

1999 STEELE PACINI ZINFANDEL [California]



Vintage:

The vintage of 1999 closely parallels the previous vintage of 1998. The year was characterized by a cooler than normal growing season, lower sugar levels and later ripening.

Vineyards:

Steele Wines purchases almost all of the grapes that we use. The only exception are the "Old Vine" Zinfandel vineyards. These ancient vineyards are few in number and very unique. Pacinin Vineyard is set in the western foothills of the Mayacamas Mountains south of the city of Ukiah in Mendocino County. This vineyard had passed its 59th birthday when the 1999 vintage was in full swing.

Food Pairing:

Somewhat lighter than usual because of the lateness of the vintage, this wine exhibits the traits that Pacini Zinfandel is known for. The wine always has earthy, brambly and mildly tarry flavors. Full flavored foods are what go best with this wine. Roasted meats, hearty stews, even barbecued foods are perfect choices to complement this wine.



Tomme de Crayenuse

Tomme de Crayenuse is often made with skim milk after the cream has been used to make butter. This is why Tommes are traditionally low in fat content (20-40 %). There are many varieties of Tommes, and they are often named after the village where they are produced. Tommes made in winter are from the milk of cows that are fed hay, very different from the Tommes made with the summer milk from cows that graze in the high mountain pastures. The maturing process often takes several months, which gives the cheese a thick rind with a rustic appearance. It is grey in colour with patches of yellow or red moulding.

Texture:

The pâte is pale yellow, nearly white and has small holes. It sticks to the palate and has odours of cave.

Taste:

The taste is soft and fruity, and occasionally one can detect a subtle flavour of grass.