

The Cheese Club

Cheese Notes Offer 01/04

For the first Cheese Club of 2004 we take pride in showcasing some of the wonderful farmhouse cheeses being produced in Victoria. As our selection shows, there are an increasing variety of high quality cheeses being produced all over the country. The emphasis is on the local and regional characteristics and flavours of the cheese, as well as organic and biodynamic methods of farming and cheese production.

holy goat veloute

goat's milk, white mould

Sutton Grange, Victoria

Sutton Grange Organic Farm is situated just east of Castlemaine in central Victoria. Established by Carla Meurs and Ann-Marie Monda, it is run as an organic enterprise, with both the goatherd and farm cheese production being organically certified. The emphasis is on a holistic and integrated approach to the management of the farm, respecting the natural environment and the health and well being of the goats.

The goats here graze on a wide variety of predominantly native grasses and shrubs, which produces milk of a high quality and helps give the milk it's unique character, which is reflected in the cheeses produced.

As with all the cheeses produced at Sutton Grange, the Veloute is hand-made. The cheese making process is based on the traditional French soft curd style using slow lactic acid fermentation. The fresh curds are hand ladled into their individual moulds and allowed to drain slowly. Many of you will be familiar with the *geotrichum* mould used in the production of the Veloute, which give it its characteristic 'wormlike' appearance on the surface. It is a young, creamy goat's milk cheese matured for a minimum of three weeks. The cheese is quite sweet with a lovely, slightly nutty flavour on the finish. It has a flaky texture, which melts on the tongue.

gunnamatta gold

cow's milk, washed rind

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria

Red Hill Cheese is the smallest dairy in Victoria. Established by Trevor and Jan Brandon in April 2000, Trevor's experience as a food microbiologist has been invaluable in the production and development of the Red Hill cheeses. Red Hill Cheese is able to take advantage of the burgeoning wine industry in the region, with many of it's cheeses designed to match well with the local Peninsula wine styles.

Organic and biodynamic cow and goat's milk sourced from single herds are used in the production of all Red Hill cheeses. The milk used in the production of Gunnamatta Gold comes from an organic herd of Friesian cows at Fish Creek in Gippsland.

The milk is heated for ten minutes at 65 degrees Celsius, a process that is equivalent to pasteurisation, but which is gentler and better retains the flavours and qualities of the milk. The cheese is made by hand from non-genetically modified vegetarian rennet and is free from artificial stabilisers and preservatives.

The *brevi bacterium linens* (or *b.linens*) used in the production of the washed rind cheeses such as Gunnamatta Gold were accidentally introduced to the maturation rooms at Red Hill from the nearby Main Ridge Winery. It is these local characteristics of the area and its flora, particularly those associated with the winegrowing of the region, that contribute to the unique taste of the cheeses.

This batch of Gunnamatta Gold was ordered especially for the Cheese Club, and one of our Cheeseroom staff who also works at Red Hill Cheese, Karen Leeworthy, helped to make the cheese for us. As with all the Red Hill cheeses, it is named after a local landmark, in this case Gunnamatta surf beach.

Gunnamatta Gold is a lovely medium strength washed rind cheese with a creamy texture. It has thick and crusty aromatic rind, which is a wonderful golden orange colour typical of washed rind cheeses -a result of the *b. linens* and the local flora. In contrast, the pate of the cheese is pale and creamy. The cheese has an earthy, quite meaty flavour to it with a lingering sweetness on the finish.

mount emu creek cloth mature **sheep's milk, semi-hard** **Camperdown, Vic**

Historic Purrumbete Homestead is located near Camperdown in Victoria's Western District. Romney sheep have traditionally grazed the grasslands of this region, originally having been bred for their wool. Robert Manifold is the latest generation of the family who first settled in the area in the late 1830's. He established the Mount Emu Creek Dairy in 1992.

Sheep's milk is far richer than cow's milk. It has 90 per cent more calcium and 70 per cent more protein than cow's milk. It also has more fat, vitamins and minerals, and is very easy to digest. However, the milk yield from sheep is far less than that of dairy cattle. With the development of the sheep dairy industry in this region, Robert has implemented a cross breeding program between the Romney ewes and East Friesland sheep imported from New Zealand, as East Friesland ewes have a much higher and more consistent milk yield with a higher buttermilk content.

The Mount Emu Creek Cloth Mature is a pure ewe's milk cheese. It is a clothbound cheese produced in lovely little one kilogram wheels which are wrapped in a breathable muslin and rubbed weekly with salt. The cheese is matured for seven to eight months at Mount Emu Creek, the maturation rooms of which are filled with wild yeasts and bacteria. The cheeses collect these, including *b. linens* and penicillium, and these contribute to the final flavour. Mount Emu Creek Cloth Mature has a fine, smooth, texture and is pale ivory in colour. It has a rich creaminess which is typical of sheep's milk cheeses, with a balanced salt flavour on the finish. The fruity sweetness of quince paste pairs beautifully with the savoury flavours of this cheese.

tarago river dairy

Gippsland, Victoria

Tarago River Dairy is located at Neerim South, in the midst of the lush pastures and dairy country of northwest Gippsland in Victoria. It is in this idyllic setting that cheese-makers Laurie Jensen and Richard Thomas, and farmer Rob Johnson, first set up Tarago River Cheese with the aim of making specialist farmhouse cheeses for the Australian market. A farmhouse cheese is one where the production of the cheese and the sourcing of the milk all occur on the one property. The cheese therefore reflects the specific character of the herd and farm, and its locality. With Gippsland Blue, a cheese many members will be familiar with, Laurie Jensen and Richard Thomas created Australia's first new farmhouse cheese in decades and it is now a recognised 'benchmark' Australian cheese.

