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AT THE FARM

Tumalo Farms
Tumalo
tumalofarms.com

Rogue Creamery
Central Point
roguecreamery.com

CHEF'S KITCHEN

Cheese Bar
Portland
cheese-bar.com

Larks Restaurant
Ashland
larksrestaurant.com

10 Below
Bend
oxfordhotelbend.com

HOME TABLE

**Toad in the Hole with
Raclette Mornay Sauce**

**Smokey Blue, Sweet Potato
and Bacon Strata**

**Roasted Chicken Penne with
Arugula Pesto and Tumalo
Farms Classico**

**Roasted Squash and Potato
Gnocchi with Goat Cheese**

**Mushroom & Blue
Cheese Strudel**

**Char Grilled Poblano Peppers
with Albuquerque Corn
Salad**

Homage to *Fromage*

A renaissance of
Oregon cheese
is in the making

ON AN 84-ACRE FARM in Bend, a herd of French and Swiss breeds of goats

are roaming in the crisp air of the Cascades mountains. Flavio DeCastilhos, founder of Tumalo Farms, goes about making goat cheese by hand.

Because DeCastilhos makes his cheese at the farm with fresh milk right from the animals, it is classified as farmstead cheese, one of the cheese's highest designations. Under the farmstead designation, the cheese maker has complete control over the milk quality and therefore the cheese. Most consumer cheese, by contrast, is created through a process where the milk arrives by truck from a number of farms and states.

In farmstead cheese-making, the animal's environment is the key to the cheese taste—from the air the goats breathe to the local orchard grass and alfalfa they eat, to the water they drink, says DeCastilhos. The environment, the terroir, pleases the palate, he says. Like the peat of a scotch or the region of a wine, with farmstead cheese you're savoring the land that nurtured the product.

Unrelenting care of the animals is crucial. "It all revolves around their health and feeding—like having a bunch of babies," says DeCastilhos who has two teenage sons and 700 goats—the latter mammals free of antibiotics and hormones.

DeCastilhos ages the cheese in a high-tech cellar he built into the side of a hill, constantly monitoring and adjusting controls until the cheese is perfect.

It was that taste that last year catapulted Tumalo Farms into the national spotlight. Its Classico Hard Goat's Milk Cheese scooped second place in the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, considered the Academy Awards for American cheese-makers. It was the first time an Oregon farmstead cheese placed

in the top three and rare for a goat cheese to finish on the podium. It was a good year for Oregon cheese, as Tillamook took first place for its medium cheddar.

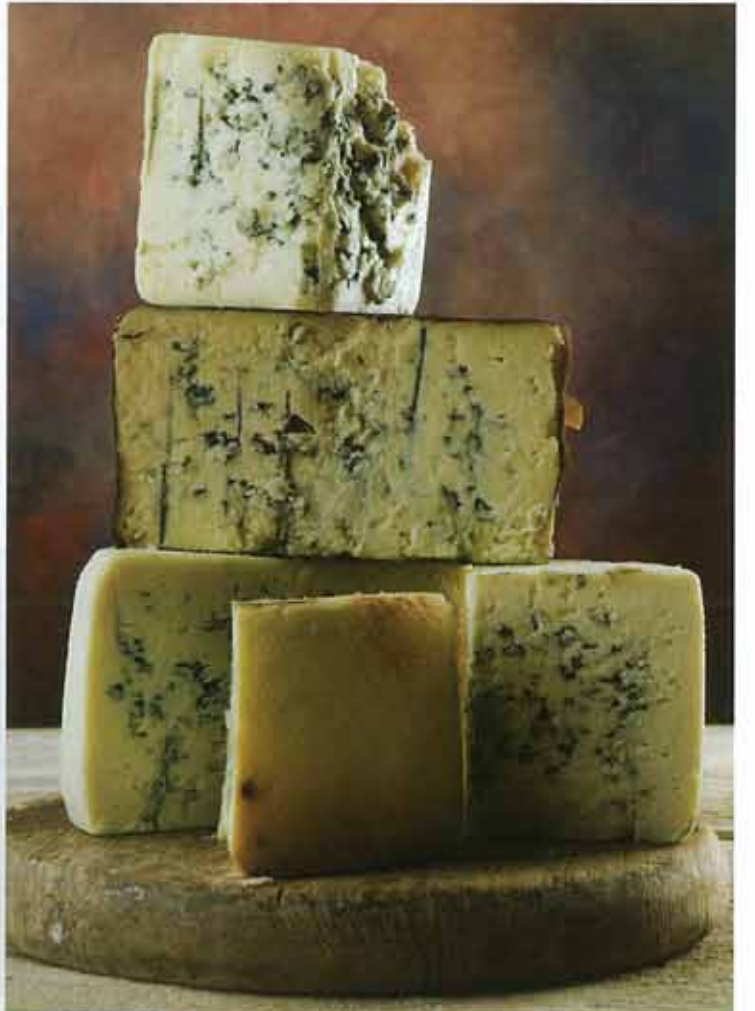
That acknowledgment supports what Oregon cheese-mongers, cheese-makers, chefs and cheese nerds have known for years. "Oregon is on the national map as a hotbed of creativity and a real resource for high quality products," notes Christine Hyatt, president of the board of the Denver-based American Cheese Society. About a decade ago, Oregon had one farmstead and one artisan cheese-maker: Juniper Grove Farm in Redmond and Rogue Creamery in Central Point. "Artisan" cheese-making is similar to farmstead cheese-making in its small-scale, handmade cheeses with the highest quality milk and ingredients, but differs in that artisan cheese is not made at the farm where the milk is produced. Within the past five years, however, the number of farmstead and artisan cheese-makers has grown to about two dozen in the state.

