

What's Cooking at CAB

With Chef Michael Ollier

How the West was won

It may have begun with Lewis and Clark, proceeded with the Gold Rush and concluded with those California girls, but after my recent experience in Sonoma Valley, I'm convinced red wine and Angus beef had a lot to do with the phrase, "Go West, young man!"

I've never been to anything quite like "Cab Lab and BBQ Boot Camp," hosted by Louis M. Martini Winery and the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand. It was touted as a celebration of one of the noblest of grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, sometimes called "Cab"), and its perfect pairing partner, CAB. Some of the country's most prominent food writers joined me at this unique California boot camp, from publications like *Reader's Digest*, *Wine Enthusiast*, *Forbes* and *Esquire*.

Now, admittedly, I'm a city kid, and any time I can get to the ranch is very special for me. Abbie and Mark Nelson's 5 Star Land and Livestock of Wilton, Calif., provided the perfect setting for our down-to-earth experience. Boot campers visited the winery, enjoyed a meal at third-generation winemaker Michael Martini's private cellar, Monte Rosso Vineyard, and then traveled to the Nelson ranch to see how they raise cattle in Sacramento County.

We talked about premium beef cuts and tricks of the trade. A campfire chat in the shadow of a chuck wagon with Tracey Erickson, CAB vice president, was an eye-opener for many. Tracey talked about you — farmers and ranchers, and why and how you do what you do to produce premium beef. She also spoke candidly about the tough topics that leave many consumers misinformed about beef.

In addition to lively discussions, the 'foodies' learned beef and wine pairing tips at the winery. They had hands-on time at the grill and even branded their own steaks. There were roping lessons and a wagon tour of the ranch. Lunch was catered by local eatery Buckhorn Grill, serving CAB tri-tip. It was a chance for East Coast writers to taste regional flavors with an ever-present theme: Cabernet and CAB make a perfect pair.

And that's something to remember this holiday season. A full-bodied red wine is a flavorful complement to a rich, celebratory roast. When preparing a special meal, keep these things in mind:

Step 1: The perfect red. Marbling in beef produces rich flavor. Choose dense,



► Michael Martini, a third-generation winemaker, hosted a meal at his private cellar, Monte Rosso Vineyard, as part of an event hosted by the Louis M. Martini Winery and the CAB® brand.

concentrated wines with heavy tannins when serving luscious roasts. "With hints of tobacco, dried fruit and herbs, Cabernet Sauvignon's flavors and intensity stand up perfectly to the richness of the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand. I can't imagine a more ideal pairing," says Martini.

Step 2: The ideal roast. Strip, ribeye and top sirloin roasts are ideal for special occasion meals. Each of these cuts will be tender and

juicy, with robust beef flavor. They are all widely available but may go by slightly different names. Check out www.certifiedangusbeef.com for our best roast recipes and instructional cooking videos.

Here's wishing you merry meals and happy holidays!

Until next time,

— Chef Michael



► Attendees at the "Cab Lab and BBQ Boot Camp" ended their experience at Abbie and Mark Nelson's 5 Star Land & Livestock with lively discussions, hands-on time at the grill, roping lessons and a wagon tour of the ranch in support of an ever-present theme: Cabernet and CAB make a perfect pair.