

Tested



Words by:
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CHEESE, GLORIOUS CHEESE! It is a food of comfort and joy; one that requires the accompaniment of wine or a small tincture of port and, above all, it is sustenance to share. Because loading up a rich, runny, stinky delectation onto a piece of crusty bread or finely fashioned cracker with friends is one of life’s greatest pleasures. So, it is only right and proper, during Covid-19, that my husband and I share our haul of Great British fromage at a socially distanced tasting with our neighbours, retired teachers, John and Rosemary (J & R) in Slindon, West Sussex. We raise several glasses of red and many smiles as we sample some British dairy delights during lockdown.
Great cheese-makers of Britain, we salute you!



Lyburn Farmhouse Cheesemaker Stoney cross, Old Winchester
Situating on the edge of the New Forest, Lyburn has been farmed by the Smales family for 50 years. They have made cheese for the past 20 years with rising stars such as Old Winchester – a hard and crystalline cheese, reminiscent of vintage Gouda and Stoney Cross, a mould ripened cheese similar to a Tomme De Savoie – it’s ‘creamy and buttery in texture and sweet with an earthy finish’ which is probably why it’s garnered a slew of awards.
J & R’s verdict: Stoney Cross is gentle, creamy and undemanding; Old Winchester nutty and very good.
650g Stoney Cross + 500g Old Winchester £20
● lyburnfarm.co.uk



Lincolnshire Poacher Cheese Original Lincolnshire Poacher, Vintage Poacher, Oak Smoked Poacher, Double Barrelled (two year) Poacher & Lincolnshire Red
The recipe for Lincolnshire Poacher cheese is a cross between a traditional West Country cheddar and a continental alpine cheese, such as Comte. There are, however, a number of trade secrets that give the supreme champion, gold medal-winning cheese its unique texture and flavour.
J & R’s Verdict: Firm, savoury and comfortably familiar. Good grub!
Lincolnshire Poacher 250g £6.80 (from nealsyarddairy.co.uk)
● lincolnshirepoachercheese.com



Trethowan Brothers Pitchfork Cheddar, Gorwydd Organic Caerphilly
Todd and Maugan Trethowan began their careers on the family farm in the Teifi Valley, Ceredigion. Using raw milk and the traditional method to create Caerphilly cheese the brothers allowed it to mature longer than most. In 2014, they moved to a farm in Somerset and turned their attention to producing Pitchfork Cheddar. The cheese is cloth bound, larded and matured for at least 11 months. Launched in 2018, Pitchfork Cheddar swept the board at the World Cheese Awards 2019/20.
J & R’s Verdict: An inviting looking cheese, great colour; the taste is sublime. Cut me a big chunk!
Pitchfork 250g £7.87
● trethowanbrothers.com



Ticklemore Cheese Beenleigh Blue (ewes) Harbourne Blue (goats) Devon Blue (cows)
Robin Congdon was one of the first pioneers to revive the tradition of milking sheep in the UK, developing a range of distinctive cheeses. Present day Ticklemore cheesemaker, Ben Harris says: “Serve Devon Blue with Peter’s Yard Sourdough Crispbread (Pink And Black Peppercorn), Waterhouse Fayre Devon Apple Chutney and pair with good Perry.”
J & R’s verdict: The Beenleigh is creamy and strong, Devon Blue is strong but without the sharper notes of the ewes’ cheese. Harbourne is tangy and very strong; suited to the macho aficionado!
Devon Blue 200g £4.00, Beenleigh Blue 200g £6.07, Harbourne Blue 250g £7.88
● thecheesesshed.com



Fen Farm Dairy Baron Bigod & Raw Bungay Butter
Hand-made in Suffolk by Jonny Crickmore from the milk of his herd of Montbeliarde cows, the Baron is a full-flavoured Brie-style cheese. Jonny has been working on the family farm nestled in the marshlands of the Waveney River Valley since the age of four, when he would sneak out of bed at 3am and follow his Dad to the cowshed to help with the morning jobs. Winner of Great Taste Award 2019, Baron Bigod is an essential addition to your summer cheese board. And I need a monthly subscription to the rich saffron-coloured Bungay Butter.
J & R’s verdict: The Baron is soft, creamy and tasty and the butter is to die for.
250g Baby Baron RRP £6
200g Raw Bungay Butter RRP £4.50
● fenfarmdairy.co.uk



