

# COMTÉ News



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Winter/Spring  
2023



Comté Cheese  
Association

## Comté Renews Sponsorship Fund for *Certified Cheese Professional*® Exam Candidates to Attend ACS Conference

The Comté Cheese Association has renewed their three-year sponsorship of The Comté Association Conference Fund. Administered by the American Cheese Education (ACE) Foundation, The Comté Association Conference Fund will be open to all applicants who have been accepted to take the *Certified Cheese Professional*® (CCP) exam at the American Cheese Society's annual conference. The Fund covers travel expenses to the conference, registration, a 1-year ACS Membership, and taking the CCP Exam. The selection of the recipient is made by the ACS Scholarship Committee based on need.

"We are extremely happy that the Comté Cheese Association has generously renewed their commitment to this three-year sponsorship," said Stephanie Ciano, ACE Foundation President. "This support means more cheesemongers will be able to experience all our annual conference has to offer," added Tara Holmes, ACS Executive Director. "It will also help grow the number of individuals who possess a recognized set of skills and knowledge, which in turn contributes to the success of the cheese industry and greater consumer satisfaction."

Go to <https://www.cheesesociety.org/scholarships/> to apply today!



## Counter Culture in Houston, TX

Comté Cheese will be presenting live at Counter Culture in Houston, TX on April 18<sup>th</sup> and Charleston, SC May 16<sup>th</sup>. In addition, we will be participating in the following events this fall:

- **September 13, 2023** – Boston, MA
- **October 3, 2023** – Denver, CO
- **October 24, 2023** – Minneapolis, MN



## Congrats again to Sam Rollins, Cheesemonger at Cow Bell Cheese, in Portland, OR – Winner of the 2022 Comté Scholarship for ACS CCPs!

Rollins, upon learning the news, replied, "Oh wow, I never expected to win a trip to the Jura. I'm thrilled and surprised! That is somewhere I have been wanting to go to since forever!!"



## Cheesemonger's Corner – "Best Practices"

**John Braga, ACS CCP and Cheese Instructor at Murray's Cheese\* in New York, NY**

### Q. How initially did you get into the cheese world?

A. I grew up in a cheesemaking family in Brazil. So cheese has always been a staple in our kitchen. We would eat raw cow's milk cheese for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, almost every day. However, it wasn't until I moved to New York City in 2016 that I became acquainted with the word cheesemonger. At the time, I was working in sales near Grand Central Station and one of my favorite spots to visit was Murray's Cheese. They always had a great selection of cheeses - including Comté! I was fascinated by how cheesemongers described all the different flavors and aromas you could find in a wedge. They were also able to taste freshly cut cheese with customers -- while sharing stories of makers and places. A few months later, I got hired as a monger in the West Village. Fast-forward to 2023, I still love being called a cheesemonger - even though I'm not always working behind the counter.

### Q. What do you think more people behind the counter need to know or consider when dealing with a cheese like Comté?

A. Due to its PDO status, Comté can only be made from raw milk of two breeds of dairy cow, Montbéliarde and Simmental. By allowing these cows to graze on mountain

pastures in the summer and local hay in the winter, and not pasteurizing the milk, cheesemakers are able to retain complex flavors and produce unique wheels of Comté. Every wedge and every bite has its own complexity in flavor. Sometimes nuttier and sometimes fruitier but never the same. Every wheel of Comté tastes differently. So treasure it like it's a priceless artifact and sell it like it's the last asset you own.

### Q. What is your favorite way to enjoy Comté?

A. I honestly love getting home from work and pulling a wedge of Comté out of the fridge (I always like to keep at least one piece). I enjoy it with a glass of dry white wine or Pinot Noir. Pistachio butter and chocolate-covered almonds also go really well with Comté.

### Q. What is the number one lesson you would like to share? (with consumers or other mongers?)

A. Although it is often referred to as an Alpine-style cheese, Comté is not made in the French Alps! Instead, the cheese is produced in fruitières (dairies) located in the Jura mountains, in France.

\*To learn more about the classes John teaches go to:

<https://www.murrayscheese.com/classes>





## Bread Pudding with Comté and Wild Mushrooms the Perfect Winter Dish!

(Courtesy Culture Cheese Magazine. Recipe and photo credit: Jackie Botto.)

Make this dish the star of brunch or serve it as a dinner side. Using an assortment of mushrooms imparts a more robust flavor. Soaking the bread first allows it to absorb the milk and egg mixture yielding a tender, pillowy result. Serves 6

### Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs
- ½ cup whole milk
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 6 ounces Comté, grated, plus more for topping
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 16 ounces challah, about 1 loaf, torn into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 12 ounces sliced wild mushrooms (ideally a mix of varieties)
- 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon dried tarragon
- ¼ cup dry vermouth

### Instructions:

1. Heat oven to 350 °F
2. Whisk eggs, milk, stock and cheese in a bowl until well combined. Season with salt and pepper. Add bread pieces to soak up mixture while mushrooms cook.
3. Melt butter in a cast-iron or other heavy, deep, oven safe pan over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and shallots, season with tarragon and salt, and sauté until mushrooms are browned and tender, about 20 minutes.
4. Add vermouth to deglaze pan, scraping up any browned bits.
5. Stir mushrooms into bread mixture. Return everything to warm pan. Using rubber spatula, gently push the mixture down evenly into the pan. Evenly sprinkle more cheese on top. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown.