

## 2000 RAMSAY California Pinot Noir: Lot #15

Bottled: August 2nd and 3rd, 2001 --- Production: 13,426 cases

2000 was the perfect start of the new century, and the third-in-a-row great vintage we have had in California's North Coast for Pinot Noir. While crop levels were high in most varieties, Pinot Noir had very reasonable levels. Harvest was a bit late, but we had a perfect harvest season - warm and rainless.

Our fifteenth release of the now-famous Ramsay Pinot Noir follows in its predecessors' foot-steps. It is a blend made from selected lots of grapes grown in several of California's great Pinot Noir regions for the first time, all from the North Coast. Like previous vintages of Ramsay Pinot Noir, the blending of grapes from many vineyards is what makes it such a charming wine. Each vineyard offers its own particular set of nuances.

The melding of all these different nuances yields a blend with a wonderfully complex character, and a flavor and aroma range that covers Pinot Noir's own spectrum. In addition to obtaining grapes from many different vineyards, we also used several different yeasts in the fermentation of the grapes. Each of the yeast varieties adds its own "color" to the wine, and further increases the complexity of the whole. This wine was aged in a combination of French and American oak barrels. The wine was not fined, and was only minimally filtered at bottling.

To me, as winemaker, this Lot #15 Pinot Noir is a beautifully crafted wine. It has a wonderful array of the rich cane-berry flavors that are so much the fruit character I associate with good Pinot Noir. Above these fruit characters there is a good structure of tannins, from both the fruit and the barrels, and firm acidity that makes the wine come together in the mouth. The nose is a nice blend of good Pinot Noir fruit and oak, with major notes of vanilla, blackberries and allspice. To top off all the other sensory beauty of this wine, it has a wonderful filling and rich mouth-feel. I hope that you enjoy this wine.

**RONCAL** - Labeled "Denominación de Origen Protegida" (D.O.P.)  
Taste of the mountain - "The soul of the Valleys of the Pyrenees"

The "University of the Seven Val de Roncal Villages" in northwestern Navarre, on the border of Aragon, is a rural farming community with a single management of the pastures and woods. This administrative structure dates back to ancient times and guarantees an optimum and rational exploitation of its natural resources. Following a strict time-table set out by the Valley's Municipal government, Roncalese farmers have moved with their flocks each year, from the winter pastures in La Bardenas Reales, southern Navarre, to the summer pastures higher up in the valley.

The production of a cured variety of cheese using un-pasteurized sheep's milk is one of the main occupations of the farmers. The excellent conditions of evergreen pastures and the suitability of the Lacha and Rasa-Aragonesa breeds, selected especially for milk production, lend themselves very well to this occupation.

The traditional hand-crafted methods of making Roncal cheese are jealously guarded family secrets, unwritten and handed down through the ages from one generation to the next.

Characteristics.

Type of milk: Navarre and Latxa sheep.

Aging period: Minimum 4 months. From cured to very old.

Shape: Cylindrical, usually with dark gray or straw-colored rind.

Flavor: Well-developed and structured, buttery with an aroma of straw, dried fruit and mushrooms