

Green County : at the forefront of fine Wisconsin cheesemaking

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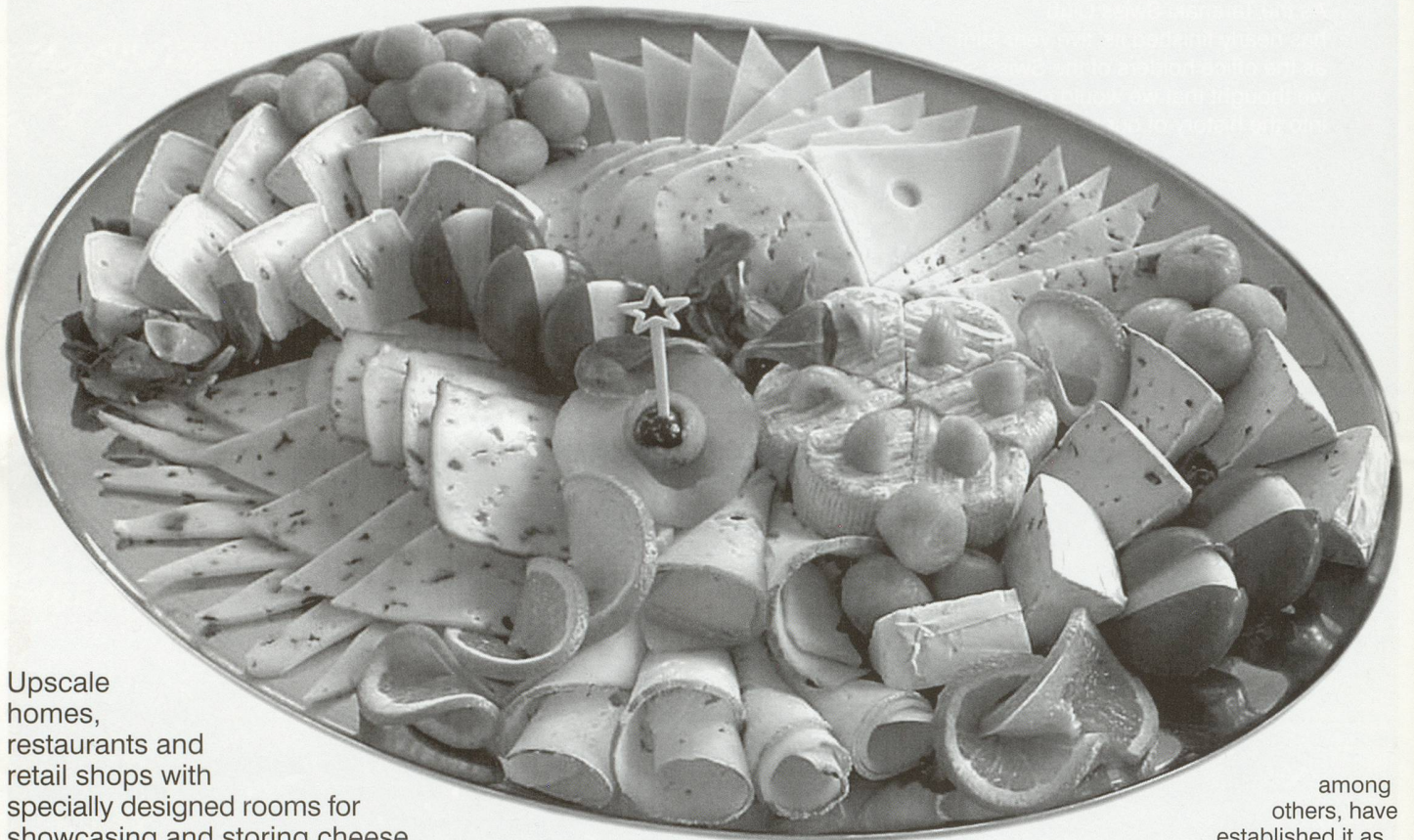
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Green County

At the Forefront of Fine Wisconsin Cheesemaking



Upscale homes, restaurants and retail shops with specially designed rooms for showcasing and storing cheese are among the hottest food trends in the United States. Cheese menus and cheese flights at restaurants used to be a feature found only in the most upscale of eateries.

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Why? Because appreciation for fine cheese is growing from a trickle to a rushing river that's flowing from the top echolons of European-trained chefs and fromagiers in this country to increasingly well-travelled, food-savvy consumers. For them, the world of fine artisan cheese is a tantalizing journey of discovery not unlike that of the world of wine.

"There are many parallels between the wine and cheese industries," notes James Robson, CEO at the Madison-based Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. "Both are rich in history and tradition. Both demand tremendous skill and craftsmanship. And both are greatly impacted by terroir and environmental conditions". Indeed, as the nation's top cheese-producing state, Wisconsin is at the forefront of the artisan cheese movement. Home to the only Master Cheesemaker certification programme outside of Europe, its cheesemakers - many third - and even fourth-generation craftsmen - each year produce more award-winning cheeses than are produced in any other place on Earth.

And at the centre of this movement are the cheesemakers of Green County. At Edelweiss Town Hall Creamery in nearby Monticello, Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Bruce Workman has rekindled the tradition of 180-pound Emmenthaler wheels produced in copper kettles brought to Wisconsin from Switzerland. And at Roth Kase USA in Monroe, the production of authentic mountain cheeses, such as Gruyere and Raclette,

among others, have established it as one of the most influential specialty cheesemakers in the nation. And the list goes on and on among the 28 cheesemaking facilities in the county - a count that is more than any other county in Wisconsin. Green County is home to Wisconsin's famed Limburger Cheese, the only locale where Limburger is made in the United States. This traditionally produced cheese, made by Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Myron Olson at Chalet Cheese, has become more popular over the past several years with the growing popularity of rich, pungent American-produced specialty cheeses.

