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CHEESELINKS The ultimate newsletter for cheese enthusiasts, cheesemakers and cheese-a-holics everywhere!

CHEESE-A-HOLIC

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From the Editors



Dear fellow cheese-a-holics, We've had a really exciting few months at Cheeselinks, and we've been busy brainstorming new ideas and projects for this year. Since moving to publication every two months instead of monthly, we've got more topics

than ever to write about, and this edition will be our longest yet, with five pages full of cheese news.

We haven't forgotten that a couple of months ago we promised a discussion of the issue of raw milk cheeses in Australia, but even with five pages we ran out of space in this issue! And there are so many diverse opinions on the issue that in order to do it justice we are still collecting emails and ideas on this topic so stay tuned for that — next time!! Anyone that has an opinion, we'd love to hear it so send us an email to info@cheeselinks.com.au

Our most exciting announcement is a brand new concept for our range of workshops. One of our frequent

workshop attendants, a guy by the name of Rocco, has done just about every workshop in Carole's repertoire, but he is still keen to do more. So we asked him to come up with his dream workshop, and he said that what he would really like to do was learn to make three of his all time favourite cheeses: Jarlsberg, Triple Cream Brie and Raclette.

We thought it was a fabulous idea so we set a date, put the announcement on the website and opened the workshop for public bookings. The only condition was the anyone doing that workshop had to have participated in a Cheeselinks workshops previously. Three pretty labour-intensive cheeses in two days requires that we spend less time

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going over theory and more time cheese-making.

We could never have anticipated the response to this workshop. It sold out so quickly that poor Rocco, who dreamt up the combination in the first place, actually missed out on a place!

Due to this high demand, we decided to open up another weekend for booking, on the 8th/9th of August. The cost for the weekend is \$300.00 and that includes a

delicious Raclette lunch on one of the two days. If you've never tasted Raclette you are definitely in for a culinary experience not to be forgotten—think bread, potatoes, European sausage and lots and lots of melted cheese! We only have four places left in the weekend of the 8th and 9th, and two more spots are now available on the 15th/16th of August as well. But these places are filling fast, and we are offering places on a first in first served basis, so contact us as soon as possible if you wish to confirm your attendance.

Also coming up this month are the Bem-boka Show and the Red Hill Show, both of which have home cheesemaking sections. Carole is proud to be attending both events as special guest judge and commentator. We were rapt to hear from some of our regular customers who are planning to submit cheeses in both shows, and we wish all entrants the best of luck and promise to bring results in the next issue of Cheese-A-Holic!

Tracy and Carole Willman

Feature Cheese: BLUEMBERT by Comboyne Culture

This month's feature cheese is BLUEMBERT from Comboyne Culture (pronounced Blue-em-bear to rhyme with Camembert). It is one of Comboyne's signature cheeses, with the size and shape of a camembert, but with blue mould on the outside instead of white. It has a soft texture like camembert, but a deliciously mild blue flavour. It is a perfect example of the sorts of innovative cheeses that Australian cheesemakers are starting to create. The bluembert is so unique and different to anything else that is made here in Australia and from the moment Carole tasted it she has

been raving about it. It is not widely available, so if you are in NSW anywhere between Sydney and the mid north coast, you should look out for it, especially at Farmers' markets and specialty cheese shops.

Comboyne cheesemaker Ron Lindsay (see right)—like many others did his first cheesemaking course with Carole at Duck Under The Table in Wingham.





