

2020

ALL YOU NEED TO SELL CHEESE SUCCESSFULLY

# CHEESE BUYER

From the publishers of  
SPECIALITY FOOD

MAGAZINE

## The Finest Cheese Around the World

What Britain can learn from  
international markets



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# WELCOME TO CHEESE BUYER



**W**elcome to the 2020 edition of *Cheese Buyer*, brought to you by the team behind *Speciality Food*.

The reputation of great cheese as being an 'affordable luxury' is rising, even in such uncertain times as this. At the time of going to print, the UK – together with countries across the world – is on lockdown as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, meaning that the opportunity to enjoy excellent cheese in company is on pause, and many people's budgets have been tightened.

However, across Britain cheesemakers are still transforming milk into fabulous cheeses, and shoppers have



been purchasing these online – and enjoying doorstep delivery – as a delicious treat to add some brightness to their days at home.

There's no better time to celebrate the makers and mongers producing and selling these wonderful cheeses, so within these pages you will find profiles of some of the very best cheesemakers within the UK and beyond, as well as some helpful advice to boost your community spirit and sales – and a look at some of the international markets to take inspiration from.

Until next time.

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# MASTERS OF DUTCH GOUDA

How Treur Kaas became a specialist in maturing premium cheeses

**F**ounded in 1955 by Evert Treur, family business Treur Kaas is now guided by second generation leaders Daan and René Treur. The company has evolved over the years and has explored the need for Dutch Gouda Cheeses to be matured in specific natural conditions. With passion and a consistently high commitment, the family has built up their own warehouse, knowledge from maturing Goudas and a network at the top of the Gouda cheese world. The business has become a specialist in the sourcing and ageing of premium Dutch Gouda cheeses and supplies the best of Dutch cheese to wholesalers, retailers and specialty shops around the world.

In order to continue to provide for the generations to come, Treur Kaas has a dedicated basement for storing and maturing around 200

tonnes of cheese. The basement is located deep in the ground, ensuring a consistent temperature which is ideal for ageing cheese.

The team works together with artisanal cheesemakers and farmers who have the knowledge and passion to make the finest Gouda cheeses to serve the high-end customer. Organic or non-organic, with herbs or plain, made of cow's, goat's or sheep's milk, Treur Kaas has it all.

The company's high quality cheeses have acquired a number of renowned awards. Last year, several of its cheeses won the gold award at the International Cheese Awards in Nantwich, and in 2016 they picked up the Supreme Champion accolade. This year the company celebrates two milestones – 65 years in business and founder Evert Treur's 90th birthday.



From left to right: René Treur, Eduard Treur, Evert Treur and Daan Treur



“ Treur Kaas is a specialist in the sourcing and ageing of premium Dutch Gouda cheeses ”



**Villa Truffo**  
Dutch farmstead cheese with real Italian black truffle. A true delicacy!



**Villa Verde**  
Farmstead cheese with green pesto, pine nuts & fenugreek. An eye-catcher!



**Bon Repas**  
Unique farmstead cheese, type Emmental. Really creamy & a little sweet.



**Geitenstee Sea lettuce**  
A creamy goat cheese with sea lettuce. Matured for 8 weeks. Full of taste!

## Matured with family expertise

Treur Kaas is established in 1955 with the aim to become the specialist in aging Dutch specialty cheese. Surprising the world with excellent cheese is our passion. We supply the best Dutch cheese to wholesalers, retailers and specialty shops around the world.







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*Portions*



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200g x12



200g x10



125g x12



100g x10



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*Grated*



150g x16

*Slices*



150g x12



150g x12



150g x12



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# HOW TO BECOME AN AWARD-WINNING CHEESEMONGER

With multiple awards under its belt, The Courtyard Dairy is well-placed to offer advice on standing out from the crowd



**W**ith its out-of-the-way location and unassuming air, it would be easy to assume that Andy and Kathy Swinscoe's cheesemongers would be a sleepy mecca for lovers of cheese. But this is far from the case. Thanks to the pair's passion for the cheeses they sell and support for the people who produce them, an equally passionate – yet small – team, and a perfectly curated selection of lovingly cared-for cheeses, The Courtyard Dairy counts among its accolades the recent title of Retailer of the Year of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2020.

Based in Settle, North Yorkshire, might mean a smaller audience than for those based in a city – especially London – you might think, but with a clever balance of charm and ingenuity the business has amassed followers from much further afield. Cheese Buyer caught up with Andy to find out just how his grass roots approach has led to such great success.

## Be a destination for locals and visitors alike

First up, we discussed the cornerstones to a great cheese retailer. Andy's response: "Don't stock anything you're not proud of and wouldn't want to sell to a friend. This pride in what's sold at The Courtyard Dairy has two other facets: "Know your products inside and out" – this means all

members of the team ("so key but so overlooked!" Andy states) – and that less is more: "Champion a smaller range, as that way they'll be in better condition and you and your staff are more likely to know about them".

Courtyard Dairy is based in quite a rural, remote area – how does it ensure repeat custom? "By making our shop a destination and working closely with other retailers/attractions in the area so we can give people a reason to visit for the day," explains Andy. "If you make the shop truly special people really will travel a fair distance just to buy cheese." A beautiful region often visited by residents from elsewhere in the UK, North Yorkshire is a haven for the tourist pound. "We have flyers that go out and rely a lot on roadside advertising".

And yet, Andy describes The Courtyard Dairy's regular trade as its "bread and butter." Asked

how he manages to maintain this alongside the tourist trade, Andy explains, "We top up in the summer with visitors, but locals-wise we simply try to maintain an active part in the community – as a family and business – making sure we contribute to the local economy and its activities. Doing a great job for the locals tends to spread the word."

## Sell the very best cheese you can get

When it comes to securing the very best stock for his shop, Andy swears by connecting properly with suppliers – even down to ordering:

"Talk to suppliers, the phone is a lot better than an email with a list of cheeses you want". The team at The Courtyard Dairy invests time and resources into getting to know the people and locations behind the cheeses they bring in. As Andy explains, "we spend a fair bit of time visiting our suppliers. That way we can hopefully build a relationship and they can understand the profile we like". Good relations with suppliers doesn't end there: "it's key to pay suppliers early and pay compliments," says Andy, continuing, "It's easy to say something when a cheese is a

## NEED TO KNOW

- We try not to compromise in anything we do, even if it means we turn business down
- We have an ethos behind the business and try to achieve that every day
- Keep staff happy - they are what people get when they visit The Courtyard Dairy, not me





“ We try not to compromise in anything we do, even if it means we turn business down ”

bit 'flat' or not as good as normal, but when something is 'bob-on' or amazing – that's the more important time to give feedback and ask for more like that!"

### Become a master of cheese care

After spending so much time and effort sourcing the very best cheese for your counter, it's imperative that you pay equal attention to ensuring that it leaves your premises in perfect condition, too. How does Andy and The Courtyard Dairy team maintain the quality these great cheeses deserve? "We have a few different fridges and maturation cabinets," he explains. As well as having the right kit for the job, the team "evaluates each wheel when it arrives and determine what to do with it then, rather than just doing the same thing each time with the same cheese." There is no one-size-fits-all solution in this scenario: "If we're not sure we might try two or three different things

then evaluate the quality/weight loss at the end to see what worked best for next time." It takes time and experience to trust this somewhat experimental method: "Some cheese are left wrapped or boxed, some are overwrapped, some are washed... It's quite a fun bit of the job to see how different cheeses behave!" he says.

### Add value with good quality 'extras'

Part and parcel of being an award-winning retailer is creating a full experience for your customers, and Andy has done this with aplomb – while keeping his efforts true to The Courtyard Dairy's keep-it-simple approach. As well as staff sharing their knowledge regarding perfect pairings, cheese care at home and recommendations, The Courtyard Dairy team sends out newsletters to their database full of detailed information about cheese

for their aficionado customers, as well as sharing a number of recipe suggestions from local chefs on their website alongside cheese care tips and insider knowledge.

### THE DOS & DON'TS OF AWARD-WINNING CHEESE RETAIL

Andy shares his hard-won tips:

- Do taste out as much as possible - don't be afraid of giving too much away
- Do educate your staff and take them to visit key suppliers. I love the saying "what's worse than having to train a member of staff and they leave - you don't train them and they stay!"
- Don't stock too many different types – be confident in what you have
- Do champion something different or local and push it out – really get behind it and sell it
- Do come up with a sourcing ethos and stick to it
- Don't pre-cut or vac/cling/cyro wrap cut pieces of cheese



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# MASTERS OF INDULGENCE

Godminster's decadent black truffle Cheddar is set to become a cheese counter classic

No fine food lover's pantry is complete without a great quality Cheddar and notes of truffle, and Godminster has applied its cheesemaking knowledge to create a perfectly balanced combination of these two classic flavours. "Pairing premium black truffles with Cheddar is a booming trend – just look at the amount of black truffle mac and cheese recipes there are! – and we wanted to create something

that marries those two classic flavours together," says Jessica Kimber-Holloway, commercial and operations director at Godminster. The cheesemaker is staying true to its organic roots: "We knew that there was a huge gap in the market for an organic version too, so we're happy to say we're also the first Black Truffle Vintage Organic Cheddar in the world," she continues.

Godminster's waxed 200g Black Truffle Vintage Organic Cheddar, launched in September 2019, has been an "amazing success" – winning gold at the International Cheese Awards – "so we knew we were onto something special," says Jessica.

A 1kg cutting counter version was the natural next step, as



Jessica explains: "Our sales team have been inundated with requests for a larger cutting version so that deli counters can provide hand-cut slices weighed out to the customer's needs." Godminster's 1kg Vintage Organic Cheddar and 1kg Oak-Smoked Vintage Organic Cheddars are two of the cheesemaker's most popular product lines for cheese counters, "so it was logical to complete the trio!"

## How to sell

"When recommending cheese board choices for customers, the Black Truffle Vintage Organic Cheddar is a perfect 'something special' element within a cheese selection," she continues.

"We supply ready-to-go sampling packs of pre-cut cheese tasters to accompany our Black Truffle Vintage Organic Cheddar as we know that pro-active sampling with customers is a great way to introduce them to speciality cheeses in your counter."

## PERFECT SERVING

"When it comes to enjoying Black Truffle Cheddar at home, it makes the perfect addition to a decadent Welsh rarebit," Jessica suggests.



## Introducing... 1kg Black Truffle Vintage Organic Cheddar

Gold award-winner at the International Cheese Awards 2019

To order your stock now or for more information on the Godminster range please contact our team on **01749 813733** or email [sales@godminster.com](mailto:sales@godminster.com)

- A blend of authentically-hunted truffles and award-winning Vintage Organic Cheddar
- The first organic Black Truffle cheddar in the world
- 200g samples available on request



We're maintaining close contact with our couriers and hauliers to ensure we can continue to deliver our award-winning range of Vintage Organic Cheddar to all customers nationwide. All Godminster waxed products have long shelf lives and plenty of availability, so call or email the team to find out how we can help you with your requirements.



