



My first selection is the **2013 Winery of Good Hope Cabernet Sauvignon “Vinum” (\$19)**, which is not related to the Vinum Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon “The Insider” from California, which was a feature in December, 2014. This version is from South Africa and is the second tier of production of our old friend Alex Dale. Longtime customers may remember wines from his top tier, Radford-Dale, which enjoyed tremendous popularity five or six years ago. In those days they were the darling of the Season’s 52 restaurant wine list and really helped establish South Africa as a source for serious wines.

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The grapes for this wine are grown in the Napa Valley of South Africa, the picturesque region of Stellenbosch. This region lies east of the city of Cape Town, on the Western Cape of the continent. The valley is sheltered by several mountains, the Papegaaiberg to the west, Stellenbosch Mountain to the south, and the Jonkershoek, Drakenstein, and Simonsberg mountains to the east. The vineyards lie in the valley of the Erste River and up the lower elevations of the mountains, creating what is easily the most beautiful wine region that I have ever seen.

The town of Stellenbosch was established in 1679 by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel. In his typical style, he named the town of Stellenbosch, which means “Stel’s bush” as well as two of the mountains, Stellenbosch and Simonsberg after himself. What makes this region so special is that the soil at lower elevations is primarily clay, mixed with a decomposed sandstone.

All of the mountains surrounding this valley are made of a soil type that is traditionally called Table Mountain sandstone. This is a very old soil, thought to have formed between 300-550 million years ago when all of the continents were still connected, called Pangaea. During this time, a vast inland sea formed, and up to 6000 feet of sand was eventually compressed into what is today Table Mountain sandstone. As the tectonic plates shifted, this formed the previously mentioned mountains of the Cape Peninsula, which create the Stellenbosch wine region. Millions of years of weathering, including ice age era glaciers have greatly eroded these mountains, filling the surrounding valleys with loose, sandy, mineral-rich soil.

Sandy soils are considered “warm” by viticulturists, which benefit late ripening varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, and the local wonder boy, Pinotage. Stellenbosch also enjoys a Mediterranean climate, with moderate winters and warm summers. There are pockets of the region that are warmer and cooler than the average, depending on the exposition of the slope, elevation, and orientation to the ocean, which is only 15-20 miles away. For a wine like Vinum, which is made up of Cabernet grapes grown in two different vineyards, the variation in growing conditions helps to build even more complexity. While rarely as ripe as Napa Valley or Washington State Cabernet Sauvignon, most examples are considerably bigger than those from a European benchmark, like Bordeaux, and this deserves inclusion in the New World Red Club.

Winemaker Ben Radford is meticulous in his winemaking, whether for the top shelf Radford-Dale wines, or his second tier Vinum bottlings. All of the fruit for this wine was hand-harvested, then sorted twice before being placed in a fermentor. During fermentation, they performed cap-punching and pump-overs once a day, taking great care not to over-emphasize tannins or extract but to ensure good balance with the fruit and acidity. Once dry, two-thirds of the wine underwent malolactic in barrel, the rest in tank. The barrels were 90% small French oak, 10% American, a quarter new, the rest split between barrels up to four years old.

When you open this wine, you will want to let it breathe in a decanter for up to an hour. Once you do, it shows a deep color and exotic nose of black currants, black pepper, Thai basil, cooked black cherries, graphite, and roasted walnuts. The wine is firm in the mouth, with the dense fruit framed by fairly obvious tannins. While good now, this wine will benefit from a year or two in the cellar. Serve with any high protein dish, steaks, short ribs, or lamb chops.

My second pick, the **2013 Cor Cellars Momentum (\$23)**, is a dramatic blend that is produced from vineyards in the Horse Heaven Hills of Washington State. I have been wanting to feature this wine for some time, but timing has been tricky as the wine sells out quickly from the winery each year.

Cor Cellars is Luke Bradford, along with his wife, Meg Gilbert. Long time club members may remember my pick from her family winery, Gilbert Cellars Uncle Cragg’s Red, which I featured in August of 2014. Luke is a renaissance man with a love of the outdoors, who studied sustainable agriculture in college. This landed him on the slopes of Mt. Etna in Sicily, working harvest at Passopisciaro as well as an estate in Montalcino. He decided that making wine in Washington State also gave him access to his other two great loves, skiing and whitewater. I am sure that meeting Meg also had nothing to do with it...

For Luke the most important thing is finding sustainably farmed, low impact vineyards, which he feels yield exceptional fruit. When I tasted with him in November 2014, he was very specific about not only the vineyards he uses, but specific blocks within them. To this end he makes small amounts of several wines, using eight different growers and ten different vineyard sites. Each is a brilliant reflection of the site, or grape variety, with very little human interference in the final flavor.

