

COMTÉ News



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COMTÉ CHEESE ASSOCIATION | WWW.COMTE-USA.COM

**Entry to Comté CCP
Scholarship essay competition
opens soon. Keep an eye out
for details.**



Comté Cheese
Association

Cheese Monger's Corner "Best Practices"

With Hilary Anderson, ACS CCP and Cheesemonger
at Di Bruno Bros in Philadelphia, PA.

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

A. I graduated college in 2012, moved to Boston and got my first job in cheese soon after. Finding paid work in journalism, at a time when print publications were downscaling was unproductive. However, the food industry and specialty foods fascinated me. In fact, there was an extremely popular college club called Cheese Club -- that was the first place I tried specialty cheese. After I graduated I wrote about indie bands for no money -- so I felt like I was doing something similar to cheesemongers. We were both making people aware of something special. We were tastemakers, if you will! Then, I started working at American

Provisions in South Boston. I'm forever grateful to the owners, Andy and Matt, as well as my manager Linni who hired me, since my only food experience was working at a bakery and as a hostess. When I took my initial baby steps selling, cutting, and wrapping cheese, it was behind that counter. It was a supportive and fun place that I still think about today.

Q. What is the most challenging part about working in cheese? And how do you handle it?

A. Engaging with customers can be extremely challenging and rewarding. I work at one of the busiest and most high-volume counters in the

U.S., which means we are a stop for tourists, chefs and locals. We do not have numbered tickets and our shop is small, so once the customers outnumber the mongers, it starts to get chaotic. The only way to handle it is with patience, grace, and understanding (and cheese samples can help too). Bottom line, this is why people come to us for cheese. We are experts in the product and work hard to give each customer the help they need the understanding comes in realizing you won't change every person's life with cheese, but you might change one. That's why we do it.

Q. What tips would you give other mongers when it comes to selling raw milk cheeses such as Comté?

A. I would highly encourage tasting on your own, as well as tasting with the customer. Taking a moment out to try the cheese and see it through the eyes of someone on the other side of the counter can be a valuable tool for noticing subtleties that you may have missed. As mongers, we have so many cheeses available to us that it can be easy to take them for granted. Notice how a piece of Comté is cut wide and thin to cover more of your palate tastes different from a cube. The more familiar

you are with the nuances, the more confidence you will have to speak to your customer. That confidence is noticed by customers, although they probably don't realize it, and it makes all the difference in producing a successful sale.

Q. What is your favorite pairing or way to enjoy Comté cheese?

A. My absolute favorite pairing is with Basque Black Cherry jam from La Maison du Piment. The tartness of the cherries works so well especially with an aged Comté. I love a chunky preserve that is not too sweet, and this one lets the flavor of the cheese shine through and creates beautiful synergy. Plus, the syrup you're left with after eating all the cherries is a great cocktail (or mocktail) addition. My go-to for the best Dirty Shirley you'll ever have. I also love a caramelized onion jam, shout out to my local Pennsylvania company *Eat This Yum!* for making my favorite caramelized onion jam when I don't have time to stand over the stove. At the shop, we call it the French onion soup bite when we pair the Comté with the onions—it really hits home!

Fl'or du Jura Cocktail Time!



According to David Lebovitz, this drink has some similarity to his Yellow Cocktail highlighted in his book, "Drinking French." He came upon it at the Vin Jaune festival in the Jura called La Percée du Vin Jaune.

"Vin jaune means "yellow wine," which refers to the rich golden colour of the wine. It has a very distinctive nuttiness with notes of dry wood, green apples, lemon, burnt sugar, and maybe even spices. Because it's made in the same region as Comté cheese, there is no better cheese pairing than Comté and Vin Jaune. It's perfect."

Fl'or du Jura cocktail

Prep Time: 1m

Total Time: 1m

Serves: 1

Equipment: Cocktail shaker and strainer

Ingredients:

2 ½ ounces Vin Jaune

1 ¾ ounces elderflower liqueur

1 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice

½ ounce simple syrup

Lemon twist for garnish

Preparation:

Step 1: Add the ingredients (except the lemon twist) to a cocktail shaker. Fill the shaker three-quarters full of ice, cover, and shake vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds until the drink is thoroughly chilled.

Step 2: Strain into a chilled coupe glass. Garnish with a lemon twist.

(Photo credit: <https://davidlebovitz.substack.com/p/flor-du-jura-cocktail> and post La Percée du Vin Jaune instagram page here <https://www.instagram.com/p/DSsGt1kguQt/>)

Introducing

The 2026 Comté Conference Fund Winner!

Zaski Blazek, Cheese Specialist with Lunds & Byerlys in Edina, MN! Born and raised in Minnesota, Zaski has worked in cheese for over three years. A love for the industry and desire to learn about every facet of the cheesemaking process pushed them to take the CCP exam. “I cannot express my gratitude enough to the Comté Association for allowing me the opportunity to attend the conference in person and connect with my peers over this shared passion.”

The Comté Conference Fund is open to all applicants who have been accepted for the current year's Certified Cheese Professional® (CCP) exam. The scholarship covers the costs of attending the ACS conference (including registration, hotel and travel), an individual membership with ACS, along with the fee to take the exam. To learn more, go to americancheesesociety.org



Apply for

A Daphne Zepos Teaching Award!

Created by Daphne Zepos, an international cheese educator and co-founder of Essex Street Cheese in NYC, the Daphne Zepos Teaching Award allows young cheese professionals to travel to far-reaching places in Europe and put together unique curricula built on education and research.

Daphne first-hand understood the power of traveling to “learn with your eyes, ears, nose, tongue and fingers” and this endowment expands on her philosophy.

“Daphne believed deeply in the power of education to create passionate,

knowledgeable cheese professionals, and her love of Comté was very much a part of that. The Comté Association's commitment to education and preserving the connection between cheese, place, and tradition aligns beautifully with her vision, and we are incredibly grateful for their continued support of DZTE,” said Rachel Juhl, Executive Director at the Daphne Zepos Teaching Endowment.

Several past recipients have travelled to the Comté region as part of their travels and research.

The DZTA scholarship is run by the Daphne Zepos Teaching Endowment. For more information about it and other scholarships offered by DZTE go to www.dzte.org

Daphne Zepos (1959-2012)



The Big Cheese!

Stream Adam Moskowitz's wonderful documentary about American cheesemongers traveling to compete in the international Mondial du Fromage in Paris — available on Apple TV, Google Play or Amazon.