# 35 YEARS OF QUALITY

Delamere Dairy is celebrating a major milestone with perks for its loyal customers

Since its launch 35 years ago when founders Liz and Roger Sutton brought their first three goats onto their farm in Delamere Forest, Delamere Dairy has become a respected brand around the world. It supplies independent, retail and wholesale customers across the UK and beyond with an extensive range of speciality goat's, cow's and sheep milk products including cheese,

milk, butter and yoghurts, which are widely popular thanks to their quality, health credentials and great flavour.

As well as being a good source of calcium, goat and sheep milk products come with a host of health benefits. "Over 80% of our customers buy goats' milk for health reasons, and once they find a reliable source, they become a regular purchaser," explains Ed Salt, MD of Delamere. These customers report that they are easier to digest than traditional dairy, and ease

symptoms relating to skin and respiratory conditions (such as eczema, psoriasis and asthma), relieving congestion and mucus. Other consumers simply prefer the taste.



## CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

Delamere Dairy will be running an on-pack promotion to celebrate its 35th year, whereby customers will collect gold tokens in exchange for Delamere merchandise. More information can be found at [delameredaairy.co.uk/living/35years](http://delameredaairy.co.uk/living/35years).

The business will also be celebrating the people behind its success with a party and a range of initiatives focusing on the family element to the business – including Meet the Team content and interviews with its longest serving members of staff, and insights into life on Delamere's goat farms.

Goat's cheese consumption continues to grow in popularity and is more mainstream than it once was, potentially due to its popular use on restaurant menus and the plethora of TV cookery programmes. It is incredibly versatile, and Delamere offers a wide range of options, from a Mild Spreadable Goat's Cheese and Greek Goat's Cheese (similar to Feta) to a Natural Goat's Cheese Log; there's even a

goat's cheese log infused with honey to satisfy customers with sweeter palates.

The introduction of Cheddar-style goat's cheeses (in addition to the French-style logs) has been equally popular. Delamere offers mild and medium Cheddar-style goat's cheeses which can be used in the same way as ordinary Cheddar, while adding real depth of flavour to recipes and sauces.



"Close working relationships with our farmers, packing sites, staff and customers are key to our business, and in our 35th year, this loyalty to each other is something we are proud to celebrate and attribute much of our success to"

ED SALT, MD AT DELAMERE



## Complete your cheese offering with Delamere Dairy cheese

There's a cheese to suit everyone in our award winning range - from our mild and creamy spreadable goats' cheese, to our delicately sweet honey log, to our deliciously tasty sheep cheese.

All of our cheeses are very versatile and taste great in sandwiches and sauces, as well as served straight from the cheeseboard.



For more information please visit...

[www.delameredaairy.co.uk](http://www.delameredaairy.co.uk)







# HOW TO PAIR KALTBACH'S FINEST CHEESES

The unique flavour notes within the cheeses hailing from Switzerland's Kaltbach caves allow for a plethora of delicious accompaniments to be explored

**W**hen it comes to the perfect cheeseboard, no selection is complete without a taste of Switzerland courtesy of some delicious Swiss cheese from the Kaltbach caves in the region of Lucerne, Switzerland.

There's a wide range of options to choose from, from ever-popular Kaltbach Creamy to the classic Swiss cheese Gruyère, so there's sure to be an option to suit everyone's appetite. Each cheese in the Kaltbach range lends itself to both sweet and savoury pairings thanks to complex flavour notes perfected by generations of cavemasters.

## Only the finest will do

As ever in the fine food world, it's important that the accompaniments you stock to accompany fine cheeses like the ones produced in Switzerland's Kaltbach caves are of an equally high quality. For generations, the team working within the Kaltbach caves have applied their passion and expertise to the production of some of the

world's finest cheeses, and so only the best accompaniments will do such a cheese selection justice.

In partnership with the team at Kaltbach, *Speciality Food* has created a selection of perfect pairings for independent fine food retailers and their customers to enjoy. Once you've mastered these, and familiarised yourself with the unique flavours within Kaltbach's cheese range, why not create your own? This could be the perfect opportunity to build relationships with your customer base by holding Swiss cheeseboard-themed tasting events. Offer a wide selection of

accompaniments – from fruit, chocolate and preserves to cheese biscuits and beverages – and allow your customers to explore their favourite pairings. You never know, this could lead to a new top-selling upsell option and lead you to rethink your cheese accompaniment selection, especially if you include some wildcard products.

## Delicious pairing suggestions

### Kaltbach Creamy

Kaltbach Creamy, with its flavoursome taste and smooth texture, is the ideal partner for sweet flavours such as raspberries, blackberries, pineapple and honey. The sweet sharpness within these partners cuts through the creamy texture with aplomb and affords the eater the perfect balance of sweet and savoury. Pomegranates offer another delicious partnership for this creamy Swiss cheese. Try serving a half cut pomegranate and bowl of pomegranate seeds alongside your Kaltbach creamy; the fruit not only tastes wonderful with the cheese but also makes



a colourful decoration for your cheeseboard.

*Drink with:* light, bright beers and wines such as Berliner Weisse or a tart Gose, Chardonnay, Reisling or Chenin Blanc.

### Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP

The flavour of Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP makes it a delicious partner for savoury dishes. Perfect with mushrooms, melted within potatoes au gratin, and even served within Indian dishes such as naan bread with chutney. Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP is also particularly delicious with nut butter. Opt for almond or cashew butter rather than peanut options, as the latter can often be too overpowering for the delicately balanced cheese. Also, try serving dried apricots and other fruits alongside your Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP – their rich flavour and texture make for a tasty and satisfying pairing.

*Drink with:* Cabernet Sauvignon, oaked Chardonnay or gin and tonic

### Kaltbach Le Gruyère AOP

Meanwhile, Kaltbach Le Gruyère AOP – with its notes of dried stone fruit, black tea and spice – has possibly the most indulgent perfect partner: white chocolate. A perhaps surprising option but truly mouthwatering, the nutty, mouth-filling flavour of Le Gruyère AOP is deliciously tempered with the creamy vanilla sweetness of quality white chocolate. Its affinity to sweet flavours means that it's also



“ My favourite cheese in here is a fine, tasty Gruyère. When it's just becoming slightly crunchy within your teeth and then, there's this strong flavour of the aroma. This bouquet that unfolds. It is really fascinating. I prefer a really tart, pure, acid flavour. My colleagues, on the other hand, prefer the slightly sweeter ones. If you manage to get this kind of product to the standard you like, then that makes you kind of proud ”

MICHU, CAVEMASTER AT EMMI KALTBACH CAVES

delicious partnered with honey and fragrant fresh or preserved figs.

*Drink with:* Le Gruyère AOP's stronger taste allows it to stand up to punchier beverages. Try it with a red or white Burgundy, Syrah or Grenache, or even a single malt Scotch whisky.

### The perfect base

When it comes to which biscuits to stock as accompaniments to Kaltbach's range of fine cheeses, keep it simple in order to allow the expertly honed flavours of the cheese to shine through. Avoid strongly-flavoured biscuits as these could overpower the cheese; instead, opt for either non-flavoured options or some with a light sprinkling of salt and pepper – the salt will balance with the savouriness of the cheeses, while the pepper will help palates to pick up on the spicy notes particularly present in Kaltbach's aged cheeses.

As a general rule of thumb, cheese with a slightly softer texture – such as Kaltbach Creamy – can be particularly enjoyed atop a more delicate biscuit, whereas a harder, more aged cheese will be able to stand up to a more robust option. A good example would be biscotti, as its subtle almond notes would play well into the nuttiness of a Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP.



### NEXT TO LAUNCH: KALTBACH GOUDA

Won Silver at the World Cheese Awards

The newest addition to the range is Kaltbach Gouda, made with Swiss milk in a Gouda style and aged to perfection in the Kaltbach caves. With notes of caramel and spice and a slightly crumbly texture following six months of refinement, it's a popular choice for cheeseboards across the world – try pairing with a floral dark honey or peach jam.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Over 22 million years ago, the caves in Kaltbach – located in the Lucerne region of Switzerland – were formed by water and ice. Little was known about them until in 1953, it was discovered by local cheesemakers that their unique characteristics made them perfect for storing and ageing cheese. These unusual natural properties create characteristics within every cheese which are entirely unique to the Kaltbach caves.

Within the caves, a small team of cavemasters apply patience, attention to detail and expertise which has been passed down through word of mouth to the care of each individual cheese.

The caves boast a number of unique properties. Its walls are formed of layers of sandstone and quartz, allowing for the levels of moisture within the caves to be carefully controlled by nature. Located 15 metres underground, the temperature within the caves is a consistent 12.5°C: the ideal temperature for ageing and storing cheese.

### WHAT'S IN THE RANGE?

#### Kaltbach Creamy

Won Silver at the World Cheese Awards

Within Kaltbach's characteristic rustic brown rind lies a deliciously creamy cheese which has been refined for four months in the caves. Kaltbach Creamy is an exclusive product of Emmi Kaltbach.

which produces slightly crunchy white crystals and water droplets known as 'tears of joy'. A deliciously nutty and tangy cheese displaying Kaltbach's distinctive dark brown patina.

#### Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP

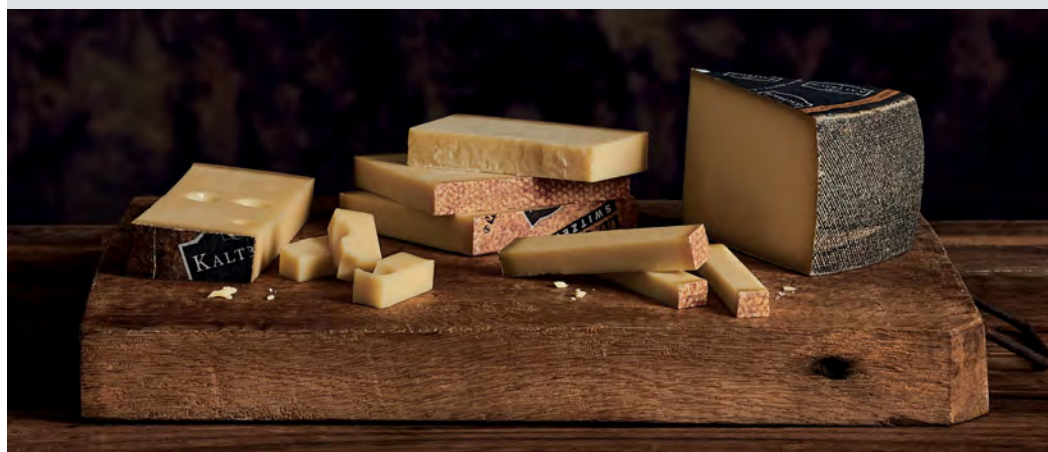
Won Bronze at the World Cheese Awards

One of Switzerland's most iconic cheeses, Emmentaler AOP's distinctive holes make it instantly recognisable. Each wheel is aged in the Kaltbach caves for a minimum of nine months,

#### Kaltbach Le Gruyère AOP

Won Gold at the World Cheese Awards

A true Swiss classic, first made in the Gruyères region of Switzerland in 1115. Le Gruyère AOP has a tangy and fruity flavour, with a slight hint of nuttiness. Aged for at least 12 months in the Kaltbach caves, these wheels boast a uniquely refined flavour and the traditional lightly browned rind.







