

COMTÉ News



COMTÉ CHEESE ASSOCIATION | WWW.COMTE-USA.COM



Summer
2018



Comté Cheese
Association

INTERVIEW WITH KATIE QUINN

Video Creator, YouTuber & Host of *Keep It Quirkypodcast*

Katie Quinn produced four videos for Comté which ran in late 2017/ early 2018. As an American living in London since 2017, she also had the opportunity to intern at Neal's Yard Dairy during the holiday season. Below are some of the insights she wished to share with our readers.

> As an American what was your experience working at Neal's Yard Dairy?

My experience with Neal's Yard was incredible. It was interesting working in a cheesemonger role simply because Brits tend to be more low-key in their interactions with strangers -- and my American excitement about certain cheeses was a little overwhelming for some. Neal's Yard Dairy completely opened my eyes to the rich history and culture of cheesemaking in Britain, and I gained an immense respect for the farmers and cheesemakers who produced the high-quality cheeses offered there.

> What do you think Americans need to know about how the U.K. and Europe view cheeses? What surprised you? Do you think the English view cheese differently than the French?

I was surprised by the strong cheese tradition in the U.K. At the Covent Garden location in the weeks leading up to Christmas, I saw first-hand the crowds of people lining up at the shop to buy special cheese for the holiday. It was such an important part of their family celebration. (Colston Bassett Stilton is the traditional seasonal pick here, but there are many other beloved options, too!) I would say that the thing the French and the English absolutely have in common is a respect for the artisanal

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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 fruitière 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.

For more information about Comté, visit: www.comte-usa.com



COMTÉ SPONSORS THE FRENCH OLYMPIC NORDIC SKI STARS!

Comté PDO has sponsored the French Nordic Ski Team for the past 5 years. Last February, the team participated in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang, South Korea where it gained 7 medals.

Coinciding with the opening of the Olympics, a special exhibition of black and white portraits of the French Nordic Ski Team athletes was shown at the French Cheese Board in New York City. The pictures are part of a commemorative calendar developed in collaboration with the Comté PDO, the French Ski Federation, Nordic Ski Magazine, the French athletes and professional photographer Pascal Regaldi.

Each Olympian is associated with a month of the year and is portrayed holding a chunk of Comté in a humorous and charming way. The approach was fitting given Comté country, which stretches over the Jura Mountains and is recognized as the top training area for Nordic skiing in France.

Regaldi explained, "I wanted to focus on two powerful elements, without any competition between them. On one hand accomplished athletes, on the other an exceptional product. I decided to distinguish them by the use of color in order to best marry them: the understated courage and inner strength of the skiers of the French team is accentuated by the simplicity of black and white, while the beautiful yellow wedge of Comté is highlighted by a touch of color."



COMTÉ COMES TO SOUTH KOREA FOR THE GAMES!

Soyoung Scanlan is the owner of Andante Dairy which is based in California and produces artisanal goat cheese. Featured in the Winter 2016 edition of Comté News, she was instrumental in bringing Comté to Korea.

> How would you describe your experience providing Comté for the Olympics in Korea?

Since it took so much work to bring Comté into Korea as the first raw milk cheese from France, it was very exciting to offer a service to French team.

> How was the cheese received and how much did you bring in for the games?

We started selling Comté late last year. In December and January combined we sold 350 kg. In addition, we delivered 5 wheels for the Olympic Games. Now we have small cut format of 200g (7 oz.) coming to Korea, so the retail market will pick up a lot more this year.

> Were there any surprises?

Still a lot of people do not know that Comté and other raw milk, aged cheeses are available in Korea. The Korean government only changed the importing rules in July 2016. Before that, only a few raw milk cheeses were obtainable. I think the Olympians themselves were probably the most of the surprised. Having Comté while they were competing was great!

> Has there been an uptick in interest in Comté there since?

Korean cheese culture is in infancy, so I do not think many Koreans know what Comté is! Obviously, many food professionals were happy to see it.

> Was there any story in particular you wished to share about your experience?

The hardest part was completing the affineur's registration process. It took more than six months in France to get the process moving. However, I met many people along the way, which was meaningful. I also built a strong friendship with Rivoire-Jacquemin. We work with good products, and we are proud of what we are doing. Through Comté, I want to introduce the culture of traditional cheesemaking to Korea. We are just getting started!



NEWS!

COMTÉ LAUNCHES NEW “INSPIRATIONAL” CHEESE BOARD CAMPAIGN

This year we launched a new campaign featuring “inspirational” cheese boards created by selected experts in the cheese industry. These boards are featured on our website and then shared on social media with our followers. The first two boards were created by Max McCallman and Kirsten Jackson. If you haven’t had a chance to see them, take a look at <http://www.comte-usa.com/category/news/cheese-board/>

Q&A with Adam Moskowitz

President, Columbia Cheese and Larkin Cold Storage & Founder, The Cheesemonger Invitational

> For those who are not familiar with you, what is your background? How did you get into this line of work?

