



March 2014

We love our cheese!

Cheesy people's annual get together NZ Champions of Cheese Awards March

What fun we have every year when Cheese makers large and small gather together for the Annual NZ Champions of Cheese Awards.

In one corner we have Fonterra and other distinctively large dairy manufacturers.

In the middle we have a wonderful range of highly individual artisan cheesemakers and as the finale for the evening we have a very special category—the Home Crafted Category for a highly skilled home cheesemaker. The Judges were enthusiastic about the quality and calibre of

the entries submitted by home cheesemakers and to make things difficult we had to select from four gold medal category finalists!



Tasting and trying and tasting again the winner for the evening was Bri DiMattina for her well textured aromatic soft cheese

Formaggio di Latte Fresco - Aglio . Bri learnt cheese making as a child standing beside her Italian Grand mother and using simple equipment from the kitchen. Hygiene above all, Bri told me is the secret to a good cheese but I think talent counts as well! Bri's 9 year old son Pablo was present at the dinner and must have been delighted to see his Mother take a well justified bow!

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The Sacco culture range continues to expand check out www.curdsandwhey.co.nz

The following day we have the Cheesefest!





DUTCH TRIO SWEEP NZ CHEESE AWARDS

Dutch influences have made their mark on New Zealand cheese, with three supreme awards at the 2014 NZ Champions of Cheese Awards directly related to a Dutch heritage.

A Dutch-style cheese made in Akaroa – Aged Gouda by Barrys Bay Traditional Cheese won the coveted *Countdown* Champion of Champions Award for large cheese producers.

Another Dutch-style cheese - Very Old Edam produced by Mahoe Farmhouse Cheese won the *Cuisine* Champion Artisan Cheese Award for smaller producers for the third year running.

Completing the Dutch trio is Jeanne Van Kuyk of Aroha Organic Goat Cheese who won the *Milk Test* NZ Champion Cheesemaker Award. Her company also took out the *Tuatara Brewing* Champion Goat Cheese Award for its Aroha Raw Milk Rich Plain cheese.

Emigrating from Holland, Van Kuyk now makes award-winning organic, specialty cheese from her own herd of goats on the family’s rural Waikato farm.

Over 430 New Zealand specialty cheeses were entered in this year’s competition,

Twenty eight of New Zealand’s most experienced cheese connoisseurs made up the expert judging panel. They were led by one of Australasia’s most experienced international cheese judges and renowned cheese educationalist, Russell Smith. Commented that “New Zealand cheese ranks with the best in the world, with certain styles indisputably world-class,” Smith further added that “The diversity of flavour profiles, the quality of cheese making and high presentation of the majority of cheese was fantastic. It’s incredibly encouraging to see the bar being raised each year.”

Each cheese was examined by a technical and an aesthetic judge as a duo, and strictly graded to pre-determined gold, silver and bronze standards.

This year saw a higher percentage of gold medals being awarded, which attests to the increasingly high quality of cheese being made in New Zealand and exhibited this year, Smith said.

Barrys Bay Traditional Cheese, which produces traditional hand-crafted cheese including cheddar, gouda and maasdam, is celebrating its first Champion of Champions title.



Rounds of hard cheese on display at a market in Holland



And so onto real people like us—feedback from cheesemakers

Pressing a cheese at home

Your stockpot or clean buckets filled with water will give you approximately 1kg of weight per 1 litre of liquid. Heavy books or bricks will provide ample weight if stacked evenly and safely and if you have a set of plate weights, these make ex-

cellent pressing devices. Just make sure that if you can’t sanitise the items you are using, that you create a good barrier between your cheese and your pressing system. It can be a little hit and miss getting exactly the right weight and pressure across your

cheese with makeshift pressing systems but you’ll find you get a pretty good result and you can upgrade to a proper press once you become more serious about your home cheese making. So really, there is no need to spend a fortune when you are first starting out with cheese



The annual Cheesefest is held on the day following the Cheese Awards. For the past few years the Cheesefest has been held at the centers showcase their wares. This leads on to another



We are dippy about Hipi

Kuratau Yoghurt Hipi Natural Sheep Milk Yoghurt— Cuisine Artisan Awards Winner held Feb 2014

Waiheke Island Cheese produces some singularly good Sheep's Cheese. We know because we have tried them! The flavour and consistency of the sheep cheese is worth a trip to Waiheke Island and a visit to the shop where you might like to indulge in Putiki Pecorino—a 100% pure sheep milk Tuscan style cheese, mildly earthy and faintly fruity or a Church Bay Blue—A rich creamy blue 100% pure sheep milk with subtle hints of sweetness and pepper.

