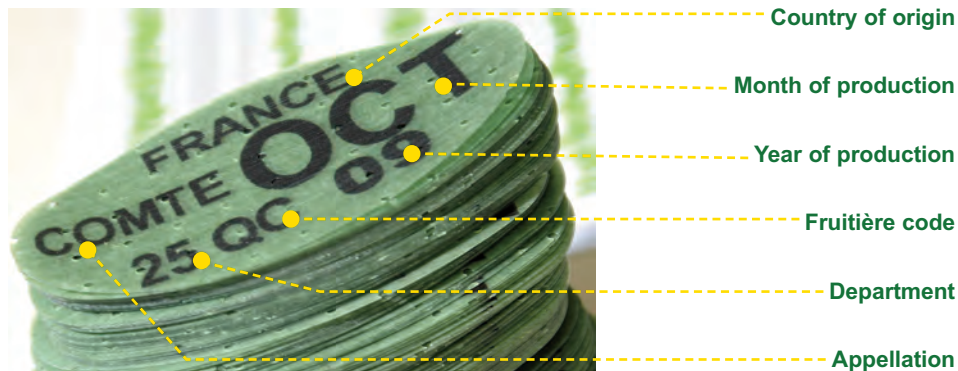




Spring/Summer 2014

The “Plaque Verte” – Comté’s Identity Card

Have you ever noticed a green label in the rind of Comté? Every wheel of Comté is affixed with a casein label called a *plaque verte*. The plaque ensures authenticity and allows for traceability. Each plaque indicates the country of origin (France), the appellation (Comté), the month and year when the wheel was produced, the specific department where the cheese was made (Comté is produced in 3 departments, represented by numerical codes: 25 for Doubs; 39 for Jura; and 01 for Ain), and the *fruitière*, or cheesemaking facility, where the cheese was fabricated (each *fruitière* is represented by a 1-2 letter alphabetical code).



The exact date of production is indicated on a separate plate that’s affixed to the left of the plaque verte. Cheesemakers can also indicate the specific tank from which the milk came in a plate to the right of the plaque verte.



The plaques vertes are made out of milk proteins and natural chlorophyll and are manually affixed when the wheels are molded.

Comté (“con – TAY”) cheese ID

General information:

Origin: Jura Mountains (Massif du Jura), France

Milk Type: Raw cow’s milk

Cheese Style: Artisanal, pressed, cooked, with natural brushed rind.

French AOC (Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée) since 1958 and European Union Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) Certification.

- Delimited area of production: Doubs, Jura, Ain, elevation 650-5000 ft.
- Milk must be produced by local cows of the Montbéliarde (95%) and Simmental (5%) breeds. There are approximately 112,000 Comté cows.
- Minimum of 2.5 acres of natural pasture for each animal.
- Cattle feed must be natural and free of fermented products and GMOs.
- Each *fruitière* must collect milk from dairy farms within a 16-mile diameter maximum.
- Milk must be made into cheese within 24 hours maximum of the earliest milking.
- Only natural starters must be used to transform the milk into curds.
- Wheels must be aged on spruce boards. Minimum aging is 4 months, generally 6-18 months and sometimes even longer.



Comté Cheese Association

will be at the 2014 American Cheese Society Conference in Sacramento, CA, July 29-Aug 1.

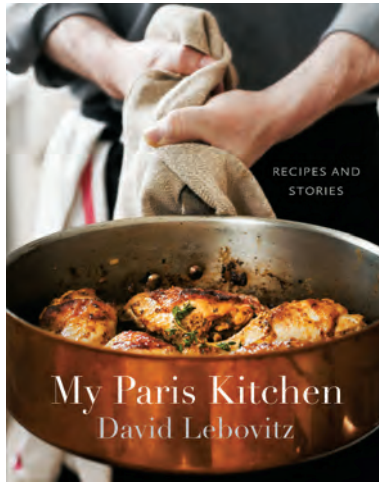
Winner of Comté Scholarship for ACS CCPs