JAPAN BOASTS A WIDE RANGE OF CHEESES

## INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION

We dig into some of the most surprising developments in the global cheese market

**W**ith tastes and preferences shifting all the time, cheesemakers must continually rise to new challenges to keep up with the ever-changing market. Today, these might include a sharpening focus on healthy eating together with the rise of veganism and

sustainability concerns – but tomorrow, a new set of challenges will emerge. Innovation is crucial.

So where are the most inspiring new creations in the global cheese market? Often, they come from where you'd least expect it. Where producers of classic varieties have centuries of tradition and

heritage on their side, newcomers have a leg up when it comes to innovation. Over the years, certain regions have produced particularly surprising success stories. Two distinctly interesting markets that have risen to the forefront of the worldwide cheese scene are America and Japan. While one is experiencing a boom in artisanal cheeses that is many decades in the making, the other seems to have sprung to the global stage overnight with award-winning success.

### America's maturing market

It's safe to say that America hasn't always been known as a haven for high-quality artisan cheeses. "When I started visiting the States in the early Nineties, artisan cheese barely existed – there were very few people making farmhouse or

raw milk cheeses, and there was certainly no 'tradition' to speak of," says Jason Hinds, sales director at Neal's Yard Dairy, one of Britain's foremost cheesemongers. For a country famous for its bright orange, processed cheese, artisan varieties were seen as novelties. This posed a challenge for producers like Neal's Yard Dairy who struggled to sell their wares to shops that had no knowledge of artisan cheese. Their solution? Kick-start a new generation of speciality cheese champions by educating and inspiring a fresh batch of cheesemakers.

Against the odds, it worked. Makers began producing high-quality cheeses, and despite the higher price points, artisanal cheeses gained momentum among US consumers. Sue Conley, the co-founder of pioneering farmhouse cheesemaker Cowgirl Creamery,



ROGUE RIVER BLUE

“ American producers have certainly been influenced by Europe's cheesemaking heritage, but they have also benefited from their lack of such a long, historic tradition. Working from a blank slate has given them the opportunity to experiment and take risks ”



commended Neal's Yard Dairy for its role in the transformation of the American cheese market. "They have been helping Americans understand dairying and cheesemaking since the 1970s when Randolph Hodgson appeared on the scene to teach us how to taste and appreciate the wonders of British farmstead cheese. When he talked about the dairies and milk quality as the key to great cheese, many budding cheesemakers, including the Cowgirls, perked up and paid attention," Sue says. "Our company was modeled on the Neal's Yard philosophies and was created with the same commitment and attention to all parts of the industry from making, to selling, to delivering cheese in good condition."

American producers have certainly been influenced by Europe's cheesemaking heritage, but they have also benefited from their lack of such a long, historic tradition. Working from a blank slate has given them the opportunity to experiment and take risks. With fewer restrictions, America's best cheesemakers have flourished, applying their own twists to the classics. "They were unencumbered by tradition

## THERE ARE **NEARLY 1000 ARTISAN AND SPECIALITY CHEESEMAKERS** IN THE US

THE AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY'S STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT, 2018

unlike those in countries with a cheesemaking heritage; they didn't have a chef with a toque, or a fellow cheesemonger, tapping them on the shoulder and telling them to work in a certain way. Tradition is a great thing but it does halt people who are inspired to create," Jason explains. "They can be as creative as they

want to be; they're very dynamic, and very inspiring."

Since the turn of the century, the sector has grown rapidly. The American Cheese Society's state of the industry report in 2018 found that there were nearly 1,000 artisan and speciality cheesemakers in the US. According to the Specialty

Food Association, the industry was worth \$4 billion in 2015, a 15% increase from 2013. For producers, the growing industry has provided the opportunity for international acclaim. At the 2019 World Cheese Awards in Bergamo, Italy, an organic blue cheese from Oregon called Rogue River Blue was named the best cheese in the world – marking the first time an American cheese has taken the crown at the prestigious event.

### An awakening in Japan

Perhaps even more surprising than America's rise to the top has been the birth of Japan's cheese movement. With globalisation causing more people across the country to open up to international cuisines, dairy products like cheese, which traditionally had no place in the Japanese diet, have become more and more commonplace. According to government data, cheese consumption has more than doubled from 1990 to 2018 to reach more than 350,000 tons – a record high – with natural cheese making up over 210,000 tons of the total. As the taste



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Based in Stornoway, Stag Bakeries is a family run business with a heritage dating back to 1885.

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Tel: 01851 702733 [sales@stagbakeries.co.uk](mailto:sales@stagbakeries.co.uk)  
[www.stagbakeries.co.uk](http://www.stagbakeries.co.uk)





“ Cheese tea, a black or green tea topped with a cream cheese and milk foam plus a dash of salt, has gained popularity across Asia ”

for cheese grows in the coming years, this is only expected to increase.

Today, more than 300 small cheese producers in Japan are catering to the growing demand for quality cheeses, according to the country's Cheese Professional Association. The environment for cheesemakers in the country is collaborative and creative. “Each producer is passionate and spares no effort to improve the quality of

their cheese,” says Norio Masuda, executive director of the Cheese Professional Association. “People who make the same type of cheese are in constant contact with each other to share their skills and improve the overall quality.”

Like American cheesemakers, Japanese producers started out by mimicking popular European cheeses – but the real success came after they began experimenting with creating flavours that are completely unique to the country. One of the nation's best-known producers, Nozumu Miyajima, masterminded an award-winning soft cheese made with Japanese cherry blossoms called Sakura. Elsewhere, cheesemakers have worked to establish a uniquely Japanese version of French raclette that is washed with local moor water.

Other avenues of the cheese industry are even more inventive. Cheese tea, a black or green tea topped with a cream cheese and milk foam plus a dash of salt, has gained popularity across Asia. As



CREATIVE CHEESES FROM JAPAN

## JAPAN TOOK HOME 15 PRIZES AT THE WORLD CHEESE AWARDS, INCLUDING 5 GOLD MEDALS

well as being sold in tea houses, Japanese drinks company Kirin announced plans to develop and sell a bottled version. Cheese sweets have also made waves. Tokyo-based cheese specialty shop My Captain Cheese Tokyo introduced a sweet cheese burger made with cheddar cheese, biscuits and whipped chocolate.

These headline-grabbing developments aside, Japanese producers got a real boost in 2019 with the country's premier at the World Cheese Awards. Japan took home 15 prizes at the closely watched event, including five gold medals. Kazuhiko Ochiai, one of the country's burgeoning cheesemakers, was awarded a Super Gold, with his Brown Swiss cow's milk Mori no Cheese ranking tenth best in the world. This success on the international stage – and the high praise received from those in traditional cheesemaking countries – has given other producers courage, Norio says. “It was the moment when confidence and pride were born in Japanese cheesemaking.”

With cheese consumption rates rising, there is plenty of room for

Japan's cheese market to continue to mature. Opportunities are also opening up abroad. This year, Japan will begin exporting cheese to the US for the first time, and the recently agreed Japan-EU Economic Partnership will open the door to exporting cheese to the European Union. But despite the progress, Japan's cheese market still faces challenges. The price of raw milk has exploded, hampering the growth of local cheese factories and boosting the country's reliance on imports – which are now even cheaper because of the recent trade deals. Local cheesemakers face a tough, but undoubtedly exciting, future.

Like America, Japan found success in the global cheese market thanks to innovative recipes and techniques that are wholly Japanese. While the world's traditional cheesemaking nations offer reliably great varieties, it is the outsider nations that are the most exciting to watch as they grow and develop. In the coming years, all eyes will be on the creative ideas these new entrants continue to bring to the table.



A SELECTION OF JAPANESE CHEESES

“ While the world's traditional cheesemaking nations offer reliably great varieties, it is the outsider nations that are the most exciting to watch as they grow and develop ”



# CHAMPIONING GREAT BRITISH CHEESE

Alison Taylor, marketing manager at Belton Farm, explains the passion and expertise behind every vat of its cheese



**T**he watchword at Belton Farm is quality and this applies to every area of the business, from the milk our dedicated group of local, family-run, dairy farms supply, to the care and attention that our team takes at our new speciality cheese packing facility.

An independent, family-run business, Belton Farm is located in the stunning Shropshire countryside, where the Beckett family have been making cheese for nearly a century. We're grounded in our heritage and rural surroundings but also have the ambition and capability to innovate, move forward and

deliver for both our customers and consumers.

We harness the very best of cheesemaking tradition and combine it with the skill, dedication and drive of the latest generation of Belton Farm master cheesemakers. All of whom are wholeheartedly committed to creating the finest products whether they be classic regional 'crumbles', vat-made cheese or our distinctive take on contemporary 'Modern British' cheese Red & White Fox.

## A passion for quality

The milk we use for cheese production comes from Belton Farm's dedicated group of local dairy farmers, all of whom farm within a 25-mile radius of the dairy and pride themselves on the quality of their milk. Their focus is on the health and welfare of their cows and allowing the cows to spend the maximum time outside, grazing on grass.

We source our salt from the historic local Cheshire salt mines, but our bespoke cultures (used to start the cheese-making process) are unique to Belton Farm and a closely guarded secret.

Belton Farm is located on

420 acres of organic arable farmland which gained organic status in 2002. Third generation cheesemaker Justin Beckett is passionate about farming and conservation, growing organic oats, beans and grass silage which is supplied to local milk producers to feed their animals, with much of this milk going into producing our organic cheese range.

A testament to our milk producers and team of cheesemakers came in 2018 when Belton Farm won the title of Supreme Champion for the 4th time at the International Cheese and Dairy Awards, Nantwich.

## WHAT'S NEW?

We've created a new specialist cheese packing facility that adds to our existing packing capability and allows us to have full control and traceability of our speciality cheese lines, complementing the strong ongoing relationships we have with other cheese packers.

