

# QUESO DIEGO

## THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

*Message from Queso Grande president, Marci Richards*

MAY 2020

### *Hello Queso Diegans,*

Routines. We all have them and they serve a purpose and provide a “known.” Right now, those routines have been shaken up. But it’s when our routines have been shaken up, thrown by the wayside (e.g., during vacation) or interrupted, that we discover new things and have new adventures. This rings so true for our cheese experience and sharing. If you’ve been camped out in front of YouTube, Hulu, Netflix, etc., then this is what you missed ... In April, we had a great presentation from Pat Powlowski, [cheesescience.org](http://cheesescience.org), on cheese flavor and texture for our Queso Diego meeting; there was the first **California Cheese Guild** interview/cheese tasting with the cheesemaker from **Pennyroyal Farms**, Erica McKenzie-Chapter, with cheeses expeditiously arriving at Smallgoods for this tasting; there were two wine pairings presented by Gina and Rob G of **Venissimo**, one with Rosé and one with wines around the world; and the second California Cheese Guild presentation/ interview/cheese tasting with the cheesemaker from **Tomales Farmstead Creamery** and co-owner, Tamara Hicks. You can read more on some of these events deeper in the newsletter.

**And May, Whooooo hooooo, is American Cheese Month!!!!** Yes, time to celebrate, discover, and support American cheesemakers. There are three more California Cheese Guild events for May and Smallgoods is carrying the cheeses for each of these events. There are several pairing events for May with Venissimo, check their website (note: some events have not been posted, yet). I can’t say enough about these events ... the opportunity to learn more about cheeses and cheesemaking and to taste new cheeses. These events are **free** on-line for the viewing. Share the on-line events with friends, relatives, neighbors, and new friends. Then when you are ready to make some cheese, you can order supplies on-line from **Curds and Wine**, as you may have a little extra time right now to try your hand at a new cheese. Also, check-out the Queso Diego library and make arrangements via email with Curt.

We will have a May Zoom meeting, stay tuned for the announcement. Also, watch for a special upcoming event with **AleSmith** (mid-May). Because schedules change, we have temporarily suspended the Calendar of Events in the newsletter. I will send out weekly announcements for events, generally on Sundays, that I am aware of for that week; if you have any cheese related events, please send them to me and I will include in the announcements.

Stay safe and don’t forget to remove your mask when eating cheese, American cheese 😊

Marci





# Cheese Talk

Inspiring Information, Presentations, Recipes



**Dairy UK** @dairyuk · May 4

In the UK we have over 700 named cheeses! Each variety of [#cheese](#) has its own unique taste, texture, and nutritional composition.



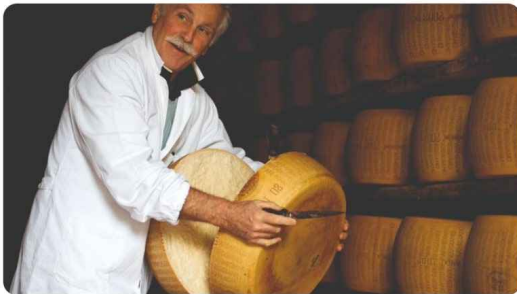
↻ 25

♥ 76



**Parmigiano Reggiano** @ParmesanAus · 5h

Have you ever seen a whole wheel of [#ParmigianoReggiano](#) being cut open? It requires a special technique and skill as the [#cheese](#) is so hard and heavy!



♥ 5



**Jeanine El Moghrabi** @jeaninemoghrabi · May 4

Why does this get me every time. [#cheese](#) [#Italians](#)



