



QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

September 2018

From the desk of Queso Grande, Curt Wittenberg

Ah, the vicissitudes of cheesemaking. Recent events, conversations and experiences have turned my thoughts to the unpredictability of cheesemaking...the joys and the frustrations. As we hone our craft we are constantly confronted by the limitations of our equipment, the limits of our knowledge, our lack of patience, our lack of time and a plethora of other limitations that confront us as amateurs. Some we address through innovation, take the mini-fridge cheese cave or the makeshift cheese press. Some we overcome by seeking out inexpensive resources like the club's Library of Cheesemaking, made possible by a generous donation from the Berry Good Food Foundation. The Library provides us with supplies and equipment we might not otherwise have access to. Others we just forego and hope for the best.

Those of us who are trying to "up our game" in the world of cheesemaking are often confronted by the results of those limitations. Sometimes our cheese is too dry... take, for example, my "dry sheep-milk blue" that dehydrated when my humidifier died while I was out of town. Then there are the soggy rinds I found on several of my cheeses this weekend when I took them out of the vacuum bags that they were sealed in when my time became too limited to properly maintain them. They were still appreciated at the Cross-Club Picnic, but they were a little worse for wear. There are the blue veins that never develop and the bloomy rinds that overshoot their prime and begin to melt in the cheese cave. So much unpredictability, so many unanticipated outcomes.

Not all of these mishaps or limitations lead to undesirable outcomes. My "dry blue" is tasty, but more like a blue parmesan than the Forme d'Ambert that I was trying to clone. Melting Valençays are sought out by lovers of French cheese for their luscious texture and pungent flavor. Red Hawk, a beautiful and subtle washed-rind cheese made by Cowgirl Creamery was the result of contamination in a cheese cave. There was even the "albino blue", made by our own Jessica Voytek, that never developed blue veins despite repeated poking but went on to win Best of Show at the San Diego County Fair in 2017.

Perhaps that is a message to us to keep on striving despite the limitations and lack of control. We will certainly continue to impress ourselves and our friends and, if all goes wrong in just the right way, we may even make the next great cheese or invent a new cheese style.

Keep on striving for the best and then enjoy what you end up with. That might be good advice for more than just cheesemaking.

A great September to you all.

Your President, Curt Wittenberg

For our September meeting we will have a "share and tell" format instead of a formal speaker. We are encouraging members to bring Fall and Holiday cheeses and to briefly share their ideas for cheeses, cheese arrangements, cheese dishes, etc. for the fall and holidays. Hope you will join us Tuesday, September 18th at AleSmith.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Sept. 5

Speaker Deadline for Maker's Faire

Sept. 18—6:30 p.m.

General Meeting@ Ale Smith
Fall & Holiday Cheese

OCTOBER EVENTS

October 6—7

Maker's Faire

Oct. 16th, 6:30 p.m.

General Meeting@ Ale Smith

The logo for Maker Faire San Diego, featuring the words "Maker Faire" in red and "San Diego" in blue, all enclosed in a blue rectangular border.

Balboa Park

October 6-7, 2018

Proposal Deadline—Sept. 5

[Maker Faire San Diego!](#) invites you to once again join the fun. Last year, the Faire broke previous attendance records and they're looking to do it again. But they can't do it without YOU.

This year the focus is on their thematic motto: *People can do incredible things... when they let themselves do it.* This festival showcases the amazing work of all kinds of makers – anyone who embraces that do-it-yourself or do-it-together spirit. They are looking for exhibitors, performers, speakers, start-ups, tinkerers, and anyone excited to showcase what they create with an interested and curious audience.

Queso Diego is participating again this year and you have until Sept. 5th to submit your presentation and demo proposal. Larry Stein is coordinating our speakers and will help with submitting the proposal so please contact him by Sept. 5th.

So far we have:

Larry - Intro to Cheesemaking

Sabine – Yogurt making

Chris – Not sure yet

One or two more over the two days would be great.

Even if you can't do a presentation please sign up to help out. Here's a shorter link to the doc: <https://tinyurl.com/y8aqsjnp>

Exciting New Additions to the Library of Cheesemaking

A generous donation from the Berry Good Food Foundation has made possible some wonderful additions to the Queso Diego Library of Cheesemaking, a resource for all of your cheesemaking needs open to members of our club. In addition to the books listed below, we have several new cheese cultures and cheesemaking supplies. These are only \$1 per item or dose of culture required for 2-4 gallons of milk, so take a look at the list and expand your cheesemaking horizons.

