



# QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

June, 2019

From the desk of **Queso** Grande, Larry Stein

Hello Cheese Lovers,

It's been a busy month and it just started. Before I get into that I want to thank Peter Zien for last month's presentation on pasteurization. It's a lot of work creating a creamery and it was an interesting peek at one of the most important and probably overlooked aspect of cheese making. Thank you Peter.

To kick off June, Queso Diego hosted and sponsored the "Say Cheese Home Cheesemaking Contest" at the San Diego Fair. A BIG thank you goes out to Marci Richards for the months of preparation and working with the fair people to make this happen. Dealing with the fair is like herding cats, but she pulled it off. Another BIG thanks goes to Jenny Eastwood for heading the judging team. It was great to have such professional judges to participate this year. The turnout this year was 49 entries, about the same as last year. As expected the quality of the entries was very high and the taste fest that happened after judging felt quite indulgent. If you didn't make it to the fair you missed a good time. You can see the category winners below. We'll hear more about the fair at this month's meeting. The big cheese of the competition and winner of the Best of Show was Chris Banker with his smoked Fiore Sardo! Congratulations Chris

This next weekend 20 of us are heading south to check out the Valle Guadalupe and Cava de Marcello. It should be a crazy weekend of wine and cheese tasting. We'll report back next month. The month will wrap up with another potluck get together at Kane Farms. June 29<sup>th</sup> is the date. Put it on your calendar and plan on joining in. There will be more information to follow.

This month Jenny and I are teaming up to present "Tasting Cheese". This is a sensory exploration of cheese. With this we'll kick off Jenny's Cheese Bites, a bi-monthly sampling of some characteristic of cheese. The meeting is on June 18<sup>th</sup>. As is our custom, the social time and potluck will start at 6:30 p.m. You all have been awesome with the sampling of cheese and food to try. Please feel free to bring something if you'd like. At 7:00 p.m. we'll start our featured presentation.

Bring a chair and a coat, and a friend.

See you on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

-Larry

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

- Fresh - Marci Richards, Kefir Cheese
- Flavored soft - Curt Wittenberg, Chevre crottin with fresh herbs
- Flavored semi-hard/hard - Jessica Voytek, flavored semi-hard
- Brined – Curt Wittenberg, Feta
- Bloomy – Larry Stein, Bloomy w/cracked pepper & ash
- Blue Mold – Marci Richards, Gorgonzola
- Semi-Soft/Washed Rind – Jessica Voytek
- Hard & American Style – Marci Richards
- Smoked or Other – Chris Banker, Fiore Sardo – **Best of Show!**



## JUNE EVENTS

**June 1 –San Diego County Fair Cheese Competition**

**June 8-9– Baja Tour**

**June 18 @ 6:30 p.m.**

**General Meeting @ Ale Smith, Tasting Cheese and Fair Recap**

**June 29 Kane-Groce Farm**

## June 1 - Cheese Competition at San Diego County Fair!

Check page 1 for results!

## June 8 & 9 - Baja Tour

We have a good group reserved for this tour. Come to the General Meeting to hear more about it.

## June 18—General Meeting

Jenny Eastwood and Larry Stein will discuss Tasting Cheese and we'll have a recap of the Fair.

## June 29 - Kane- Groce Goat Farm Visit

Mark your calendar for another amazing Queso Club Pot-luck Event at the Kane Family Goat Farm, in Lakeside, scheduled for June 29, 2019. A separate e-mail will be sent when details are finalized.



## JULY EVENTS

**July 16 @ 6:30 pm—**

**General Meeting @ Ale Smith, Washed Rind Cheeses**

## So we're not just about Cheese...

Jenny Eastwood, Small Goods, is looking for a good home for a 9-10 year old pig, Clementine. She's completely domesticated and needs a small yard, or hobby farm, to live the rest of her years (possible another 8-10 years). She comes with a house, that has a heat lamp which we use during cold months and cool mornings / evenings. She's vegetarian and eats Pig Chow (I have a brand new unopened bag to donate), and she loves compost - lettuce greens, vegetables, fruit

If you have any interest in her, please feel free to call me and I can give more details:

Jenny Eastwood, 917-794-0478



**Check our our Website to stay informed, learn more about the Club and see past meetings and newsletters:**

**<http://quesodiego.org/>**

# The Human Hand in Cheesemaking – In the Cave

by Curt Wittenberg

Affinage, or the art of aging cheese, consists of a bewildering array of techniques and practices that come together to give us the vast array of aged cheeses we know and love. Compound that with the diversity of methods and cultures used to prepare the curd and the range of styles we can create is limited only by our skill and imagination. That said, we can take comfort in the fact that the various techniques fall into a small number of classes and by learning and practicing each of them we can perfect our favorite styles and then, with patience and practice, begin to develop our own styles. In this article, we will consider the goals of affinage and just a few of the practices that might help us achieve them.

