

APRIL CHEESE CLUB



*April Showers Brings May
Flowers....And Cheese, Lots
of Cheese.*

In this issue we will go on a journey through America to Bavaria, taste a creamy bloomy rind cheese from Connecticut, learn how to pair fromage with beer, and enjoy a very special collaboration between one of America's most awarded farms and cider company.

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Mystic Cheese Company Melinda Mae

Mystic Cheese was born in 2013 as a collaboration between Brian Civitello, who has made cheeses of all styles across the United States and Italy, and cheesemonger Jason Sobocinski, owner of Caseus Fromagerie & Bistro in New Haven, Connecticut. After Civitello learned how to make cheese in Italy, he worked for various cheese companies throughout the US, both making cheese and consulting for small family-owned creameries. When Civitello started his own business, Sobocinski was brought in to help make Mystic Cheese a reality. Both have irrepressible enthusiasm for their work and the future of the dairy and cheese industries, as well as for their home state.

The company is known for pioneering the use of "cheese pods," affordable, transportable cheesemaking facilities built into refurbished shipping containers. The containers are transformed into mobile, industry-standard spaces for efficient cheese production. Currently, Mystic Cheese is in the process of constructing a new cheesemaking space in Groton, CT. The new facility will offer cut-to-order cheese, grilled cheese, charcuterie, cheese boards, and other snacks, catering, and classes.

The most important part of the cheese making process for Mystic is to highlight the freshness of the milk. All Mystic cheeses are made to keep the integrity of the delicate characteristics of the milk intact so they may be reflected in the final product.

Stemming from Civitello's Italian training, many of Mystic's cheeses are inspired by Old World Italian recipes. Created in 2013 as the second cheese the company offered, Melinda Mae is inspired by Robiola. The name comes from the classic Shel Silverstein poem about a little girl who eats a whale starting with the tail.

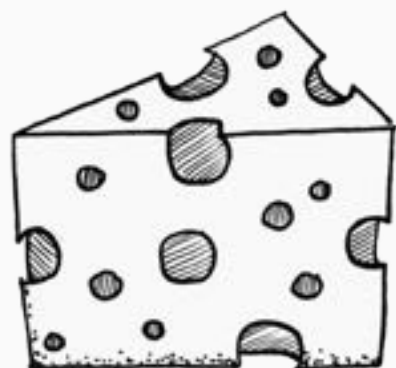
At about four pounds and square, Melinda Mae is soft-ripened with a bright white, bloomy *Penicillium* rind. The wheels are aged from 12 to 21 days in a space specially designed to manage the moisture of the cheese. Maintaining the moisture is vital to generating the pudgy, buttery texture that defines Melinda Mae. With its high yeast flavors, this cheese is reminiscent of warm bread topped with rich cultured butter.

Tasting Notes

Melinda Mae's bright white rind encases a soft, brie-like paste that smells of butter, milk, must, and fungi. The interior paste has a buttery, nutty tang, while a musty umami flavor emerges closer to the rind.

Pairings

This butter bomb of a cheese can pair well with just about anything. Mystic suggests pairing it with tart effervescent beers, pale ales, bubbles, sweeter jams, seasonal sweeter fruits, and crusty bread.

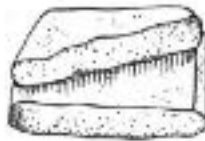


**MYSTIC
CHEESE**

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Soft Ripened

Bloomy Rind



CHEESE NOTES

Pack Size:
1 x 7.0 156 lb.

Item Codes:
MM01

Shelf Life:
30 Days

Ingredients:

- ♥ Pasteurized Cow Milk
- ♥ Rennet
- ♥ Cultures
- ♥ Sea Salt

CHEESE MAKERS NOTES

Fresh single herd cow milk is warmed to 100 F, cultured, coagulated and cut into walnut sized curds which are briefly stirred and gently transferred into 5lb curd moulds. After 24 hours the cheeses are drysalted and ripened for 30 days at 53.5 F to achieve peak flavor and texture.

Tasting Notes

A Puddly Paste of Cultured Cream caught between a cumulous cloud of mystical mycelium.

