

# Cheese **CULTURE** Wedge Issue #3

News, lore and bite-sized reviews



## **Cheese Holidays**

My vacations are never holidays from cheese. Usually they're holidays to cheese. While nothing compares to a trip to Europe (to Italy for Slow Food Cheese later this month, if I had my way!) a short jaunt to Québec is a quicker, much less expensive way to explore new flavours and meet some cheese makers.

As Toronto cheese counters are stacked with *fromages du Québec*, you might think there's no reason to leave town, but inter-provincial trade barriers prevent a large number of interesting cheeses from making it to Ontario. Unless a producer operates from a federally inspected facility, she cannot sell her wares outside her home province. Plenty of delicious cheeses are made in safe, clean, provincially regulated environments that are not federally inspected. So, hit the road!

Consult the Route des Fromages ([www.routedesfromages.com](http://www.routedesfromages.com)) for details about cheese makers close to your destination. If you'll be stuck in downtown Montréal, then visit

Fromagerie du Marché Atwater or Marché Jean Talon's Qui L'ait Cru and Marché des Saveurs for a sampling of what's best from around *La Belle Province*.

## **In My Fridge**

A camping cooler full of treats from Québec accompanied me back along the 401. None of these products are available yet in Ontario.

**La Station de Compton "Swiss-type":** The Fromagerie La Station is known in Toronto for Comtomme, a supple Trappist-style tomme, and Alfred, an aged pressed cheese, but there are "beta-cheeses" in development at the fromagerie. (See photo above.) Savoie-trained cheese maker, Marie-Chantal Houde helped create this four-month-old Swiss-style cheese. Semi-firm and sweetly aromatic, it delivers everything you (secretly and shamefully) like about Jarlsberg, with more complexity due to its raw milk and farmstead origin.

**Kunik:** ("to embrace" in Inuktitut) A Quebec-born cheese maker developed this farmstead product in New York State, but has recently returned home, establishing the Fromagerie Domaine de Courval, and adding this mixed goat and cow milk, triple-crème to Québec's repertoire. Kunik appeals to those who like butter as much as they like cheese. The tangy, lactic, salty, melting paste is contained within a pungent, peppery rind. Enjoy the staggering 42% butterfat!

**Crème à L'Ancienne 45%:** Apart from hand-churned butter and a variety of cheeses, the Beurrerie du Patrimoine sells thick luscious sweet cream from the Groleau family's own herd of cows. The texture of crème fraîche or clotted cream, but with no lactic or caramelized notes, this cream is a chef's dream and a dessert lover's fantasy. Add a dollop or two to pan sauces, or use to bake ethereal scones. Whips into peaks in about 10 seconds!

## **On the Calendar**

- Sept. 20**      **How to Taste and Talk About Cheese Like a Pro.** Night School for Cheese Fans. Leslieville Cheese Market. 891 Queen Street East. Details about all classes and events are at: [www.cheeseculture.ca/news.html](http://www.cheeseculture.ca/news.html)
- Sept. 30**      **Understanding Cheese Families and Flavours.** Cheese at Bar Volo. 587 Yonge Street.
- Oct. 25**      **Cheeses of Old and New Worlds.** Night School for Cheese Fans. Leslieville Cheese Market.
- Oct. 28**      **Who's Who in the Dairy Barn?** Cheese at Bar Volo.