Letters/Problem solving/Q&A Section

Our goat milk Fetta is coming out great but when we put it in the 20% brine it comes out too salty. We tried a 15% brine with the same result. We are finding it difficult to store the cheeses at 11-15 degrees celsius. We tried a fridge turned on its warmest setting but still only achieved 8 degrees. We live in the Riverland of SA which is hot and dry during summer. Do we need to make these type of cheeses during the cooler months? - Bev and Mick

Regarding brining your feta there

are a couple of things that you can do. You can probably go down to a 10% brine solution, but less than that will affect the way the cheese is preserved. If 10% is still too salty for you then another option is to take the cheese out of the brine before you eat it, and sit it in some long life milk. This will allow the salt to come out of the cheese into the milk and will make the flavour a lot less salty. It is simply a matter of trial and error to find how long you leave it in the milk to get the desired flavour, but it should be a matter of hours not days, to give you an indication. Also, another thing to note is that the level of saltiness depends on the ratio of brine

to cheese – if you have one cheese sitting in a very large container full of brine the cheese will be quite salty. So I would suggest you get the smallest possible container that will still cover the cheese with brine and store it in that. Regarding the temperature, storing at 8°C won't be bad for the cheese. It will be BETTER at 11-15°C, but 8°C is okay. The characteristics and flavours will develop slower at 8°C than at 15°C and your cheese won't have the same flavour profile as cheeses matured at a higher temperature. I know a lot of people that keep their feta in the fridge at 4°C from the day it is made until the day it's eaten and they are

incredibly happy with the flavour of their fetta, so it is all about personal preference... So definitely don't stop making these cheeses in summer!

HELP! I have a daughter that is allergic to lactose, but she loves yoghurt. I've read that you can make lactose-free yoghurt by leaving yoghurt to incubate for a long maturation period, 24 hours or more. Could you please tell me more? -Amber

There are a couple of ways to make lactose-free yoghurt. The way that yoghurt cultures work is basically as

the cultures multiply they will consume the lactose in milk and convert it to lactic acid. However, this does not mean that if you leave it indefinitely all the lactose will be consumed, because the way that it works is that the cultures multiply and produce acid, but they can't survive in too acidic conditions, so when it gets to a certain

If you absolutely need to avoid lactose completely, then my suggestion is that it is safer to make yoghurt with a lactose-free milk

point they start dying off and they reach a kind of equilibrium. I couldn't promise there would be absolutely no lactose left in yoghurt that was incubating for 24 hours and people who are extremely sensitive still could be affected. Also, if you incubate for 24 hours, then you will have an extremely tart, acidic flavour in your yoghurt and may need to add fruit, honey or sugar to sweeten it.

If you absolutely need to avoid lactose completely, then my suggestion is that it is safer to start with a lactose-free milk, which has already had the lactose broken down into the two compo-

nent sugars, glucose and galactose. The acidification process happens as normal, the flavours are the same, and there are now some great lactose-free milks available in the supermarket these days, including UHT varieties which are ideal for making yoghurt with.

Dear folks at Cheeselinks—I started cheesemaking a year or so ago and now I am addicted! Over the last few months I've been collecting ingredients and think I've bought just about every product you sell through your

online store! But I have a question — you sell a Yeast Culture and a Special White Mould (Geotrichum Candidum) on your culture list... What are these for?

Nick

The yeast culture is mostly used as in flavour and aroma development, and provides a more complex flavour profile than would develop ordinarily. In Australia it tends to be used in Blue Vein cheeses but in Europe they also use it in Camembert-style cheeses as

well. The technical name is Kluyveromyces Lactis. Geotrichum Candidum is an alternative to Penicilium Candidum, and it is primarily used with washed rind cheeses. The reason is that it is less proteolytic than other white mould spores; the result of this is that the cheese doesn't soften as much it would with a Camembert or Brie. Sometimes you can mix GEO with normal white mould spores, which can prevent problems associated with rapid softening of the outer layer of camembert before it has softened all the way through the cheese.



Letters/problem solving/Q&As continued from previous page

The recipes in the book all say that I need to make up prepared starter the night before... Can't I just add the culture directly to the milk? -Jenny

In a commercial situation, the starter is added directly into the milk. The problem that exists for home cheesemakers is that it is very difficult to

measure the exact quantities required, as it could be as small as 0.01g for 1L of milk. If you have an analytical balance, then you will be able to do it.

