



Fact Sheet

Founders:

Donald Ziraldo, Karl Kaiser.

Founded:

In 1975, Inniskillin received the first winery license granted in Ontario since 1929 (Prohibition). Winemaker and co-founder Karl Kaiser, of Austrian descent, produced Inniskillin's first Icewine for public sale in 1984.

Winemaker:

Bruce Nicholson.

Location:

Inniskillin Winery is located in Canada's Niagara Peninsula wine region in Niagara-on-the-Lake, just over an hour's drive from Toronto, Ontario's largest city, and a short distance from Niagara Falls. The Niagara Peninsula is bound by Lake Ontario on the north, Lake Erie on the south, and by the Niagara River on the east. The backbone of the Ontario's wine region is the Niagara Escarpment, a ridge approximately 100-160 feet high, which acts as a barrier to form a unique mesoclimate suitable for growing premium wine grapes.

The Wine:

Inniskillin VQA Icewine is an intensely concentrated sweet wine made from grapes naturally frozen on the vine. The process of repeated freezing and thawing during months of hang time until winter causes the grapes to dehydrate, altering their biochemical makeup while developing complexity and intensity. Inniskillin's Icewine is fermented slowly—sometimes for up to four months—and stops naturally at 10 to 12 percent alcohol. It is a brilliant golden color with aromas of lychee, apricot and pears with flavors of honey, mango and tropical fruits on the palate. VQA, the Canadian “Vintner Quality Alliance” mandates grapes for Icewine must be harvested at a temperature 17.6°F or lower and a minimum of 32°Brix (125 g/l of residual sugar) in the pressed juice.

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Vineyards: Inniskillin's Icewine vineyards are planted mainly to Riesling and Vidal. After the fall wine grape harvest, the grapes for Inniskillin Icewine are netted and left to hang on the vines. Then, in the heart of the Canadian winter when the temperatures drop to between 17 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit (-8 to -12 degrees Celsius), the grapes are naturally frozen on the vines and ready for harvest.

Visitors: The winery is open daily year-round.
Summer hours: (May to October)
Retail hours — 10:00 am to 6:00 pm
Public tours — Every hour from 10:30am to 4:30pm

Winter Hours: (November to April)
Retail hours — 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Public tours — 10:30 am and 2:30 pm

Visit www.inniskillin.com for complete details

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Extreme Winemaking

Making good wine is always a challenge. Throw in two to three months of risky hang-time for the grapes, netting an entire vineyard to protect against preying animals and birds, temperatures that fall below 17 degrees Fahrenheit, night-time harvesting, incredibly low yields, tricky fermentation and what do you get? Extreme winemaking. This is Canadian Icewine.

Icewine has evolved from the German *Eiswein* that originally resulted from an unexpected frost in the winter of 1794 when Franconian monks tried to produce wine from semi-frozen grapes and were euphoric at the resulting elixir. In Germany, where the climate doesn't guarantee a hard freeze, Icewine harvests are sporadic. But the climate of Canada's Niagara Peninsula allows for production of Icewine each year. In Canada, Icewine is produced from *Vitis vinifera* grapes including: Riesling, Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc, Gewürztraminer and from French hybrids such as Vidal.

After table wine grapes are harvested in October, the sweet, ripe grapes destined to become Inniskillin Icewine, are covered with protective netting and left to hang on the vine until winter. As the cold sets in, the grapes dehydrate and undergo biochemical changes due to the repeated freeze and thaw. This process concentrates the sugars, acids and extracts in the grapes, intensifying flavors and complexity. During the long wait, wind, birds and mold threaten the ripened berries. Inniskillin co-founder Karl Kaiser was familiar with the risks: one year, he watched starlings strip an entire vineyard bare in 30 minutes.

During a normal year, in late December or early January, a deep freeze envelops the Niagara Peninsula and temperatures drop to between 17 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit (-8 to -12 degrees Celsius) for an extended period of time. Sometimes with as little warning as a few hours, volunteers, friends, and long-time loyal harvest workers are summoned and the Icewine harvest begins.

In the heart of winter, most often in the dark of night for maximum cold temperature, the naturally frozen grapes are picked with great care to preserve as much of the harvest as possible. Yields are always very low; around only 10 percent of what might be a normal wine harvest. At picking, the sugar content of the grapes is between 38 and 46 degrees Brix.

