

QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

Dear Queso Diegans,

Hard to believe I've been president of Queso Diego for almost a year now, but it's time to turn things over to incoming president Mike Cordova. I look forward to continuing to help with club activities and of course attending meetings and events. At the last meeting, Ed Lavin was unanimously elected to the position of vice president. We are still looking for someone to act as activities coordinator, let a board member know if you are interested.

At the last meeting we had an outstanding presentation by Curt Wittenberg on the microbiological aspects of cheesemaking. As a reminder, our Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 13 at Mike and Sue Cordova's house. Mike previously sent a request for RSVPs so be sure to respond. This replaces our regular December meeting, and is on the second Tuesday of the month instead of the third.

Hope to see you all there!

Randy

DON'T MISS THE HOLIDAY PARTY
it's this coming Tuesday at Sue
and Mike Cordova's and should
be great fun with a completely
delicious potluck!

Cheese Events

GRATE NEWS!

We are looking forward to the January meeting when Kitty Morse, author of more than a dozen cookbooks including Mint Tea and Minarets and the soon-to-be released Bitter Sweet: A Wartime Journal and Heirloom Recipes from Occupied France, will share memories of Morocco and recipes for both a salted, fermented butter called smen and a fresh Moroccan cheese called jben. With this kind of inspiration, it should be a great potluck! Gentlepersons, start your tagines!

Next Cheesemaking Class is still in the planning stage but likely will involve the opportunity to pair with an experienced brewer in order to brew beer and make cheese at more or less the same time. Details to be announced but there will be limited openings so if you're interested please sign up as soon as details are released.

Queso Diego Meeting Dates are always the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM Potluck, 7 PM Meeting (Alesmith's Barrel Room) EXCEPT for December when the Holiday Party is the 2nd Tuesday, location to be shared with those who RSVP-

CHEESE TALK - Articles by Members, World and Local Cheese news, Recipes, Interviews, Fun

MONGER OF THE (MORE OR LESS) MONTH

PETER ZIEN TELLS (MOSTLY) ALL! Peter, owner/CEO of Alesmith and CheeseSmith and an early Queso Diegan, not only makes fine beer and award winning cheese, but has also generously provided space for our monthly meetings. His presentation a few years ago on the hurdles involved in opening CheeseSmith gave us all a sense of how complex and daunting a process it was.

Editors: Can you tell us about your career path, how did you go from cradle to cheese? Proudest career moment? Please tell us about your early experience with Queso Diego?

PZ: I originally set out to be an attorney, getting my JD from USD in 1988. Then I did a hard 180 and got into home brewing, which eventually led to taking the helm at AleSmith Brewing Company in 2002. In those early years, a goat farmer took our spent grain and repaid me gifts of raw goat milk. Having loved cheese all of my life, I began learning about and practicing cheese making. I took cheese making courses at Cal Poly SLO and began planning for a creamery of my own. In November of 2018, CheeseSmith Artisan Creamery was founded within the walls of AleSmith Brewing.

Proudest moment so far occurred in July 2022, when my Persian Lime & Chili Pepper Curds won a Silver Medal at the American Cheese Society Competition. The curd divisions are usually dominated by Midwest creameries, I think I shook up the cheese makers when a Southern California creamery medaled!

It's wonderful to see the progression and success of Queso Diego! There were only a few of us in those early days and our early work was getting a cheese competition sanctioned at the San Diego Fair. We thought it would be great



to meet on a regular basis as a group. I remember the submissions for a name for the club. Queso Diego was the perfect choice.

Editors: When you started making cheese, how did you go about choosing what type? Where there trends or inspiration that you were following? Have you tried making any new cheeses recently?

PZ: I'm originally from Minnesota and the Midwest is famous for its fresh and squeaky cheese curds. As a cheese maker if you cannot make a proper curd then there is little hope for your pressed cheeses. Sort of like mastering a pale ale before moving on to more difficult beer styles. I enjoy incorporating unique ingredients to both the cheese curds and some pressed cheeses. I also enjoy experimenting with AleSmith beers and the cheese- I've made washed curd styles with beer as well as cheddar-like styles with Speedway Stout, Horny Devil Belgian Ale, and most recently the 2022 Oktoberfest Marzen. A few new cheeses from 2022 were the Bacon Curds, Caraway Havarti, Za'atar Havarti, Raw Scottish-Style Dunlop, Raw French-Style Cantal, and Porcini Mushroom Gouda.

Editors: What would be your own personal ideal cheese?

PZ: I'm a fan of so many cheese styles, that would be hard to say. The more that you learn about making cheese, the greater your appreciation for the great cheeses of the world. Seemingly insignificant alterations of procedure can equate to an exponential difference in the finished cheese. I like my curds squeaky, my cheddars sharp, my blues tangy, and so it goes, on and on, through dozens of my favorite cheese styles! If I had to pick one ideal cheese for me, it would be the Rogue Creamery World Champion '19 Rogue River Blue wrapped in Pear Spirits-soaked grape leaves. So creamy, tangy, strong blue cheese notes and a sweet, fruity finish. Really a masterpiece!

Editors: Favorite non-liquid pairings?

PZ: Honey from my bee hives, Marcona Almonds, Ploughman Chutney, Fig jam.

Editors: And what's your favorite beverage to pair with cheese? [We invited Peter to do a shameless plug but he was reasonably discreet.]

PZ: Well, I do love beer with cheese- hoppy IPA's and malty Nut Browns and Stouts, AleSmith makes some decent ones 😊.