The size of our starter packs is enough to be added directly to a 250L vat, as you are making only 8L you need to add 3.2% of the pack so you will need to measure out 3.2% of the contents. When using starter directly into milk like this the amount you add is critical in order to get a consistent product. When you add directly to milk you must remember to wait at least 30 to 45 minutes to wake the starter up and grow to the levels that you need before you add the rennet.

As you can see it's a bit complicated and you need accurate scales and other equipment which is one of the reasons why we always recommend making a liquid starter for home cheesemakers.

Not only will your starter go further, it means you don't have to measure small quantities and the amount of starter powder you add make the prepared starter is not critical, a little more or a little less won't affect your cheese as the starter will only grow so much in the milk before it reaches a critical number above which no more will grow, so no matter how much powder you add to make up your liquid starter you always have the same number of bacteria in the liquid starter you add to the milk when you make the cheese.

KEFIR — Nectar of the gods?

Kefir is a cultured milk product that contains a multitude of friendly yeast and bacteria with a range of known health benefits. It is well known throughout Europe and the middle East and it is rapidly growing in popularity in Australia, due to new research into its positive effects on the body.

Kefir differs from yoghurt because it contains yeasts as well as bacteria. The combination of these help to clean the intestinal tract and the beneficial yeasts out-populate destructive pathogenic yeasts in the body, so it is great for people who have persistent yeast infections as well as promoting a healthy digestive system, which is great for people who suffer from IBS. It is also thought to boost the immune system.

In terms of flavour, Kefir has a delicious, tangy edge, with a slight subtle aroma of fresh yeast, that is quite different to yoghurt but difficult to describe unless you taste it for yourself.

Fresh Kefir grains look a bit like cauliflower, and they grow in milk. Due to food safety regulations we are not able to supply these grains fresh. However, we have found a freeze-dried source of Kefir culture, which makes Kefir that looks and tastes as authentic as the fresh stuff.

You use the freeze-dried Kefir granules just like yoghurt culture. All you need is a source of milk - UHT milk is perfect, because it has already been heat treated. Then you add a couple of granules of

Kefir culture to the milk and leave at about 20-25°C for about 15 hours and voila, you will have liquid Kefir without the hassle of messing about with fresh grains!

Just a little warning for you all—Kefir grown from fresh grains also contains up to 2.0% alcohol! (Another reason why we love it!) In reality though, the amount of alcohol produced depends on how long it has been fermenting, but when made from freeze dried cultures and cultured for less than a day, then stored in the fridge this amount is usually minimal—typically more like 0.1% so it is generally kid-friendly.

We have packs that will make about 100L of liquid Kefir, for \$10.00, and at that price we think it is quite affordable, even for people who just want to give it a go and see what all the fuss is about!

Our cheese presses are now available to buy online!

LARA FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL



Cheeselinks love to support our local community, and this March 22nd, we are getting a great chance to do just that, through participation in the Lara Food and Wine Festival, along with many Victorian-based gourmet food producers. The festival will be held in the grounds of the historic Pirra Homestead on Windemere Road, from 10am - 4pm. Feature events will be a cooking demonstration by celebrity chef, Gabriel Gate and a special

guest appearance by Catriona Rowntree. And of course, Cheeselinks will have a stall too, and we'll be there ready to talk cheese and yoghurt making with all of the guests, as well as having heaps of stuff at sale prices available for purchase on the day. We are so excited about this event, and although Carole will be busy with a workshop, Tracy will be there along with Julitha, so come and say hello. We're looking forward to talking cheese with you and hope to see many of our fellow cheese-a-holics there throughout the day!



How to make home-made Mascarpone using your yoghurt maker!

Mascarpone is one of the easiest cheeses to make, and if you've got your own yoghurt maker it is even easier still. Mascarpone is typically used in Tiramisu, but you can use it with any desert instead of cream and it has a slightly tart flavour that complements sweetened deserts perfectly. We love it with jam and scones instead of cream, or with chocolate mud cake.