Errington Cheese Biggar Blue (goats), Corra Linn (ewes), Elrick Log (goats), Isle of Mull (cows), The Strathearn Whisky washed cheese (cows)
Errington has put together a monthly selection to provide a full cheeseboard whilst supporting struggling Scottish cheesemakers. Included in the box is Errington’s Corra Linn – a hard ewes’ milk cheese, Biggar Blue, a raw goat’s milk blue, The Elrick Log, an ashed raw goats milk log made with traditional kids’ rennet, an Isle of Mull raw cow’s milk farmhouse cheese which is considered to be the king of Scottish cheddars. And finally, The Strathearn, matured for four weeks and washed in a Glenturret single malt whisky.
Scottish Cheese Box selection with rhubarb chutney £35
● erringtoncheese.com



Hampshire Cheeses Winslade, Tunworth
Founded by Charlotte Spruce and Stacey Hedges, making the first Tunworth prototype in her family kitchen, Hampshire Cheeses are made by a specialist team in a dairy nestled in the heart of Hampshire. Described by Raymond Blanc as “the best camembert in the world”, Tunworth graces the tables of Michelin-starred restaurants and high-end shops across the UK. The Winslade is the newest Hampshire arrival and this Vacherin/ Camembert hybrid, encased in a spruce collar which gives it a distinctive pine note, is runny and soft and oh, so delicious.
J & R’s Verdict: Self-discipline required!
Tunworth, RRP£8 and Winslade, RRP £7.50
● hampshirecheeses.co.uk



Lynher Dairies Cheese Company Cornish Yarg, Cornish Kern
Lynher have been producing specialist cheese, such as Cornish Yarg, for more than 30 years, moving to a state-of-the-art dairy near Truro in 2006 using their own Ayrshire milk and milk from local farms. Bodmin Moor farmer Alan Gray produced the prototype in the 80s after finding a 17th century recipe for nettle wrapped cheese in his attic. (Yarg was named in his honour – it’s Gray spelt backwards) Kern was created in 2010 – meaning ‘round’ in Cornish and is also the first four letters of Kernow, Cornish for Cornwall.
J & R’s verdict: Kern is tangy, dense and inviting; Yarg is firm with a subtle flavour.
900g Yarg £16, 900g Kern £14
● lynherdairies.co.uk



Park Farm Bath soft Cheese, Wyfe of Bath
Like a square brie, the mushroomy and creamy cheese (which comes wrapped in parchment paper with a red wax seal) dates back to the time of Admiral Lord Nelson who, in 1801, was sent some by his father as a gift. The Wyfe of Bath takes its name from Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. Succulent, nutty and creamy, it is made by placing the curd in cloth-lined baskets. Entirely organic the Padfield Family have been milking cows for four generations.
J & R’s verdict: Wyfe of Bath slightly crumbly, with nice edge. Bath Soft like a soft brie with good flavour.
Bath Soft 260g £7.50, Wyfe of Bath 250g £6
● parkfarm.co.uk



High Weald Dairy Brighton Blue (cows’) & Organic Seven Sisters (ewes’)
In the late 1980s, Mark Hardy and his parents established a flock of 150 British Friesland sheep at their family farm in Duddleswell. Soon they were bottling the surplus, making their own yoghurt and, finally, cheese. By 2003, the business moved to Horsted Keynes. High Weald Dairy now produces 15 different cheeses including, Brighton Blue, a mild, semi-soft cheese with blue green veins and a salty finish, and their most recent cheese, Seven Sisters, a matured organic sheep’s cheese
J & R’s verdict: Brighton Blue: good nose, delicious; Seven Sisters: not a fan of the texture but sweet and nutty.
Brighton Blue wedge 150g £3.71 Seven Sisters 125g £4.43
● highwealddairy.co.uk



Charles Martell and Son Stinking Bishop

The Stinking Bishop was launched in 1994 by artisan cheesemaker Charles Martell. A regular medal winner, including 'Britain's smelliest cheese', it has been given A Royal Warrant by Prince Charles. My postman thought something had 'gone off' in the parcel but this full fat wheel of gratifying stinkiness, with a natural rind washed in perry, is a personal dinner party favourite. Inside the Bishop is creamy, full flavoured and ... eaten, exceedingly quickly!