Some of the nation's oldest continuously operated farmer-owned cop-operatives are found in Green County as well, including Maple Leaf Cheese, Decatur Dairy, Silver-Lewis Cheese and Chalet.

"There are so many examples of great artisan cheeses being crafted here in Wisconsin today --- both classics and new American Originals," says Robson. "Across the board, we make more than 500 varieties, types and styles of cheese. The diversity is great and, with the renaissance we're seeing on the artisan side, the excitement and epicurean appeal are stronger than ever, as well."

Among the world class cheeses produced by Green County cheesemakers: Baby Swiss, Blue, Braun Suisse Kase, Brick, Butterkase, Cheddar, Colby, Cranberry White Cheddar, Edam, Farmers Cheese, Feta, Gouda,

GranQueso, Gruyere, Havarti, Limburger, Monterey Jack, Mozzarella, Muenster, Raclette, Swiss, Queso Blanco, True Bleu and Yogurt Cheese.

Green County Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers - The Best of the Best. This highest concentration of Master Cheesemakers outside of Europe is found right here in Green County, Wisconsin - long the centre of attention among the nation's cheesemakers. That tradition continues today with nine cheesemakers from the county attaining the prestigious designation of Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker since the programme's inception more than a decade ago.

The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker programme certification was established by Wisconsin in 1994 and is the only programme of its kind outside of Europe. The programme is administered through the Centre for Dairy Research and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

Source : Green County Visitor's Guide

Green County Cheese Days are held in September ... join the festivities at a fun family weekend celebrating cheesemaking and Swiss heritage in Monroe, Wisconsin. Learn to yodel, savour a cheese sandwich and a local brew, Experience the Swiss Colony Cheese Days Parade, Groove to the tunes at Berghoff and Blues, Milk a cow, Polka in the street, Find a treasure at the arts and crafts fair, Discover Swiss folk art and culture, Run the Cheese Days Chase, Observe the Old World art of historic cheesemaking, Sample Wisconsin's Biggest Cheese Fondue!!! All this at the Green County Cheese Days!!!

Located in the rolling hills of Green County is New Glarus, "America's Little Switzerland". New Glarus is surrounded by farms and woodlands like Glarus, Switzerland, homeland of New Glarus' first settlers. They proudly maintain their Swiss heritage and invite you to share their traditions. New Glarus is especially well known for cherishing the Swiss tradition of fine food and drink. Much of the architecture is Swiss chalet-style: a wonderful example of this is the New Glarus Hotel, which was built by Swiss immigrants in 1853, and has long been a landmark known for its fine Swiss cuisine, atmosphere and entertainment. Shopping in New Glarus is a unique experience. Nowhere else will you find such a fascinating mix of items, ranging from Swiss imported goods such as cuckoo clocks and alpine clothing to locally produced fine art and specialty foods such as cheese and sausages. As the Swiss are renowned for their love of music and celebration, several of their annual festivals celebrate Swiss holidays or stories, including Heidi Festival in late June, Volksfest in early August (as a tribute to the traditions brought by Swiss settlers in 1845, New Glarus residents celebrate Swiss Independence Day - the birth of the Swiss nation on 1 August, 1291. The official sponsor of Volksfest is the Maennerchor New Glarus which was established in 1928 to preserve traditional Swiss music), and Wilhelm Tell Festival. These events display traditional Swiss culture, including folk costumes and traditional music and yodelling. You can also visit the Swiss Historical Village museum which offers a heartwarming glimpse of pioneer life in New Glarus and America's heartland.

So, on your next trip to Switzerland, plan a stop-over in New Glarus, Wisconsin, to see "America's Little Switzerland". You'll be sure to enjoy it!!!



Simmental Cattle

Simmental cattle were first introduced to New Zealand in 1972 from England, where they had been bred from German stock. The previous year semen had been brought into New Zealand from Simmental sires in England and Scotland under the auspices of the newly formed Simmental Society of New Zealand. The semen was used to breed up from local breeds, but the introduction of the purebreds from England shortened the route to a clear Simmental bloodline in this country. An additional 12 females were brought in from France in 1973, and 36 heifers from Germany the following year. It was the peak here of the exotic cattle boom.

Simmentals are a Swiss breed (deriving their name from the Simm Valley), big animals with good milk and high butterfat production. This indicates a dual-purpose past in the high valleys of their native habitat, where the ancestors are said to go back 1000 years. They have spread to Germany and Austria where they are known as 'Fleckvieh', and to France where they are called 'Pie Rouge'. But the real proliferation of Simmentals has occurred round the world over recent years, and the present total is claimed as 50 million.

In New Zealand, the Simmentals have been used for crossbred beef and the breed has benefited from a promotional project, borrowed from Australia, under which 'Simbeef' is promoted as the product of animals with at least 25% Simmental blood. In Europe there are some Simmental dairy herds, and there has been an introduction of blood to some dairy herds here.

The Simmental seems to have quickly earned a permanent place in the New Zealand livestock farming system. It is estimated there are more than 5,000 purebred and 40,000 crossbred Simmentals in commercial herds in New Zealand. The animal is large, red and white in colour, and yields a high proportion of red meat.

Source : Bateman New Zealand Encyclopedia - 2nd edition.

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