

COMTÉ News



COMTÉ CHEESE ASSOCIATION | WWW.COMTE-USA.COM



Fall-Winter
2017



Comté Cheese Association
will be at the Winter Fancy Food Show
in San Francisco at Booth #4525
(Jan 21-23)

Fred Bernard Illustrates Life in Comté!

Well-known French author, Fred Bernard recently came out with a new book in collaboration with Vincent Bernière. It is a comic book entitled, *“Chroniques de la Fruitière: Voyage au pays du Comté,”* (Glenat Publishing @ 2016). Following is an interview with the author.



> Why did you write the book?

Because I love good food and drink, of course! I grew up in Savigny-les-Beaune and my grandfather was a winemaker. I spent a year in England as a student where there was a great lack of cheese and wine. While I appreciated the fine Cheddar, I saw in grocery stores, it was too expensive for me!

In 2013, I wrote *“The Chronicles of Vines, Conversation with My Grandfather.”* In that book, I used comics to depict all the anecdotes my grandpa had told me about my village, the evolution of wine in my family before, during and after the war, to the great success of today! He repeated them often. I know

them all by heart and I loved my grandfather! It was a very personal ode to wine and rather funny, like my grandfather. In the family, everyone was surprised to see it translated into Japanese and Chinese. My grandfather was pleasantly surprised as well. He did not understand what I wanted to do initially and was disappointed that I didn't become a winemaker. I wanted to draw and tell stories. Following the success of that book, my publisher asked me to write about Comté; after the wine of Burgundy, he saw a certain logic.

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Comté (“con – TAY”) cheese ID General information:

Origin: Jura Mountains
(Massif du Jura), France

Milk Type: Raw cow's milk

Cheese Style: Artisanal, pressed, cooked,
with natural brushed rind.

**French AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée)
since 1958 and European Union Protected
Designation of Origin (PDO) Certification.**

- Delimited area of production: Doubs, Jura, Ain, elevation 650-5000 ft.
- Milk must be produced by local cows of the Montbéliarde (95%) and Simmental (5%) breeds. There are approximately 150,000 Comté cows.
- Minimum of 2.5 acres of natural pasture for each animal.
- Cattle feed must be natural and free of fermented products and GMOs.
- Each fromagerie must collect milk from dairy farms within a 16-mile diameter maximum.
- Milk must be made into cheese within 24 hours maximum of the earliest milking.
- Only natural starters must be used to transform the milk into curds.
- Wheels must be aged on spruce boards. Minimum aging is 4 months, generally 6-18 months and sometimes even longer.

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Jordon
Carroll

Photo by Paul Wagtoulcz



RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT:

An Interview with Restaurateur Franois Latapie, Little Frog, NYC

> Why did you decide to name the restaurant the Little Frog?

Well, it started with the idea of giving a French restaurant an English name for a change! Of course, a frog is synonymous with something French. It is a cute little animal and we don't really think of frogs in terms of gastronomy that much. Initially, I wanted to call it "The Naughty Frog." However, my friend said that's too "pub"-ish and not particularly glamorous. He encouraged me to "stay small and humble." I looked up the word "humble" but couldn't see how that translated to the restaurant business. Although, when he said "small" the name "Little Frog" exploded in my head. I secured the domain and the rest is history.

> What inspired you to make Comt  fritters? Is a fritter the same as a croquette in France?

No, it's not the same; a croquette has usually bread in it. Croquettes are popular in France however here croquettes are considered "tapas." They are more associated with Spanish food. We wanted some "munchies" for the bar but creating a bar menu is a headache. So, we thought we'll have munchies and appetizers on the menu and at the bar for happy hour. That way we can give people a chance to sample Little Frog food and see what we are all about. And it did very well! We sell more of them at the tables than we do at the bar. And Comt  is such a great cheese. You know in France we make fried beignets. So, making a recipe for a fried Comt  Fritter was an absolutely great idea. It's been a great success.