Pair with:

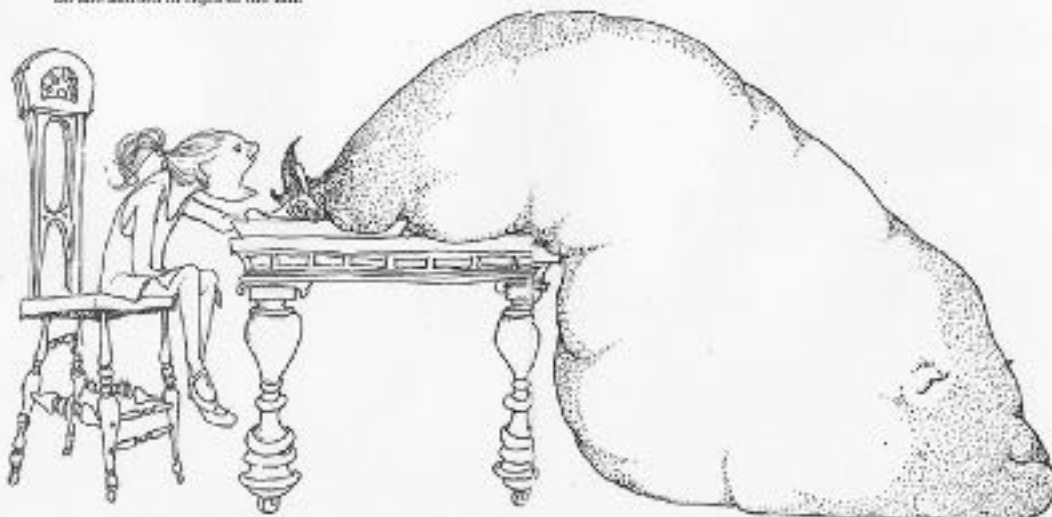
- ♥ Dry Bubbly
- ♥ Charcuterie
- ♥ Tart Jam
- ♥ Wheat Beer



MELINDA MAE

Have you heard of tiny Melinda Mae,
Who ate a monstrous whale?
She thought she could,
She said she would,
So she started in right at the tail.

And everyone said, "You're much too small!"
But that didn't bother Melinda at all.
She took little bites and she chewed very slow,
Just like a good girl should...



The Cellars at Jasper Hill

WILLOUGHBY WASHED WITH PEAK BLOOM HARVEST CIDER

Cheese and cider have always been friends. The acidity and sweetness of cider is the ideal companion for the buttery richness of cheese, whether that's a smooth and creamy young goat chevre or a crumbly, aged cow's milk cheddar. The characteristics of cider and cheese go together so well, in fact, that some cheese makers have taken to washing cheeses with cider, thus melding the two together in eternal harmony (at least until the cheese gets eaten).

One beautiful example of this is Jasper Hill Creamery's washed-rind soft cheese, Willoughby. If you a cheese lover, chances are that you've heard of Jasper Hill, a farm, creamery and cellar located in Greensboro Bend, Vermont. What you might not know is that Willoughby is actually a whole ongoing cider washing program. In the past, Jasper Hill has done editions with Eden, Shacksbury, Wölffer and Citizen Cider as general releases for its customers, as well as custom washes for specific events. Yes you could have a custom wash of this cheese of your own creation! How fun!



While Jasper Hill is known for making raw milk cheese, this one needs to be shipped to customers before it's been allowed to age for the Federally-mandated 60 days, so it must be pasteurized, in this case, by necessity rather than by choice.

While the flavors of pasteurized cheese can be complex and interesting, they're more deliberate than a raw milk cheese. Willoughby has a safer flavor profile, so it's actually a better canvas for washing with beer, wine, cider or spirits than a more wild raw milk cheese. The washed-rind family is known for being stinky and assertive, but Willoughby is a bit gentler, so the aroma of what you wash it with can actually make it to the finish line. While the hoppiness of beers can tend to lend unwanted bitterness to a washed-rind cheese, cider is different. It nearly always makes a pleasant compliment.

Willoughby is sold in an eight-ounce wheel, and with its gooey, pudding-esque interior it boasts aromas of peat, roasted beef and onions — "a strong and complex front for the subtle milky, herbal, ripe-peach flavors within," according to Jasper Hill's website.



