

stratus

A MASTERFUL MATCH: STRATUS VINEYARDS AND THE CHEESE BOUTIQUE RELEASE EXCLUSIVE MADE-FOR-CHEESE WINE

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If you can count on anyone to perfect the matching of wine and cheese, it would be Afrim Pristine of Toronto's legendary Cheese Boutique. A "maître fromager" – or cheese master – as designated by La Guilde Internationale des Fromagers, Pristine, along with four generations of his family, have made an indelible mark in national food circles.

Today, the perfect pairing of wine and cheese reaches a new standard. Just in time for National Cheese Day (June 4), Stratus Vineyards and the Cheese Boutique are releasing an exclusive wine AND an exclusive cheese that were truly born for each other.

Nothing could be more natural than a wine collaboration between Stratus and the Cheese Boutique. "We have been working together on many levels since we opened in 2005 including a Cheese Boutique@Stratus event at the winery that has become an annual favourite", says Suzanne Janke, Stratus' Estate Director. It was during these events that Pristine's dream of creating his own wine was born. And now in 2022, after two-and-a-half years in the making, Stratus presents Pristine Cuvée Cabernet Franc 2019.

The Wine: To achieve the heightened fruity aromatics that Pristine desired, wines were selected from various barrels in the cellar that represented specific vineyard blocks. Stratus' founding winemaker J-L Groux affirmed, "Afrim has an astute palate and years of experience in defining the taste nuances in cheeses. It was intriguing to taste together and watch him apply that expertise to selecting this assemblage of Cabernet Franc."

The name "Pristine Cuvée" logically followed, as it salutes the family name, and it also evokes the bright, pure wine in the bottle.

Once the wine was created, to complete the pairing, Pristine then focussed on the cheese.

The Cheese: The Cheese Boutique started with three-year-old Ontario cheddar made expressly for them. It was then soaked in Stratus Pristine Cuvée Cabernet Franc and aged in the Cheese Boutique's famous cheese "cave" for 120 days. The wine-soaking resulted not only in a beautiful wine-stained exterior but also in a lush, fruity flavour that it has in common with the Pristine Cuvée Cabernet Franc. The cheddar has a perfect salty sharpness, and it blends beautifully with the fresh, fruity wine.

"We are very proud of the aesthetic of this cheese, the way it pairs with our bespoke wine, and we are grateful for our innovative, qualitative collaboration with Stratus Vineyards," said Pristine. "Adding to our extensive collection of cheeses from around the globe, it's exciting to launch a very local cheese made with a wine grown so close to home."

Stratus will be on-site at the Cheese Boutique on June 4 (noon – 3:30 pm), National Cheese Day, to sample and sell the new Pristine Cuvée Cabernet Franc. The wine is sold in single bottle and six-bottle collections (\$39/750 ml bottle) (\$235.20 with bottle deposit) and the first 100 bottles will be personally signed by Afrim Pristine. The six-bottle collections will also be available from Stratus' webstore (www.stratuswines.com) beginning June 4.

Not only will "foodies" benefit from this perfect match, but so will mental health charities. The Cheese Boutique has pledged \$1.00 from the sale of every bottle to the Cheese Boutique Mental Health Promise Fund at St. Joseph's. (www.supportstjoes.ca/cheeseboutique)

For more information contact:

Suzanne Janke
Estate Director
Stratus Vineyards
suzannejanke@stratuswines.com
905.321.0281

Afrim Pristine
Cheese Boutique
afrim@cheeseboutique.com
416.697.5422