J & R's verdict: 'Very tasty and moorish' from Rosemary, but, for John, 'this creamy Cleric was too High Church!'

Stinking Bishop 500g £30

● charlesmartell.com



Godminster Vintage Organic Cheddar, Oak-Smoked Vintage Organic Cheddar, Black Truffle Vintage Organic Cheddar

Made to a traditional 90-year-old recipe and matured for up to 12 months, Godminster cheddar is sold in 21 countries and was Voted the Nation's Favourite Organic Product at the Soil Association's BOOM Awards 2019, taking Gold at the World Cheese Awards 2019.

J & R's verdict: Vintage: gritty and tasty, Black Truffle: strong truffle notes, and Oak-smoked: sweet and perfectly smoky.

Triple Cheddar Collection gift set with 3x 200g cheddars £26.50

● godminster.com



Alsop and Walker Lord London

Created in honour of the London 2012 Olympics this dome-shaped semi-soft cow's cheese was served at the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's Royal Wedding Breakfast.

Based in East Sussex, Arthur Alsop sources the milk used to make his cheeses from a local farmer. Alsop and Walker's Mayfield cheese is a cross between Emmental and Comte - smooth, sweet and nutty.

J & R's verdict: Smooth, creamy with a good nose it's delicious with the Alsop & Walker 'Apple Companion'

£12.00 each (550g)

● alsopandwalker.co.uk



Simon Weaver Cotswold Blue, Truffle Gloucester, Cotswold Brie

The Weavers have been farming near Upper Slaughter in the Cotswolds for three generations. The Cotswold Brie is a soft moulded cheese with a creamy, clean taste; Cotswold Blue has a rich vein of Roquefort blue mould running through the centre that adds an aromatic piquancy. The Truffle Gloucester is a single Gloucester farmhouse cheese infused with minced black summer truffles.

R & J's verdict: Cotswold Blue: 'creamy with good nose, delicate flavour'. Not truffle fans, they like the 'modesty of the Cotswold Brie.'

Cotswold Brie 240g £4.20, Cotswold Blue 300g £4.80, Truffle Gloucester 220g wedge £9.99

● simonweaverorganic.co.uk



Colston Bassett Blue Stilton

Throughout its 107-year history, Colston Bassett Dairy has been making Stilton and Shropshire Blue. The cheeses are made using milk supplied by four farms all within 1.5 miles of the dairy in the Vale of Belvoir. Stilton's PDO status (Protected Designation of Origin) means that the cheese must be produced in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire, using local milk and Colston Bassett are only one of six dairies licensed to make Stilton.

J & R's verdict: With a good creamy edge it hits the Stilton spot - bull's eye! Definitely worth putting on weight for!

Colston Bassett Stilton 550g £12.50 (from finecheese.co.uk)



★★
**CHARLIE'S
CHOICE
Blue**

Cropwell Bishop Creamery Stilton & Beauvale

The Skailes family has been making and selling cheese for more than 160 years and has produced their award-winning Stilton in the Vale of Belvoir for three generations. With 13 Peak District farmers supplying the milk to the creamery they are an important business in the area. The gooey Beauvale blue was created by Robin Skailes and Howard Lucas, and it melts-in-the-mouth with a well-balanced flavour.

J & R's verdict: Stilton is salty and creamy; the Beauvale strong, full flavoured and velvety.

Half Mini Blue Stilton 1kg £20, Beauvale 850g £18

● cropwellbishopstilton.com