# Great tasting British cheese.



 **Belton Farm**  
GREAT BRITISH CHEESEMAKERS



[www.beltonfarm.co.uk](http://www.beltonfarm.co.uk)





# RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Fine food importer and distributor Rowcliffe has been championing small producers since 1967 and continues to evolve to this day

**T**he story begins in 1966, with a young Anthony Rowcliffe's determination to change British attitudes to cheese. Having discovered artisanal cheeses from small producers at local markets in Europe, he returned with quality artisanal cheeses from the Continent. He founded Rowcliffe in 1967, and was the first to start importing specialist cheeses from Europe for independent retailers.

The business has been making and aging cheeses since 1942 under the Ambrosi brand. Rowcliffe has its very own cheesemakers in Italy, some of whom have over 25 years of experience making the traditional, DOP award-winning cheeses.

The cheese available today is thanks to Anthony's campaign to champion and support small producers. The business still upholds his values and the buying team tastes the produce frequently to ensure the range is ever-evolving and that Rowcliffe is known foremost for its unrivalled selection of cheeses.



## A point of difference

The USP of Rowcliffe is its people. Its product experts relentlessly seek out innovative unique products from Europe and the UK and drive product innovation exclusive to the company, allowing them to offer customers a much needed point of difference.

Rowcliffe considers its suppliers to be part of the business, as they bring forward cheeses with true provenance, made from traditional recipes, hand-crafted skills and cheese stories that the business is proud to keep alive.

The market

experts support the specialist independent stores with authoritative product knowledge, in-store vision, range planning and store staff training. The company's wider expertise has secured prestigious invitations to be represented on judging panels for the British Cheese Awards (BCA), World Cheese Awards (WCA), Great Yorkshire Show and Global Cheese Awards, to name a few. Rowcliffe also has team members who have conceived and implemented industry standards such as SALSA (Safe and Local Supplier Approval) and SCA (Specialist Cheese Makers Association) audit protocol and have been intrinsic to the successful adoption across the industry.

## Clemency Hall

In 2020 Rowcliffe will be focusing on its revamped Clemency Hall



“The focus is to keep driving positive changes which means we can optimise our commitment and support to the industry”

range of cheeses. Managing director Sunit Mehta explains, “This year we have invested in the re-launch of our private label Clemency Hall, which is dedicated to the independent sector. We have hand-selected and sourced a range of products from artisan producers locally in Britain and in Europe, and have also included some of our very own cheeses from Italy. The range includes territorials,

farmhouse Cheddars, blue cheeses, Continental artisan hard and soft cheeses. We are also showcasing for the first time our new exclusive range of wax truckles of aged Cheddar and mature Cheddars infused with flavours. The cheeses are also supported with antipasti and olive range sourced especially for the label from the Mediterranean – offering a cheeseboard proposition for in-store opportunities.”

What is in store for Rowcliffe



moving forward? Sunit says, “The family-owned spirit is still at the centre of this business. Ambrosi Group who acquired Rowcliffe in 2019, is a firm part of the future. We will be continuing to move the business forward with strong focus on the long-term goals, which includes further developing Clemency Hall and new and existing supplier relationships. We have the strategy, the knowledge, the team, the investment from the Group – so the focus is to keep driving positive changes which means we can optimise our commitment and support to the industry.”



# Clemency — Hall —

*Expertly Hand Crafted Cheese*

introducing...

Clemency Hall's new and  
exclusive wax truckle cheeses.



Exclusive to Rowcliffe.

## ROCKING THE HERBS

Mature Cheddar infused with herbs  
and subtle spices.

## SMOKED SPLENDOUR

Aged Cheddar delicately smoked over Oak.

## KA POW CHILLI

Red Leicester with cayenne peppers,  
sweet bell peppers, jalapeños and herbs.

## VICTORIOUS VINTAGE

Vintage Cheddar aged for over 18 months.



# “TAKING A STAND AGAINST BLAND”

With its award-winning combination of tradition and innovation, Wensleydale Dairy Products is at the forefront of the industry



**W**ensleydale Dairy Products, based at Hawes in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, is steeped in heritage and renowned for traditional artisan cheesemaking, as well as being innovative with the development of new cheeses and dairy products.

The famous cheesemaker is well known for the creamy, crumbly classic: Yorkshire Wensleydale, which is protected with European Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status and crafted by a team of skilled and passionate cheesemakers.

Using milk from a dedicated group of 41 local family farms to produce its award-winning cheese, the business employs over 230 people across two sites, playing a

vital economic role in the deeply rural area of Yorkshire in which it is situated, contributing £13m annually to the local economy.

It is also home to the UK's flagship Cheese Visitor Experience at its Visitor Centre, which welcomes 350,000 visitors per year. With cheese and butter-making demonstrations and a Cheesemaking Viewing Gallery, visitors can also enjoy tasting over 20 varieties of cheese in the bespoke Cheese Shop, along with dishes inspired by cheese in its Calvert's Restaurant and 1897 Coffee Shop.

Yorkshire Wensleydale is traditionally known for the pairing with fruit cake; however, the cheese's creamy, crumbly texture truly sets it apart and means that it is just as versatile

as Feta. To celebrate the crumble in its cheese, Wensleydale Creamery launched its 'Crumble It!' campaign to inspire usage and highlight recipes where a crumble of Yorkshire Wensleydale can bring specialness to a wide variety of different dishes.

Wensleydale Dairy Products supplies a broad range of customers including major UK retailers, wholesalers, independent retailers, delis and farm shops

around the UK, as well as the manufacturing and food service sector, along with its own online offer, delivering direct to homes. It also exports its portfolio of products around the world.

With centuries of cheesemaking experience and the capability and insight to adapt to the changing dairy landscape, one thing is for sure: Wensleydale Dairy Products will keep at the forefront of the industry for years to come.

## INTRODUCING THE YORKSHIRE CREAMERY

The business has made significant investments in its Creamery in recent years. Increased capacity and ability to produce various types of cheese, all aligned with recognition and understanding of consumer demand, led to the launch of a new brand: The Yorkshire Creamery. It is on a mission to take a 'stand against the bland' and champion exceptional quality and traditional recipes to make dairy products that 'taste like they ought to'.

### What's in the range?

The Yorkshire Creamery shares the same values of using locally sourced milk, investing in the sustainability of British farming, and creating delicious dairy products made with love and care. The brand aims to

be bold and disrupt a crowded cheese and dairy category that has become more concerned with quantity than quality through great tasting, award-winning products combined with lots of personality.

The Yorkshire Creamery range of cheeses includes Extra Mature Yorkshire Cheddar, Double Yorkshire and Yorkshire Red, all of which smack your taste buds and win awards.

Yorkshire Butter is the most recent addition to the Yorkshire Creamery's award-winning product line up. The distinctively rich and creamy Yorkshire Butter is made using cream specially selected from local Yorkshire farms, which is then batch churned and salted for a real depth of flavour and unique texture.



“ The Yorkshire Creamery shares the same values of using locally sourced milk, investing in the sustainability of British farming, and creating delicious dairy products made with love and care ”



# TAKE A STAND AGAINST BLAND



Hands up who wants bland for lunch? Us neither!

If depth of flavour, rugged texture and rich, creamy indulgence are what you're after, you've come to the right place.

Welcome to **The Yorkshire Creamery.**

[yorkshirecreamery.co.uk](http://yorkshirecreamery.co.uk)





# THE TASTE OF SWITZERLAND

With its famed history, quality and consistency, no wonder Le Gruyère AOP is a cheese counter classic

**LE GRUYÈRE®**  
SWITZERLAND AOP  
[www.gruyere.com](http://www.gruyere.com)

**T**he history of Le Gruyère AOP begins in 1115, when the inhabitants of five neighbouring regions of Switzerland – the town of Gruyères in the Canton of Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Jura and Bern – transformed the milk of their cattle herds into cheese. In the 900 years since then, the knowledge and techniques established by its original makers have been upheld to the delight of cheese lovers across the world.

By 1762 the cheese was officially named and its provenance noted in the dictionary of the Académie Française, but despite this the style of the Le Gruyère AOP was often imitated to create lesser-quality wheels until – following discussions held across Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – it was awarded AOC (Controlled Designation of Origin) accreditation across Switzerland then certified AOP (Protected Designation of Origin) across Europe.

At a time when provenance is so important, Le Gruyère AOP's is impeccable, and despite its worldwide reputation this isn't a factory-produced cheese. The 170 small dairies which produce the cheese (often making only 14 wheels daily) are governed by the

PDO specifications which ensure that the cheese is consistent, made to the highest standards possible and entirely traceable, from the cows which supplied the milk right through to the affineur who aged it and beyond.

The freshness of the milk is assured by the ruling on proximity: the small herds which produce the milk which is delivered twice daily to the dairy must be located no more than 12.4 miles from the dairy. The milk must also be poured into the cheesemaker's copper vat no more than 18 hours after milking.

While the flavor of the cheese will vary within limits according to whether the milk has come from cows which have been fed upon Alpine grass in summer or hay in the winter, Le Gruyère AOP is famed for its consistency.

## Catering to all tastes

Its consistent flavour has played a huge part in earning and maintaining the worldwide popularity of Le Gruyère AOP, as well as numerous awards. Its distinctive yet subtle flavours are both unique and versatile, making it popular with consumers of all ages as well as delicious served in a number of ways, from a flavourful addition to a cheeseboard to melted in a fondue.



## A FREE-FROM FAVOURITE

*As well as being delicious, Le Gruyère AOP is naturally gluten and lactose-free, meaning that coeliacs and lactose-intolerant cheese lovers can enjoy the cheese too.*

Le Gruyère AOP is available in three ages, each of which displays subtle differences in flavour:

- Le Gruyère AOP Classic (aged six-nine months) is nutty, sweet and refined – delicious melted and popular with fans of mild cheeses
- Le Gruyère AOP Réserve (aged 10

months and up) is aromatic and full of flavour – its complex, mature flavours make it a popular choice for a cheeseboard

- Le Gruyère AOP can also be purchased aged 18 and 24 months – both options showcase a well-balanced but powerful taste



## BE CONFIDENT THAT YOU'RE BUYING GENUINE LE GRUYÈRE AOP

Each wheel of Le Gruyère AOP carries important information on its rind, which guarantees the authenticity of the product and allows you to trace it back to its point of origin.

### ● CASEIN MARK AND DATE OF PRODUCTION:

this guarantees the authenticity of your wheel of Le Gruyère AOP

- **DAIRY NUMBER:** this allows buyers to trace the cheese back to the dairy which made it

- **HEEL MARKING:** each wheel is stamped with the words Le Gruyère AOP and offers assurance that this is real Le Gruyère AOP from Switzerland



# The One, The Only...

Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland - a centuries-old tradition of artisanal cheesemaking.



Gruyère AOP was born in Switzerland in 1115 AD, and our milk producers, cheesemakers and affineurs have followed the same recipe, protocols and procedures ever since. This is how we can maintain the quality and flavour that has been trusted for generations. For artisans such as ours, this is what matters above all.

