

Dear friends of Cheese and Crackers, We are proud to present our first newsletter!

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Cheese and Crackers Newsletter - February, 2010

Greetings from Yachats,

It's been a long, cold winter (note, former Minnesota residents: no, not really). We thought it'd be a great way to start off the new year with a new newsletter. Hmm, that sounds awkward. How about, 'the nascent year with an unprecedented newsletter'? (thank you, thesaurus) Well, in any case, we'd like to keep you up to date on what's happening at Cheese and Crackers.

This being our first newsletter, we'll do a couple brief introductions. Cheese and Crackers is owned by Karen and Todd Moyer. Karen and Todd moved to Yachats in September 2007, and opened their business, Cheese and Crackers, in October of the same year. Since then, we've moved just a short distance to a new location across 4th St. from City Hall and the Yachats Commons. Karen manages the business, and Todd is employed as an engineer in Newport. Currently the Cheese and Crackers Crew includes Piper and Robin -- two of the friendliest people you'll ever meet; we're happy to have them with us.

Cheese

If you're a cheese fan, we'd like to invite you to stop in on Saturdays. Every Saturday from 1:00 - 4:00 there is free cheese tasting. We generally try to include 4 different cheeses, and usually have one that is "challenging" to the palate. Whether it's extreme sharpness, intense tanginess, campfire-grade smokiness, or a sort of funky earthiness, this is where we like to be: lots of flavor! But, for those who prefer things a little milder, rest assured there is plenty of room in the cheese world for you. Subtle, mild, complex flavors are something we also enjoy. Rubbery texture and industrially-processed flavors, however, are right out! For that, we refer you to Kraft Singles.

In February's list of featured cheeses, we have two new cheeses we've never carried before, as well an old favorite.

1. Keen's Cheddar (cow's milk, raw, aged 12 months): This is an English cheddar. It's not super sharp, but more balanced in flavor, with a smooth texture. The flavor is rich, nutty, complex, and lasts a long time. At the end, there is a bit of a tangy bite. Truly lovely. Enjoy it with an apple, and maybe some Oregon red wine (we find this cheese works well with just about any red), or perhaps with a nice English-style IPA (Todd's a fan of Ridgeway Ales). We find the extreme hoppiness of typical American IPAs gets in the way in this instance; the English ones are a bit more toward the malty. Another great possibility is Rogue's Dead Guy Ale, which also has a nice malty character.

<http://www.keenscheddar.co.uk/product.htm>

2. Colston Bassett Stilton (cow's milk, pasteurized) Amongst English cheeses, Stilton is unique. The word "Stilton" and the Stilton Cheese Makers Association logo are certification trademarks. It has also been registered as a Product of Designated Origin (or PDO) in the European Community. All these protections mean that the product can only be manufactured by licensed manufacturers in the three counties of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire. That being said, we've been looking for a good Stilton since we opened the shop 2 1/2 years ago, and we've discovered that not all "Stiltons" are of the quality we like. But, with the Colton

Bassett, we've found our favorite; it's the best we've ever tasted! Its flavor is strong & full without being sharp or overpowering: mellow, fruity, deep and savory. Please come in and try this extraordinary cheese. A classic combination is a good port wine with Stilton, and this one is no exception.

<http://www.colstonbassettdairy.com/cheeses/>

3. Roaring 40's Blue (cow's milk, pasteurized) This Australian cheese is a full-bodied blue with a honeyed, slightly nutty quality and a great aftertaste. The tanginess is intense. In terms of flavor per ounce, this cheese is probably near the top. It has been a long-running favorite at the shop. Do you know how some blues get sort of crumbly, even chalky? As a contrast, Roaring 40's is a rind-less cheese, matured in wax, which helps retain moisture, smoothness, and an exceptionally creamy texture. As such, it's more spreadable than many blues, making it a good choice if you're into slathering some blue onto a slice of bread, or a good cracker. Again, the best way to know it is to taste it. Come in and give it a try.

Roaring 40's Blue received the 2006 Champion award at the Annual British Empire Cheese Show in Ontario, Canada.

Roaring 40's Blue Cheese is made by the Kings Island Dairy, on an island just north of Tasmania, Australia. The cheese is named after the infamous Roaring Forties gales which frequently bring westerly winds of more than 100 km/hr to the island, which lies on 40 degrees latitude.

Bread

We'd like to tell you a little about our bread. First off, we'd like to introduce a new feature, the "Bread Card" with which you can access the "Baker's Half Dozen". Come in and get a card; thereafter, for each full sized loaf of bread you buy, we'll punch the card once, and after you've bought 6 loaves, the 7th is free. Bread is available Friday - Sunday, but often sells out early. We're happy to reserve you a loaf if you call ahead: 541-547-3123. Our bread is baked using organic sustainably-harvested flour.

Starting late in 2008 Karen began researching how to make good artisan-quality bread. She learned that the starter is critical, more than we had imagined originally. It affects not only flavor, but the crust and the crumb (a term bakers use for the interior texture of the bread). This meant many, many experiments with different starters, to find the ones that work best here in the Yachats environment. Eventually, she settled on a few starters for different styles of bread. She learned how the level of sourness depends on how 'stressed' the wild yeast is, and how to gently coax the starter to work on a weekly schedule, by controlling its feeding and temperature. If the yeast is relatively strong relative to bacteria in the dough, the sour flavor is suppressed. If, on the other hand, the yeast is restrained (for instance, by feeding it less), the bacteria are relatively stronger, and they produce a more intense sour flavor.

This month we want to tell you in particular about "Natural Sourdough". This is a mildly sour bread. The base for this bread is a natural wild yeast starter developed in Yachats. Purple grapes were added to the original "mother" starter giving the bread a slightly fruity aroma. The acids produced by various bacteria in the dough create the sour flavor. This microbial world is constantly changing so there will be some variation to the sourness of the loaf from week to week. But we think, despite the natural variation, it's always a great tasting bread, with a wonderful texture. Give it a try!

General Information

Hours of Operation

Thursday 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Friday & Saturday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sunday & Monday 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
Tuesday & Wednesday closed

Contact Information

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<http://www.goyachats.com/>