

Zimbabwe-born sommeliers becoming our finest wine stewards

 By [Anna-Bet Stemmet](#)

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It was quite an eventful week in the world of wine and we are happy to bring you some good news from around the globe. We're so used to hearing stories of doom and gloom that it makes quite a nice change of pace to focus on the great things that are happening when nobody is paying attention.

Here goes, your weekly helping of wonderful wine news:

Science finds yet another reason to enjoy that glass of red

The gist of it: Red wine lovers rejoice! Researchers have found a new benefit associated with resveratrol, the naturally occurring compound in red wine that accounts for its health-boosting properties.

The human body has three types of muscles: 'slow' muscles, 'fast' muscles and 'mixed muscles', which all respond differently to a high-fat/high-sugar diet. For the purposes of the study, researchers focussed on the hind leg muscle to see whether a resveratrol supplement would counteract the negative impact of such a diet. The soleus muscle, a large muscle spanning from the knee to the heel, is considered a slow muscle (which means it is more fatigue resistant), and responded to the diet by taking on certain fast characteristics. This sounds like a good thing, but it is not - it means the muscle tires more easily.



When the resveratrol supplement was introduced it counteracted this shift. So what does this science babble actually mean? It means that a supplement containing resveratrol (or a nice glass of high-quality red wine per day, for that matter) could potentially contribute to 'improved physical activity, mobility, or stability, especially in elderly individuals'. Now that's what we call great news! [Read more here.](#)

Zimbabwe-born South African sommeliers are becoming our finest wine stewards

The gist of it: It is almost as unlikely a story as that of the Jamaican Olympic bobsled team - young Zimbabweans are leaving their country to seek greener pastures in South Africa, reinvent themselves against all odds as members of the crème de la crème of South Africa's sommeliers and perform so brilliantly that they run the lists and advise diners at many of our most celebrated restaurants. This includes Tinashe Nyamudoka, the in-house wine aficionado at The Test Kitchen in Cape Town (the only South African restaurant that is listed in the S. Pellegrino World's 50 Best. [Read the full inspirational tale here.](#)



Tinashe Nyamudoka, Melusi Mghodi - Image sourced from www.thedailymeal.com

Bonus factoid: In the mood to educate yourself about the international wine trade? *Somm: Into the Bottle* is a wonderful documentary available on Netflix that introduces the world's famous winemakers and sommeliers who discuss wine as the beverage that is uniquely intertwined with the history of mankind. Viewers see some of the most storied bottles of wine opened and the history, the vintage, and the magic of these bottles is discussed by the best in the business. You can also download it from iTunes [here](#). If you enjoy that one, look out for *SOMM* - a 2013 American documentary following the attempts of four candidates to pass the extremely difficult Master Sommelier examination.

A Magritte wine bottle nude fetched US\$700,000 at auction

The gist of it: Christie's New York has sold a work by artist René Magritte that was painted on an empty bottle of claret for over US\$700,000. The Surrealist artist is perhaps best known for his painting *The Son Of Man*, which shows a man in a bowler hat behind a floating apple.

Part painting, part sculpture, *Femme-Bouteille* is one of a series of oil paintings Magritte did on empty wine bottles during the 1940s when wartime restrictions meant that canvas was in short supply. Christie's art specialist Jessica Fertig said: "Magritte began to paint on wine bottles because they were readily available. Those on which he painted female nudes have become among his most coveted." [Read more here.](#)



Christie's specialist, Jessica Fertig, with *Femme-Bouteille* - Image sourced from www.thedrinksbusiness.com

Bonus factoid: Magritte's first job was designing wallpaper and posters and after WWII he created counterfeit works based on those by Picasso, Braque and Chirico to make ends meet. He chose the titles of his original works at random and would often let his friend decide on the title while he was painting. The largest Magritte archive in the world is housed by the Magritte Museum in Brussels - it currently displays over 200 original paintings, drawings and sculptures by this prolific artist.

This week's Weekly Wine Wrap-up was brought to you by Juliet Cullinan Wines. The 26th annual [Juliet Cullinan Standard Bank Wine Festival](#) will be hosted on 12 and 13 July, 2016, at Summer Place, Hyde Park, Joburg. Tickets are available at [Webtickets](#).

ABOUT ANNA-BET STEMMET

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