

QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

Where Cheese Education Meets Cheese Gastronomy

The January 2018 Newsletter

Happy New Year!!!



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From the desk of our new esteemed President, Curt Wittenberg:

Happy New Year, Queso Diegans! We are heading into the new year with the wind at our back and your board is busy cooking up ideas and plans for new adventures in cheese. As your new president, I want to start by thanking you for putting your trust in me, and the rest of the board, to keep Queso Diego fun and creative and, at the same time, moving it forward in new and exciting ways.

Please join me in thanking Earl for his dedication to the club over the last year and his success in moving the club to a new level. His foresight to make Queso Diego the sponsor of the San Diego County Fair Cheese Competition with a new standard of organization and professionalism was, perhaps, his crowning achievement. All San Diego cheesemakers are the beneficiaries of that effort.

I am so pleased to see the passion of our members for cheese eating and cheesemaking. As president, I am dedicated to facilitating both activities during the coming year. Our initiatives to lower the barriers to cheesemaking for those that are new to the craft, as well as for those interested in taking on new cheesemaking challenges, have been fruitful. As a result, we have seen a big increase in the number and quality of homemade cheeses shared at the meetings. That means more experience for cheesemakers and more enjoyment for cheese eaters...which means all of us!

Over the next year, we hope to improve those resources and access to them. We will be continuing our adventures in the Cheese of the Month calendar, so join us in learning about and making new cheese styles. We are also planning a new year of presentations and club activities. All of these are opportunities for member involvement, your opportunity to help make the club experience richer. Your suggestions and participation are always welcome. Please join me and the Queso Diego board in making 2018 a really cheesy year.

Till next time,

Curt



Is the QD Anniversary Party on Your Calendar?

The New Year is almost upon us! You know what that means: the great Bubbly and Cheese Pairing event is less than a month away. January 16th, 2018 to be exact. To attend the party you must be a current member. If you haven't done so already, please go to <http://quesodiego.org/about/membership/> and renew for 2018. Renewing is easy on Paypal. Only \$21 for single members and \$31 for households. We have some great events in the works for 2018 so sign up now.

You also must pay for the event in advance. You will be notified of the location when you prepay. Like last year, no one can attend without prepaying online. For what you will be served, this will be the bargain of the year! There will be a few changes:

- This year we're going to ratchet it up with more exotic cheeses and drink and this may affect the price slightly – we're working on it.
- Tables for the potluck items will be placed in station-like areas to avoid congestion in the room.
- We're adding a dessert item and beverage pairing.
- Plus the party will take place at a new venue.

A Good Read.....

By Curt Wittenberg

“Reinventing the Wheel: Milk, Microbes and the Fight for Real Cheese”, by Brownen Percival and Francis Percival (2017), University of California Press, Oakland, CA. briefly reviewed by Curt Wittenberg

Despite being only part way through “Reinventing the Wheel: Milk, Microbes and the Fight for Real Cheese”, by Brownen and Francis Percival, I am fully prepared to recommend it to those of you interested in the reemergence of artisan cheese or, as the authors call it, “Real Cheese”. Brownen Percival, a cheese buyer and cofounder of the website www.microbialfoods.org, and Francis Percival, a wine writer of international acclaim, have written this fascinating and provocative book to explain how cheese made in small scale creameries using milk directly from the animal virtually disappeared to be replaced by industrial creameries and how a new group of pioneers of artisan cheesemaking are bringing back “Real Cheese”. Importantly, they explain the social, political and scientific forces that have driven those transformations and how, without meaning to, we almost lost the heart and soul of cheese. In doing so, they celebrate the artisans who maintained the craft and enabled those with the interest and motivation to recover those skills to reinvent the wheel. “Reinventing the Wheel” reflects both the authors passion for cheese and their skill as story tellers. The consequence is a rich and rewarding read.

Jenny Eastwood, of Small Goods, aka “SassyPants”, is raving about a new cheese. Check out what she has to say about it.



Recently, I came across a unique find: Couet Farm & Fromagerie’s amazing Fran de Marquis. <http://www.couetfarm.com/>

This cheese took first place at this year’s ACS conference, and yet it still managed to fly under my radar. A family farm with French, Polish, and Quebecois roots, cheese-maker, Marie-Laure, is currently the only sheep milk, cheese-maker in Massachusetts. She studied extensively in Europe before starting her own farming endeavor, and now employs her retired parents to help manage and tend the animals and the cheese-making responsibilities.

Although Marie-Laure studied goat cheese making in Europe, and although she generally makes sheep milk cheeses, Fran de Marquis is a cow milk cheese, made from milk sourced from neighboring farms.

Loosely based on the Corsican recipe for Fleur de Maquis, Fran de Maquis is a cow's milk crottin covered in rosemary, fennel seeds, savory and juniper berries - herbs commonly found in the evergreen shrub lands of Mediterranean regions.