"There's absolutely the locavore factor," says Hyatt. "Another big factor is that Oregon winters are not as harsh as the traditional dairies of the Midwest."

The time-tested Rogue Creamery has been making cheese by hand in the same way since 1935. That has become particularly popular with consumers, says Francis Plowman, the creamery's marketing manager. People want to be more in touch with the people who make their food. "In the last five years, I've seen an increase in people wanting to know where the cows are from, what they eat, and do we use hormones," he says. Rogue Creamery uses milk from a single

by Cathy Carroll

CLOCKWISE: Chef David Georgeson from Larks Restaurant at the Ashland Springs Hotel. Tumalo Farms' high-tech cellar. A royal stack of Rogue Creamery blue cheese. A dairy goat at Tumalo Farms.





Dairy cows provide the essential ingredient for artisan cheeses at the Rogue Creamery. Aged goat's milk cheese infused with rosemary from Tumalo Farms.

source, Rogue View Dairy, which does not use growth hormone supplements.

Rogue Creamery has drawn attention to Oregon cheeses through numerous awards, including taking First Place Blue Cheese in the 2010 American Cheese Society Awards, and winning, in 2003, the World's Best Blue Cheese at the World Cheese Awards in London, a first for a U.S. creamery.

At southeast Portland's Cheese Bar, connoisseur and proprietor Steve Jones counts Rogue Creamery

among the nearly 200 types of cheese at his deli. He enjoys helping patrons pair their selections with more than fifty brews and wines. Yet as much experience as Jones has with cheese, he has trouble picking one Oregon artisan creamery or cheese that excites him the most.

"Oh man, there are just so many," says Jones, who has been a cheese-monger for the past fifteen years and a judge at the 2010 American Cheese Society. Juniper Grove and Rogue Creamery keep innovating, he says. Yet, he concedes, the Tumalo Farms' Pondhopper, a tangy Dutch gouda style goat cheese made with a local microbrew, makes "the perfect balance of cheese and beer."

Jones rattles off a list of artisan creameries that come to mind: Ancient Heritage Dairy, a sheep and cow dairy in Scio; Willamette Valley Cheese Com-

pany in Salem, and the self-named "off-the-grid-by-choice" Rogue River dairy, Pholia Farm, with its Nigerian dwarf dairy goats.

This cheese renaissance is flourishing among Oregon chefs. Portland restaurants such as Fenouil, Beast and Le Pigeon are doing more with cheese.

Chef Hilary Carson at Cheese Bar is adding more gratin and baked dishes to her menu of simple, satisfying offerings. In the colder months, she'll use blue cheese, sweet potatoes and other seasonal vegetables in their strata, a savory bread pudding. She also regularly changes the cheese in her macaroni and cheese dish, selecting from hundreds on hand.

"Keeping it local is our number one priority, along with flavor," says chef David Georgeson from Larks Restaurant at the Ashland Springs Hotel. "We have so many amazing local cheese-makers in Oregon." In his gnocchi, he uses Tumalo Farms' Fenacho goat cheese, which has a semi-sweet, complex aroma and fenugreek seeds that add a nutty flavor. "With sage and winter squash, the flavor profiles are perfect," Georgeson says. He switches to Rogue Creamery's Crater Lake Blue Cheese for a wild mushroom strudel. "Blue cheese and mushrooms is a proven winner, and when you see the cheese melting out from the bottom, it's a great presentation."

