

FOOD & DINING

Pork chop dish wants wine with good acidity

By Bill St. John, Special to Tribune
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This pork preparation is put together, element for element, almost the same way as a fine wine, making such a wine the pork's perfect partner. There's acidity (lime, tomatillo), slight tannin (herb and vegetable matter), even a whisper of sweetness (maple syrup). What's missing in the dish, of course, is alcohol, which in no small way makes wine wine. But the dish also adds elements that can be troublesome for any wine, such as salt and chili heat. Just be sure that the wine can foil those two, with abundant acidity and moderate alcohol. Many whites and reds will do admirably.

THE FOOD: Cumin-crusting pork chops over green salsa

Season six 1/2-inch-thick pork chops with 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin and pepper, to taste.

Combine 5 tomatillos, quartered; 1 jalapeno, seeded, quartered; 1 small onion, quartered; 2 cloves garlic; juice of half a lime; 1 tablespoon maple syrup; 1/2 teaspoon salt; and pepper, to taste, in a food processor. Pulse until coarsely chopped. Transfer salsa to a bowl; microwave 3 minutes. Stir in 1/2 cup chopped cilantro. Meanwhile, cook the pork chops on a grill or under a broiler, turning once, about 5 minutes per side. Serve topped with the salsa. **Makes:** 6 servings

THE WINES

2011 Domaine Vincent Dureuil-Janthial Bourgogne Aligote, Burgundy, France: If in search of rapierlike acidity to pair up with salt, fat or chili heat, find it in this little-known Burgundian white grape; tastes like a Golden Delicious but bites like a Granny Smith.

\$20-\$25

2011 Truchard Vineyards Pinot Noir Carneros, Napa Valley, California: Superfine price for layer on layer of earthy, mineral and dark red fruit aromas and flavors, with round-the-mouth fine tannins. **\$27**

2012 Innocent Bystander Pinot Gris, Yarra Valley, Australia: What's coolest about this crisp white is its combination of luxurious, ripe apple-y fruit on the tongue, edged and finished with snappy acidity. **\$18**