

## **Cheese Tasting, Talking and Pairing Points**

CROSSWINDS FARM & CREAMERY :: Edu. 4/29/16

*When a person is knowledgeable about the products they are carrying, they have the power to connect each of their customers with the farmers, artisans and terroir, "the taste (and story) of place," of those products. When our customers can relate to these stories, it enhances their experience, the interconnectedness of our local community and economy and, of course, sales.*

-Carly Thomasset  
Manager of Marketing & Sales  
Crosswinds Farm & Creamery

### THE OWNER - THE FARM - THE VISION

Located in the heart of New York's Finger Lakes Region, Crosswinds Farm & Creamery is home to 125 Brown Swiss dairy cows, crossbred pigs, a flock of several breeds of egg-laying chickens, and owner & cheesemaker Sarah VanOrden. Sarah is a 12th generation farmer who uses the time-tested skills & knowledge learned growing up on her family's 300-year-old farm in the Hudson Valley, blended with modern science and technology learned during her years at Cornell and in the field, to keep Crosswinds growing. Animal welfare, green farming practices and community building are staples of the Crosswinds vision. The entire herd has been born & raised on our farm, and most of our cow "families" have been with us for 6 or 7 generations. The comfort and health of all our animals is our top priority. Recycled materials, including two deconstructed barns, were used to build the vast majority of the farm. We use solar power to heat water used in the dairy. We aim to connect people to where their food comes from and be part of the fabric of a vibrant local community and economy.

### THE CHEESES

In order of least intense flavor to most intense flavor :: When participating in a cheese, wine or other tasting event, it always helps to taste from least intense to most intense so as not to overwhelm your palate.

#### **Morning Glory Original**

Style: Farmers Cheese/ Fromage Blanc  
Milk: Cow  
Age: un-aged/ unripened  
Appearance: ivory white  
Texture: crumbly or spreadable depending on temperature  
Tasting Notes: light, bright, fresh, milky, tangy, lemony  
Similar To: fresh goat cheese, cream cheese

#### **Morning Glory Maple**

Style: Farmers Cheese/ Fromage Blanc  
Milk: Cow  
Age: un-aged/ unripened  
Appearance: tan  
Texture: crumbly or spreadable depending on temperature  
Flavor: delicate maple sweetness, light, bright, fresh, milky, tangy  
Similar To: fresh goat cheese, flavored cream cheese

### **Morning Glory Chive**

Style: Farmers Cheese/ Fromage Blanc  
Milk: Cow  
Age: un-aged/ unripened  
Appearance: ivory white, speckled with chives  
Texture: crumbly or spreadable depending on temperature  
Flavor: savory, onion-y, light, bright, fresh, milky, tangy, lemony  
Similar To: fresh goat cheese, cream cheese

### **Butternut Baby Swiss**

Style: Alpine - cooked, pressed curd  
Milk: Cow  
Age: ~ 3 months  
Appearance: pale straw colored, small lacey holes/ eyes, partially natural, partially sealed rind  
Texture: semi firm, smooth paste with a little bounce in the curd  
Flavor: earthy, swiss-y, hints of brown butter  
Similar To: Emmentaler

### **Goblin**

Style: Alpine - uncooked, pressed curd  
Milk: Cow  
Age: ~ 5 months  
Appearance: white to pale yellow, partially natural, partially sealed rind  
Texture: semi firm, creamy, smooth dense paste  
Flavor: fruity, tangy, vegetal  
Similar To: Appenzeller

### **Rose's Reserve**

Style: Alpine - cooked, pressed curd  
Milk: Cow  
Age: ~ 9-12 months  
Appearance: deep straw color, occasional holes/eyes, natural, orange-brown rind  
Texture: firm, smooth paste  
Flavor: nutty, salty, savory  
Similar To: Gruyere, Parmesean

## PAIRING PRINCIPALS

Source: Adapted from Murray's Cheese Educational Literature

Wine, cider and beer all have potential for perfect pairings with your favorite cheeses. It can be difficult to make generalizations, but here are a few things to think about when looking for that perfect pairing:

### BALANCE

Pay attention to balance -- try to avoid a situation where one taste overpowers the other.

### TEXTURE

Texture is another key area to look for balance. Richer cheeses succeed when paired with more effervescent beers and wines. Conversely, beverages with density and substantial mouth feel might not be the best pairing for a rich, buttery cheese like a triple-creme brie.

### COMPLIMENTS :: *like with like*

It seems like common sense that similar-tasting foods go well together; indeed, complementary tastes really have the potential to enhance your sensory experience.

### CONTRAST :: *opposites attract*

On the other hand, one can find harmony in contrast. Take for example, the classic sweet/salty combination. A strong blue cheese may clash with a tannic, big bodied red or a hoppy, bitter beer *but* it will pair well with a caramelly dessert wine or a rich barleywine ale.

### TERROIR :: *things that grow together, go together*

While not a guarantee for a winning pair, matching beverages with cheese produced in the same locale can yield fascinating combinations. This has long been the sommelier's strategy for putting together wine and cheese and the idea applies to beer and cider as well.

### THESE ARE GUIDELINES, NOT RULES

In the pairing world, there are no hard and fast rules. Each pairing will have its individual pros and cons. The only way to truly determine if a pairing will work is to experiment and taste it out.

The Goal is that together, the pairing adds up to more than the sum of its parts.