

COMTÉ News



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Comté Cheese
Association

Summer Pairing Ideas!

Whether hosting a cocktail party on the roof or a picnic with friends consider this easy delicious option, inspired by the European Union campaign to promote the Comté & Côtes du Rhône PDO's, <https://iconicterroirsofeurope.com>.

For the Comté, go with a Comté with fruity, lactic and slightly roasted aromas, and for the wine, pick a light, crisp, chilled white or rosé from the Côtes du Rhône. The acidity of the wine complements the soft texture of the cheese and reveals its fruity, floral aromas.



Congrats to Ashley Moreland, cheesemonger at Beautiful Rind in Chicago, Illinois!

She is the winner of the Comté Conference Fund Winner! She especially loves the simple combination of Comté on sourdough bread. To learn more about how you can enter the Comté Conference Fund go to <https://www.cheesesociety.org/conference/scholarships>.



Q&A with CEO and Founder of Bonnie's Jams, Bonnie Shershow

Q: You've been making amazing jams, jellies and conserves for over two decades now, what led you to start this company?

A: The most honest answer is - I accidentally started my company. I have loved the whole process of making jam since I was a child. My mother and I peeled fruits, juiced citrus and stemmed berries, then added the right balance of sugar to get the best flavor.

Q: What role did France play in inspiring your pairings and ultimate product?

A: On a family trip to the South of France, I found a whole world of cheese that was unknown in my small town growing up. I was stunned when, after a long leisurely lunch an extraordinary platter of various cheese arrived with a perfect little pot of local raspberry jam. I was hooked on the concept of jam and finely crafted cheese.

Q: Your approach is all about finding the perfect pairing of jam and cheese—why was that important to you?

A: An extraordinary [cheese] store named Formaggio Kitchen, a few blocks from my home in Cambridge, MA, tempted me to turn my love of making jam into a passion to pair jam with fine cheese.

I learned the rules of commercial jam making, printed a label according to government regulations and pasted it on a jar of Black & Blue (jam). Then asked the store's owner, Ihsan Gurdal, if he would be interested in selling it as an accoutrement for cheese. He tasted it and said yes. He let me use his small kitchen area to cook the jam as well. With his help, I found the right balance of sugar to fruit that would pair best with various cheeses, including Comté. [n.b. Ihsan Gurdal was a great supporter of Comté for his entire career.]

Q: How did you come up with the idea to create Bourbon Berry Jam and pair it with Comté?

A: That flavor was an incredibly enjoyable collaboration with the extraordinary Whole Foods Product Development & Innovation Expert, Joey Wells. I am pretty sure Joey came up with Comté as a great pairing for Bourbon Berry.

Q: Are there any other jam flavors you tested with Comté?

A: Yes. I think Peach Ginger is a great pairing and a favorite with tasters.

Bonnie's Jams can be found at Bonniesjams.com, numerous small independent cheese and specialty shops and Kroger stores.



Interview with Author, Educator and Blogger, Kirstin Jackson

Known for her popular cheese blog — “It’s Not You It’s Brie” — Kirstin recently hosted an “Uptown Funk” beer and cheese pairing event in San Francisco.

Q: What is an “Uptown Funk” tasting and how did you come up with the idea?

A: Drake's Brewing and I have teamed up on this event for eight years in honor of SF Beer Week! The "uptown" part of the event name comes from it being held at their "uptown" Oakland location, and the "funk" is because we make sure there's a fun, wide variety of cheeses and beers, not just pairing standards like cheddar or IPAs. We make sure there are some sours and washed-rinds in the pairings, too.

Q: What pairings in particular were your favorites?

A: My favorites were Drake's Peached Whale Sour Blonde Ale and Comté, and Santa's Brass Barleywine Ale with Taleggio.

Q: How did you decide on what to pair with Comté?

A: Comté is almost too easy to pair with beer, in that you can pair it with two beers on the opposite sides of the flavor

spectrum and still have a hit. So we did! Half of the pre-tasting group loved it with the Peached Whale Sour Blonde Ale, which is a seasonal, subtly fruited sour beer. The beer really brought out the fruitiness of Comté, which isn't something you often taste highlighted in a beer and cheese pairing, and the cheese melded with the tartness of the beer. The other half liked it with Drake's Black Robusto porter—a slightly chocolatey, roasted-toasty dark beer.

Q: What was the response to the pairing with Comté?

A: They loved it! About half the crowd had a clear favorite of the two, but people in general loved trying both combos. It was the only cheese in the tasting paired with two beers, so they loved that too! Guests who hadn't tried Comté before were also just smitten by their first try of the cheese.

Cheesemonger's Corner – “Best Practices” with Lisa Ueltschi, Murray's Cheese Specialist for the Louisville Division.



Q: How initially did you get into the cheese industry?

A: I had been a long time Kroger employee working as a florist when I was offered the position of Cheese Master. It was a huge learning curve but I was lucky to have great mongers to learn from and they really kindled my love of everything cheese. It was from one of these fellow mongers that I was inspired to pursue my Certified Cheese Professional certification- and it has been one of my most favorite experiences.

Q: What advice do you have for others looking to pursue a career in cheese, what do you wish you knew?

A: The two things that I like to share with the new mongers I teach are: 1- All mongers start out at the same place. We all have to learn how to cut various styles, how to care for cheeses behind our counter, and how to make our customers fall in love with our amazing cheeses. There is nothing wrong with being new to cheese, and there is something

new to learn about cheese everyday! 2- Cheese is forgiving! Even if a cheese is cut incorrectly, or in the wrong amount, there will always be a customer for that cheese. So don't be afraid to make mistakes, as long as you are learning.

Q: What was your first or most memorable experience with Comté?

A: My first time trying Comté was a huge surprise. While in my own monger training days, I was tasting some of our classic cheeses which included Comté. I discovered that Comté offers a completely different taste experience to other mountain cheese!

Q: How do you typically enjoy it?

A: My favorite way to enjoy Comté is simply slicing it and pairing it with apple butter and whole grain crackers- maybe a nice cider to go with it!