The books join the many cheese forms and presses listed on other tabs on the spreadsheet and are available to borrow free of charge. Be sure to include the information listed in the documentation for the Library of Cheesemaking spreadsheet found below.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19fLvqk26dKyUlf1Ay5E_IFhULYZ1rt8nk0SXiR2R720/edit#gid=1491603828 .

Simply request the items you'd like by sending an e-mail to: qd-library-request@quesodiego.org.

Mastering Basic Cheesemaking	Gianaclis Caldwell
Mastering Artisan Cheesemaking	Gianaclis Caldwell
Artisan Cheesemaking at Home	Mary Karlin
Home Cheesemaking	Ricki Carroll
The Cheesemaker's Manual	Margaret Peters-Morris
The Science of Cheese	Michael H. Tunick
Cheesemonger: A life on the wedge	Gordon Edgar
The Complete Encyclopedia of Cheese	Christian Callec

American Cheese Conference

Jenny Eastwood, Smallgoods American Cheeses & Provisions

The American Cheese Conference holds their annual conference during the sweltering month of July, and this year, it was in Pittsburgh, PA. Mike & I attend this conference each year; it's a great way to catch up with colleagues, cheesemakers, the latest in education & tasting events - and of course, eat a TON OF CHEESE!

We had two fun tasting events: the first was a sampling of cheese, sake & accompaniment flown in from Japan. Mallory from The Geography of Cheese is the first "foreign" hire of a cheese shop in Toyko and she brought over a few things the shop features: we had fresh chevré, an alpine style and even a blue cheese. It was utterly fascinating. I didn't realize they made cheese all over Japan...

The second tasting was a project 3 American cheesemakers are working on, called the Cornerstone Project. Parish Hill Creamery (VT), Consider Bardwell (VT) and Burch Run Creamery (PA) have all collaborated to make the same cheese, utilizing the necessary resources from each individual farm: making their own cultures, using raw milk from their own herds, aging the cheese in each farms' caves. The tasting consisted of all 3 creameries cheeses, side by side. The variations were amazing and it was a wonderful exercise not only in terrior, but also the cultivation of one's own microbes.

In between the tastings and education classes, one can browse the lobby for books, swag, and – you guessed it! Cheese. The supply of cheese, cured meat, crackers, olives & condiments at this thing is limitless – with it all culminating at The Festival of Cheese! Check out a few of the pictures... you have to see it to believe it! And really, our pictures only touch a small portion of that HUGE room.....

After several salads and a good detox, Mike & I headed to New York City where I had the pleasure of visiting my alma mater, Murray's Cheese! Some of my old colleagues are still there and I even scored a chance to see their new caves in Long Island City. Murray's has changed a lot since I was there, but it still remains THE place for cheese lovers to go!



Vermont Cheese Tour—Lesley Stern



Vermont, a green verdant land overflowing with cheese enticements. In late spring, when friends proposed a road trip through New England my cheese antennae immediately sprouted. Katie and Susan are both prone to watching the calories and cholesterol and neither are cheese aficionados. So I had to deploy subterfuge to entice them into the Southern part of the Vermont Cheese trail for one day, with many subsequent days devoted to consuming the spoils. And in the end

Before travelling I researched crazily, eventually settling on a list of the best Vermont cheeses. My plan was to taste as many as possible and to only buy what we couldn't taste. Well that plan soon went out the window, and before long the car was bulging

with cheeses. First stop: Vermont Shepherds Cheese in Putney, famous for spearheading the move towards boutique cheese making when small farmers were squeezed out of the dairy industry. On their beautiful farm of rolling hills and woods they have a quaint small hut with a refrigerator and an honor system for paying. We bought their two seasonal cheeses: Verano (a pure sheeps' milk, aged for 3-5 months) and Invierno (a much stronger mix of sheep and cow milk, aged longer).

Wending our way we stopped at a number of farmers markets and Co-ops, gathering samples. Last stop: Grafton Village in Brattleboro. This is a stinky heavenly emporium of cheeses, managed by wonderfully informative (and persuasive) workers. Here I steeled myself to not buy Harbison, a favorite, and instead to try another of Jasper Hill's celebrated smelly soft rind cheeses: the succulent and pudgy Willoughby. I asked for a taste of Hazen Blue, calculating that a nibble of this might edge S and K into the cheese camp. We were persuaded to also try Parish Hill West West Blue, a traditional two curd Gorgonzola made from raw jersey milk. Wow, a revelation, this got S and K asking curious questions, and me salivating. Salivation and curiosity were rewarded by sampling (and buying smidgens of): GVC Grand Reserve Cheddar, made from unpasteurized cows milk; Oma an American original washed-rind made by Sebastian Von Trapp – delicate orange rind with white flora, puddingy texture, barnyard buttery flavor; Bear Hill, a Grafton Village, washed-rind, Alpine style raw sheep's milk; and Moses Sleeper, a Jasper Hill bloomy rind.

One of the questions I was hoping to have answered on this trip is: what is a Tomme? Liz Thorpe, in *The Book of Cheese* describes it as "ish ish" - smallish, roundish, semsoftish. A universal characteristic is a natural rind. We tried two: from Lazy Lady and Twig Farm, both semi-ripened goat cheeses, utterly different but both yielding complex flavors produced by the layers of slowly ripening ambient mold and yeast (the rind is not made of wax or cloth, nor washed or inoculated).

And here is another question that bubbled away during the trip. I have always been rather skeptical about the idea of *terroir*. But travelling through this green and verdant country, so different to Southern California, it seemed impossible not to connect the taste of the cheeses to the landscape that nurtures the animals. Yet our country is so well suited to goats and the goats' milk is wonderful. Should we emulate the classic goat's cheeses or aim for a distinctive regional taste? Any thoughts?

And in the end ... if you want to know whether S and K were converted, S just texted me to say she has discovered Harbison, and shared this wonderful video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4PwmOcglll>

With all this talk of American made cheeses here is an interesting article Olaf found in the Washington Post:

"The United States has amassed its largest stockpile of cheese in the 100 years since regulators began keeping tabs, the result of booming domestic production of milk and consumers' waning interest in the dairy beverage....." (Follow this link for the full article)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/06/28/americas-cheese-stockpile-just-hit-an-all-time-high/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.42f6f95a8315

"Abdough Khiar"(Cold Persian Yogurt Soup) — Sabine Friedrich-Walter

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. Greek plain yogurt or homemade recipe below*
- 2 Persian cucumbers cut in thin slices
- 1/2-1 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 1/2 teaspoon grated fresh ginger or less
- 1/4 cup rough chopped walnuts
- 1/8 cup raisins or dried chopped figs
- 1/2 bunch spring onion, fine sliced
- 3 springs of fresh mint, (keep some for garnish), rough chopped
- 2-3 springs of dill and parsley (keep some for garnish), rough chopped.
- Salt and pepper for taste
- 1-1/4 cup ice water.

Mixed ingredients together and chill soup for a minimum of 1 hour in your refrigerator. Garnish with springs of herbs and serve with warm flatbread or pita bread.



***Homemade Yogurt, my way:**

Starter "Trader Joe's" plain Greek yogurt 2%

1/2 Gallon Whole Milk, pasteurized

1/2 Gallon pasteurized Half & Half (not ultra-pasteurized, it doesn't work)!

- Mix milk and Half & Half in pot. Heat slowly to 185 F, stir to avoid burning.
- Cool down milk on your counter to 110-115 F
- Dilute 1/4 cup yogurt with 1/4 filtered water and stir in to the cooled milk.
- Ripen yogurt in your oven with the light on for approximately 6 hours or overnight. Or at 100-110F.
- Chill yogurt after fermentation in your refrigerator for 12 hours or up to 24 hours.
- Drain yogurt in fine cheese cloth (sieve over a pot to collect the whey). Put it your fridge to drain for 3-4 hours based on your taste and thickness you like to achieve.

The yogurt is good for 8 days. Keep a 1/2 cup starter culture on hand for your next batch. The whey is a very healthy probiotics drink, keep and drink it with orange juice or pure.