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The freshly-harvested frozen grapes are then immediately pressed in the extreme cold, bypassing the traditional process of crushing and destemming. Most of the natural water content of the grape is pressed away in the form of ice crystals. The remaining juice is highly concentrated and intensely aromatic.

After racking off of the sediment (remaining solids), the juice is inoculated with a pure strain of yeast culture to induce the primary fermentation. The strain of yeast is crucial; high sugar conditions give yeast a challenge. The wrong yeast can make fermentation too rapid, diminishing complexity of the finished wine, or it can struggle under the pressure of the high sugar, risking a “stuck fermentation.” Most Icewine is fermented in stainless steel tanks, a process that is long and slow—often taking up to four months to complete—stopping naturally at 10 to 12 percent alcohol.

Inniskillin produces Vidal, Riesling, Sparkling Vidal and rare Cabernet Franc Icewine. In all Icewine, the balance of acidity and high sugar content yields an extraordinary and unique wine with intense and lively flavors unlike any other sweet wine available.

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Cool Climate Viticulture

The Mounties, great skiing, Niagara Falls—all familiar symbols of our vast neighbor to the North—but wine? Until recently, most wine lovers were not even aware of the variety of Canadian wines, but thanks to viniferous ambassadors like Donald Ziraldo, stellar reviews in wine, food and style publications, and numerous international awards, people are starting to take notice.

It's a far cry from the sunny, mild climate in Tuscany or Napa Valley, but Canada, one of the world's cool climate viticulture regions, is rapidly becoming recognized as a major quality wine-producing country.

Cool climate wines like those produced in Canada's Niagara Peninsula are characteristically higher in acids and aromas than warm climate wines. Icewine in particular owes much of its character to the increased level of acidity and aromatics. The acidity sustains equilibrium between the elevated concentrations of sugar in the grapes. Cool climates also produce added levels of fragrant compounds in grapes because of slower fruit maturation due to solar deficiency. The result of both is well balanced, highly aromatic wines.

Canada's Niagara Peninsula is a unique growing region where *Vitis vinifera* species flourish along with peaches, cherries and apricots, because of a special set of climatic and geographical conditions. For example:

- Lake Ontario has a moderating effect on the climate of the Niagara Peninsula. The lake absorbs and stores heat, releasing it whenever the surrounding air and land are cooler than the lake. This continuous warm airflow moderates winter temperatures and reduces the risk of spring frost.
- The Niagara Escarpment, a ridge 100-160 ft. high, acts as a barrier between the wine region and the continental shelf, creating a unique mesoclimate on the Niagara Peninsula.
- Soils in the Niagara Peninsula are deep and obtain a considerable quantity of mineral material from different types of bedrock, which influences vine nutrition.

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- Climatically, the Niagara region is similar to Burgundy. Both are on the 43rd latitude, enjoying long periods of daylight during the growing season, and an equivalent annual rainfall. Both areas can also experience unpredictable September and October rains.
- Niagara enjoys warmer temperatures than regions like Burgundy and Champagne throughout the critical vine growth period between bloom (June 10-18) and harvest (October-November).
- However, Niagara's winter temperatures in December and January drop precipitously, unlike Burgundy. The extreme cold temperatures generally do not affect the dormant vines.

Many other factors are important in the ability to manage for cold endurance. The grower must understand vine maturation, dormancy, canopy management, training systems, rootstocks, water and soil management, nutrient requirements and clonal selection to ensure the quality of fruit under unique conditions. Certain clones have been specifically developed for cool climates, enabling the grower to select characteristics that have a significant impact on the quality of the finished wine.

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Inniskillin Winemaker Bruce Nicholson

Born and raised in Ontario's leading wine region, the Niagara peninsula, Bruce Nicholson was fascinated by the winemaking industry from a very early age. Influenced by the profusion of vineyards, fruit stands and wineries "at every corner," his heart was set on being a winemaker long before he finished high school.

Gifted in chemistry like his father, who was a research technologist for an oil firm, Bruce embarked on an educational course that would marry both the art and science of winemaking. Following a couple of years at the University of Windsor, Bruce completed his studies in Toronto at Ryerson, where he graduated in applied sciences in 1983.

