hospital and another of \$10,000 to help fund a golf scholarship at Georgia Tech where he went to college.

Those donations also had special meaning to the couple.

“My cousin is an orthotist and prosthetist there at Shriners in Greenville, South Carolina,” Amanda says. “So, she casts the artificial limbs and fits the orthotics. They were shocked, absolutely shocked, and they sent us some neat little videos of kids whose lives had been changed from their visits to Shriners.”

And Hadley says one of the reasons he’s playing the PGA TOUR right now is Georgia Tech coach Bruce Hepler.

“He does a great job of raising professional golfers, but also turning us into a functioning human being that’s going to contribute to society,” he says.

That’s exactly what Hadley did when he and his wife decided to leave some of the Birdies Fore Love money that he won in the Napa Valley which has been their “spot,” Amanda says, since the couple honeymooned there more than a decade ago.

Not surprisingly, long before they boarded the plane for California on Monday, the Hadleys – no longer the 23-year-olds newlyweds who “knew nothing” -- had been planning their activities in the wine country when Chesson isn’t playing in the TOUR’s kickoff event at Silverado.

They have their special places like Model Bakery where they get the brick oven-baked English muffins with jam that are among Oprah Winfrey’s favorite things. They’ll go to Bouchon for the macaroons and Rutherford Grill for the kale salad with peanut dressing.

“Obviously the wine's incredible, but the food is every bit as good as the wine out there,” Hadley says.

One of the highlights, though, was Tuesday's check presentation at Alpha Omega, where Chesson and Amanda got to meet two Fruit of the Vine scholarship recipients. Seeing first-hand how their donation made quite an impact on Chesson and Amanda.

“We are Christians, and we have a strong faith background, and this is what we are called to do,” Hadley says. “We believe that everything that we have, and we've been given is not really ours. Like God has given us these things -- our talents, our house and obviously our income, and we're just stewards of it.

“And so, this is just what we're supposed to do. It's really cool that I was able to win this and be able to give back and keep some of the money in the Napa community. And you know, I would certainly love to be able to do that again this year.”

<https://www.pgatour.com/beyond-the-ropes/2021/09/15/chesson-hadley-wife-amanda-give-back-napa-community-winery-silverado-birdies-fore-love.html>