

## **2001 Steele PINOT BLANC [ California ]**

**Vineyards:** This grape is the colorless expression of the red Pinot Noir grape. The Pinot family have very unstable genetics and the results are the many clones of Pinot Noir, the dusky colored white grape called Pinot Gris and this grape Pinot Blanc. Bien Nacido represents tropical fruit aromas and flavors as well as a green apple character in Pinot Blanc.

**Winemaking:** We started making Pinot Blanc so that we would have another white wine besides Chardonnay to have at winemaker dinners. In fact, we often call Pinot Blanc our "baby Chardonnay." Like Chardonnay, we ferment Pinot Blanc in French Oak barrels. However, we use only twenty percent new oak and bottle the wine in the early spring. This brings out more of the fruit and gives us a crisp, fruity wine with just a hint of oak. The combination of less new oak and shorter time in oak makes Pinot Blanc a great value and it is our favorite wine for summer drinking. The wine was lightly filtered and bottled in April 2001.

### **Tasting Notes**

**Textures** light weight - subtle fruit - crisp finish

**Pairings** include sushi, arugala salad with feta/raisins, any fresh fish roasted with olive oil, lemon slices and rosemary. This wine is unique and has flavors that complement Asian foods and is always a hit with any of the lighter foods of summer.

## **Azeitao Sheeps Milk from Portugal**

Azeitao is a hand crafted unpasteurized sheep's milk cheese (aged 90 days) produced at the foot of the Arrabida Mountains in the regions of Setubal, Palmela and Sesimbra in Portugal. The combination of climate and vegetation added so much to the special flavors in the cheese that these three regions were demarcated for the DOP in 1986 and in 1993 an association was formed to monitor the production of the cheese. 9 oz. Thistle flower is used instead of rennet.

Yet another Portuguese cheese recently qualifying for Protected Designation of Origin (DOP), Azeitao is a great example of the high quality cheeses emerging from Portugal. Named after its village of origin, this flavorful cheese is strongly influenced by its geographic location at the foothills of the Serra da Arribida. Here, the sheep milk is rich and fragrant, and one mouthful of Azeitao reveals its delicate balance of flavors – a result of the superb grazing terrain.

Aged for a minimum of 30 days, Azeitao has a creamy, slightly salty interior balanced by a slightly sharp and crusty edible rind. Best served at room temperature with some fresh peasant bread and a generous glass of wine, Azeitao is sure to be a crowd pleaser!