Back in Niagara, Bruce applied for employment at several leading wineries while dabbling with winemaking on his own. Eventually, after mailing in numerous applications to the Chateau Gai winery in Niagara Falls, he decided to drop by in person—a move that ultimately launched his career. His qualifications and determination impressed the winemakers and he was hired on the spot.

Joining Chateau Gai's winemaking team in 1986, Bruce's talents were soon acknowledged and, just 18 months later, he was offered a more senior position at a sister winery in Penticton, British Columbia, in the heart of Canada's Okanagan Valley.

Honing his skills in winemaking over the following years, Bruce was invited to head up Jackson-Triggs' Okanagan winery in 1993, and has since had the privilege of working with a number of international winemakers who have visited this extraordinary wine-growing region.

Driven as much by his love of life as by his love of wine, Bruce is now enjoying the fruits of his labors in more ways than one. Happily married with a young and growing family, he is now gaining professional recognition in the international arena. Responsible for creating the Jackson-Triggs Okanagan VQA wines that have won more than 1,400 awards in both North American and European competitions, he is most proud of the accolades from France and England.

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In 1999, Bruce's 1997 Proprietors' Reserve Riesling Icewine received the coveted Civart Award of Excellence at the Challenge International du Vin at Vinexpo in France. At the International Wine and Spirit Competition in London, England, he was awarded the prestigious Best Icewine trophy two years in a row and the Best Canadian Producer trophy an unprecedented three times.

Crowning his many achievements was being named Winemaker of the Year at the 2004 San Francisco International Wine Competition and Winery of the Year at the 2005 event, which he describes as the greatest honors of his career.

He views his January 2007 elevation to senior winemaker at Inniskillin as an amazing opportunity. A native of Niagara Falls, he has longed to return after 20 years in British Columbia. "I've worked with some of the finest people there," said Nicholson, "and I look forward to carrying on the tradition of great wines that precedes me with the founders of Inniskillin, Karl Kaiser and Donald Ziraldo."

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Inniskillin Co-founder Karl Kaiser

Austrian-born Karl Kaiser grew up in a private monastery school where viticulture and winemaking were a time-honored tradition. He was engrossed in studying the monastic winemaking history of Bergenland and, when he became a teacher in a vocational trade school located in a wine region, he became interested in winemaking. Kaiser went on to study with cellar masters in Austria and it was during this period that he chanced to meet the granddaughter of a local winemaker, Silvia, who was visiting from Canada.

Canadian Icewine aficionados have Silvia Kaiser to thank for wooing one of the world's finest cool climate winemakers to Ontario back in 1967. According to Kaiser, only Silvia could have drawn him from his beloved Austrian homeland to Canada. But once there, he had the good fortune to meet vintner Donald Ziraldo. The two men secured the first winery license granted since 1929 and established Inniskillin Winery in July 1975, and began planting Riesling, Chardonnay, other *Vitis vinifera* varieties.

Ultimately, Karl's hands-on learning in Austria melded with a biochemistry degree from Canada's Brock University and extensive research in both old and new world Icewine vinification gave him the impetus to create Inniskillin's unique style of Icewine. Eventually, the studious Austrian who might have been headed for the priesthood, would win the highest accolade at France's prestigious VinExpo in 1991, the Grand Prix d'Honneur, for his 1989 Vidal Icewine. The rest is Canadian Icewine history.

Kaiser, who retired in 2006, is credited with recognizing that the unique characteristics of the then-lowly Vidal grape were perfectly suited to making Canadian Icewine. He has been widely-acclaimed as the "father of the Canadian Icewine industry," as well as a being major influence in the avalanche of international attention paid to the production and enjoyment of Icewine that began in the last decade of the twentieth century.

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Inniskillin Co-founder Donald Ziraldo

Donald Ziraldo likes challenges. Twenty-nine years ago, Ziraldo co-founded Inniskillin Wines (which license was the first granted by the government since the prohibition days of 1929) in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada, with vintner Karl Kaiser, eventually creating a world-class Icewine that is presented on the wine lists of many prestigious restaurants in the world. He has also become Canada's premier ambassador of their burgeoning wine industry, as well as the most vociferous defender of Niagara region's scarce and precious agricultural land.