Congratulations to Amanda Parker, Director of Program Development for Murray's Cheese, who won the 2013 Comté Scholarship for American Cheese Society Certified Cheese Professionals™ (ACS CCPs™)! Her essay scored the most points in the blind judging. The judges included Greg O'Neill (*Board President of the American Cheese Society; Owner of Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine*); Cathy Strange (*Global Cheese Buyer, Whole Foods Market, Inc.*); and Max McCalman (*Maître Fromager of Artisanal Premium Cheese Center, Author and Cheese Writer*). As the winner, Amanda will travel to the Comté region to learn first-hand about the cheese's history and production. You can read Amanda's essay here: <http://comte-usa.com/files/13CCPScholarshipWinningEssay.pdf>

We'd also like to give a special shout-out to Jason Herbert, Assistant Specialty Team Leader of Whole Foods, and Leah McFadden, Associate Perishables Buyer for the Northern CA Region of Whole Foods, who tied for runner-up!

“Cheese to (Almost) Die For” – David Lebovitz's New Cookbook



Acclaimed chef, cookbook author and blogger David Lebovitz just released his newest book, *My Paris Kitchen: Recipes and Stories* (Ten Speed Press 2014), a collection of mouthwatering recipes and stories about living in France. In the book, David recounts a trip to the Jura region where he explored the making of Comté.

One evening his car slid off a snowy cliff on the way back from visiting a Comté affineur, but fortunately he was saved by some locals, who invited him back to their house for a restorative meal of Comté and local wine. As he reminisces, “Now, whenever I slice into a chunk of Comté, I think of that night on the snowy mountain: being pulled out of the car, taken in by locals, and

restored with the local cheese and wine...” Comté makes her appearance several times throughout the book, in recipes such as a killer croque-monsieur, an elegant cheese and bacon soufflé and in Comté wafers, which are a perfect pre-dinner nibble.

Comté Wafers

Adapted from *My Paris Kitchen: Recipes and Stories* (Ten Speed Press, 2014), by David Lebovitz. David serves these wonderfully buttery wafers, known as *sablés*, with drinks before dinner.



8 tablespoons (4 ounces/115g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon sea salt or kosher salt
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives, or 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
2 1/2 cups (7 ounces/210g) coarsely grated Comté cheese
1 cup (140g) all-purpose flour
1/4 cup (45g) cornmeal or fine polenta

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large bowl, by hand), beat the butter, pepper, salt, and chives on medium speed until smooth.
2. With a chef's knife, chop the grated cheese into small bits; add them to the butter mixture. Stir in the flour and cornmeal. Mix until the dough comes together.
3. Divide the dough in half and roll each half on a lightly floured surface into a 7-inch (18cm) log. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 1 hour.
4. To bake the *sablés*, preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
5. With a sharp chef's knife, slice the *sablés* 1/4-inch (.75cm) thick and place them on the baking sheets evenly spaced. Bake the *sablés* for 12 minutes, rotating the baking sheets midway through the baking time, until the *sablés* are golden brown on top. Let cool and serve.
6. The *sablés* can be kept in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days. The unbaked dough can be kept refrigerated for up to 1 week, or frozen for up to 2 months.