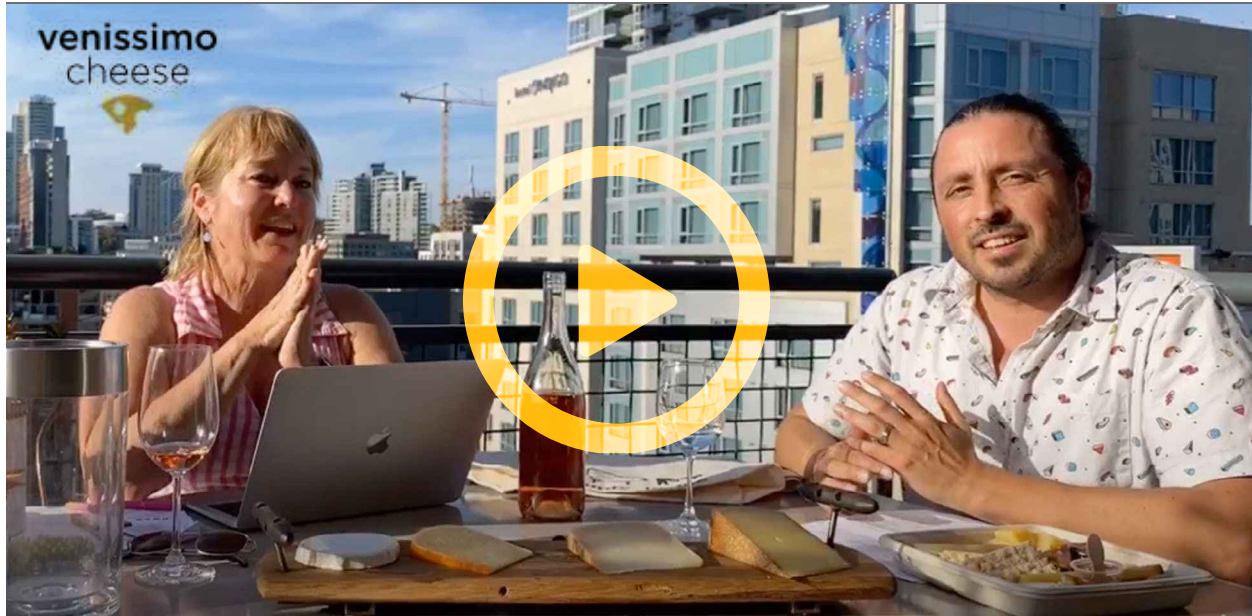
**Joe**  
@josephcorcoran

Last night Corona led me down a YouTube rabbit hole and I ended up watching a video of an Australian cheese maker making parmesan. He starts his videos by saying "g'day curd"



♥ 1





## A Rosé Kind of Day: Virtual Tasting #5

*Marci Richards*

Indeed, it was a rosé kind of day on April 26, 2020; the sun was shining with a cool breeze and there was an inviting board of cheese, accouterments and wine on the table. The cheeses were from four different European counties; the accouterments were local, domestic, and international; and the wine was from California or Greece or varied from household to household if you chose to select your own. Gina and Robby G of Venissimo walked us through the pairing of cheeses with rosé while providing insight on the etymology, history, and compared/contrasted the selected wine and cheeses.

The live event, via YouTube, started with a review of the rosé wine aromas and flavors (e.g., strawberry, melon) that one might detect depending on the varietal. Typically, rosé wine is served chilled and tends to be on the lighter and sweet side; but if your preference is a drier rosé then look for an old world-European style rosé (southern France). The accouterments on the board consisted of marcona almonds, red grapes, sourdough flatbread, dried figs and cranberries, and a wonderful rosé jelly (made by Sara, resident chef and manager at Venissimo, Del Mar). So, that's the background but let's get into the real reason for attending the event ... the CHEESE!



The first cheese was Queso Leonora from Leon, Spain, a fresh 100% goat milk cheese with a tangy, slightly sour flavor. It is a young, couple weeks to a couple months, cheese that ripens from the outside in and has a bloomy white rind under which lies what I like to call “white gold” and a creamy center (chèvre like). The texture of the cheese starts out very smooth and dense but starts to become runny and breaks down just under the rind as the cheese ages (aka “white gold”).



The second cheese was Ossau-Iraty from France (Basque region), a raw sheep milk cheese with a slightly funky rind (edible). It is a rich, high in fat, medium-to-semi-firm, medium bodied cheese that is quite creamy. When the cheese is at room temperature for a little while it will begin to sweat; the beads of sweat are just fat coming to the surface. It is the only French Basque cheese that is protected by the AOC. The sheep graze in the Ossau-Iraty valley.

The third cheese was Guntensberg from Saint Gallen, Switzerland, an Alpine-style, raw cow milk cheese (it is similar to Challerhocker). It has a very complex flavor (i.e., different flavor sensations in the bite, something in the beginning, middle, and end) – nutty, sweetness, etc., yet creamy, big and bold. It is named for the cheesemaker (his name) and is a rare alpine cheese. It is very versatile with wines, beer and whiskey for pairing but also good for cooking, as it is a great melter (e.g., mac-and-cheese, fondue).

The last cheese was Mahon Reserva from Menorca, Spain, a raw cow milk cheese. It has been made since the 1700's and the only cheese made from cows milk on the island (all others made from goat and sheep); it was made to last (i.e., hard cheese) due to the island location. The cheese comes in many ages and the older the cheese, the stronger the aroma and grittier it becomes (i.e., more character). It was also interesting to note that cheese shrinks with age. The cheese pairs well with the rosé jelly.

