



WINE WONDER: For the Love of Wine's Robyn Martin introduced Webersburg winemaker Matthew van Heerden to local wine lovers PHOTOGRAPH: GARY HEMMINGS

Webersburg's boy-next-door

WHEN a wine maestro like Giorgio dalla Cia (maker of the legendary Meerlust Rubicon) recommends "the young guy next door" to take over his wine-making duties, as a wine farm owner, you sit up and listen.

That's what Fred Weber, owner of 200-year-old Webersburg in Stellenbosch's "golden triangle" of the Helderberg did, and he's surely not regretting it.

The boy-next-door was Matthew van Heerden – who already had a Diner's Club Young Winemaker of the Year award under his belt, along with a "world's best Chardonnay" trophy and a nomination as one of the top 10 winemakers in the world from the International Wine and Spirits

A VINE TIME



SAM VENTER

Competition – those for the Chardonnay he made at nearby Uva Mira.

He's now hauling in accolades for both Webersburg and his Matthew van Heerden Signature range, and said they're not so much about the personal recognition as about "show-casing what our country can do".

For Matthew, that's about pursuing purity of fruit with "passion and authenticity".

His Matthew van Heerden Chardonnay had even the most die-hard red wine devotees raving at a recent tasting at PE's For the Love of Wine, and deservedly so.

A gorgeous nose of burnt butter and citrus – delicate and elegant, reflecting his aim not to overdo the wood – leads into a big wine with elegance. Citrusy, rich and creamy, with no overpowering oiliness, balanced with caramel tones and a memorable finish – it's simply amazing.

His Webersburg Sauvignon Blanc delivers what he calls the "biltong effect" – like one nibble of biltong is never enough, you just want to keep on sipping at this wine.

There's a fresh, fruity nose, a touch of creaminess, silky-smooth mouthfeel and long finish – and lovely layers of granadilla and citrus.

His reds for Webersburg include the 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon of which, he says, "wine is like rugby – you don't want an explosive front row with no depth; rather focus on intensity and concentration in the back line".

The Cab is just that – very drinkable now, with fresh red fruit, a touch of the typical Cab mint and pencil shavings – and great balance and structure that suggests it will have some longevity too.

The big and bold Bordeaux blend has had two years in the barrel, the same as the Cab, and it's all fruit and spice, juicy, chewy and delicious – you have to believe Van Heerden when he says the wine "summarises the very best of the farm".

Webersburg and Matthew van Heerden wines are available at For the Love of Wine.