

Antonelli's Cheese Shop

Finally, a friendly neighborhood place that celebrates the small cheese

Cheese, Wine store

Market

Hours

Tue–Sat 11:00am–7:00pm

Sun noon–5:00pm

Features Veg-friendly

Bar Beer, wine

Credit cards Visa, MC, AmEx

www.antonellischeese.com

Hyde Park

[4220 Duval St.](#)

Austin, TX

(512) 531-9610

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Austin's first cheese shop. Let that sink in a little bit. Let it melt on your tongue the way, perhaps, a slice of Parmigiano Reggiano does, when shaved right off the wheel in front of you. Hyde Park is one of the most ideal neighborhoods in the city to host this gastronomic one-giant-leap, populated as it is with a diverse range of ages and incomes that all agree on one thing: the relative dearth of serious cuisine on this corner. So it was no wonder that this place opened to oohs and aahs, to ravenous tweets and blog posts, the hand-scribbled font on the sign outside endowed with all the sincerity and craftiness that is emblematic of the food-obsessed generation.

And sincerity really is the driving ethos behind this project, which is the labor of love of a young couple whose eagerness to please and geeky cheese expertise amounts to some very exciting prospects for their neighbors. The selection, which is ever growing, includes some of the harder-to-find cheeses from abroad, but mostly focuses on the excellent, little-known American farmsteads. There's a list where you can request certain cheeses the shop may not carry yet, and the staff will let you taste anything in the case. Anything. In fact, if you seem hesitant, they will encourage you, handing over a sliver of something delicious while telling you how it was made and by whom. It's precisely these kinds of educational, horizon-broadening experiences that Austin is hungering for.

Behind the bar, you'll see chalkboards of cheese facts, such as a demystifying scale of lactose-intolerant-friendly cheeses, and you will note that cheeses are, for the most part, correctly wrapped (as opposed to some larger markets, which suffocate their cheeses or cut off of not-so-fresh wheels). But man cannot live by cheese alone, and so there is also a good little selection of olives and charcuterie, as well as a very well-edited array of cheese-friendly wines and beers. Should you need help assembling an impressive cheese plate for a party, they'll make suggestions and equip you with all the information you need to win your guests' admiration. It's not that the shop sells anything you can't find absolutely anywhere else, but the prices and staff are far and away more agreeable than anywhere out there. We really want this shop to do well—we need it to. So that we can have more just like it.