

COMTÉ News



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Lutèce's Honeycomb Semifreddo with 18-month aged Comté cheese



Photo credit: Alex Lau



Comté Cheese
Association

Q&A with Isabel Coss, Chef of Pascual on Capitol Hill, The Popal Group of Restaurants

Q. How long have you been a pastry chef and what got you interested in pastry?

A. I have been a pastry chef for over 15 years. Pastry has always been my passion. It's very creative. You can transform ingredients into any shape you can dream of. I started very young in kitchens in Mexico City and New York City. Now, I'm in Washington D.C. and serve as the Chef of Pascual in Capitol Hill. Lutèce is part of the same restaurant group as Pascual. Both are overseen by me and my husband, Chef Matt Conroy.

Q. What is the official name of the signature dessert you created with Comté for Lutèce?

A. It is called the Honeycomb Semifreddo with 18-Month Aged Comté Cheese. It is on the menu year-round.

Q. How did you happen to make something so unique and I assume, delicious? What inspired you?

A. This dessert was born during the pandemic, when we had access to Comté aged a little longer, about 18 months. I completely fell in love with the depth of flavor that comes with that kind of aging. Comté is hands down my favorite cheese, and I wanted to create a dish that celebrated it in a fresh, playful way.

Lutèce is a French neo bistro restaurant, so we used to serve a traditional cheese plate year-round. That idea stayed with me. I wanted to reinterpret the cheese course to make it something that feels both nostalgic and new. Cheese and honey are a timeless pair, so I took that classic combination and pushed it as far as I could. The heart of the desert is the shaved Comté—it's

delicate, salty, sweet, and familiar in a way that surprises people. Some guests have even cried the first time they tasted it, which is the highest compliment I could imagine.

Q. Why did you want to use Comté cheese for this dessert?

A. Comté — it's complex, nutty, a little sweet, and incredibly versatile. For this dessert, I wasn't looking for just any cheese—I wanted something that could stand on its own, but also elevate other elements on the plate, especially the local Pennsylvania honey we use. I didn't want it to be a garnish; I wanted it to be the star.

Q. Have you used Comté in other desserts or dishes?

A. Yes, I first tasted Comté one summer while traveling through the Jura. That flavor — that place — it's something I want to return to often, even if just in my mind. Since then, we've used Comté in different ways in the kitchen. Shaved over our Parisian gnocchi or another favorite was a Comté sauce spiced with Dijon mustard, which we used to fill gougères. It's a cheese that keeps inspiring new ideas.

For a taste of Isabel's signature dessert dish, Honeycomb Semifreddo with 18-month Aged visit Lutèce in Georgetown, <https://www.lutecedc.com/>



Photo credit: Alex Lau

Rithika Merchant Loves Comté!

Rithika Merchant was the artist behind Dior's Spring 2025 couture show set. She is known for her "evocative portrayals of mythological and natural worlds" and has been showcased in *Art Asia Pacific*, *Art India*, *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Verve Magazine*, *Architectural Digest* and others.

The remarkable artist is also a fan of Comté according to a feature in the weekly HTSI magazine of the Financial Times (20 June) entitled "Merchant talks taste - The Mumbai-based artist loves Comté, cold plunging and Winsor & Newton paints."

<https://www.rithikamerchant.com>



Lissa Knudsen, cheesemonger at The Mouse Hole Cheese Shop in Albuquerque, NM, wins the Comté Conference Fund for ACS CCP's!

The Comté Conference Fund covers the cost of travel to the conference, registration, a 1-year ACS Membership, and the fee for the CCP Exam. Here Lisa receives her scholarship certificate at the ACS annual conference in Sacramento, CA.

Texas Comté Lover Shares an Update!

Banquet Chef Jan Loou at the Omni Frisco Hotel at the Star in Frisco, TX shared highlights from their June 13th event, "Taste of the Star," which featured a 72-hour *sous vide* short rib with Comté fondue, shiner sourdough crouton, pickled red onions and microgreens. He reported that it was such a fun conversation piece since "the curiosity over the fondue went from "what is that?" to "that's really good!" Especially when the same guests come back 2, 3, 4 — even FIVE times! We are making even more fans of Comté cheese!"

Thank you for sharing, Chef!

Have news about Comté? Or a recipe you'd like to share? Please let us know! We are happy to share it with fellow-Comté lovers! Simply email us at trade@comte-usa.com



Stay Tuned CCPs! Information about the Comté Scholarship will appear in the next issue — so look for it! It will also be on our social media pages and our website, comte-usa.com.