Born in St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1948, Ziraldo comes from a family of winegrowers from Northern Italy. At age 16, his father immigrated to North America where he worked as a gold miner for 23 years in the town of Timmins. Donald bears the souvenir of his father's strike in a gold ring that he wears constantly.

Ziraldo has pioneered the estate winery movement in Canada and was Founding Chairman of the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA), Canada's appellation of origin system and the industry organization responsible for rigorously maintaining the highest standards in winemaking. To ascertain that future generations receive the highest possible education in Canadian winemaking techniques, he was instrumental in creating the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute at Canada's Brock University, which is aptly named Inniskillin Hall.

Donald's vintner leadership has earned him numerous awards from the international business and wine communities. In 1993, he was appointed the Order of Ontario and, in 1994, was the American Marketing Association's Marketer of the Year. Also in 1994, he was granted an honorary Doctor of Laws from St. Catharines Brock University in recognition of his service to the community. In 1998, he was awarded the Order of Canada, Canada's highest honor for lifetime achievement; in 1999, he

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was chosen as one of the top 25 Canadian CEOs of the Century by the National Post Business Magazine, and in 2002 received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award.

Equally passionate about his philanthropic endeavors, Donald founded Murals of Hope, a Canadian non-profit that designs and creates murals and paintings in key areas of hospitals, shelters, group homes, and clinics, using art to deal with the physical, mental and emotional health of children at risk.

In November 2006, Ziraldo left Inniskillin to pursue a new endeavor as the Chairman of the Vineland Research and Innovation Center for Horticulture, a world-class research institution and international hub for horticulture and floriculture research, development and commercial activity. Additionally, he completed work on his latest book, written with Karl Kaiser, *Icewine: Extreme Winemaking*, which was published in the fall of 2007.

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The World's First Icewine Glass

Inniskillin Vidal Icewine was awarded the 1991 Grand Prix d'Honneur at Vinexpo in France, bringing unprecedented world attention to the Canadian wine industry and its emerging specialty Icewine. In the ensuing years, awareness and popularity of what has been called the "nectar of the Gods" vastly increased.

In 1998, Donald Ziraldo, President of Inniskillin winery, proposed the creation of an Icewine glass to 10th generation glassmaker Georg Riedel, President of Riedel Crystal. Mr. Riedel was quite enthusiastic as *Eiswein* had long been considered the ultimate late-harvest dessert wine in his native Austria.

Riedel glasses are known the world over as the most finely tuned instruments for the enjoyment of wine. Unlike most glasses, which are developed on a drawing board or computer, each Riedel glass is developed exclusively through an understanding of how different sensory characteristics are optimized. Following the Bauhaus principle that form should follow function, each glass is designed for a single individual wine and therefore has a specific purpose. While it cannot alter the wine, it can and does alter the perception of it.

Inniskillin co-founders Ziraldo and Karl Kaiser hosted a summit in Toronto in the fall of 1998, which was guided by Riedel. 15 participants, comprised of wine experts, educators, writers, restaurateurs and sommeliers, sampled four Inniskillin Icewines beginning with a selection of 12 glass shapes and sizes. During successive flights, glassware was eliminated as it was judged to be unsuitable until the group, by consensus, agreed on three: the Sauvignon Blanc, Sauternes and Vintage Port glasses.

Wine expert and author Barbara Ensrud chronicled her rigorous experience as a panelist in a 1999 *Wall Street Journal* story and quoted Riedel's thoughts on the process: "It's sort of like creating a baby."

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With copious notes in hand, Mr. Riedel returned to Austria develop a prototype. Nine months later, following a series of refinements and consultations with Inniskillin, the new glass went into production to be part of Vinum Extreme design series, as befits the extreme methods by which Icewine is made.

George Riedel returned to Canada in October of 2000 to introduce the new glass at a second tasting event in Toronto which coincided with the 25th anniversary of Inniskillin Wines.

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Cheese Pairings with Inniskillin Vidal Icewine

The difference between Icewine and other sweet wines is one thing: acidity. While all dessert wines are sweet, only the best ones have balanced acidity as well. This crucial element not only adds to the enjoyment of Icewine, but also to its natural compatibility with cheese. Cheeses are inherently savory and sometimes salty, and when paired with the dark honey, nutty, herbaceous with a hint of molasses flavors in Inniskillin Vidal Icewine, it creates a lovely balance that makes for a perfect pair.