This traditional recipe and the care that goes into every wheel makes Gruyère AOP the finest choice for your customers.

**All Natural, Naturally  
Gluten- and Lactose-Free.**

For more information and some great recipes, please visit us at [gruyere.com](http://gruyere.com)

**LE GRUYÈRE®**  
**SWITZERLAND**  
[WWW.GRUYERE.COM](http://WWW.GRUYERE.COM)



Switzerland. Naturally.



**Cheeses from Switzerland.**  
[www.cheesesfromswitzerland.com](http://www.cheesesfromswitzerland.com)



AOP = PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)





# FLYING THE FLAG

Exploring the renown of British cheese across the globe

**F**ueled by unique expert knowledge and years of trial and error, the British cheese export market is booming. Making cheese is an ancient practice for Brits, and traditional techniques developed over centuries of careful experimentation are coveted by nations not so lucky to have their own rich cheese history. Britain is firmly positioned in the top 10 cheese exporters in the world, raking in a record value of £665 million in 2018 alone. Data from OECD shows that UK cheese exports grew faster than Germany, France and Italy between 2016 and 2018. But why the interest in British cheese, compared with other nations' varieties?

Henry Openshaw, head of sales at Singletons & Co, a cheesemaker and cheesemonger based in Lancashire that exports to more than 30 countries, believes it's all down to experience. "We have an enviable tradition and history – when we tell

people in the UK that the Singleton family started making cheese in 1745, it turns a few heads. In the US, people are amazed by that sort of heritage," Henry explains. "While the UK was a bit later to the export party than some other European countries, today there are very few places you could go to and not find British cheese. There has certainly been a drive to promote British cheese around the world."

## New territory

Where history and tradition are concerned, Asian cuisine is well-known for the lack of dairy in its cuisine. However, in recent decades, the market in the Far East has rapidly opened up to dairy products. Influences from Western cultures, whether that be via expats, tourists or the media, are introducing many Asian people to an exciting new culinary experience – with British cheeses at the forefront of the revolution. "Michelin star and

high-end European restaurants are where the majority of consumers in Asia will try cheeses, which then filter down to the retailers," explains international cheese consultant Juliet Harbutt. From 2013 to 2018, China alone saw a 9,567% increase in export value of British cheeses. "There is certainly a growing demand," confirms Henry, and where British cheese is concerned, we've got it in the bag. "There is an acceptance that European dairy in general, and British dairy in particular, is of a good quality. We are lucky in that the British brand is generally considered to be synonymous with quality."

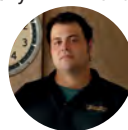
Granted, Asia as a whole is relatively new to cheese, but the sheer scale of the continent means it's inevitable that some countries will be further along in their dairy journey. "The danger is to consider Asia as a single market. It is no more a single market than Europe is – each country has its own cultural

and culinary history that will determine what cheeses they will like, and how the market will grow," Juliet warns. "In our experience Mild Cheddar is the general entry-level cheese. Beyond that, it differs significantly by country. We are currently experiencing great success with fruit-flavoured varieties like Wensleydale and Cranberry in China," adds Henry.

## Across the pond

Mild, processed cheeses hold childhood nostalgia for many Americans, but as interest in artisan varieties piques, traditional British cheeses are taking centre stage. One cheesemonger in particular is on everyone's lips: Neal's Yard Dairy. "The American market has been interested in British cheese for the last couple decades, which

coincides with our relationship with Neal's Yard Dairy," explains Hunter Fike, cheese category manager at Philadelphia speciality food



“ On the whole, I think cheesemakers are excited by the prospect of export and therefore willing to do what it takes to make things happen. We aren't running out of cheese any time soon ”



retailer Di Bruno Bros. "For a long time before that, British cheese did not have the best reputation, but Neal's Yard helped changed that perception," he adds.

You'll hear similar praises sung at Tomales Bay Foods. The California-based artisan cheese and accoutrements distributor finds the knowledge and expertise that Neal's Yard Dairy offer irresistibly tempting. In fact, all of their British cheese is sourced from Neal's Yard. "We currently stock Colston Bassett Stilton and Westcombe Cheddar, but we offer the entire line of imported Neal's Yard Dairy cheeses via pre-order," explains procurement manager Aislinn Muir. "The texture of Colston Bassett Stilton is unbelievable – like chilled butter. It's impeccable. We love Westcombe Cheddar for its depth of flavor – it's an extremely approachable Cheddar that keeps you coming back for more. These two cheeses are classic examples of traditional British cheesemaking that definitely correlate with what consumers in America are eating."

Without an extensive cheese history of their own, American cheesemakers are drawing on techniques from across the pond to inspire new varieties. What they lack in long-term experience is made up for in endless possibilities for experimentation. "As relative newcomers to the industry, American cheesemakers do not have centuries of cheesemaking history in their blood, but nor do they have Protected Designation of Origin rules and laws regulating the types of cheeses they can make," explains Aislinn. "This means that American cheesemongers can celebrate and learn from those that came before them by incorporating certain recipes, techniques and styles into their make. You can find similar American versions of almost any cheese made in another country, just by a different name."

## Neighbours

The French love affair with cheese is no secret to the rest of the world. A good cheese is often considered the most important element of a French meal; nationals take the subject very seriously. You cannot doubt their passion for cheese – it's an ingrained part of French culture. With such an intrinsic relationship already established, is there really any room for British offerings in the French market? Surprisingly, the answer is yes. "There is certainly a rising demand and appreciation for Britain's more traditional offerings, like Blue Stilton and West Country

Farmhouse Cheddar PDO," explains Henry from Singletons & Co. "It is true to say that France has the longest and most decorated cheese history, but French people are becoming more open to specialties created outside of France. In the supermarket context, the challenge is to show the French consumers that British cheese is something other than a mass-produced block of Red Cheddar."

More than 1,000 varieties of cheese are produced in France, but consumers are always eager to discover



## FROM 2013 TO 2018, CHINA ALONE SAW A 9,567% INCREASE IN EXPORT VALUE OF BRITISH CHEESES

something different and exciting. British cheeses are on-hand to provide this experience, often managing to achieve a fuller, more mature flavour that the French crave. "I think there is probably more appreciation for cheeses that are not so flagrantly derived from French classics," Henry continues. "The very best Stiltons and Cheddars (and, we hope, Lancashires!) stand on their own two feet as outstanding British cheeses. I wouldn't want to be quaking in front of a French buyer presenting a Somerset Brie, however good it was!" he adds.

## Looking forward

As demand heightens for both classic British recipes and innovative new blends, cheese exporters across the country are racing to keep up. Many

cheesemongers have set up dedicated teams to oversee international markets – expertise and experience in the field is essential in order to spread your products far and wide. "In some places it is incredibly easy to export cheese, but other places demand more in the way of documentation, certification, written signed agreements, sample analysis and document legalisation. And that is before we mention the B-word. The lack of clarity around Brexit has caused quite a few sleepless nights," explains Henry. "But on the whole, I think cheesemakers are excited by the prospect of export and therefore willing to do what it takes to make things happen. We aren't running out of cheese any time soon."



Appealing to international markets isn't just about cheese itself, though – unique and appealing branding can put you a step ahead of competitors. "We have found that international retailers have benefited from creating eye-catching displays with our colourful truckles," explains Richard Newton-Jones, Commercial Director at Snowdonia Cheese Company. "The bold colours and innovative wax packaging of Snowdonia products make

them stand out on the chiller aisle or cheese counter. We have encouraged this concept through display competitions and point of sale support, which has led to an increase in the rate of sale across the range," he adds.

The export market for British cheese is certainly booming, but there are still some hurdles to face. Climate change combined with a growing vegan population places pressure on the dairy industries across the world – but the cultural significance ingrained in British cheesemaking has the strength to power the market steadily on.



AGEING CHEDDARS AT WESTCOMBE DAIRY



# A FAMILY AFFAIR

After 30 years in business, a passion for quality cheesemaking is still at the heart of Shepherd's Purse



**F**or over 30 years now, Shepherd's Purse has enjoyed the art and science of cheesemaking on the family farm in North Yorkshire, using only quality local milk and ensuring that only the most delicious cheeses make it to market. They are now a team of 35, still based on the family farm, and supply to retailers and foodservice across the UK and beyond.

## A passion for cheesemaking

Shepherd's Purse was founded in the 1980s on the Bell family farm in North Yorkshire, after farmer's wife and trained pharmacist, Judy Bell, discovered her passion and talent for cheesemaking. After discovering that there was an increasing number of people identifying as suffering from cow's milk allergies, she set out on a mission to create quality alternatives.

Judy discovered that ewe's milk was a delicious and nutritious alternative for cow's milk allergy sufferers, and whilst the local farmers thought she was mad, she set about researching different breeds of sheep and experimenting with a variety of traditional methods of artisan cheesemaking. In true direct Yorkshire style, she set on and bought six experienced milking sheep as she learned all there was to know about sheep dairying.

After another year of hard work, running the family farm, bringing up a young family and late nights spent experimenting and perfecting recipes, Judy was ready and nervously launched Shepherd's Purse Cheeses at the Great Yorkshire Show in 1989. Shepherd's Purse was launched with Olde York and Yorkshire Feta (now called Yorkshire Fettle) and a ewe's milk Wensleydale. Any doubts Judy harboured were soon swept aside with a warm reception from the public, and that same summer Shepherd's Purse went on to win the first of many awards at the prestigious Nantwich International Cheese

Show: a gold medal for the Olde York cheese.

As the artisan cheese company grew, they built upon their range, adding new innovative cheeses using cow, sheep and buffalo milks. In 1995, Judy was proud to bring blue cheesemaking back to Yorkshire, after an absence of 30 years, by developing the now-iconic Yorkshire Blue with her eldest son Justin. Mrs Bell's Blue (made from ewe's milk) was developed at the same time, and in 1997 Mrs Bell's Blue won Reserve Supreme Champion cheese of show at Nantwich International Cheese Show.

In 2012, Shepherd's Purse passed a new milestone as Judy handed over the reins to her two daughters, Katie and Caroline. Together they developed and launched Harrogate Blue which has gone on to win Super Gold at the World Cheese Awards and be named in the top 16 cheeses in the world. More recently they have launched Northern Blue, and in 2020 they plan to launch a new format of their Feta-style cheese, Fettle, a project they are accelerating to support their sheep dairy farmers through the Coronavirus crisis.

## Navigating new challenges

The Coronavirus has been a huge challenge so far for Shepherd's Purse, as it has been across the board. "Sales are being challenged, but they are still coming through. Our direct web sales have increased by 500%, so it's clear that consumers still want our products," says Caroline Bell, MD of Shepherd's Purse. "The challenge has been working with the existing chain including wholesalers who support food service, retailers themselves and online merchants to ensure we can support them as they adapt to the changing behaviours in the market and keep products on the shelves. Consumers are

“ In 2020 Shepherd's Purse plan to launch a new format of their Feta-style cheese, Fettle, a project accelerated to support their sheep dairy farmers ”



already showing that they'd like more than the basics now for their lockdown existence and experience, and I'm sure the chain can be sustained to provide it for them.