The milk for the majority of cheeses comes from the dairy's own herd of Friesian cows. With the acquisition of a second farm, the original herd of 350 Friesian cows now numbers over 800. Jersey milk and goat's milk are also sourced from nearby farms as the range of cheeses produced by Tarago River expands.

We have three beautiful cheeses produced by Tarago River Dairy on offer for this Cheese Club.

tarago triple cream

cow's milk, white mould

Forget the diet - this cheese is pure indulgence! Tarago Triple Cream is made from a combination of rich cream and Friesian milk. The outside of the cheese is covered in a fine white coat of *penicillium* mould, which slowly ripens throughout the cheese's four week maturation period. The Tarago Triple Cream should have a texture similar to ice

cream, with a chalky heart, which breaks down over time. It has a rich buttery flavour with a slight sharpness in the rind to cut through the rich creaminess of this cheese. At certain times of the year, it will break down to a soft, sticky consistency. This is a luscious, decadent cheese. It is an ideal dessert cheese and is lovely with acidic and juicy fresh fruits and a glass of champagne or a local sparkling white.

tarago goat mature

goat's milk, semi-hard

An artisanal cheese, Tarago Goat Mature is a naturally rinded cheese. It is made only during late spring and summer using the milk from a single grassfed herd. Only the best quality milk is used in the production of this cheese to ensure that no strong 'bucky' flavours develop as the cheese matures.

The goat's milk undergoes a quick fermentation. The curd is then 'cooked' using steam-jacketed vents, which bring the temperature up just enough to caramelize some of the remaining lactose and cause the curd to express additional moisture. The cheese is dry salted, and then matured underground for a minimum of six months. The wheels for this Cheese Club have had a further maturation period here at Richmond Hill Cafe & Larder.

Tarago Goat Mature develops a semi-hard, firm flaky texture as it matures. It has a slightly sweet, creamy goat taste with earthy and slightly fruity flavours.

enterprize exhibition blue

cow's milk, blue mould

This intensely flavoured creamy cow's milk blue is the third of our Tarago River cheeses we are offering for this Cheese Club. A farmhouse blue, it is made exclusively from milk from the dairy's herd of Friesian cows.

The cheese is matured for three months in underground cellars. This allows it to form a natural crusty rind, and to develop its flavour characteristics, adopting the flora present in this underground environment. After six weeks of maturation, the wheels of cheese are pierced with long needles, which encourage the growth of the airborne blue *Roqueforti* moulds. This process is then repeated in another four weeks. The cheese develops a silky texture which is less fragile due to the addition of retenate, the separated protein solid derived from the ultra-filtration of milk.

Enterprize Exhibition Blue has a strong distinctive flavour - quite spicy with a touch of saltiness and a long, creamy finish. Its texture is rich and succulent. As it matures, the cheese develops a hint of caramel and a richness which balances the more robust flavours of the blue mould.

things to enjoy with your summer cheeses....

Rosemary Matzos Bread

A beautiful partner to all cheeses, this traditional Jewish unleavened bread is crisp and delicious with the lovely herby flavour of rosemary.

Peppered Apple & Lemon Chutney

This spicy peppery chutney is full of gutsy flavours with a sweet lemony tang. It works particularly well with hard cheeses such as the Tarago Goat Mature and the Mount Emu Creek Cloth Mature.

Yarra Valley Produce Truffle Infused Honey

This wonderful Victorian honey has been infused with truffles for a very special treat. Beautiful drizzled over a spicy blue such as the Enterprize Exhibition Blue.

***summer berries and stone fruits are in abundance and are the perfect accompaniment to cheese**

***try the raspberry jam on our 'Shopping List' for this offer with the Tarago Triple Cream and Veloute**

The Cheese Club

Cheese Class

1. Fresh Cheese

Fresh cheeses are the first stage of the cheesemaking process and are the simplest form of cheese. They do not undergo any maturation and therefore rely largely on the quality of the milk for their flavour. Fresh cheeses are not ripened and have no protective rind, and generally have a very short shelf life due to their high moisture and low salt content. The texture of the cheese varies depending on the treatment of the curds, with the most delicate fresh cheeses retaining as much moisture as possible due to the slow handling of the curds. Best eaten as soon as possible after making, they should have a sweet floral aroma and be sweet and acidic to taste. Examples of fresh cheeses include fromage frais, fromage blanc, cream cheese, fresh goat's and ewe's curd. Related cheeses include marinated cheeses such as feta and stretched curd cheeses such as mozzarella. Marinating, scalding and coating in ash are all techniques used to extend the life of fresh cheeses.

Wines to try with fresh cheeses

Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Young sparkling wines

Breads to try with fresh cheeses

Baguette, Crusty unbleached white, grilled Sourdough, fruit breads, Walnut bread

Good Things to try with fresh cheeses

Almond bread, Red Plum jam, fresh fruits such as berries and plums, drizzled with honey

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to matching food and wine with cheese. Unusual pairings can often work well. Let us know if you find a great cheese match!

Please note that in addition to The Cheese Club, the Cheeseroom at
RHCL is open seven days a week

We are able to receive orders (and visitors) at any stage
during this time. Delivery is available Monday-Friday for Melbourne metro
and Tuesday -Thursday ALL other areas Australia wide.

Please also remember that as a Cheese Club member you can now order
any Richmond Hill Cafe & Larder item* less a 10% discount.

It's our pleasure!

*excludes functions, freight and handling costs

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