I was overjoyed to see this cheese beautifully wrapped in paper and tied with a bit of hemp. Opening one up, I immediately smelled Christmas: the juniper berries and rosemary scent were fragrant and rich. Fran de Marquis sports a pure white paste that is uber creamy and unctuous, with an astringent tanginess from the covering of herbs and molds.

Marie-Laure spent time studying Affinage while in Europe. It shows, THE MOLD on this cheese is OUTSTANDING! Its taste contribution and appearance are unmatched: lovely white P. Camemberti, a heavy blanket of blue-green P. Roqueforti.....The herbs keep this cheese very humid and the mold blooms at a terrific rate.

I'm keeping this creamery on my radar and hope to get Marie Laure's line of others cheeses. Stand by! Hope to share with you soon!

News from our new VP, Larry Stein

Happy New Year Turophiles! I hope you all had a great holiday season. Now it's time to get back to important stuff....cheese.

We added some exciting new programs for Queso Diego members last year.

The first is the lending library. No other cheese club, which we know of, offers a service like this. Current members of the club can borrow from a wide variety of cheese forms, presses, and accessories such as thermometers, draining mats, spoons, books and other equipment. This alone would be worth the cost of membership, but wait, there's more.

Our unique library has a stock of about 28 cultures, bacteria, molds and additives from which to choose. For only \$1 each you can get a tube of any these, sufficient to make your cheese. This means you can make a Swiss cheese and get your dose of Propionic Shermanii for only \$1, instead of spending \$30 for a small commercial package. This enables all of us to experiment and try different cheeses without spending a lot of money on cultures we may not use for a year.

Our Google Doc spreadsheet is password protected so that only current members can access it. The link is:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19fLvqk26dKyUlf1Ay5E_IFhULYZ1rt8nk0SXiR2R720/edit#gid=333222537

If you're a paid member, but not on the list, then just Request Access and we'll enable your email.

Another program we started was the *Cheese of the Month*. This is intended to be a guide to making various cheeses for people just starting out or looking for some guidance for styles. If you make a cheese, bring it to the meeting and we can all check out what you made. This is a great way to get feedback, identify things that may have

gone wrong, and see things that worked out great. I've been working on the list and have added two cheeses per month; Quick and Aged.

The Quick cheese is something that can be made a day or a month ahead of the meeting, and be ready to share. The Aged cheese needs a bit more time. Maybe 2 months or a year. So this is something you make ahead and plan for a future date.

I'm working on filling out the rest of 2018. Here are the cheeses on the schedule for the next few months:

February

Quick Bloomy Rind - Brie, Camembert, 2-4 weeks

Aged Munster 10 weeks

March

Quick Mozzarella 1-5 days

Aged Gouda 6 weeks - 4 yrs.

April

Quick Valencay 2-4 weeks

Aged Blue Cheese 2-4 months

If you request your cultures/rennet three days before a general meeting then Curt will have your tubes ready at the meeting. If you want to have a Brie ready for the February meeting then send your request to qd-library-request@googlegroups.com by January 13th and you'll get them at the anniversary party.

Here's a link to my Google Drive where I keep my recipes and history. This is a link to my Brie folder. Feel free to view and copy any of the versions. I sometimes keep time stamps of when I do things so you can see how long a particular process takes.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B7tYBgfJcRhdWGdnQTVkalY0Y2c?usp=sharing>

I encourage anyone making cheese to start a Google Drive folder. I just started this last year. Before this I had scraps of paper with notes on it. The drive is an easy way to organize your recipes, share them, and they're accessible anywhere you are.

That's it for now. Go and make some cheese.

-Larry

CHEESEY TRIVIA

- ❖ What appears to be the remains of cheese have been found in Egyptian tombs over 4,000 years old.
- ❖ Greek historian Xenophon (430?-355? B.C.) mentions that goat cheese had been known for centuries in Peloponnesus.
- ❖ Data indicates that shards from vessels used as sieves, dating back to the sixth millennium B.C. in Poland, have dairy fat residue, suggesting they were used in the earliest known instance of cheese-making. Researchers at the University of Bristol confirmed what Princeton archaeologist Peter Bogucki suspected for 30 years—that Neolithic farmers in Europe, whose settlements were dominated by remains of cattle were dependent on those animals for more than meat. (2013 Archaeology Magazine)
- ❖ From 1935-1937 Wisconsin state law required restaurants to serve 2/3 ounce of Wisconsin butter and 2/3 ounce of Wisconsin cheese with every meal served.
- ❖ The USDA issued guidelines in 2002 regulating the size of the holes in domestically produced Swiss cheese. The size of the holes was reduced by 50% to accommodate modern cheese slicing machines that jammed with the larger holes.
- ❖ Cheddar, Cheshire and Leicester cheeses have been colored with annatto seed for over 200 years. Carrot juice and marigold petals have also been used to color cheeses. Coloring may have originally been added to cheese made with winter milk from cows eating hay to match the orange hue (from vitamin A) of cheeses made with milk from cows fed on green plants.

May the cheese be with you!!