It is important to consider the goals of affinage if we are to appreciate the range of practices. Fresh curd, drained, pressed and salted, however flavorful, has generally not achieved its full potential. As a mélange of living organisms and rich nutrient sources including protein, sugars and fats, the cheese paste is now ripe with opportunity for transformation. In the presence of moderate to high humidity, moderate temperature and an abundance of introduced or resident microflora, the paste will continue to develop from within and, via inoculation of the rind, from the outside. The challenge is moderating the environment and controlling the rate and diversity of inoculation as well as preventing the unwanted loss or excessive introduction of moisture. Once achieving inoculation of the rind with the appropriate species for the desired outcome, the skilled affineur can manage the conditions to nurture the cheese toward the texture and flavor profile of the style.

Let's look at just a few cheese styles and their development the cheese cave. Perhaps the most simply described, but not necessarily easily managed, journey is taken by bloomy-rind cheeses. The freshly drained, salted and air-dried cheese is placed in a relatively humid (>90%) and warm (>50 degrees F) environment to allow the molds (*Penicillium candidum* and *Geotricum candidum*), introduced during ripening of the milk, to grow on the surface of the paste. Once a glaze of snowy white fur develops on the surface, it secretes proteases and lipases into the paste, leading to its liquefaction. Controlling the rate of growth of the furry rind and secretion of the enzymes is important to avoid a thick chewy rind or a "slip-rind" where the cheese immediately underneath liquifies too rapidly. That involves controlling temperature, humidity and the mold inoculation rate and ratio. It can take 10 days to one month to achieve the desired ripeness. With time, the cheese will develop into a creamy paste or, if improperly managed, become so ripe that the entire structure collapses into a puddle on the bottom of the aging space. Achieving the desired outcome is aided by acquiring the appropriate equipment and some experience with affinage.



Semi-hard and hard cheeses are a completely different challenge. Many require a long slow aging process and the development of a natural rind to add character and complexity to the paste. Natural rind can be achieved by inoculation of purchased cultures, organisms brushed from the rind of a favorite cheese or allowing the resident microflora of the cave to make a home on the nutrient-rich rind. This often means constant care including daily washing or rubbing with a morge (a mélange of organisms that is maintained to inoculate rinds) interspersed with periods of drying, and, after a layer of rind has developed, brushing daily and then weekly to maintain the health of that precious coat. Even amateurs with small refrigerator-based caves, can replicate this process to good effect with patience and experience. For the long term, the cheeses must also be turned frequently and kept sufficiently humid to prevent excessive water loss but sufficiently dry to prevent degradation of the painstakingly developed rind. With time, the organisms and their byproducts will promote transformation of an uninteresting cheese into something that will excite the palate when it reaches the table.

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Finally, we can consider the washed-rind cheeses, which reside somewhere between the bloomy-rind and hard cheeses in terms of the time required for ripening and the texture of the final product. Despite the short aging, this family of cheeses generally surpasses both of the others in terms of its intense flavor and aroma. These cheeses, sometime called *smear* cheeses, harbor a distinct family of microflora that are encouraged by the very moist and usually sticky cheese surface produced by repeated washing with a solution of that is often salty, flavorful and, sometimes, even alcoholic. The yeasts and bacteria that frequent these environments promote the liquefaction of the underlying paste similar to the process in bloomy-rind cheeses. The process takes from one to several months of affinage including washing and high humidity to achieve their supple paste and pungent aroma. The resulting cheese are loved by some and reviled by many, but they occupy an important place as part of the color and history of the culinary arts.

Although this is certainly not an exhaustive treatment of the range of cheese styles or the complex topic of affinage, it should give a sense of the activities involved and their varied influence on the nature of the final product. It is easy to imagine how, through experimentation with modifications of these techniques, one might stumble upon the next delectable cheese to grace our tables.



# Library of Cheesemaking—A unique benefit!

The Club's Library is a great benefit, especially for those of us just starting out. It gives members an opportunity to get going without having to invest a lot of cash up front. You can borrow equipment (draining baskets, forms, presses, spoons, thermometers, etc.) and books on Cheese making. Or order cheese cultures (Flora Danica, feta culture, rennet, etc.) for just \$1.00 a sample good for 2 – 4 gallons of milk. And the books listed below also give you a chance to see what you like.

So if you've joined to start making your own cheese the library can really be a way to kick off a project!

Mastering Basic Cheesemaking	Gianacis Caldwell
Mastering Artisan Cheesemaking	Gianacis 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

Here is a link to the Library spreadsheet. The tabs at the bottom get you to what you need.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19fLvqk26dKyUlf1Ay5E\\_IFhULYZ1rt8nk0SXirR2R720/edit#gid=1491603828](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19fLvqk26dKyUlf1Ay5E_IFhULYZ1rt8nk0SXirR2R720/edit#gid=1491603828) .

Requests are generally filled at the monthly meetings. Simply request the items you'd like by sending an e-mail a week before the meeting to: [qd-library-request@quesodiego.org](mailto:qd-library-request@quesodiego.org).



Below are organizations who support Queso Diego. We hope you will support them as well! Click on the logos to get to their websites.