"The coronavirus will continue to challenge all industry and supply chains, on top of all of our health concerns. But by continuing to support each other as a speciality food industry, communicate and keep a level head, we will all put ourselves in the best position to navigate through the crisis and hopefully emerge on the other other side with a nation more aware and even more appreciative of the UK speciality food industry."







## PRE CUT WEDGES



100g or 180g

Cut and individually wrapped by hand by our dedicated team on the family farm in Yorkshire.



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# CHEESEBOARD MUST-STOCKS

From fruity chutneys to punchy mustards, these are the accompaniments to stock to take your cheese offering to the next level

**N**ow that you have a perfectly curated and cared for selection of cheese in your counter, the time has come to seek out their perfect accompaniments. The right partner will take the experience up a notch for food-loving customers, so it's important to get it right. Thankfully, there's a whole host of options available, from internationally-inspired cheese biscuits to versatile preserves – and we've taken the hard work out of the search and collated our favourites right here. If you're ready to level-up your cheeseboard selection, look no further.

## HAWKSHEAD RELISH



Fabulously fruity, Hawkshead Relish's delicious Cheeseboard Chutney is filled with fresh figs, cranberries and apples and is finished with Pinot Noir red wine adding to depth of flavour, designed to complement any cheeseboard. Although great with cheese, this perfect preserve is also great with cold meats, pies and toasties! This product is made with natural ingredients and is gluten-free, nut-free and is suitable for vegetarians. Hawkshead Relish is a small family run business with a range of over 100 pickles and preserves, all of which are handmade in small batches.

01539 436 614 [info@hawksheadrelish.com](mailto:info@hawksheadrelish.com) [hawksheadrelish.com](http://hawksheadrelish.com)

## ROSEBUD PRESERVES



Made in Masham, North Yorkshire, Rosebud Preserves' Sweet Cucumber Pickle is perfect for adding a note of sharp sweetness to cheeseboards. A delicious example of a traditional 'bread and butter pickle', its blend of onions, cider vinegar and spices such as mustard seed, turmeric and ground cloves creates a surprisingly versatile pickle any food lover would enjoy. Particularly delicious with hard cheeses, especially matured Cheddars with a combination of sweet and savoury-sharp notes.

01765 689 174 [enquiries@rosebudpreserves.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@rosebudpreserves.co.uk)  
[rosebudpreserves.co.uk](http://rosebudpreserves.co.uk)

## PETER'S YARD



Peter's Yard's sourdough crispbreads are hand baked in small batches following a traditional Swedish recipe. They are made with simple, natural ingredients including organic flour, organic fresh milk and their own sourdough, which ferments for 16 hours before each batch. With six recipes that are all Great Taste-awarded, they're the natural choice to complement even the most varied of cheeseboards.

07732600292 [naomi@petersyard.com](mailto:naomi@petersyard.com) [petersyard.com](http://petersyard.com)



## STAG BAKERIES



Based in the Scottish Outer Hebrides, Stag Bakeries is a family-run bakery with savoury biscuits at its heart. The bakery has a heritage dating back to 1885, and their speciality for many years has been their Stornoway Water Biscuit. Stag produces the Water Biscuit in two sizes and several flavours, including the award-winning Seaweed variety, providing maximum versatility for the cheeseboard. As well as Water Biscuits, Stag makes traditional Oatcakes that are the perfect carrier for any kind of cheese.

01851 702 733 sales@stagbakeries.co.uk stagbakeries.co.uk

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## PRIDE OF WALES

State-of-the-art facilities meets traditional techniques in South Caernarfon Creameries' range of cheeses

**P**roudly owned by 130 farming members across North and Mid-Wales, dairy co-operative South Caernarfon Creameries has a long history of making unique and innovative cheese and butter from 100% pure Welsh milk. Nestled amid the lush rural countryside of the Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales, the creamery makes a wide range of products under their flagship Dragon brand, as well as supplying the wholesale and retail markets.

### Award-winning cheeses

Among a record 80 awards for SCC last year were prizes from food and farming shows across the UK including the British Cheese

Awards, the Royal Welsh Show, Royal Highland Show and the International Cheese Awards. Gold winners included the dairy's new Dragon Handcrafted Maplewood Smoked Cheddar, Classic Mature Cheddar, Wensleydale, Mature Coloured Cheddar, Cheshire, Red Leicester, Vintage Cheddar with Leeks, Half Fat Cheddar and Caerphilly, with SCC's Dragon brand butter also securing the top Overall Dairy champion prize at the RHS.

### Handcrafted range

The unique Handcrafted range is one of the latest new lines from Dragon. Megi Williams, sales and marketing coordinator, says, "New products include our Dragon Handcrafted range, developed in

collaboration with other iconic Welsh brands – Penderyn Whisky, Halen Môn and Llechwedd Slate Caverns. The range is now stocked in Tesco and other outlets across Wales, and in February we took it to the Salon du Fromage show in Paris, where we were flying the flag for Welsh produce."

The speciality range began with Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar, which is matured 500 feet underground in the Llechwedd slate cavern at Blaenau Ffestiniog, using a traditional method used for centuries in France to achieve a deeper flavour. It also features a Maplewood Smoked Cheddar, developed with the smokery at iconic Anglesey brand Halen Môn, and a Sea Salt Cheddar, also made in partnership with Halen Môn using sea salt from the Menai

Strait. The range is completed with Penderyn Whisky Cheddar, made by infusing the Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar with a madeira finish whisky from the well-known Welsh distillery.

### Investing in the business

SCC achieved record sales of £52.9m last year which helped to support the best possible milk price for farming members, many with families that have been supplying the company for generations; profit is ploughed back into new product development, production and packaging.

More than £12m has been invested at the co-operative's production and packing plant at Chwilog in the last five years, putting Wales's oldest dairy co-operative founded in 1938 at the forefront with new technology.

State-of-the-art facilities mean all cheese is still hand-salted using traditional open table techniques passed down through the generations, but this is then pressed in modern cheese towers, enabling maturing, cutting and packaging on an industrial scale for the mass market.

Megi continues, "Our cheese is salted using traditional open table techniques dating back hundreds of years, but production has been scaled up with innovative new techniques following a £12m investment at our production and packing plant at Chwilog. This enabled us to introduce modern cheese towers to press and mature our cheeses, as well as a start-of-the-art packaging facility, where we last year created 11 new jobs – taking the staff team to 130. We achieved record sales of £52.9m last year and won 80 prestigious awards at a variety of events, including the International Cheese Awards and the Royal Welsh Show."

“ Our cheese is salted using traditional open table techniques dating back hundreds of years, but production has been scaled up with innovative new techniques following a £12m investment at our production and packing plant at Chwilog ”



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COW, ©PATRICE LARIVEN

# INSIGHT INTO EUROPE

What can we learn from European cheesemongers? What British produce is making bestseller lists abroad? *Cheese Buyer* finds out...

**W**hen it comes to cheese our Italian and French neighbours, in particular, have centuries of cheesemaking tradition and expertise to bring to the table, and as a result their produce has taken centre stage in many British counters for a long time. Gorgonzola Dolce, Brie de Meaux and Comté frequently top the bestseller lists for many cheesemongers, and this is certainly the case at The Cheese Lady in Scotland. Owner Svetlana

Kukharchuk says that these three are the “classics of the genre” when it comes to European cheeses and the tastes match up to the reputations; “Comté is sweet, nutty and crunchy; Brie is gooey and mushroomy, whereas Gorgonzola Dolce is just so seductively creamy, elegant and moreish,” she says.

With Brits looking to cook from scratch at home, quality ingredients are becoming more important to shoppers. Italian cuisine, for example, has become embedded in

British eating habits, along with a range of other European influences, creating a demand for traditional cheeses. Italian hard cheeses such as Parmigiano Reggiano are proving good sellers for Cheesemonger Jen Grimstone-Jones, at Cheese Etc, The Pangbourne Cheese Shop, with its longer shelf life and versatility boosting its popularity when it comes to cooking meals at home.

## Inspire customers with comprehensive displays

Stocking a wide variety of different cheeses and being aware of the way they are displayed in the counter go a long way towards helping customers make purchase decisions. Some shoppers may regularly buy the well-known classic European cheeses, but by mixing produce around in the counter and keeping the display fresh it may encourage a conversation about different options to try.

Jen at Cheese Etc explains how the counter flows at the shop: “Our

counter flows from Continental cheeses at one end to all the blues at the other. We have areas of goats’ cheeses, ewes’ cheese, flavoured, smellies, Cheddars and locals. We do also mix it up every now and then to keep customers (and our casual staff) on their toes – this gets them looking at things they might not have seen before. We group similar cheeses together to encourage people to try other cheeses, so the Brie de Meaux is next to the Baron Bigod, and we can talk about their similarities and differences.”

## French cheesemonger proudly showcases British produce

The strength of the British cheese market is also making its name in Europe. Now, Continental cheesemongers are stocking British produce including the likes of Baron Bigod, made by Fen Farm Dairy in Suffolk. Demand continues to grow for British exports; according to figures from AHDB for 2019, Cheddar’s annual export volumes grew by 9%.

With the French cheese industry renowned throughout the world for its classic cheeses, stocking other European cheeses, including British, can create a stir within the industry. However, Paris-based cheesemonger COW

“We group similar cheeses together to encourage people to try other cheeses so the Brie de Meaux is next to the Baron Bigod and we can talk about their similarities and differences”



“ We visited a place in Seville last year and you could see the goats, the milking, the cheesemaking and then buy the finished product at various ages all on one site ”

(Cheese of the World) decided to shake things up a bit by stocking a range of great cheeses from a variety of different countries, and introducing its customers to new delights. Owner Antoine Farge reports that the shop now has around 50-60 cheeses from 15 countries, including Britain. He says, “We have Brunswik, Baron Bigod, Montgomery Cheddar, Isle of Mull, Poacher, Stilton, Shropshire, Sinodun Hill and Saint James. But we regularly change some references due to the season and the offer. Our bestsellers are Stilton, Isle of Mull and Baron Bigod.”

He adds that they are inspired by how businesses in the UK sell cheeses, explaining, “We have worked especially with Neal's Yard Dairy for the merchandising and the way they sell cheeses in their shops. We also like the Danish shop of Unika in Aarhus.”

### Take advantage of retail inspiration

It's one thing to be inspired by the produce itself, but much can be gained from visiting European counterparts (and vice versa) and snapping up any key takeaways that can benefit your own retail operation. There will be

different approaches to the art of display, shop layouts and even accompaniments that can inform and inspire.