Style of Cheese: Blue Cheese

Blue cheeses fall into three sub-categories: creamy, creamy-crumbly, and firm. The creamy blue cheeses, such as Gorgonzola Dolce, tend to be the mildest, while the creamy-crumbly cheeses, including Roquefort and Fourme d'Ambert, among others, are usually the most assertive. The firm cheeses, such as Stilton, are often salty but also quite earthy and sometimes even smoky. All three styles of blue cheese find an excellent partnership with Inniskillin Vidal Icewine.

Choose blue cheeses with predominantly earthy, grassy, pungent and salty characteristics: Cabrales (cow, goat and sheep's milk, Spain); Fourme d'Ambert (cow's milk, France); Gorgonzola Dolce (cow's milk, Italy); La Peral (cow and sheep's milk, Spain); Picon (cow's milk, Spain); Roquefort (sheep's milk, France) and Valdeon (cow and goat's milk, Spain).

Style of Cheese: Hard

Hard cheeses are easy to distinguish, not only because of their granular texture but also because they are most often salty, fruity, nutty and sometimes pungent. Their saltiness makes them particularly nice with Inniskillin Vidal Icewine, as does their relative sweetness.

Choose cheeses with earthy, floral, gamy and nutty characteristics: Shepherd's Way Farm Freisago (sheep's milk, Minnesota); Lavort (sheep's milk, France); Pantaleo (goat's milk, Italy); Piave (cow's milk, Italy) and Zamorano (sheep's milk, Spain).

Style of Cheese: Semi-hard

Semi-hard cheeses have the best balance between protein, fat and salt which makes them the most wine-friendly of all styles of cheese.

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For pairing with Inniskillin Vidal Icewine, choose semi-hard cheeses with predominantly buttery, earthy, floral, and nutty characteristics such as: Appenzeller (cow's milk, Switzerland); Beaufort (cow's milk, France); Comté (cow's milk, France); Gruyère (cow's milk, Switzerland); Hoch Ybrig (cow's milk, Switzerland); Mahón (cow's milk, Spain); Morbier (cow's milk, France); Ossau-Iraty (sheep's milk, France); Pecorino Toscana (sheep's milk, Italy); Roncal (sheep's milk, Spain); Bellwether Farms San Andreas (sheep's milk, California) and Twig Farm Tomme (goat's milk, Vermont).

Style of Cheese: Washed Rind

Washed rind cheeses can be distinguished by two main characteristics: the orangish or pinkish color of the rind and their strong aromas. They also tend to be salty because of the way they are made, that is: washed with a brine during aging and, almost without exception, they are quite creamy.

Choose cheeses with predominantly barnyardy, creamy, earthy, mushroomy, nutty, and salty characteristics: Brescianella Stagionata (cow's milk, Italy); Ardahan (cow's milk, Ireland); Epoisses de Bourgogne (cow's milk, France); Gubbeen (cow's milk, Ireland); Cato Corner Farms Hooligan (cow's milk, Connecticut); Langres (cow's milk, France); Cowgirl Creamery Red Hawk (cow's milk, California); Reblochon (cow's milk, France); St. Nectaire (cow's milk, France) and Taleggio (cow's milk, Italy).

Style of Cheese: Soft-ripened

Soft-ripened cheeses' white, "bloomy" rind distinguishes them, and their oozing, creamy centers make them memorable. The best pairing with Inniskillin Vidal Icewine are soft-ripened cheeses with mushroomy and salty characteristics such as Coulommiers (cow's milk, France) and Fougereus (cow's milk, France).

Cheeses pairings with Inniskillin Icewines were researched and compiled by Laura Werlin, author of *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials*, *The All American Cheese and Wine Book*, *Great Grilled Cheese* and *The New American Cheese*.

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Cheese Pairings with Inniskillin Riesling Icewine

Cheeses are inherently savory and sometimes salty, and when paired with the golden honey and light caramel notes, along with the excellent acidity in Inniskillin Riesling Icewine, it creates a lovely balance that makes for a perfect pair. The difference between Icewine and other sweet wines is one thing: acidity. While all dessert wines are sweet, only the best ones have balanced acidity as well. This crucial element not only adds to the enjoyment of Icewine, but also to its natural compatibility with cheese.

