

Austin's Lone Cheese Rangers

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In Hyde Park, we visited Austin's only dedicated cheese shop, [Antonelli's](#), on the suggestion of Chowhound [amysuehere](#). John and Kendall Antonelli, the shop's owners, sell cheeses from all over the world, including some made in Texas, as well as cured meats from artisan salumi-makers (local and national) and preserves from Austin-based Confituras like a salted caramel pear butter and Rio Star grapefruit marmalade.

We tasted four local cheeses, including Midnight Chevre from CKC Farms, an aged nutty cheese from Eagle Mountain Farmhouse Cheese, and a cloth-bound cheddar from Brazos Valley. But Pure Luck Farm & Dairy's Hopelessly Bleu from Dripping Springs, Texas, stood out. Pure Luck is a small family farm and goat dairy specializing in handmade cheeses. Its riff on blue cheese was milder in the blue-stink flavor than a traditional blue, and had an incredibly creamy and smooth texture.

We also asked John Antonelli a few questions about the state of cheesemaking in the Austin area, and about how the business of cheese had been going.

It seems like a lot of the local cheeses are goat-milk-based.

There are quite a few cow operations, but the Hill Country area tends to have more goats. The countryside isn't as flat, so it's better adapted for goats. You don't need as much land per goat as a cow, and that might be driving some of the decisions too.



Is cheesemaking getting a lot more common around Austin?

The trend is definitely growth; it seems like more and more people are trying to get back to handcrafted food. We've had about six or seven new cheesemakers approach us in the last year, which is amazing considering Texas only had about twenty or so when we opened.

What are your favorite local cheeses you are carrying right now?

Unfair question. Who are your favorite children?

I really appreciate them all! The folks making the product are really passionate and conscientious about what they are doing. It's not like they are making a million dollars in this business.

You've been open about a year; how has the shop been received in Austin?

It's been amazing; I couldn't have imagined a better start or more fulfilling start. It seems like Austin is really appreciating the service we offer. We are busier and busier every week. There are a couple groups of 10- to 12-year-olds that come in with their allowance money and buy some of our most expensive cheeses but in tiny wedges with their pennies. They aren't buying candy; they are buying Rogue River Blue. They spend \$3.50 every time, but they are regulars.

[Antonelli's Cheese Shop](#)

4220 Duval Street, Austin

512-531-9610