The attendees were local and from Wisconsin (all virtual) and voted on their favorite cheese of the ones selected for pairing; the Queso Leonora and Mahon Reserva were the winners. Gina and Rob discussed pairing the cheeses with different wines and other beverage, what to look for when pairing, and other similar cheeses to those that we were tasting (same style but different region [i.e., different name]). You can [watch this event on YouTube](#) on your own to gain more information, BUT go get the cheeses from Venissimo to fully appreciate the pairing.

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## **QUESO DIEGO** THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

### **NOT A MEMBER? { [JOIN THE CLUB](#) }**

We are a group of enthusiastic cheese lovers who want to learn more, taste more and appreciate small farmers and growers. We have monthly presentations taught by passionate members or experts that delve into a variety cheeses, pairings, and how-to demonstrations. Check out our [Meeting Schedule](#) online to see other members-only or fun events Queso Diego hosts or participates in every year.





## Guided Tastings of California Artisan Cheeses at Home – Pennyroyal Farm

*Curt Wittenberg*

In these unusual days of pandemic and isolation, our club missing the opportunity to convene over food, beer, wine and, especially, CHEESE! Sadly, we are left wanting and the purveyors of cheese are left with severely limited sales. The pandemic doesn't stop the goats, sheep and cows from lactating or, as a consequence, the cheesemakers from making cheese. Furthermore, those aged cheeses are maturing but left without customers to appreciate them.



The California Artisan Cheese Guild has stepped up to remedy some of those problems with their Wednesday Cheese Chats. These guided cheese tastings, conducted online, began on April 22nd with Erika McKenzie-Chapter, head cheesemaker and herd manager at Pennyroyal Farm in Boonville, CA. They will continue for a total of six Wednesdays.

In these days of social isolation, we cannot gather and pass the cheese around as Queso Deigans are so accustomed to. Instead, it is up to each of us to procure the cheeses needed for the tasting. That is being made easier by our members, sponsors and cheesemongers extraordinaire, Jenny and Mike Eastwood, and their new store and cafe, [Smallgoods Cafe](#). All that is needed is a trip to La Jolla where Mike and Jenny will lovingly and safely provide the cheeses, pre-packaged specifically for the tasting. They will do their best to procure the cheese for each of the future tastings at a reasonable price, aided by our Queso Diego discount, so that we can enjoy them without the need to order direct from the creamery. While you are visiting the store, don't forget that Smallgoods Cafe has plenty of other American artisan cheeses for your

enjoyment along with a selection of charcuterie and prepared foods available to take away. Also, think about eating in at the café when stay-at-home restrictions are lifted.

With the cheeses in hand, grab some wine, beer or another beverage of your choice and get comfortable for the main event which live-streams on the [CA Cheese Guild Instagram page](#). Despite my lack of familiarity with Instagram, I managed to get the live event streaming to my home. It doesn't seem like the optimal online "venue" but it works and provides an enjoyable tasting and educational experience.

For the first Cheese Chat, Michelle, the Communications Director for the guild conducted a 40-minute interview Erika McKenzie-Chapter of Pennyroyal Farms. We learned some about the farm, the goat and sheep herds and the spring activities and then launched into a discussion of the cheeses. That [chat is posted on YouTube](#).

So, what about those cheeses? For this tasting there were three beautiful cheeses from Pennyroyal Farms. The first was, Laychee, a soft fresh acid-coagulated cheese that changes in composition throughout the year depending upon the availability of Sheep milk. We were lucky enough to be tasting in spring when both goats and sheep are milking and the cheese is produced with a blend of milks. Consequently, the cheese is soft, slightly tart and creamy with the fatty buttery-rich texture and taste that is a hallmark of sheep milk cheeses. It paired equally well with the oaked Chardonnay as well as the rather light-bodied Syrah that I was pouring that evening. For variety, Pennyroyal Farm also makes Laychee with blueberries and other additions.



Next up was Bollie's Mollies, a bloomy-rind goat-sheep cheese with a firm flaky paste that softens at the surface where it meets the rind. Although I initially found the rind a bit "toothy", by cutting thinner slices I found it an interesting contrast to the paste. But where this cheese really stood out for me was the robust musty mushroom-like flavor and aroma. Another notable aspect of this cheese was the light blue-grey coating of mold spores on the outer surface that, I suspect, enhanced the intensity of the mushroom aroma. The cheesemaker described this as a characteristic of the "*Penicillium album*" mold used to make it. I only found this species described in French online so, with my limited French skills, I learned little useful about it. With its lightly tart paste and earthy mushroom notes, the cheese paired beautifully with the French oak-derived coconut flavors of the evening's Chardonnay.