Jen of Cheese Etc says, “I love visiting other cheesemongers wherever we go. Walking around any market in Italy you get an amazing variety of cheeses, nearly all locally produced, and they often look a bit ropey but taste amazing!”

“I am always hugely jealous of cheesemongers who can have a cheesemaker on-site so as to be able to share a whole story with customers – we visited a place in Seville last year and you could see the goats, the milking, the cheesemaking, and then buy the finished product at various ages all on one site.”

“Often European supermarkets have a much better selection of cheeses than ours do but I do think cheese plays a more important role in the lives of our European neighbours. It's very French or Italian to sit around a table sharing cheese, bread and wine with friends and family. The Brits are getting better at it and we are definitely seeing more people choosing to stay in and enjoy cheese with friends than go out for a meal.”



EUROPEAN CHEESES IN THE COUNTER AT CHEESE ETC, THE PANGBOURNE CHEESE SHOP

## RETAILER INSIGHT



*“Portuguese cheeses seem to be relatively unknown in the UK so I see a potential for them to become more known and appreciated in the future, especially because they are very unique and unlike most other European cheese”*

Svetlana Kukharchuk, The Cheese Lady

### Commitment to quality

Looking at the similarities and differences between produce from Britain and Europe is part of what encourages producers to be inspired by each other. A long-standing history has resulted in a dedication to high quality cheese from many European producers, and according to Svetlana, it's something homegrown producers can be inspired by. She says, “The biggest lesson that we can take from the European farmhouse and

artisan cheese market is their unwavering commitment to high quality. Cutting corners is just not their style. From milk to cheese maturation, there is attention to detail all along the way. The strength of the British fine cheese market at the moment is variety. In addition to the British classics, we can find nearly all ‘international’ styles of cheese here at home: from Mozzarella and fresh chevre to Gouda, and Pecorino to Roquefort and Gorgonzola.”



COW, ©PATRICE LARIVEN

## RETAIL TIPS

What the UK can learn from Parisian cheesemongers:

- Put accompaniments in the foreground. Fromagerie Griffon creates an appealing display of preserves, biscuits and wafers at the counter to attract customers. COW's accompaniments are placed by the entrance/exit to remind customers pre-and post-purchase of the joy of a well-chosen partner for their cheese
- Tempting window displays. Entice customers walking past with a feast for the eyes. Fromagerie Griffon decorated some of its cheeses with candied fruit, dried herbs and petals to add to the occasion





# THE VEGAN CHEESE BOOM

Rising demand for plant-based cheese is fuelling innovation, opening the door to a new generation of vegan cheeses

**T**here is no question about it: the public's appetite for vegan cheese is growing. Gone are the days when the phrase "vegan cheese" was an oxymoron or a disparaging remark made about flavourless slabs of coconut oil. Whether driven by health or ethical reasons, more consumers are seeking out plant-based cheeses than ever before.

Non-dairy alternatives to cheese date all the way back to the 1500s in China – but the spreadable fermented tofu of the time was a long way from the vegan options that we find on chilled shelves today. Coming up with a dairy-free cheese substitute that

is not only palatable but a joy to eat is a journey that's been decades in the making.

## A growing market

The main obstacle to creating a tasty vegan cheese is recreating casein, a milk protein that gives cheese its melty and stretchy properties. This question stumped developers of dairy-free cheese for many years, but the rising popularity of veganism has renewed the drive to find the winning formula.

In Britain, around 600,000 people identify as vegan, according to research by the Vegan Society in 2018, up from just 150,000 in 2014.

In recent years, the month-long Veganuary challenge has given veganism a huge publicity boost. In fact, the 2019 event was credited with causing major fast food chains like Greggs and Pizza Hut to launch brand new vegan options.

"The number of vegans has certainly increased over the years, and as a business we have also seen an increased demand for our products and vegan cheeses in general," says Ami Deane of Tyne Cheese. "I think up until a few years ago there had been a steady rise, but, with a major boom in veganism in the last one to two years, demand is soaring."

But the popularity of plant-based foods stretches far beyond the

consumed in the UK in 2018 were eaten by non-vegans.

With plant-based diets on the rise, retailers keen to make a profit have jumped in with both feet. The Good Food Institute, a US-based food innovation non-profit, said plant-based options are now outpacing overall food growth by more than five times in American shops. SPINS retail sales data showed that sales of plant-based food products that directly replace animal products grew by 29% from 2017 to 2019. The vegan cheese market in particular has recorded an even steeper rise, with US sales rocketing 51% over the two years to reach a value of \$189 million.

Meanwhile, in the UK, mainstream supermarkets were quick to give their customers more plant-based options. In 2018, Britain had more vegan product launches than any other country in the world, according to Mintel. Consumers have certainly welcomed the trend: when Sainsbury's first launched its Deliciously FreeFrom vegan cheeses in 2016, sales in the first month were 300% greater than predicted.

Only a few decades ago, the market was dominated by just a handful of producers, such as Greece's Violife, which became a vegan staple after it started up in the early 1990s. Today, nearly all of the UK's supermarkets sell branded and own-brand vegan cheese products.

## Consumers demand more

Although the number of vegan cheeses available in mainstream shops and restaurants is growing, consumers' newfound appetite for plant-based food has started driving demand for higher-quality options.

The vegan cheese industry is not

“Our aim is to continue to grow and adapt as the market does, and we love that this pushes us to continue experimenting and creating new and unique products”

vegan community. In fact, one in three British meat eaters follow a 'flexitarian' diet, according to Mintel, meaning they don't abide by a strict vegetarian or vegan diet, but they tend to choose plant-based options when they can. Research by Kantar Worldpanel found that a whopping 92% of plant-based meals

nearly as developed as the market for plant-based milk, but that's no surprise; cheese, with its countless different varieties and uses, is a complicated product to recreate. From farmhouse cheddar to creamy goat's cheese, tastes and textures vary wildly – but this diversity and depth of flavour is



often missing from the mass-produced vegan options available at mainstream shops.

Ami, a lifelong vegan, noticed a gap in the market for artisan vegan cheeses in 2014, so she began to create her own. Soon, Tyne Cheese was born. "After I attended my first vegan festival where I launched our products, I realised that people were dying to get their hands on good artisan vegan cheeses that they can use for a cheeseboard. The artisan vegan cheese movement in the UK has been growing ever since."

Ingredients used by artisan producers vary from one cheese to the next, but many high-quality plant-based cheeses get their creamy texture from nuts like cashews and almonds, which have a high fat content. After these are turned into nut milks, they are fermented and then aged, like cheese, to develop their flavour and texture. These traditional cheesemaking methods are the key difference between artisan and mass-produced vegan cheeses.

Artisan options also involve more innovative flavouring than mainstream vegan cheeses. The blank canvas of a nut-based cheese can be flavoured with a range of ingredients, including truffle, herbs and spices, garlic, vinegar, miso and nutritional yeast.

### A bright future

While most vegan cheesemakers experiment with different ingredients, fermenting processes and ageing environments, a few are taking vegan cheese the



way of the Impossible Burger by getting down to the nitty gritty of the science. The plant-based Impossible Burger was developed after years of research by California-based Impossible Foods. The company found that flavouring their meatless burgers with lab-grown proteins, including heme, an iron-containing molecule that's found in animal muscle, gave their burgers a meatier taste.

Elsewhere in Silicon Valley, start-ups are taking a cheesier approach. Some, such as Perfect

“ The blank canvas of a nut-based cheese can be flavoured with a range of ingredients, including truffle, herbs and spices, garlic, vinegar miso, and nutritional yeast ”

Day and Motif Ingredients, are focusing on developing lab-grown milk proteins such as casein through microbial fermentation, a process that allows microflora-like bacteria to express casein proteins. These businesses will then supply their plant-based proteins to other businesses. New Culture, another California start-up, is focused on creating what it calls "cow cheese without the cow". The company is working to engineer plant-based casein. It's already started developing its own Mozzarella.

In the lab and the kitchen alike, vegan cheesemakers have made huge strides in the past few years. According to Ami, the industry's growth has also been enhanced by technology. "Technology has played a massive role, in the sense that social media has been a fantastic way for small businesses like ours to connect with their customers and gain amazing free advertising. Without this I am sure that our business would not be where it is today."

Social media has also given vegans a place to connect with one another and share tips and products, helping the lifestyle

gain traction. "I can only see veganism growing in popularity, and with it people who are looking to reduce their meat and dairy consumption in general," Ami says. This rising demand is fuelling exciting changes in the industry. "There are going to be new products being developed, businesses entering the vegan market and new methods of production on the horizon. All vegan products, from meat to chocolate to cheese will develop and become more like their non-vegan counterparts (if not better) in the coming decade.

"As a business in a growing market, our aim is to continue to grow and adapt as the market does, and we love that this pushes us to continue experimenting and creating new and unique products. As veganism grows I think people are going to expect to see higher-quality products emerging across the board, including vegan cheeses," Ami says. The market for plant-based cheese has transformed over the past decade, and with the next 10 years sure to bring even more sweeping changes, vegan cheeses are poised to make their mark on the cheese industry.







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# FAMILY VALUES

Introducing Affineur Walo von Mühlenen: the expert behind a family business revered across the world

**F**or more than five generations, cheese by Affineur Walo has proved an important contribution to all speciality cheese counters in the whole world. A well trained and perfectly operating team guarantees high quality and consistency. The Von Mühlenen family looks back on a longstanding tradition and collaboration with farmers, dairies, maturing facilities and distributors in order to supply groceries all over the UK with artisan raw milk cheese.

Today Walo von Mühlenen is responsible for a selection of products with consistent high quality, and he assures that each cheese is characterized by its authentic flavour typical for pure raw milk cheese. Due to more than 150 years of family-expertise in cheese production he knows the best milk producers and dairies, the

optimum maturing conditions for each speciality and guarantees that only perfectly matured products are sold under his label.

Without an adequate distribution in the UK this could not be achieved. Affineur Walo is proud to collaborate with the Fine Cheese Company, whose maturing cellars in Bath guarantee optimum stocking conditions until the cheese comes to the shops. Walo refrains from vacuum packaging in order to allow the cheese to continue to unfold until the very last. It comes to Bath in big wheels and is freshly cut before distribution.

## A varied selection

The range of products includes traditional AOP products such as Emmentaler Switzerland AOP matured in caves for 16 months; Le Gruyère AOP matured in caves for 14 months; and own creations as



Red Nose Gold Label, a hard cheese matured in natural cellars and washed regularly with red wine for 12 months; Red Wine Farmer cheese, a semi hard cheese matured with red wine; Swiss Jura mountain cheese matured for 12 months;

Stämähäs, a semi hard cheese produced in the Appenzell region; Gallus, another hard cheese matured for 10 months; and the latest creation: Lion cheese, a creamy gentle cheese produced in the Thurgau region.