This special edition Willoughby is washed with Peak Bloom Harvest Cider by Eden Speciality Ciders. This cider includes a variety of different apples such as, Dabinett, McIntosh, Empire, Spartan and Esopus Spitzenburg.

One might ask, what does it mean to "wash" your cheese? Well its almost exactly as it sounds! The rind of the cheese is washed during the maturing process. After the cheese has been moulded and formed, it is aged/matured. During this maturation process, the outside of the cheese is moistened (washed) gently with a damp cloth or brush, sometimes regularly, sometimes only once or twice. The washing solution is often brine (salt-water), but in this case it is washed with the cider.



Just The Facts
Country: United States
Region: Vermont
Milk Type: Cow
Pasteurized
Aged 5-7 weeks



Willoughby pairs perfectly with a Rose, Saison beer or raw floral honey.

Trappist Cheese & Washed Rinds



Origins of Washed Rind Cheese

One of the origins of washed rind cheese began with Trappist monks who had also taken up the production of Trappist ale in their monasteries. The production of beer and cheese was started as an additional source of funds for monasteries. An example of this is the Belgian Chimay beer and Chimay cheese started in 1862. The monks would transform fresh, non-soured milk into curd with cultures and enzymes and then drain the cheese in forms to make them dense enough to wash with a Chimay beer and salt solution as they ripened in their caves for a few weeks.

Factors that Effect Ripening

Since the milk used in making washed rind cheese was fresh and non-soured (unlike the soured, acidic milk housewives used for Camembert), it naturally attracted the right salt-loving bacteria. The acidity level of the curd and milk when making cheese is essential to attracting the right type of bacteria, molds, and fungus.

The longer term origins of washed-rind styles also came from a preservation mentality - salt slows down and regulates the rate of fermentation in foods, and so naturally by washing cheeses in salt-water solutions, they could keep their cheese fresher for longer.

Characteristics of Trappist Cheese

Trappist cheese is pale yellow with some holes and is usually packaged in red plastic or red paraffin wax. Trappist cheese is said to have originated in 18th-century France with the Roman Catholic monks of the Notre Dame de Port du Salut abbey. The recipe found its way to Hungary through the Bosnian monastery of Maria-Stern, and then to other parts of Europe and the United States. The original French recipe is still manufactured in France under the name of Port-Salut or Saint-Paulin.

Most Trappist monasteries and Trappistine convents are in some type of business that produces goods that are sold to provide income for their homes and needs. Some of these commodities include cheese, as we see here, bread, wine, pastries, clothing and even coffins. But many of the monks, who are not required to take a vow of alcohol abstinence, produce some of the world's most famous trappist beer.



Cheese And Beer Pairings

While most would only think about pairing cheese with wine, one of our favorite things to pair cheese with is beer! Cheese and beer both offer incredible variety. Lagers to lambics, bloomy rinds to blues—the taxonomic kingdom of each is vast. And, of course, beer goes with cheese are a natural duo. But with so many options, how do you go about selecting the proper pairing of each? Here is a simple guide to pairing!

Brie + Belgian Pale Ale

Decadent, buttery cheeses, like double and triple crèmes, call for relatively bubbly brews to cut through the richness. The best beer for that is a Belgian ale, either pale or golden—the kind that comes in a corked bottle that you pop like champagne. The cork signals in-bottle fermentation, which provides the proper effervescence.



Cheddar + IPA

Why do these two work so well together? An IPA is hoppy and bitter, which holds up well alongside the crumbly, acidic properties of a traditional cheddar.

Gouda + Stout

A well-aged gouda has a wonderfully caramelly, butterscotchy quality, and calls for a beer that is just as full-bodied and subtly sweet. That's the profile of a good stout, with notes of roasted coffee and dark chocolate.



Washed Rind + Trappist Ale

Washed rind cheese was born of Trappist beer, when one day, a monk notice an unwanted color on some cheese he was aging. He dipped a rag in some beer, rubbed it on the wheel, and both removed the coloring and inadvertently developed a new style of cheese. Naturally, one goes quite well with the other.

