Berkshire Pork Medallions with Porcini Mushroom Ragout and Soft Polenta
Paired with Alma Rosa Pinot Noir Clone 115, La Encantada Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills
By Michael Giarraputo of Madison, New Jersey

1½ lbs Berkshire Pork tenderloin
1 oz. Porcini mushrooms, dried (or 8 oz. fresh)
¼ cup organic fresh thyme, finely chopped
1 cup Rustic Coarse Polenta Integrale
6 oz. Oldwick Shepherd sheep's milk cheese, grated
6 oz. Heritage Guanciale, diced
1 organic shallot, finely chopped
1 cup organic heavy cream
4 oz. organic butter, unsalted

For the polenta
In a slow cooker, add polenta and 3 cups cold water. Stir. Cook polenta on high heat until water is absorbed, approximately 1½ hours. Lower heat to warm. Just before serving, add butter & cheese. Season with salt & pepper.

For the Pork medallions:
Preheat oven to 300F degrees
Slice pork tenderloin into eight medallions (approx. 1½ " thick).
Heat a cast-iron skillet on medium-high heat. Sauté the guanciale until lightly browned and crisp. Remove with slotted spoon and drain guanciale on paper towels, reserving approx. 2 Tbs of rendered fat in the skillet. Return skillet to heat. With a towel, pat dry pork medallions. Salt and pepper pork on both sides and add to skillet making sure not to crowd the pan. Sauté pork for approx. 3 minutes on one side. Turn once and cook an additional 3 minutes. Once browned, remove pork to an ovenproof dish, cover with aluminum foil and place in oven to finish cooking, an additional 12-15 minutes. Test for doneness -- when internal temperature of pork reaches 145F degrees, remove from oven.

For the Porcini Mushroom sauce:
If using dried mushrooms, cover mushrooms in a bowl with warm water and allow to soak at least 30 minutes. Drain mushrooms by squeezing out liquid back into bowl. Reserve liquid. Coarsely chop mushrooms. Pour-out remaining fat from the skillet and return to heat. Add shallots and stir. After about one minute, add mushrooms, thyme and guanciale, stir. Add liquid from mushrooms, increase heat to high and stir while gently scraping bottom of pan to loosen browned bits. Once at a boil, add heavy cream. Allow mixture to reduce by about ½. Reduce heat and keep warm. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Place two pork medallions on a plate alongside polenta. Spoon mushroom sauce over pork and polenta. Serve immediately.

Serves four.

Wine - 2008 Pinot Noir - Clone 115, La Encantada Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills.

Suppliers:
Berkshire Pork tenderloin & guanciale (Humanely raised & sustainable) Heritage Foods USA
www.heritagefoodsusa.com

Rustic Coarse Polenta Integrale (Certified-organic & heirloom variety) Anson Mills, Columbia, SC
www.ansonmills.com

Oldwick Shepherd sheep's milk cheese (Local producer)
Valley Shepherd Creamery, Long Valley, NJ www.valleyshepherd.com

All of the remaining ingredients were purchased locally at Whole Foods Market (Madison, NJ):
Organic Butter
Organic Heavy Cream
Organic Shallots
Dried Porcini mushrooms
Organic Thyme