Style of Cheese: Blue Cheese

Blue cheeses fall into three sub-categories: creamy, creamy-crumbly, and firm. The creamy-crumbly and firm cheeses with creamy, earthy and smoky characteristics are best for pairing with Inniskillin Riesling Icewine. Choose Bleu d'Auvergne (cow's milk, France), Gorgonzola Piccante (cow's milk, France) and Persillé du Beaujolais (cow's milk, France).

Style of Cheese: Hard

Hard cheeses are easy to distinguish, not only because of their granular texture but also because they are most often salty, fruity, nutty and sometimes pungent. Their saltiness makes them particularly nice with sweet wines, as does their relative sweetness.

Two cheeses with these flavor characteristics that are excellent pairings are Asiago (aged, cow's milk, Italy) and Ewephoria (a gouda-like sheep's milk cheese, Holland).

Style of Cheese: Semi-hard

Semi-hard cheeses have the best balance between protein, fat, and salt, which makes them the most wine-friendly of all styles of cheese. Their main flavor characteristics include buttery, earthy, floral, nutty, possibly a little gamy (particularly in the case of some sheep's milk cheeses), sharp and maybe tangy.

The cheeses with predominantly earthy, gamy, nutty and tangy characteristics are the best pairings: Berkswell (sheep's milk, England); Condio Alle Spezie (an herb-coated cow and goat's milk cheese, Italy); Garrotxa (goat's milk, Spain); Manchego (sheep's milk, Spain) and Midnight Moon (goat's milk, Holland and the US).

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Style of Cheese: Washed Rind

Washed rind cheeses can be distinguished by two main characteristics: the orangish or pinkish color of the rind and their strong aromas. They also tend to be salty because of the way they are made, that is: washed with a brine during aging and, almost without exception, they are quite creamy. The main flavor characteristics of washed rind cheeses include barnyardy, earthy, gamy, meaty or beefy, toasted nuts and mushroomy or truffle.

Choose cheeses with predominantly earthy, gamy, nutty and salty characteristics: Grès de Vosges (cow's milk, France), Maroilles (cow's milk, France) and Jasper Hill Farms Winnemere (cow's milk, Vermont).

Style of Cheese: Soft-ripened

Soft-ripened cheeses' white, "bloomy" rind distinguishes them, and their oozing, creamy centers make them memorable. The primary flavor characteristics of soft-ripened cheeses are buttery, citrusy, cream-like, floral, mushroomy and sometimes salty. A subset of soft-ripened cheeses is *surface-ripened* cheeses, which tend to be the goat cheeses from the Loire Valley. These are a bit tangier, earthy and firmer in texture.

Soft-ripened cheeses with citrusy, creamy, cream-like, earthy, and floral characteristics are the best pairing such as: Bucheron (regular and ash-covered, cow's milk, France); Haystack Peak (Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy, Colorado); Humboldt Fog (Cypress Grove Chevre, goat's milk, California); Monte Enebro (goat's milk, Spain); Nancy's Camembert (Old Chatham Shepherding Company, sheep and cow's milk, New York); Nevat (goat's milk, Spain) and Selles-Sur-Cher (goat's milk, France).

Cheeses pairings with Inniskillin Icewines were researched and compiled by Laura Werlin, author of *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials*, *The All American Cheese and Wine Book*, *Great Grilled Cheese* and *The New American Cheese*.

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Cheese Pairings with Inniskillin Sparkling Icewine

The difference between Icewine and other dessert wines is one thing: acidity. While all dessert wines are sweet, only the best ones have balanced acidity as well. This crucial element not only adds to the enjoyment of Icewine, but also to its natural compatibility with cheese. Cheeses are inherently savory and sometimes salty, and when paired with Inniskillin Sparkling Icewine, with fine bubbles that lift the weight on the palate and lead to a subtle, burnt honey and earthy finish, it creates a lovely balance that makes for a perfect pair.

Style of Cheese: Blue Cheese

Blue cheeses fall into three sub-categories: creamy, creamy-crumbly and firm. The creamy blue cheeses, such as Montbriac, tend to be the mildest, while the creamy-crumbly cheeses such as Point Reyes Blue, among others, are usually the most assertive. These two styles are the best to serve with Inniskillin Sparkling Icewine.