In Bend, at 10 Below Restaurant in The Oxford Hotel, executive chef Sam Reed uses Tumalo Farms' Fenacho and Rogue Creamery Blue Cheese regularly on the restaurant's cheese plate and in several dishes. "I want to support local cheese-makers, and it goes back to the whole slow food movement," he says. "They take their time with small batches and are very particular about it. Overall, it's a better product." ■

"It goes back to the whole slow food movement. They take their time with small batches and are very particular about it. Overall, it's a better product."

— SAM REED, 10 BELOW

Chef David Georgeson's mushroom and cheese strudel, as prepared at the Larks Restaurant in the Ashland Springs Hotel.


Larks Restaurant at the Ashland Springs Hotel

212 E. MAIN STREET
ASHLAND
541.488.5558
larksrestaurant.com

Executive Chef David Georgeson

Roasted Squash and Potato Gnocchi with Goat Cheese

4 SERVINGS *Top this gnocchi with your favorite local cheese (aged goat cheese works great). Sautéed mushrooms & truffle oil can be a nice addition, or top with olive oil-scented micro greens.*

 **WINE PAIRING** *Willakenzie Pinot Meunier, 2007, \$33.00 A perfect foil for the simple flavor profiles of the gnocchi with spinach and goat cheese. This elegant, medium-bodied Pinot Meunier with flavors of fresh red fruits, delivers.*


- 1 cup russet potatoes (roasted)
- 1 cup kabocha squash (roasted)
- 4 ounces of Oregon aged goat cheese
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 cups flour (may need more or less)
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped sage
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- ½ tablespoon rubbed sage
- Salt and pepper to taste

Rub squash and potatoes with olive oil and roast until tender. While hot, cut potatoes and squash lengthwise and scoop out middle, measure a cup of each and put through a china cap with plastic spatula. Place mixture onto a large cutting board. Using backside of spoon, hollow out middle of mixture and place egg yolks, salt, pepper and herbs. Add flour ¼ cup at a time and mix until dough is no longer sticky or wet. Let rest for 10 minutes. On floured cutting board, cut off small sections and roll into dime-size strips, using sharp knife cut into half inch pieces. Dust each piece with flour so it doesn't stick. Place in boiling water until they float to the top, then shock in ice water. Let dry. Brown in skillet with butter, spinach and onions.



Mushroom & Blue Cheese Strudel

4 SERVINGS *Once strudel has cooled, cut horizontally and serve with whatever side you prefer (sautéed white beans, blackeyed peas).*

 **WINE PAIRING** *Del Rio Vineyards Syrah, 2008, \$28.00 This strudel's bold flavors call for a wine with an equally bold, smoky stroke of fruit with an edge of pepper.*

- 1 sweet onion
- ¼ stick butter
- 1 roasted red bell pepper
- 3 cloves garlic (chopped)
- 4 cups wild mushrooms (sliced)
- 2 cups spinach
- 4 ounces Crater Lake Bleu Cheese
- ¼ cup sherry wine
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 full sheet puff pastry

Caramelize onions in butter, set aside. Julienne roasted bell peppers, set aside. Sauté mushrooms and garlic until soft. Deglaze with sherry. Add spinach and cook until liquid is evaporated. Set aside and cool. Mix onions, peppers, mushrooms, spinach, blue cheese, salt and pepper. Lay puff pastry on cutting board, put filling in middle of puff pastry horizontally, flip bottom of puff pastry to cover top of filling and flip top of pastry to cover bottom half of puff pastry (like a burrito). Make sure ends are sealed, brush with egg wash and bake at 400° until golden brown.

BUY LOCAL

Oregon Artisan Cheese Crafters

The Pacific Northwest Cheese Project offers a complete directory of Oregon Artisan Cheese Makers at pnwcheese.typepad.com

- Alesea Acre Goat Cheese
- Ancient Heritage Dairy
- Briar Rose Creamery
- Cada Dia Cheese Co.
- Cheese Louise Creamery
- Fairview Farm Dairy
- Fern's Edge Goat Dairy
- Fraga Farm
- Goldin Artisan Goat Cheese
- Juniper Grove Farm
- La Mariposa
- Mama Terra Microcreamery
- New Moon Goat Dairy
- Noris Dairy
- Oak Leaf Creamery
- Ochoa Cheese Factory
- Oregon State University
- Pholia Farm
- Quail Run Creamery (coming soon)
- Rivers Edge Chevre
- Rogue Creamery
- Tumalo Farms
- Willamette Valley Cheese Co.