I am a third-generation cheese importer. My grandfather was one of the first men to import cheese into the United States. I came into the business a little over a decade ago. Today I own and operate Larkin Cold Storage, Columbia Cheese, The Cheesemonger Invitational, as well as, The Barnyard Collective. I got into this industry for the love of cheese and the people who bring you artisan cheese. Artisan cheese is the greatest food ever created. It deserves a place at every meal. And the people behind artisan cheese are perhaps some of the greatest people I have ever met.

> What interests you the most about it?

Cheese is so simple. Great cheese only needs 4 ingredients. Depending on how well you treat an animal determines the quality of the milk. How you handle the milk determines the quality of the cheese. How the supply chain handles the cheese determines the cheese’s relationship with the consumer. Great cheese equals great flavor, equals great memories. What other food is welcome at every meal and has so many varied aromas, textures and tastes? When you support Artisan cheese you are supporting earnest, hard-working stewards of pastoral tradition. I really think eating Artisan cheese is as important for the environment as driving an electric car. Great cheese serves as the best flavor ambassador of terroir.

> Do you think most Americans are aware of the route a wheel of fine French cheese takes from producer to retailer? How has that changed over the years?

I think many have no idea what it takes to get food to plate. There’s no real connection with the land and the animals. However, the number of people who do appreciate Artisan foods is growing thanks to many factors including the Internet, increased travel and more places to purchase cheese. Before the onslaught of food reality tv shows, people didn’t go abroad as often or have a specialty shop nearby, therefore, it was impossible to find a fine wheel of French cheese. Today that is not the case. Especially because North America has the best cheesemongers on the planet[sic]. In my book, the cheesemongers are the unsung heroes of cheese.

> You founded The Cheesemonger Invitational(CMI) eight years ago, did you expect it to get so much traction? What’s your vision for it moving forward?

The night of the first Cheesemonger Invitational was one of the best nights of my life. It had such a warm, electric, kinetic energy that I still find it hard to describe. Cheese professionals from all over the industry kept coming up to me with this incredible glow thanking me for “shining the spotlight on cheesemongers.”

It became very clear that my team and I were working on something important. After the second CMI, the team became ultra-committed to ensuring every event was better than the last. I think we accomplished that. Each time we heighten the bar. Hopefully, that inspires the cheesemongers to raise the bar for themselves. Our simple goal is to organize an intimate, inspiring environment for cheesemongers to push themselves to the next level.

> You also recently created, “The Barnyard” what is it? What kind of events have you held there recently?

The Barnyard is a cheese education center focused almost exclusively on engaging cheese professionals. It’s where we deep dive into all things related to cheese. Basically, it is a cheesemonger clubhouse, built to feel like a Swiss chalet but with a sick sound system and disco ball. Topics for our Barnyard Sessions range from microbes to honey to Champagne. We just held a session on consumer perceptions of the term “Grassfed.” Our next session is all about cheese crystals. I really believe in fostering community and I love proving that competing cheese shops will consistently come together as a community to participate in fun, educational cheese events.

> What would you like your legacy to be?

I want to be remembered for working hard, having a strong point of view and making an impact. Life is full of waves and I want to be a big wave rider. Cheese for Life. Moo Baa Maa. Dare to be a raw milk rock star.

> Anything else you would like to add?

I love 24-month Comté. But I think I love 36-month Comté more. And 9-month Comté always tastes good in Fondue.





Exciting News!

On July 17th,
Comté celebrates
the 60th anniversary
of its PDO!

Calling All Cheesemongers – Come Join Us at Counter Culture!

Once again, this year Comté Cheese Association hosted a session at Culture Magazine's Counter Culture event held in Buffalo, NY, June 3rd-4th, 2018. However, this year we are excited to announce that we will also be participating in the cheesemonger events held on September 9th-10th (Seattle, WA) and October 21st-22nd (Dallas, TX). So, please come join us!



Coming Up in our Next Issue!

An interview with Ann Mah, author of the new novel, *The Lost Vintage!*

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cheeses and a desire to grow the exposure and enjoyment of those cheeses. Though I'd say that the French are more vocal about their passion for, and discernment of, cheese.

> What have you learned working at Neal's Yard Dairy and with Comté Cheese Association?

Oh my, enough to write a book! I've learned HOW cheese is made, which has significantly influenced my appreciation for the product and its perceived deliciousness! Sitting next to the farmers as they milked their cows, watching the milk go through each stage of the cheesemaking process at the fromagerie then seeing it age and tasting the variety of wheels at the affinage cellar changed my view of all cheeses (but especially of Comté) for life! At Neal's Yard in particular I

learned great tips on taking care of cheese after it has left the affineur's hands. I learned about the science involved in making and keeping cheese -- temperature, humidity, protein, coagulants, etc. There's so much involved, and such a team of people, to make a great wheel of cheese and sell it.

> Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I went from being an average cheese consumer to a rabid, fascinated cheese lover in just a handful of months! The things I've learned are, I think, lifelong skills that will continue to pay dividends throughout my life.

To find Katie's Comté videos go to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSprAO1TNhIk6yz_pdhQK-w

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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