Comt  fritters recipe

(makes 18 individual balls)

- 1lb 1-year aged comte cheese, grated
- 8 Egg whites
- 1.5 Grams espelette pepper
- 1 Gram salt
- 1 Gram ground white pepper
- 1 "Splash," sherry vinegar

DIRECTIONS: in a large bowl lightly whip egg whites until ribbons start to form. Add espelette, sherryvinegar and grated comt 

cheese. Combine all ingredients and with same whisk try to smash all together until a thick paste forms. Cover with saran wrap and chill for about 30 minutes.

Using a 1 ounce ice cream scoop, scoop the mixture and line the balls in a tray with some oil underneath to prevent sticking.

Using 2 quart of frying oil in a deep pot, bring temperature up to 350 degrees faranheight and drop cheese balls in sets of 3 to prevent crowding. Let fry for 5 minutes until golden. Dab with a towel to remove excess oil. Serve with a sprinkle of espelette on top.

> How did you think to use Comt ?

I was 20 before I heard of Comt . I grew up in Paris and it was not very popular at that time. Although, it was very popular where they make Comt . I was drafted into the army and my base was located in the Jura mountains about 30 miles from where they make Comt . A lot of locals were also serving at that base. So, their parents used to send them Comt  they made locally and they would in turn share it with me. Then later on, they started to promote Comt  as a gastronomical taste, aged, with a year, very much like a wine so it became very important. It's such a delicious flavor and is so much more interesting than Gruy re or Emmental from a gastronomic point of view.

> Which wine would you pair the Comt  fritters with?

Well, when you initially grab a fritter, it is really hot and very rich. So, it is better with something really chilled. When you put something in your mouth that is cheesy and fatty it's better to break it down with a white wine or a rose. Rose goes very well with it. Any kind of wine that has an edge like a Chardonnay or a Sauvignon Blanc with good acidity. Its turned into a signature munchie for us so we are going to have it forever.

> What is next?

We have made a couple of changes, seasonally, based on the popularity of dishes. Not huge changes but for example we add things. We are in motion. There is nothing static here.

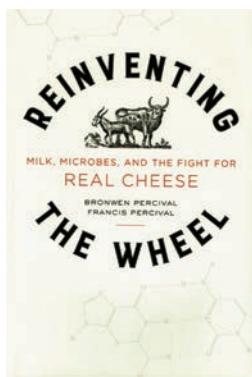


NEWS!

Earlier this year astronauts were able to enjoy Comté in the International Space Station!

New Cheese Books

Reinventing the Wheel: Milk, Microbes, and the Fight for Real Cheese



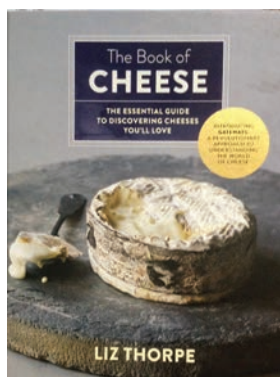
BRONWEN PERCIVAL is the cheese buyer and technical manager for Neal's Yard Dairy, a London-based retailer, wholesaler, and exporter that is recognized for its revival of British farmhouse cheese. In addition to these responsibilities, she promotes collaboration

between cheesemakers and the scientific community. She and her husband, Francis are authors of *Reinventing the Wheel: Milk, Microbes, and the Fight for Real Cheese* (University of California Press, @2017.)

According to Bronwen, this book, “really grew out of conversations my husband and I were having over dinner. He works in the world of wine and I work in cheese and we just gradually came to realize that wine as an agricultural product -- that can express a sense of place-- that kind of conversation was missing from the cheese industry. As somebody that works with cheese a lot, I was struggling to come up with a definition of quality that really made sense.” She hopes that the book will encourage people to, “explore cheese more widely. Now that they have the knowledge where cheese comes from and what the flavors in the cheese that they are tasting means. I suppose it is the essence of connoisseurship, which sounds snobby, but actually if you are going to consume something - having that understanding of it (of what you are eating) - I think makes it all the more enjoyable!”