Mascarpone sold in supermarkets is approximately 55% milk fat, but the great news is that by making it at home you can make a scrumptious low fat version with only 35% fat that tastes just as good!

All you need is longlife cream from the supermarket (or your own cream if you have your own source of fresh milk). We use longlife cream instead of fresh cream because it has been heat-treated, which means that we know it doesn't have any preservatives, and it also allows a nice, thick product. It also happens to be

cheaper, which is just an added bonus. As well as the cream you will also need a smidgen of Type E Starter and a way of maintaining somewhere between 35-45 degrees for about 6-8 hours (or until set). When your mascarpone has set, you will need to move it to the fridge where it will last for a couple of weeks.



Dairy Australia's Cheese Scholarships

Every year Dairy Australia provide a Cheese Scholarship for three budding cheesemakers to increase their skills. A panel comprising representatives of Dairy Australia and the NCDEA (National Centre For Dairy Education Australia) assess the applications on the following criteria:

- Demonstration of initiative, passion and drive for cheesemaking
- Previous experience domestic or commercial cheesemaking as well as general food industry experience
- Future plans and business goals

The scholarship winners receive an amazing prize, with a monetary value of thousands of dollars, but experientially it is priceless. A place is awarded in a five-day

intensive practical cheesemaking course, a 3-day farmhouse cheesemaking course and a 5-day technical cheesemakers' school. National Foods, Milawa Cheese Company and De Cicco Industries also provide thirteen days of practical training and mentoring in a production environment.

The Dairy Australia Cheese Scholarship really is an amazing opportunity, and we would like to congratulate this year's recipients—Michael Roache, Suzanne Harnett and Geoff



Nicholson.

Here at Cheeselinks we feel like we can share in this award in a little way, because Suzanne and Geoff actually started making cheese with Carole at home cheesemaking workshops!

Many of the previous scholarship winners have also started their cheesemaking journey with our home cheesemaking workshops including Ros Garstone, who was one of the 2008 cheese scholarship recipients, and who now helps us conduct workshops in Western Australia.

Potential 2010 applicants can find out more at the Dairy Australia webpage: <http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/Education-and-Careers/Scholarships-and-Awards.aspx>

Cheese and Wine Tasting in at Sydney GPO

Tracy and Carole recently took a family trip to Sydney to climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge. After the spectacular views of the city and the exhausting but exhilarating walk up the bridge, they took themselves and their aching legs into Martin Place in the city centre to enjoy the GPO Cheese and Wine Shop.

If you are a local Sydney resident, or visiting the city, it is definitely worth checking out. They have fantastic couplings of wine and cheese that they call 'flights', where sensational lo-



cal and international cheeses are matched with fantastic local and international wine. You get three glasses of wine and three cheese servings. At \$25.00, the flights are really reasonable and they are constantly being updated so each time you can try a new combination. The wine and cheese pairings are thoughtfully constructed by the sommelier and fromager. We found the cheese and wine complemented each other perfectly in a way that was unexpected, but completely satisfying. And if you love any of the cheeses or wines you can buy them to take home with you at the shop, which is just perfect.

Our favourite combinations, in no particular order were Coulommiers with Truffle,

Ile-de-France, France matched with Even Keel 2006 Shiraz/Viognier from the 'Red Flight', Canberra District and Meredith Blue (sheep) matched with Wellington 2006 Iced Riesling, Southern Tasmania from the 'Summer Flight' and the Comte Gruere, Franche-Comte, France matched with Audrey Wilkinson 2001 Museum Reserve Semillon, Hunter Vally, NSW from the 'White Flight'.

Tracy seen here with GPO Cheese and Wine Shop's fromager, Sonia Cousins.





Bringing cheese and yoghurt making to the kitchens of Australia!

Cheeselinks is an Australian business that is both family-owned and operated. The company was established in 1986 as Home Cheesemaking Supplies, specifically to provide quality cheesemaking ingredients and education to people who wanted to learn to make cheese in their own homes.