Choose cheeses with predominantly buttermilk-like, creamy, pungent, and salty characteristics: Great Hill Blue (cow's milk, Massachusetts); Maytag Blue (cow's milk, Iowa); Montbriac (cow's milk, France); Point Reyes Original Blue (cow's milk, California); Roaring Forties (cow's milk, Australia); Rogue River Blue (cow's milk, Oregon) and St. Agur (cow's milk, France).

Style of Cheese: Hard

Hard cheeses are easy to distinguish, not only because of their granular texture but also because they are most often salty, fruity, nutty and sometimes pungent. Their saltiness makes them particularly nice with Inniskillin Sparkling Icewine, as does their relative sweetness. The defining flavor characteristics of hard cheeses include caramel, earthy, floral, fruity, gamy, nutty, pineapple and sharp.

Choose cheeses with the butterscotch, caramel, earthy, grassy, nutty, and sharp characteristics: Bitto (cow and goat's milk, Italy); Achidinha Dairy Capricious (goat's milk, California); extra-aged Cheddar (cow's milk, England and the US); extra-aged Gouda (cow's milk, Holland and the US); Montasio (cow's milk, Italy); Saenkanter (similar to gouda, cow's milk, Holland); Sbrinz (cow's milk, Switzerland) and Vella Dry Jack (cow's milk, California).

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Style of Cheese: Semi-hard

Semi-hard cheeses have the best balance between protein, fat, and salt, which makes them the most wine-friendly of all styles of cheese. Their main flavor characteristics include buttery, earthy, floral, nutty, possibly a little gamy (particularly in the case of some sheep's milk cheeses), sharp and maybe tangy.

Choose cheeses with predominantly buttery, sharp, salty, and tangy characteristics: Cantal (cow's milk, France); Farmhouse Cheddar (cow's milk, England and the US); Cheshire (cow's milk, England); Aged Gouda (cow's milk, Holland and the US); Mimolette (cow's milk, France); Pleasant Ridge Reserve (Uplands Cheese Company, cow's milk, Wisconsin) and Tomme Crayeuse (cow's milk, France).

Style of Cheese: Washed Rind

Washed rind cheeses can be distinguished by two main characteristics: the orangish or pinkish color of the rind and their strong aromas. They also tend to be salty because of the way they are made, that is: washed with a brine during aging and, almost without exception, they are quite creamy. The main flavor characteristics of washed rind cheeses include barnyardy, earthy, gamy, meaty or beefy, toasted nuts and mushroomy or truffle.

Choose cheeses with the predominantly creamy, earthy, nutty, and salty characteristics: Affedelize au Chablis (cow's milk, France); Edel de Cleron (cow's milk, France); Torta de la Serena (sheep's milk, Spain) and Vacherin Mont d'Or (cow's milk, France).

Style of Cheese: Soft-ripened

Soft-ripened cheeses' white, "bloomy" rind distinguishes them, and their oozing, creamy centers make them memorable. The primary flavor characteristics of soft-ripened cheeses are buttery, citrusy, cream-like, floral, mushroomy and sometimes salty. A subset of soft-ripened cheeses is *surface-ripened* cheeses, which tend to be the goat cheeses from the Loire Valley as well as some Italian (Piemontese) cheeses. These are a bit tangier, earthy and firmer in texture.

Inniskillin Sparkling Icewine pairs very well with a wide variety of soft-ripened cheeses with buttery, creamy, floral, mushroomy, rich and salty characteristics such as: Brie de Meaux and Brie de Melun (cow's milk, France and the US); Brillat-Savarin (triple-crème cow's milk, France); Camembert (cow's milk, France and the US); Chaource (triple-crème cow's milk, France); Constant Bliss (cow's milk, Vermont); Explorateur (triple-crème cow's milk, France); Fleur de Lis (Bittersweet Plantation Dairy triple-cream cow's milk, Louisiana), Gratte-Paille (cow's milk, France); La Tur (cow, goat and sheep's

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milk, Italy;; Perail de Brebis (sheep's milk, France), Pouligny-St-Pierre (goat's milk, France); Rocchetta, (cow, sheep and goat's milk, Italy); St. Andre (triple-crème cow's milk, France) and St. Marcellin (cow's milk, France).