For the Momentum wine, he uses grapes grown in the McKinley Springs vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills sub AVA of the Columbia River Valley. It was an early pioneer of the area, James Gordon Kinney, who is officially credited with naming the Horse Heaven Hills in 1881. When he first came to the region in 1857, Kinney was impressed by the knee-high grass that fed the large bands of feral horses that roamed next to the river. He remarked "the area offers excellent forage and comparative isolation... This is surely a horse heaven!" and the name stuck.

While it is hard to tell now, the soils of eastern Washington are volcanic in origin. The region was formed 300 million years ago as Pangaea begin to split and this portion drifted west, creating successive ranges of volcanos. For millions of years they erupted, covering the region with a deep layer of lava which, once hardened, is called basalt. The topography was formed as the tectonic plates continued shifting, creating the Columbia Plateau, of which the Horse Heaven Hills is the southern border. It is for this reason that the appellation is known for steep sloped vineyards that face south, with perfect sun exposure.

Like all of the eastern Washington vineyard areas, the Horse Heaven Hills are quite dry, especially during the growing season. One of the most distinctive traits of the area is very windy conditions due to the proximity to the Columbia River. The winds create slightly cooler growing conditions, which slows the ripening process of the grapes. Windy conditions also cause the grapes to have thicker skins, which for red wines accounts for their more tannic nature. For this reason the Horse Heaven Hills are known for producing dark, powerful, and age-worthy wines.

It is no surprise that a wine with such power is called Momentum. In order to produce a wine that is both powerful and polished, Luke blends several grapes to achieve balance. The 2013 is a blend of 32% Cabernet Franc, 27% Petit Verdot, 22% Merlot, and 19% Malbec. For Momentum, the wine is aged in French oak barrels for ten months, but none of them are new. When you open this wine, allow it to soften in a decanter for at least a half hour before serving. Once you do, it gives you a rich combination of fresh blackberries, dried blueberries, dark chocolate, graphite, and creme de violette. On the palate this wine is nicely dense and smooth, with a good sense of fruit and smooth, soft tannins and acids. This wine drinks very well now and will improve for a year or two.

## **Bacon Wrapped Pork Tenderloin Filets**

In full disclosure, this is a repeat of a recipe I used several years ago but it has remained a family favorite in my house. It works so well with the Vinum Cabernet, and I am sure with the Momentum, that it seems time to bring it back. The key to this recipe is to microwave the bacon per directions, so it is less fatty and more solid to work with. The sauce is a bit sweet for most wines, but it is so good with the recipe that I encourage it anyway.

**12-14 slices bacon (1 slice for each pork medallion)**  
**2 pork tenderloins (1 to 1 ¼ pounds each), trimmed of fat and silver skin, cut crosswise into 1 ½-inch pieces; thinner end pieces scored and folded**  
**Kosher salt and ground black pepper**  
**2 tablespoons vegetable oil**

and cook, without moving pieces, until well-browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Turn pork and brown on second side, 3 to 5 minutes more. Reduce heat to medium. Using tongs, stand each piece on its side and cook, turning pieces as necessary, until sides are well browned and internal temperature registers 145 to 150 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 8 to 14 minutes. Transfer pork to platter and tent lightly with foil; let rest while making pan sauce, then serve.

**2 teaspoons vegetable oil**  
**1 medium onion, halved and sliced thin (about 1 cup)**  
**1 cup low-sodium chicken broth**  
**1/3 cup maple syrup**  
**3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**  
**3 tablespoons whole grain mustard**  
**Salt and ground black pepper**

1. Place bacon slices, slightly overlapping, in microwave-safe pie plate and cover with plastic wrap. Cook in microwave on high power until slices shrink and release about 1/2 cup fat but are neither browned nor crisp, 1 to 3 minutes. Transfer bacon to paper towels until cool, 2 to 3 minutes.

2. Wrap each piece of pork with 1 slice bacon and secure with 2 toothpicks where ends of bacon strip overlap, inserting toothpicks on angle and gently pushing them through to other side.

3. Season pork with pepper. Heat oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add pork cut side down

## **Maple Mustard Sauce**

Pour off any fat from skillet in which pork was cooked. Add oil and heat skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high and add broth; bring to simmer, scraping bottom of skillet with wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits. Simmer until liquid is reduced to 1/3 cup, 3 to 4 minutes. Add syrup, vinegar, mustard, and any juices from resting meat and cook until thickened and reduced to 1 cup, 3 to 4 minutes longer. Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper, pour sauce over pork, and serve.