Alpine + Brown

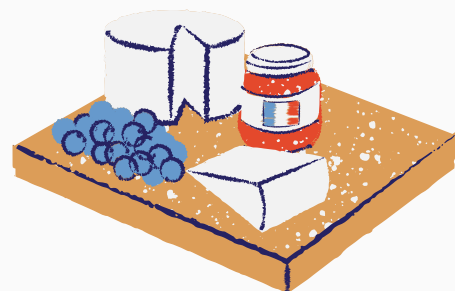
The profile of an alpine cheese is nutty, roasty, and slightly sweet. That's the very same profile of a brown ale as well. As one of our pairing principles goes: Like goes with like. It's no wonder alpine cheese and brown ale is such an excellent match.

Blue + Barleywine

On a cheese plate, blue cheese is often paired with something sweet and fruity: toffee, molasses, caramel, dried stonefruits, etc. In beer form, this manifests as barleywine. It's an ale with loads of character, anchored by a malty sweetness.



There's plenty of room in each category to explore nuances and expressions, but so long as you stick with these principles, you can't go wrong. Happy pairing!



Sleeping Beauty by Cascadia Creamery

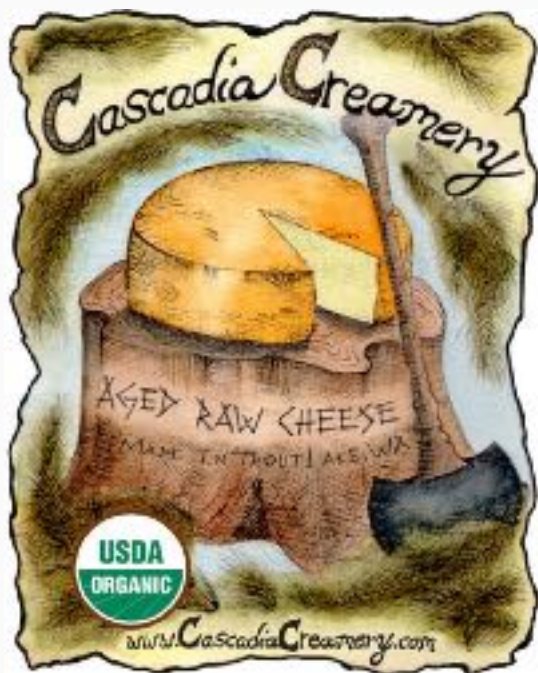
The roster of new American creameries willing to work with raw milk and tolerate the heightened scrutiny of the FDA is not long. The search results get even shorter if you add “certified organic milk” to the criteria. Washington State’s Cascadia Creamery has chosen this challenging path, and its aged cow’s-milk wheel, Sleeping Beauty, is certifiably delightful.

Cascadia Creamery is a family run operation and they have revived a long tradition of artisan cheesemaking in the Trout Lake Valley that started almost 125 years ago. The Trout Lake Valley is an ideal location for cheesemaking because of the rich volcanic soil, lush grazing fields and temperate weather. All of the cheeses they make are 100% organic and raw!

Cascadia’s husband-and-wife owners, John and Marci Shuman, buy their milk from a farm two miles away, which makes them almost farmstead producers. (Farmstead creameries own their herds.) John, the cheesemaker, favors minimal manipulation, hence the raw milk.

Shuman, a self-taught cheesemaker, uses a variety of cultures to ferment his milk. Some of these cultures produce carbon dioxide, which accounts for some of the wheel’s open texture. The coagulant is animal rennet, an increasingly rare choice because it’s costly and turns off vegetarians, but many traditionalists believe it enhances aged cheese. Shuman heats the curd only slightly, presses the wheels lightly and brines them for seasoning. The wheels spend about three months in the aging room, with only an occasional brushing to control the mold. “We let them do what they’re going to do,” says Shuman.





Sleeping Beauty is made with the raw milk from cows grazing on the grasses grown in the rich volcanic soil of the Cascade Mountains. Buttery and sweet in flavor with a slightly tangy finish, its paste is a beautiful pale gold with small eyes. The texture is both creamy and slightly crumbly. It has a beautiful gray mottled rind that develops over the aging period of 75 to 100 days.