Cheeses pairings with Inniskillin Icewines were researched and compiled by Laura Werlin, author of *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials*, *The All American Cheese and Wine Book*, *Great Grilled Cheese* and *The New American Cheese*.

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Cheese Pairings with Inniskillin Cabernet Franc Icewine

Cheeses are inherently savory and sometimes salty, and when paired with Inniskillin Cabernet Franc Icewine, which is sweeter and weightier on the palate with notes of strawberries on a faint, earthy background, it creates a lovely balance that makes for a perfect pair. The difference between Icewine and other dessert wines is one thing: acidity. While all dessert wines are sweet, only the best ones have balanced acidity as well. This crucial element not only adds to the enjoyment of Icewine, but also to its natural compatibility with cheese.

Style of Cheese: Blue Cheese

Blue cheeses fall into three sub-categories: creamy, creamy-crumbly and firm. The firm cheeses, such as Stilton, with predominantly earthy, grass, salty, smoky and spicy characteristics, are the ones to pair with Inniskillin Cabernet Franc Icewine. Choose Bayley Hazen Blue (cow's milk, Vermont), Shropshire Blue (cow's milk, England) and Colston-Bassett Stilton (cow's milk, England).

Style of Cheese: Hard

Hard cheeses are easy to distinguish, not only because of their granular texture but also because they are most often salty, fruity, nutty and sometimes pungent. Their saltiness makes them particularly nice with sweet wines, as does their relative sweetness.

Choose cheeses with earthy, fruity, nutty, smoky, sharp, spicy characteristics: Majorero (goat's milk, Spain), Parmigiano-Reggiano (cow's milk, Italy) and Valle d'Aspe Chevre (goat's milk, France).

Style of Cheese: Semi-hard

Semi-hard cheeses have the best balance between protein, fat, and salt, which makes them the most wine-friendly of all styles of cheese. Their main flavor characteristics include buttery, earthy, floral, nutty, possibly a little gamy (particularly in the case of some sheep's milk cheeses), sharp and maybe tangy.

For pairing with Inniskillin Cabernet Franc Icewine, choose semi-hard cheeses with predominantly earthy, nutty and sharp characteristics: Idiazabal (sheep's milk, Spain); Pecorino Sardo (sheep's milk, Italy); Pecorino Tartufo (sheep's milk, Italy) and Tomme de Savoie (cow's milk, France).

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Style of Cheese: Washed Rind

Washed rind cheeses can be distinguished by two main characteristics: the orangish or pinkish color of the rind and their strong aromas. They also tend to be salty because of the way they are made, that is: washed with a brine during aging and, almost without exception, they are quite creamy. The main flavor characteristics of washed rind cheeses include barnyardy, earthy, gamy, meaty or beefy, toasted nuts and mushroomy or truffle.

Choose cheeses with predominantly earthy, meaty, nutty, salty, smoky/bacony and truffle characteristics: Chimay (cow's milk, Belgium); Durrus (cow's milk, Ireland); Livarot (cow's milk, France); Munster (cow's milk, France) and Pont l'Eveque, cow's milk, France).

Style of Cheese: Soft-ripened

Soft-ripened cheeses' white, "bloomy" rind distinguishes them, and their oozing, creamy centers make them memorable. The primary flavor characteristics of soft-ripened cheeses are buttery, citrusy, cream-like, floral, mushroomy and sometimes salty. A subset of soft-ripened cheeses is *surface-ripened* cheeses, which tend to be the goat cheeses from the Loire Valley as well as some Italian (Piemontese) cheeses. These are a bit tangier, earthy and firmer in texture.

Choose cheeses with creamy, citrusy, earthy, floral, mushroomy and salty characteristics: Camembert (goat's milk, France and US), Chabichou du Poitou (goat's milk, France); Charolais (goat's milk, France); Crottin de Chavignol (goat's milk, France); St. Maure, (goat's milk, France); Tuma d' La Paja (sheep's milk, Italy) and Valençay (goat's milk, France).

Cheeses pairings with Inniskillin Icewines were researched and compiled by Laura Werlin, author of *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials*, *The All American Cheese and Wine Book*, *Great Grilled Cheese* and *The New American Cheese*.

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