I discovered a wonderful pairing with a high quality Mezcal (subdued smoke notes) and an aged, cloth-wrapped cheddar. The sharper the better for this pairing, it is fantastic!



Editors: If you could have four people from any time in history over for a really great grilled cheese sandwich, whom would you invite? And what grilled cheese sandwich would be served?

PZ: Moses, Jesus, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King over a Cowgirl Creamery Grilled Cheese Sandwich from the Ferry Building in SF. Discussion topic: What the heck is going on with the world today?

Editors: Your earliest cheese memory?

PZ: Falling in love with this amazing string cheese in Palm Springs circa 1968. I was trying to eat it from the end and was shown how to peel 'strings' of cheese from the side. The freshest mozzarella flavors washed over me. I was hooked. I have no idea who made it, but have searched for it my entire life!

Editors: Best cheese scene in a movie?

PZ: Sideways (2004). Miles is evaluating a wine with Jack: "...citrus, getting some strawberry, passionfruit, and just like the faintest soupcon of like ah asparagus and there's a just a flutter of like a nutty Edam cheese"; Jack replies: "wow, strawberries yeah, strawberries, not the cheese."

Editors: Best music to eat cheese by?

PZ: Whey heavy rock with a Gouda beat

Editors: The cheese you want to love, but can't?

PZ: Limberger, I can only eat it with anchovies on pumpernickel bread!

Editors: The cheese you want to stop eating, but can't?

PZ: An ultra-fresh burrata

Editors: Biggest phobia, other than developing a dairy intolerance?

PZ: A world without cows and milk

Editors: If you were ever to find yourself marooned on an island made entirely of cheese, what cheese would you hope for?

PZ: A solid, well knitted cheese, not Swiss or anything with eyes - I don't want my island to sink!



Tis the season, the festive cheese season that is!

Mont d'Or (mountain of gold) sometimes called Vacherin Mont d'Or or Vacherin Haut-Doubs is a French winter fave. It is classed as an AOP fromage (Appellation d'Origine Protégée) because this cheese must be produced and processed in a designated area using a recognized and traditional method. For Le Mont d'Or this



means only milk from Montbeliard cows living at least 700m above sea level can be used in its creation. It takes seven liters of milk to make a single liter of cheese! The cheese is matured for 21 days, then transferred into its traditional round wooden box, where it ages for another 2-3 weeks.

Reblochon in all its stinky splendor is another much loved French winter cheese. The history of Reblochon dates back to the 13th century, in the Alpine pastures of the Thônes valley in south-eastern France.

During the 13th century the landowners (often the nobles, lords and clergy members) would visit the farmers and tax them by how much milk they would produce. What the landowners didn't know, was that the farmers only half milked their cows before the inspection. Once they had measured their yield, the farmers would milk their cows a second time and benefit from a highly reduced tax bill! They would use this second round of much richer milk to produce their own cheese which we now know as Reblochon! This is the cheese used in Tartiflette, a hearty dish made with potatoes, bacon, onion and, of course, reblochon!

Aligot is a hearty blend of melted cheese and mashed potatoes. The legend goes the recipe dates to the 6th century, when three archbishops each contributed ingredients for a common meal. Each brought a local speciality, cheese from Rouergue, bread from Haut Pays d'Auvergne, and cream from Gévaudan. They combined all three and created the first Aligot! For centuries Aligot was made with bread, it was only until the bad wheat harvests in the 1800's that a change was made to potatoes!

It's Membership Renewal Time for 2023!

Queso Diego dues are \$20 per year for individuals or \$30 per household.

These dues help us pay for meeting supplies, commercial examples, supplies for pairings and other club expenses. Take the opportunity to renew at our next general meeting, club event or visit our membership webpage. Renew online by clicking here [MEMBERSHIP](https://quesodiego.org/about/membership/)

<https://quesodiego.org/about/membership/>

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Do you have something to share with your fellow Queso Diegans regarding:

- **Upcoming Classes and Workshops:** If Queso Diego does not offer a specific type of cheesemaking class, what local sources do?
- **Recommended Reading:** With so much content out there in the cheese world, help us curate a list for our members.
- **Something Informative:** Share your favorite cheese related recipe, news, or announcement others would find interesting.

Submit your ideas to the newsletter editors by clicking here [SUBMIT](#). We'd love to hear from you.

Get Cultured!

If you want to try your hand at making cheese, Queso Diego has a great library of cheese forms members can borrow *gratis* and a wide variety of cultures that are \$1 for enough to get you started. Curt Wittenberg, our Cheese Librarian, asks that you place your request a week in advance of a regular meeting and he will bring your items to the next club meeting for pick up. After that, just purchase the appropriate amount of milk and you are on your way. Not much else is needed beyond a good thermometer, a pot big enough to hold the appropriate amount of milk and some simple kitchen utensils. Place your order by filling out the online form here: [LIBRARY OF CHEESEMAKING](#) and sending an email one week before the monthly meeting by clicking here: [LIBRARIANS](#) .

Don't wait - take your first step toward cheesemaking today!

CLUB LINKS:

Instagram: [@quesodiego.org](#)

Twitter: [@QuesoDiego](#)

Facebook : [Queso Diego - The San Diego Cheese Club](#)

These organizations support Queso Diego. We hope you will support them as well! (Click on the logos to visit their websites)



[smallgoods](#)

Cheese Shop & Cafe

venissimo
cheese



Barrel & Stave

BREWING CO.



culture the word on cheese