## AWARD-WORTHY CHEESES

Affineur Walo products have won multiple awards during the last decades. For example, at the 2019 World Cheese awards in Nantwich they won 16 prizes including three Super-Gold.



Winners of 16 awards in the  
**2019 World Cheese Awards**  
including 3 Super Gold

Find out more about  
Affineur Walo cheese on The Fine  
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# MAKE YOUR CHEESE COUNTER ICONIC

From presentation and selling skills to affinage, here's how to make your cheese counter a destination



**E**xciting customers with a well-planned cheese counter is key to success. The first point of engagement will be a layout that enthralls and entices – well presented stock displayed in an eye-catching manner will engage the customer from the outset, and they'll want to know (and try!) more. There's more to display than meets the eye, though, and getting it right takes skill and careful thought – it's not just about adding a sprig of rosemary for a touch of rustic charm.

Put yourself into your customers' shoes – what will make their journey from browsing to buying smooth and enjoyable? Most people will have a style or type of cheese that they prefer, or will be on the lookout for a well-balanced board, so arranging your stock into easily recognisable types will add focus and help your customers to make educated choices. The exception to this rule is if you have a selection of local produce; the nation's love of buying local for artisanal quality can be tapped into simply by grouping this selection together.

Stacking produce on your counter will have visual impact, and remember to cut larger wheels so that the paste of the cheese is clear to see. Critically review your display regularly from the standpoint of the customer to make sure that you are maintaining the visual feast you are hoping for.

## Read the labels

However you decide to display your cheese, good signposting and labelling is essential. Customers will feel more confident to ask questions and engage in conversation if they are armed with a little knowledge. Something as simple as denoting your grouped cheeses using a chalkboard or a piece of slate should be the bottom line – where you take it from there is up to you, but the more easily digestible information that you can provide, the better the experience for your customers.

There are, however, a few facts that customers need to know about the specific cheeses when it comes to labelling – name, price per 100g, whether it is unpasteurised or pasteurised, and suitability for vegetarians. Once this is covered off, secondary information can include provenance, nuances of flavour and texture, and recommendations for what to serve it with. Apply these rules to your online shop, too, where the absence of helpful and knowledgeable staff makes bite-size information all the more important – your destination counter also works in the virtual world! While a well-presented and intriguing counter will certainly be a draw, there is more that you can do to turn your shop into a destination, from maturing your cheese to ensuring that it leaves the shop in tip-top condition.

“Applying this simple advice to your cheese counter will turn your outlet into more than a shop – you'll become a go-to destination cheese-lovers will trust”

## Ageing well

The art of affinage is a real string to your bow, taking your cheese credentials to a different level. There is a lot to learn, but enthusiasm and interest will get you a long way. You'll need to understand the art of cheesemaking, and how everything from pastureland to weather affects the final product in its entirety before embarking on the road to successful affinage. But, if cheese is your life, it'll be no great hardship, and you'll be able to experiment and discover how to ripen cheese for the ultimate in taste and texture.

Simply storing cheese for a while is not affinage. The art of maturing is an intricate one, with science at its core and quality and flavour as the outcome. Room temperature, air quality and humidity all play their part in subtly altering the cheese's key constituents – what works for a soft blue will differ to a traditional Cheddar, and small changes will make a huge difference. While this is a big undertaking that should be left to the experts if you can't dedicate the time to it, there are

some smaller-scale methods that you can employ to ensure that your produce reaches your customer at its peak. Everything from precision fridge and room temperature to wrapping or leaving cheese in packaging will help – it all depends on how ripe the cheese is when it is delivered to you, and you'll need to research the appropriate methods and environment according to cheese type.

## In the know

With the perfect product now gracing your cheese counter, ensuring that it leaves the premises in the best condition is down to a number of factors. Staff need to be trained to understand the importance of cleanliness and how to avoid cross-contamination of flavours – regular hand washing is essential for many reasons, not least this latter point. Coupled with this, you'll need to be storing your produce at the correct temperature. While they need to be kept cold, soft cheeses like Brie are particularly susceptible to being over-chilled,





and goat varieties prefer cool, rather than ice-cold, conditions. Cheddar, on the other hand, can be kept in a slightly warmer environment.

Once cheese has been cut, you'll need to protect it. Clingfilm generally works well, but make sure that the cheese has enough room to breathe – double waxed paper is recommended for more delicate varieties. From a business point of view, it makes perfect sense to be storing your produce in optimal conditions, and passing on this knowledge will be invaluable to your customers – being able to offer them some simple tips and tricks on storing their latest purchase will enhance their experience and keep



them coming back for more.

Another area that staff need to understand is the art of cutting the different cheeses – there is no one-size-fits-all tool, so knowing which one to use according to type is essential to ensure the selection leaves your shop ready for the cheeseboard. Because hard, blue, soft and fresh cheeses all have inherently different textures, they'll each cut in different ways so you'll need a toolkit fit for the job.

Probably the most useful piece of kit is a cheese wire and board, which will cut through most types leaving a precise and smooth edge, but, again, be wary of cross-contamination – neither you nor your customer wants a Roquefort taint on their Manchego! Your cheese toolkit should also contain a perforated knife that will stop

soft, ripe cheeses sticking to the blade, a double-handled option for cheese with a firm paste, and a cheese plane which can also be used to keep the face of your produce clean and tempting to customers.

### Spread the word

Nobody without an interest in cheese would consider becoming a cheesemonger, and passion for your produce will quickly come across to your customers. Enjoy it, and make the most of it. And that goes for your staff, too. Bestowing them with the essential facts of each variety is empowering and gives them the tools that they need to speak with conviction. Taste and discuss new varieties with them, noting down the subtleties of flavour and texture, and get to know the provenance – your customers will appreciate the knowledge, direction and story, and will be able to ask questions to ensure that they make choices that suit their palate. Make sure that staff are aware of storage and cutting requirements for the different varieties, and also that they can recommend pairings.

Talk to your customers about their cheeses, involve them in the cutting process – it's these 'little' things that lead to consumer confidence and repeat purchases.

Finally, an enthusiastic cheesemonger loves nothing more than extolling the virtues of different varieties, and doing this to a captive and engaged audience is a joy! Organising events is a great way of extending your customer base in so many ways. Cheese tastings are a fun way of getting to know your customers and letting them get to know you. Treat it like a wine event where all the senses come together to discover the subtleties of what makes a good cheese. Encourage debate and ask people to explain why and what they like about the different varieties on offer, and be prepared to tell the tale of where each one has come from... don't underestimate the power of the background story to get people interested.

Applying this simple advice to your cheese counter will turn your outlet into more than a shop – you'll become a go-to destination cheese-lovers will trust.

“ An enthusiastic cheesemonger loves nothing more than extolling the virtues of different varieties, and doing this to a captive and engaged audience is a joy! ”







**T**he Barber family is the oldest surviving Cheddar-making business in the world. It began back in 1833, when Cheddar was made on the farm in the village of Ditcheat, Somerset to give to the farm hands as part of their wage. The family now own 11 dairy farms which provide 10% of the milk needed to make the cheese, the remaining milk coming from over 150 farming families on direct contract to supply the finest quality milk. It takes less than a day to turn the milk into cheese, but this is just the beginning.

### The cheesemaking process

As the Cheddar matures, the starter cultures, which are blends of 'friendly' bacteria that start the cheesemaking process, continue to work influencing the final texture, aroma and taste. Historically, farmers used sour milk or leftover whey, which contained natural bacteria from the local land and animals, as a starter culture. If the cheesemaking went well, they would use these cultures again. Neighbouring cheesemakers would swap the best of these

cultures and pass them down through the generations.

The Barber family are the only cheesemakers still using traditional starter cultures to make rindless Cheddar, and they believe that it is this dedication to authenticity that gives their multi-award winning Cheddar its characteristic complexity and depth of flavour. Each batch of the signature 1833 Vintage Reserve, PDO-accredited Cheddar matures for a minimum of 24 months, and only when it reaches its peak does it leave the farm.

## KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE

Quality Cheddar has been made at family-run Barber's Farmhouse Cheesemakers since 1833

### The ideal ingredient

Barber's have adopted and developed technology to bring artisan notes and flavour profiles to their rindless Cheddar. This technology has allowed them to perfect consistency within their 1833 Vintage Reserve, making it the perfect ingredient for chefs and home cooks alike. The 1833 Vintage Reserve appears on menus worldwide – from the Ditcheat village pub to the tables of the Shanghai Continental Hotel.

One of the more notable and interesting chefs that features

their Cheddar on his menu is Cyrus Todiwala OBE. Cyrus Todiwala, chef patron at London's Cafe Spice Namaste and Mr Todiwala's Kitchen, recently commented, "From the day Barber's was introduced to us we have never looked back and found it to be a perfect marriage, with the Vintage Reserve Cheddar being one of the most important cheeses in both our most popular naans. Our number one seller is the chilli naan where we blend the Cheddar and Barber's Red Leicester with the naan. We also use the Cheddar in our stuffed Rissois de Camarao, which is a spiced prawn and Cheddar sauce-filled pastry fried parcel along with a mushroom version called Rissois de Cogumelos".

For Barber's this is a testament to the balance of their Cheddars and highlights the versatility of the cheese as an ingredient.

For 187 years, Barber's have been perfecting their Cheddar-making craft. The Barber family look forward to continuing their pursuit of the perfect Cheddar for the next 187 years.

“ The Barber family are the only cheesemakers still using traditional starter cultures to make rindless Cheddar, and they believe that it is this dedication to authenticity that gives their multi-award winning Cheddar its characteristic complexity and depth of flavour ”



## VINTAGE RESERVE CHEDDAR

CRAFTED IN SOMERSET  
SINCE 1833

- MATURED **24** MONTHS -



### FARMHOUSE CHEESEMAKERS

Cheddar that is powerfully intense and complex with an exceptional depth of flavour.

The slightly brittle and sometimes crunchy texture is a natural result of its long and slow ageing.



BARBERS.CO.UK   @barbers1833

- MATURED **24** MONTHS -



GOLD  
WINNER





## *The Kaltbach Cave*

**EXPERTISE:** Aged in a 22-million year old sandstone cave in Switzerland where cavemasters have been refining cheese for more than 60 years.

**NATURAL CLIMATE:** The cave climate is stable throughout the year, therefore artificial climate control is not necessary.

**TRUSTED BRAND:** The Kaltbach brand gives consumers a trusted and recognisable family of cheeses to explore.

For more information on our Kaltbach range of cheese go to [www.emmi-kaltbach.com/international](http://www.emmi-kaltbach.com/international) or email [info.uk@emmi.com](mailto:info.uk@emmi.com)