

COMTÉ News



COMTÉ CHEESE ASSOCIATION | WWW.COMTE-USA.COM



Fall/Winter
2018



Comté Cheese
Association



This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Comté PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), although the cheese's history goes back almost 1,000 years.

In honor of the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Comté PDO, the Comité Interprofessionnel de Gestion du Comté (CIGC) held a four-day celebration at the Royal Salt Works in Arc-et-Senans, France, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The event drew 1,500 Comté professionals and 5,000 consumers, not including those who were in charge of running the various activities over the three days.

This historic commemoration provided an ideal opportunity to speak with the new CIGC President, Alain Mathieu, about his thoughts on the PDO and the future for Comté.

> Do you think the event at the Royal Salt Works was a success and why?

The celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Comté PDO was very successful. It reflected the incredible job the organizational committee did in terms of gathering and engaging members from across all sectors of the Comté world. This cooperation epitomized the deep solidarity of the Comté PDO.

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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



Exciting News!

**Comté celebrates
the 60th anniversary
of its PDO!**

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> **What have been the most memorable moments for you as President of the Comté PDO?**

The four days succeeded in highlighting the different occupations and activities within Comté. It also showcased the sharing, solidarity and passion that motivated all the players, over our 60-year journey, battling to build today's success together.

> **What are the key messages you want the audience to remember (professionals and the general public)?**

The collective success of this event will continue to consolidate the bonds between the players to better build our future together in the interest of all the members of the Comté PDO, consumers and society. All of this supports the plans contained in the new Specifications of our PDO.

Winter Fancy Food Show

The Comté Cheese Association will be at the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco from January 13-15th. We hope you'll stop by our booth #7014 for a taste of Comté and to meet with members of the Comté Cheese Association.

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



Cheese for Dessert!



Earlier this year we started a cheeseboard campaign on our website, www.comte-usa.com. One of the firsts was a "Cheese for Dessert" plate created by journalist, chef, teacher and cheese expert, Janet Fletcher. "A cheese board at our house rarely includes more than toasted nuts and seasonal fruit," says Janet. For this cheese plate, "I started by thinking about what I wanted to drink with this beautiful Comté and settled on Lustau Amontillado "Los Arcos" (a Spanish sherry) because it echoes the silkiness and nuttiness of the cheese. I also love buttery blue cheeses with Amontillado so chose the lovely Point Reyes Farmstead Bay Blue, which is made not far from my home. I put the cheeses on a Tiffany cake stand, found in an antiques store many years ago. Then added fresh Mission figs from my garden and roasted walnuts that my husband gathered last fall from a tree in a Napa Valley vineyard. We spent many nights shelling walnuts!" To learn more, sign up for Janet's blog, Planet Cheese: <http://www.janetfletcher.com/newslettersignup/>

Tim Johnstone, 2017 winner of the Comté Scholarship, shares his experience visiting the Jura Mountains!

"It is difficult for cheese-lovers from America, a young country with an even younger artisan cheese industry, to wrap our minds around what 1,000 years of cheesemaking tradition means. We can get a sense of it by perusing a well-stocked cheese case, we get snippets from books or glossy magazines, but these efforts fall short of fully exploring the dedication and detail that traverses centuries to make a singular, exceptional cheese like Comté.



The best way is a fully immersive experience like that provided by Comté USA to witness first hand and up close what this dedication and detail looks like. As someone who was fortunate enough to go on this journey, I can tell you it is overwhelming. You will walk through the pasture of the Jura alongside the famous Montbéliarde cows, you will explore cavernous aging facilities that look as if they sprung from the imagination of J.R.R. Tolkien. And you will, of course, eat Comté in all its glory, in all its variations, ages, and complexities. For a cheese professional, it gets no better."

LOST
VINTAGE

ANN MAH
FRENCH EATING



Q&A with Ann Mah

Well-known food & travel writer Ann Mah splits her time between Washington D.C. and Paris. Although she has penned many books, her latest is the bestselling novel, "The Lost Vintage."

> You've written about food and travel, but this is only your second novel. What inspired you to write "The Lost Vintage?"

In 2015, I volunteered to pick grapes at the harvest in Champagne. Harvest volunteers are often given free room and board, and I was put up in an empty attic apartment at the vineyard house. The rooms hadn't been touched since the 1960s: they were sparsely decorated with mid-century hospital furniture; the floors creaked; the wallpaper was peeling; and at night the rural silence was deafening. Even though I was exhausted from long days of physical labor, whenever I lay down to sleep, my imagination would cartwheel. And so, I slept with the lights on, and when I woke, I wrote in my journal. This story was born from those wild scribbles.

> How long did it take to write it? It incorporates a lot of historic detail.

The book took about two years to research and write. It was important to me to be able to accurately portray the details of World War II, as well as the wine world. I read a lot of books about World War II – but the wine education was more difficult. I ended up taking classes through the Wine and Spirits Education Trust, which is the same organization that administers the Master of Wine program. I learned just enough to know I'm definitely not an expert!

> What led you to include Comté in the story?

In a novel about serious wine experts, there was really only one cheese to include! I generally think Comté is a perfect cheese with wine – its flavors are complementary, not overwhelming. One of my favorite pairings is Comté with a crisp white wine.

> What do you hope readers will take away from the book?

I think World War II is ultimately a morality tale and so many years after it, we'd all like to believe we'd have fought for the right side. Of course, the reality is always more complicated – and wartime complicates things even further. I think a lot of regret and shame about the war still lingers in France. If I learned anything while researching this book, it's that small actions can have unforeseen and lingering consequences.

> Is there anything else you would like to add?

I'm excited about my new book, which came out on September 25th! "Instantly French" is a French cookbook for the electric pressure cooker! I love my multifunction pressure cooker, which helps me prepare French classics in half the time – and it turns out French people have used the pressure cooker for years to speedily prepare complex recipes. The recipes are great for busy home cooks – and, yes, a few of them call for Comté! ("The Lost Vintage" and "Instantly French" are available on Amazon.com)

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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