Finally, our third cheese was Boont Corners, a rich hard goat-sheep Tomme, named after the corner formed by the crossing of highways 128 and 253 in the Anderson Valley where Pennyroyal Farm is



located. This cheese is sold at three different ages but, for this tasting, we had the seven-month-old Boont Corners, Vintage. This spectacular sharp cheese is aged on wood with a natural rind. It is hard, flaky, yet fatty, with a rich nutty character. Although each of the three cheeses was wonderful, this is the one I'll keep coming back to. Boont Corners would pair well with a range of full-flavored wines, including Pennyroyal Farm's own wine. Although, on that night, it was my Syrah that set the cheese in the perfect light, having had their great cheeses and knowing their fine winemaking region, I am curious to try Pennyroyal wines paired their own cheeses.

So, the CA Artisan Cheese Guild's Wednesday evening "Cheese Chats" are off to a very good start! There will be five more over the next five Wednesdays featuring Tomales Farmstead Creamery, Beehive Cheese Co., Pedrozo Dairy and Cheese Co., Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese, and Laura Chanel/Marin French. Be sure to drop by Smallgoods and pick up the cheese, then get comfortable for an enjoyable evening of cheese tasting.

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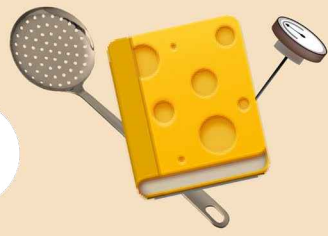


Michael Spycher of Switzerland beats more than 3,600 other entries



## START YOUR CHEESES!

QD will have a club cheese competition July 18th or 1w9th. Final details TBD. **START NOW** to get your 'soon-to-be-acclaimed-QD-cheese' game plan underway! For all you new, ambitious cheesers – we got you! QD has an awesome, educated board for reference and a library of supplies at your fingertips. Submit questions and requests to [request@googlegroups.com](mailto:request@googlegroups.com)



# Cheese Library

Resources For Cheesemaking

## Make Cheese In Your Own Kitchen

If you want to try your hand at cheese, borrow a book from the library or look on the internet for a recipe (<http://www.cheesemaking.org> is a good resource), request the items you need from our library (a week in advance, please), pick them up at the next meeting, purchase the appropriate amount of milk, and you are on your way. You will also need a good thermometer, a pot big enough to hold the appropriate amount of milk and some simple kitchen utensils. E-mail [qd-library-request@googlegroups.com](mailto:qd-library-request@googlegroups.com) with your request and the item(s) will be delivered to the next meeting. Don't wait - take your first step toward cheesemaking today!

### ONLINE RESOURCES

[Cheese Forum](#)

[Cheesemaking.com](http://www.cheesemaking.com)

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

{ LIBRARY SPREADSHEET }

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Requests are generally filled at the monthly meetings.  
Simply request the items you'd like by sending us an email one week before the meeting to:  
[qd-library-request@googlegroups.com](mailto:qd-library-request@googlegroups.com).

{ MAKE A REQUEST }



# MORE CHEESE, PLEASE

## Member submissions skimmed just for you:

### Can British artisan cheesemakers survive coronavirus?

The perishable nature of cheese means, for some, there's merely weeks until it's thrown away.

*Independent article by Clare Finney*

Read the full article online [{ ARTICLE }](#)

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### French farmers sound alarm in cheese market meltdown amid pandemic

5,000 tons of Roquefort, Camembert and Brie could go to waste.

*Politico article by EDDY WAX*

Read the full article online [{ ARTICLE }](#)

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### Mt. Sterling Co-op Creamery leading raw milk revolution with goat cheese

The advantage, as with any co-op, is it's always been run by farmers.

*Cheese Market New article by Rena Archwamety*

Access the full website [{ WEBSITE }](#)

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### Convenient cheese formats rule

Cheese processors also will find growth opportunity in snackable options and adventurous flavors.

*Dairy Foods article by Kathie Canning*

Read the full article online [{ ARTICLE }](#)

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### Could dairy prices rebound quickly and substantially?

For a bit of historical perspective, we went back to 2009.

*Cheese Reporter article by Dick Groves*

Read the full article online [{ ARTICLE }](#)

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## Say Cheese, But Keep a Bloomy Distance.

# Below are organizations who support Queso Diego

We hope you will support them as well! Click on the logos to visit their websites.