Almost reminiscent of a French style tomme cheese, the rind is particularly fantastic. As we know, cheesemakers do intend for us to eat the rind of a cheese. As cheese ages, this is where a lot of the flavor lies. Sleeping Beauty is both smooth and buttery with a supple sharpness. Named after a signature landmark of the Cascade Range - the legendary "Beauty" that came between the mighty Pahto (Mt. Adams) and Wy'East (Mt. Hood) peaks. Like its namesake, this alluring cheese can move mountains. Natural rind - aged 75 to 100 days. Like the terroir of a fine wine, it's all about the soil, the region, and the environment. Cascadia Creamery's cows graze on pastures grown in the rich, volcanic soil of the Cascade Mountains. They drink the mineral-rich glacial waters of snow-capped Mt. Adams. Cascadia Creamery cheeses are also aged in natural lava tubes created by past volcanic eruptions of Mt. Adams. It is said that the temperature, humidity and other conditions of these caves are ideal for cheesemaking and resemble the Roquefort Caves of France. The aging conditions, combined with the highly nutritious milk, provides for incredible cheeses that are absolutely delicious. Their cave aging process creates fromage with Cascadia terroir. All Cascadia Creamery varieties provide a rich and unforgettable epicurean experience.

Pair with a medium-intensity red variety with good acidity, like Merlot or Nero d'Avola.

Lisa With Ramps

If you love onions, you'll want to get your hands on this toasty, springy cheese from German cheesemaker Albert Kraus.

Stuffed with Bavarian *ramps*, this cow's milk wheel is bursting with notes of wild onion and garlic, with a subtle nuttiness and sweetly herbal profile.

At the end of each Winter season in Bavaria, little green tops begin to poke through the surface of soil and snow out in the pastures grazed on by Brown Swiss cows. These Bärlauch, or wild Ramps, are full of oniony, garlicky flavor and are a favorite snack for the cows. Ramps, sometimes called wild leeks, are a highly seasonal foraged allium that bridges the gap between the gentle flavor of spring onion and the bright intensity of fresh garlic. Aged for four months, this prized cheese is delightfully toothsome and elastic, with grassy undertones that speak to the pastures of Southern Germany, where this cheese's milk was harvested.

There isn't a ton of information of this delightful cheese, but it's for sure a cheesemonger favorite and a wonderful melter!



We love to add this cheese to any savory dish, grate on top of potatoes, serve with meat or a bold red wine.



TYPE

Cooked/pressed
Washed rind

MILK

Raw cow
Brown Swiss/Braunvieh
Single herd

RENNET

Traditional calf stomach

AGE

3 months

PRODUCER

Albert Kraus
Hofkäseerei Kraus

ELEVATION

840 meters

ESTABLISHED

2008 (current dairy)

REGION

Bavaria
Germany



FORMAT

13 lb wheel

ITEM #

2809

INGREDIENTS

Raw cow milk, salt, cultures,
rennet, ramps

AVAILABILITY

Stock
Year-round

PROFILE

Lisa's semi soft paste is buttery and creamy, with hints of crème fraîche. The addition of ramps to the cheese, as well as the garlicky flavor of the milk, mesh perfectly with the body of the cheese. Together they create a wonderful sour cream and onion profile that is pleasant and extremely snackable.

Lisa with Ramps

This Spring delight is produced by Albert Kraus at Hofkäseerei Kraus in the Bavarian town of Ebersbach. Lisa is a semi-soft table cheese that features wild Bärlauch, or ramps, which are commonly found in forest throughout Bavaria.

Albert Kraus has been producing cheese from the best Allgäu milk in the Ebersbach dairy since March 1999. This raw milk comes from two traditional farms located within 5km of the dairy, which are run by his brother Xavier Kraus and by Albert's neighbor.

Bärlauch are named after the Brown Bears (Baer) who would dig up the ramps in the forest. Northern European cow herds also are known to graze on these same ramps, flavoring their milk with notes of wild onion and garlic. This milk is more prized and sought after for this reason.

Every day, the milk of the two Brown Swiss herds is delivered to the dairy, which produces different Alpine-style cheeses, with age profiles ranging from 3 to 18 months.

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