Just hop on the ferry to Oneroa, Waiheke Island and walk up the road to the shop to spend a very gourmet time!

For a land famous for its sheep, sheep's milk products keep a fairly low profile in New Zealand. Hipi Sheep Milk Yoghurt is here to change that. The name is the Maori word for sheep as well as a play on "hippy" – as in an alternative to the mainstream – and the company is a joint venture between Waituhi Kuratau Trust and James and Kate Clairmont of the Waiheke Island Cheese Company. The Trust owns a sheep farm at Kuratau, on the southern shores of Lake Taupo, and the Clairmonts have made cheese from Kuratau sheep milk for years. The two groups joined forces to provide an alternative to cow's milk yoghurt for those wanting something different for health reasons – sheep's milk has a lower lactose content and higher calcium content than cow's milk – or simply for its unique taste.

The yoghurt is made in a plant next to the farm's milking shed from the Trust's herd of East Friesian, Awassi and Poll Dorset ewes – it's pasteurised and cooled, probiotic culture is added and the yoghurt is pot-set overnight. Hipi Yoghurt, a finalist at the recent Cuisine Magazine Artisan Awards held in February won a well deserved Award. The judges loved the yoghurt's naturally thick, creamy texture and its clean flavour adding that it was an accessible product "nice and subtle" – a good introduction for people who might think they don't like sheep's milk. We are pleased to say that Sacco yoghurt cultures are used in the production of this fantastic product

Looking after not only yourself but your animals ... " Thanks a lot 😊 goats doing so well on this regime (ie being fed probiotic yoghurt) - the best natural therapy for upset tummies caused by parasites". If you are having problems with your animals then using Sacco yoghurt cultures is an effective and delicious remedy for all



Another client who uses Camembert tells us when taste the cheese we are



cows milk to make her using the Sacco penicillin candidum "wish you could making; the Camembert is amazing !"

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integrity & excellence are keywords for us

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Dotty Ditties –

Winston Churchill said .."A country that produces 325 variety of cheeses cannot be governed.." If you offer a nice selection of cheese to your dinner guests you will prove that your house, at least is well governed.

(Encylopaedia of Cheese: Pierre Androuet 1976) - nothing much has changed!

Not so dotty – Haloumi is a rubbery sort of cheese from Greece which cries out to be grilled. Cook slices under the grill for four minutes each side then serve with a green salad dressed with lemon juice and olive oil

B limey its Briny!

Australia's ABC Radio recently reported on a story about "cheese brine" being used to salt the snowy and icy roads of Wisconsin in the USA

Cities like Milwaukee in Wisconsin average 50 inches of snow during winter. In 2012 with only 28 inches of snow Milwaukee used 44,000 tons of salt and spent almost \$6.5 million on snow and ice management.

In an effort to reduce costs Milwaukee began a pilot programme in December 2013 whereby they mixed cheese brine with rock salt to prevent the city's roads from freezing.

In addition to being cheaper it is also a more effective way of salting. The cheese brine helps the salt "adhere" to the roads so less is lost compared to dry salt, where it is estimated that 30% is lost to bounce and traffic.



CLERICI SACCO

And a little bit of science from our Clerici Sacco Gurus

It is important to recognise that not all sterile food contain micro-organisms;

The composition and level of bacterias are highly influenced by a variety of internal (such as bacteriological quality, food matrix,

pH, water activity, and fabrication) and external factors (such as humidity, packaging and temperature) features, in addition to synergistic and antagonistic interactions ... (Lone Andersen, Technical specialist, Sacco S.r.l. Cadorago, Italy) -

put into simple English

Sacco cultures are produced under strict hygienic regulations and are despatched from factory to point of destination in hygienically sealed packaging. Travelling well in ambient temperature it is always sensible on receipt of a culture – dairy, meat, fish—to put into a cool, controlled environment. Stored well, cultures last a very long time.