According to Bronwen, “Comté is a true ‘real cheese’: the process harnesses the exceptional potential of milk produced in a unique place to make a profoundly delicious cheese. Its quality is a testament not only to an extraordinary tradition of cheesemaking, but also to the application of cutting-edge scientific research and an unflinching commitment to quality.”

The Book of Cheese: The Essential Guide to Discovering Cheeses You Love



LIZ THORPE was drawn out of corporate America to pursue her passion for cheese. Since then she's become one of the country's leading expert on cheese, from working the counter at New York's famed Murray's Cheese, to expanding Murray's wholesale business as V.P.

More recently, she founded The People's Cheese, a consulting firm and authored *The Cheese Chronicles* and the recently released, *The Book of Cheese: The Essential Guide to Discovering Cheeses You Love* (Flatiron Books @ 2017)

Ultimately, Liz says she hopes the beautifully photographed book will encourage people to learn more about what they like and find more cheeses they will enjoy. That is why the book focuses on the concept of the “Gateway Cheese” which are “nine super-basic cheeses everyone has heard of, and has some frame of reference for such as Brie, Cheddar, Swiss, etc.” and maps out where people can go from there in terms of tasting.

As far as tasting Comté goes, the author states in the book, “You could eat it all damn day. It's subtle, complex, unbelievably moist. The flavor is smooth and less salty than Gruyère, with more stone fruit than beefy tendencies. Often Comté's subtlety is lost on those expecting big, sharp or butt-kicking flavor. It's none of those things and that's what makes it so ephemeral delicious.”

Both books are available on Amazon.com.

Winter Fancy Food Show

The Comté Cheese Association will be at the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco from January 21-23rd. We hope you'll stop by our booth #4525 for a taste of Comté and to meet with members of the Comté Cheese Association.

Counter Culture

The Comté Cheese Association lead a seminar and guided tasting at Culture Magazine's Counter Culture event on October 22nd in Philadelphia, PA. The free educational event was designed to introduce cheesemakers to mongers, retailers, distributors, educators, chefs and food professionals.

For more information on these events go to <https://www.counterculturecheese.com>

American Cheese Society

The Comté Cheese Association hosted a networking table at the American Cheese Society Conference in Denver on July 28th. At the conference, we also participated on a panel about "Cheese as an Economic Social Driver" and rolled out our 7th annual Comté Scholarship, for details see below.

Calling all Certified Cheese Professionals! Here's your chance to win an expense paid trip to Comté where you will learn first-hand about the cheese's unique history and production, as well as discover the know-how and culture of the region. To enter go to www.comte-usa.com.



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> Aside from growing up in Burgundy, did anything in particular inspire you? You've been enjoying French cheese for a while, so why write about it now?

I agreed to the idea because Comté is one of my favorite cheeses. I've appreciated it from childhood. In my 40 years - I ate tons - in soup and after a meal! In "*Chronicles of the Vine*," I stated that it was the only cheese that is requested in the cellars at wine tastings ... (diced or sliced). The area of Comté is not far from the county of Burgundy. I love this area; the forests, lakes, architecture, mountains -which are smaller than the Alps -but so charming! I knew the region, but little or nothing about the making of Comté. So, my editor took care of everything and organized dozens of meetings for me. I went there several times, to meet everyone from the cow farmer to the cheese maker. I was

on a mission. I took notes, photographs, painted watercolor landscapes to capture the atmosphere there. I tend to be a sponge when the subject interests me and I like to meet people who live a different lifestyle than mine. I was well served; the people were passionate and super engaged in their jobs! Of course, I had to return after I drafted the book to ensure they didn't think I made them look silly! Unlike "*The Chronicles of the Vine*," I was a real neophyte, and I was really interested in how they achieve this famous cheese.

> You've celebrated wine, you've celebrated cheese, what will you chronicle next?

My editor already has an idea: bread, of course! Bread, wine, cheese ... it is the French holy trinity!

The Comté Cheese Association

provides you with everything you need for a successful selling program, including: recipe booklets, brochures, aprons, demo toothpicks, training tools and more. Visit www.comte-usa.com for POS materials and free downloads.



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