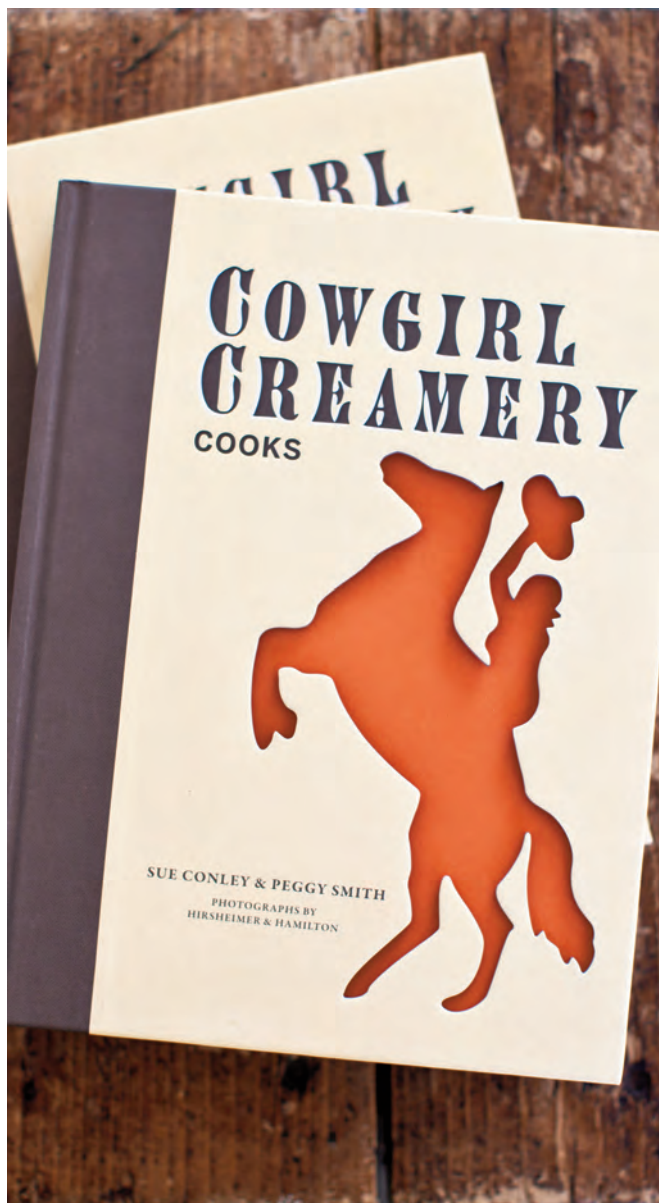
The Cowgirls talk Comté



In their new book, *Cowgirl Creamery Cooks*, Sue Conley and Peggy Smith tell the story of how they started Cowgirl Creamery, providing insight into the cheesemaking process as well as offering advice on tasting, buying, serving and cooking with different cheeses. The book also features 75 cheese-centric recipes, with Comté sprinkled throughout. We spoke with Peggy and Sue about tasting Comté and about their favorite ways of cooking with the “king of cheese.”

In *Cowgirl Creamery Cooks*, you describe a Comté tasting led by a fromager in France that widened your experience “in a way that was startling.” What did you mean by that?

It was the first time we had experienced the magical flavors of Comté in a tasting that was focused entirely around this one cheese. This was back in the ‘80s, when we were both cooks and hadn’t yet started making or selling cheese. We were led down into the aging cave, which was ancient—from the 16th century—and the fromager described how he selected and tasted Comté. We learned to taste the cheese first by feeling the texture, then smelling the cheese, then tasting with attention.



How did that experience influence the way you taste cheese?

It helped us identify the range of flavors found in Comté, some of which are found in other cheeses. Comté just happens to have the widest range of flavors that we have ever experienced. It taught us a vocabulary around cheese, and it also really had an effect on the way we respected cheese—it taught us to value cheese in a different way.

What are some of the first flavors that come to mind when you think of Comté?

Chocolate, brown butter, milk, leather, green garlic and onion confit.

Is there a style of Comté that you prefer?

We carry two styles: a younger, more milky and herbal Comté, and an older style, which has darker flavors of coffee, chocolate, tobacco and leather. One isn’t richer than the other, but we’ve both really come to love the deeper flavors in the older style.

What are some of your favorite dishes to cook with Comté?

Sue: In a lasagna, baked in a potato gratin or melted over fresh broccoli. But mostly I love eating Comté all by itself.

