



Defining "Artisanal" Cheese



Today's "cheese lesson" is all about semantics. Quite the buzz word these days, folks throw "artisanal" around to mean a lot of different things. At the Cheese Shop, we use it to identify "cheese that's been touched by hands." In other words, "artisanal cheese" is often based on traditional cheesemaking practices and requires a bit of science and a good deal of artistry since the cheesemaker must adapt his or her cheesemaking procedures to fit each batch of milk (instead of making the milk always fit the particular procedures of the making). Although "artisanal" and "industrial" cheeses are often referred to as opposites, they are not mutually exclusive and the lines can sometimes be blurry. Our shop's choice to focus primarily on "artisanal" cheese does not mean that we think "industrial" cheese is bad; it's just that we're looking for cheeses that have taken a good deal of human labor to create and that can be traced to cheesemakers and the milk source. We also feel

that many of the "big guys" get a lot of shelf space in prominent grocery stores, and that it's our duty to speak for the folks who are often too busy to represent themselves. Just think: good land management (ie think of the labor to grow grass during a Texas drought!), animal husbandry, dairy milking, and cheese-making (not to mention affinage!), are all extremely time consuming endeavors in and of themselves and it's often difficult for cheesemakers to even have enough time to steal away and get their goods to local farmers markets.

Put many of the above-mentioned tasks together, and you've got our next buzz word for the day. A "farmstead cheese" is one that is made on a farm that also cares for its own animals, often meaning that the same group of folks who take care of the animals also make the cheese and that the milk doesn't have to travel far or sit long before being made into cheese. So come into the Cheese Shop and let us walk you through some of the cheeses in our case, explaining what makes many of them artisanal and pointing out which come from farmstead producers. See you soon!

New Cheese & Goodies

Expect to love this cheese when you get a taste! Reminiscent to the goat camembert we carry in our case, [Chevrefeuille Quatre](#) is a clover-shaped cheese that comes from the Perigord region in France. The flavor has a nice acidity, characteristic of goat's milk cheeses, but also has a distinct but faint hint of eggs on the finish. Pair this delicious treat with a flinty white wine like Chablis.

Calling all lovers of cheeses made with vegetable rennet! We have a new raw sheep's milk cheese just for you! [Marzolino Rosso](#), a Tuscan pecorino made between the months of October and March, is often made with the juice of the wild artichoke flower. The rind is treated with olive oil and tomato juice - giving the younger wheels a reddish shade of color, though this begins to fade as the cheese ages. Try this simultaneously sweet and sour tasting cheese with some fava beans and a nice Chianti.

[Holzhofer](#) is a farmstead cheese from Kaeserei Holzhof, the producer that has been making Tilsiter for generations in Northeastern Switzerland. This firm, Alpine-style cheese, hand selected by Caroline Hostettler, is made with raw cow's milk; it is then specially aged for eight months in an old beer cellar and has savory-spicy flavors of shallots and garlic. Try pairing this spicy and salty savory cheese with dark beers or a good Sancerre.



Cheese-y Events & News

The Off-Centered Film Festival is here again and focuses on "Western themed fun" this year. This collaboration between the Alamo Drafthouse and Dogfish Head celebrates three nights of film and craft beer with screenings and parties around the city. We're excited to partake in the VIP media event for a second consecutive year this Saturday by pairing awesome cheese with awesome Dogfish Head beer. For more information on the festival, [click here](#).



Sunday, April 29 (6pm): One of our wholesale partners, [Royal Fig Catering](#), is launching a new supper club in its beautiful Harvest Room, and we're excited to be a part of its debut! The first Artisan Dinner Series features a five-course dinner that will highlight Chef Dan Stacy's culinary attention to detail, quality and artistry as he showcases a selection of our artisanal cheeses.

Cheesemonger and Wholesale Manager Paul will talk about the selections and pairings throughout the service. This event is open to the public and B.Y.O.B., and diners are encouraged to bring their favorite wines, brews or other beverages to compliment the meal. For more details, contact Jerod by phone at 739-3233 or [email](#).

Although our remaining April Cheese 101 class is sold out, we are booking private tastings post-June 17. (Sorry for the hiatus, but John and I will be focusing on the arrival of our new cheese baby!) Email [Kendall](#) for information on hosting private parties in the Cheese House.

Cheesily Yours,
Kendall & John
Kelly, Brad, Courtney, Paul, and Victoria



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