Over time the business expanded and began to supply small cheese factories with cultures, baskets, and other equipment. The name was changed to Cheeselinks in 1999, to reflect the increasing service provided to commercial manufacturers. With master cheesemaker Carole Willman at the helm, Cheeselinks has over 20 years experience in cheesemaking training and education, serving both commercial cheese manufacturers, and home cheese and yoghurt makers.



Grand Dairy Awards

Every year the Grand Dairy Awards is one of the highlights of the industry calendars. It is an event renowned as being only for the best of the best—only cheeses that have won gold medals in other ‘state qualifying competitions’ are even allowed to enter.

The judging happens every year in October, and in February they announced the winners for 2009. We are so proud to have some of our Cheeselinks customers on the list of Champion Cheeses. A huge congratulations to Red Hill Cheese for being awarded the champion goat/sheep milk cheese for their Red Hill Mountain Goat Blue. If you remember back to our very first issue of Cheese-A-Holic, this was the first ‘Cheese of the Month’. It has long been one of Carole’s favourite cheeses (can she ever pick them?) and it seems the

judges of the Grand Dairy Awards agree.

Congratulations also go to Milawa Cheese Company, for Milawa King River Gold for the Champion Washed Rind Cheese. Ashgrove Cheese Company won the champion cheddar-style cheese with their Double Gloucester and Fresh Cheese Company won the champion flavoured cheese with their Mamma Lucia Chilli Pecorino.

Champion Cheeses in each of the categories are listed below:

Grand Champion Cheese: Heidi Farm Gruyere

Grand Champion Dairy Product: Gippsland Dairy Pure Double Cream

Champion Fresh Unripened Cheese: Florida Ricotta

Champion White Mould Cheese: Tasmanian Heritage Signature Camembert

Champion Semi-Hard and Eye Cheese: Heidi Farm Gruyere

Champion Cheddar-style Cheese: Ashgrove Double Gloucester

Champion Hard Cheese: Florida Pecorino
Champion Blue Cheese: King Island Dairy Endeavour Blue

Champion Washed Rind Cheese: Milawa King River Gold

Champion Flavoured Cheese: Mamma Lucia Pecorino Chilli

Champion Goat’s or Sheep’s Milk Cheese: Red Hill Mountain Goat Blue

Champion Natural Yoghurt: Mundella Greek Style Natural Yoghurt

Champion Flavoured Yoghurt: Maleny Gourmet Yoghurt—Passionfruit

Champion Icecream: Connoisseur Caramel Honey Macadamia Icecream

Champion Cream: Gippsland Dairy Pure Double Cream

Champion Flavoured Dairy Beverage: Dare Iced Coffee Double Espresso

Champion Milk: Dairy Farmers Milk

Champion Dairy Gelato: Tutto Bene Banana Gelato

WHAT’S ON MARCH APRIL 2009

Mar 15	Bemboka Show, NSW
Mar 21	Canberra Workshop, ACT: Camembert/Gouda
Mar 21-22	Margaret River Workshop (WA) run by Ros Garstone in conjunction with Cheeselinks): Camembert/Fetta
Mar 22	Lara Food and Wine Festival at Pirra Homestead
Mar 27	Mozzarella Workshop at Little River
Mar 28	Red Hill Show, VIC
Mar 29-30	Red Hill (VIC) workshops: Goat Fetta and Camembert, Quarg and Mascarpone
April 4 –5	Small Cow Farm (NSW) Workshops: Creamy Blue, Soft Goat and Triple Cream Brie
April 10-13	Cheeselinks Closed for Easter: Closed Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, reopening Tuesday
April 18—19	Small Cow Farm (NSW) Workshops: Blue Vein, Ricotta, and your choice of Cheddar or Red Leister
April 24	Monbulk Workshop VIC: Cheddar
April 25-26	Red Hill (VIC) Workshops: Blue Vein and Camembert
May 2-3	TWO DAY Sheep’s milk workshop at Towrie Sheep Cheesery, QLD