Peggy: I also love it all by itself. When you eat Comté by itself, you get all of the different flavor profiles and nuances, which can be lost when cooked. However, I do love it with onion confit, which is a great complement. Also, in soufflés and potato pancakes. It’s a very versatile cheese.

Do you have any favorite beverage pairings with Comté?

Sherry, green tea, ice wine and Champagne.

Green tea?

Tea can be a great pairing with cheese. A fresh, grassy green tea with a little bit of milk in it pairs very well with a younger Comté that’s a little more herbaceous in flavor.

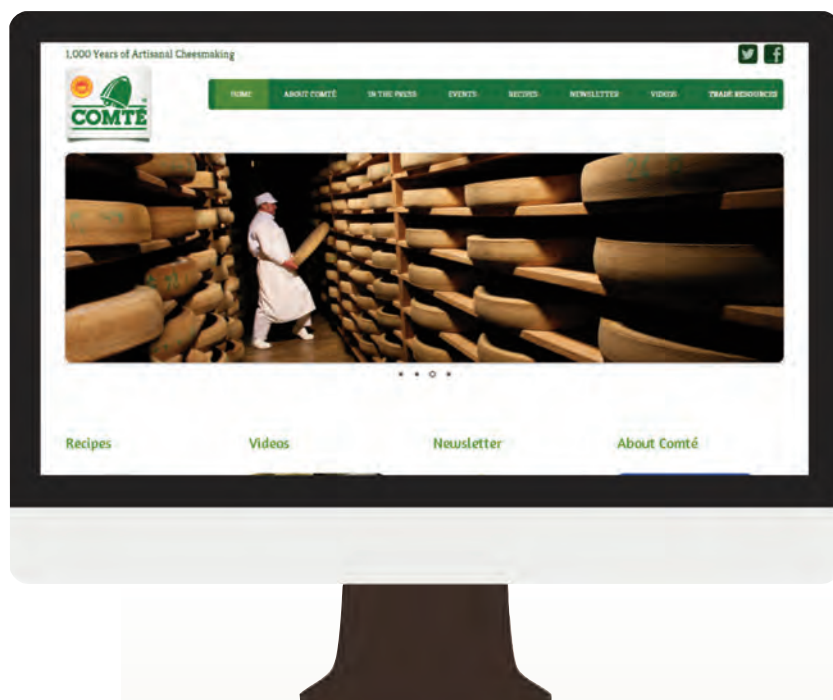
Comté Cheese Association at Next ACS Conference



The Comté Cheese Association will be at the 2014 American Cheese Society Conference in Sacramento, CA (July 29-August 1). Stop by our networking salon table on Wednesday, July 30th to taste Comté, meet with Comté representatives, discover more about the cheese and its region, and learn about how we can provide support for promotions, events, classes and trainings. We hope to see you there!

Comté USA Launches New Website

Comté USA has launched a new website featuring expanded content and a fresh, easy-to-navigate layout! The website—www.comte-usa.com—is now oriented to both American consumers and members of the trade. Visitors can access an array of Comté recipes and serving ideas as well as discover information about Comté's region and production, watch videos, learn about upcoming events, and more. Members of the trade have easier-than-ever access to the Comté Cheese Association's POS and training materials, as well as the Importer & Distributor list and purchasing/receiving tips. States Nicki Sizemore of the Comté Cheese Association in the US: "Comté's presence has grown considerably in the US over the past decade, and we hope that our new website gives consumers as well as members of the trade and the media helpful information about the many facets of the world of Comté."



New Recipe Booklet

This summer the Comté Cheese Association will release a new Recipe Booklet compiling 20 of our most popular Comté recipes! The full-color booklet will also feature serving tips and fun facts about Comté's history and production.

*To receive updates from the Comté Cheese Association about new materials please join our mailing list by emailing us at trade@comte-usa.com.

The Comté Cheese Association

provides you with everything you need for a successful selling program, including: recipe booklets, brochures, aprons, demo toothpicks, training tools and more. Visit www.comte-usa.com for POS materials and free downloads.

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