



**Adelaide Review, Adelaide**

01 Nov 2013

General News, page 4 - 35.58 cm<sup>2</sup>

Magazines Lifestyle - circulation 21,125 (Monthly)

THE ADELAIDE  
**REVIEW**

**CONTRIBUTORS.** Lachlan Aird, Leanne Amodeo, Jane Andrew, D.M. Bradley, John Bridgland, Michael Browne, William Charles, Derek Crozier, Alexander Downer, Peter Drew, Robert Dunstan, Chris Feik, Stephen Forbes, Andrea Frost, Charles Gent, Roger Hainsworth, Andrew Hunter, Jemima Kemp, Tali Lavi, Kiera Lindsey, Jane Llewellyn, Kris Lloyd, John McBeath, John Neylon, Stephen Orr, Amelia Pinna, Nigel Randall, Christopher Sanders, Margaret Simons, David Sly, John Spoehr, Shirley Stott Despoja, Graham Strahle, Rebecca Sullivan, Ilona Wallace, Thea Williams. **PHOTOGRAPHER.** Jonathan van der Knaap



# CHEESE MATTERS

BY KRIS LLOYD

My bi-annual pilgrimage to Piedmonte, Italy, was as spectacular as ever this year. Bra, Cuneo is the home of slow food and the international event known as Cheese. Coffee, food, wine, weather, people, fashion and, of course, cheese are all part of the impressive package on offer. More than 4000 cheeses, from around the globe, all in the one location could be referred to as cheese heaven.

Cheeses from around the world are on show in this quaint little town south of Turin in the Piedmonte region. The event is held in the historical part of Bra, which has a population of around 117,000. The entire old town is transformed to host this event, which is uniquely about cheese. The locals support and embrace it, as the cobblestone streets are lined with pointy-topped marquees, each one home for a cheese maker for around four days. They offer tastings, discussions and education to a keen audience. Upon arriving at Piazza Roma, which has now become quite familiar, my senses are shocked into action by the sweet pungent cheesy aroma, which is like a thick cloud wafting above the tiny town. The word on everyone's lips walking into the event is Formaggio.

Much of the cheese on offer is made using raw milk. The length on the palate makes me smile and the sweetness left in my mouth at the finish is what I have grown to expect. These cheeses have been crafted with little heat treatment allowing the natural enzymes and cultures to do their job. My mind and palate simply run wild. In my half Greek, half Italian (which includes serious use of hands): "How is this made? Is it cow, goat, sheep or buffalo milk? Is it raw milk or pasteurised? How old is the cheese? Is it seasonal? How big is the production, is it matured by an affineur, is this a DOC cheese?" The willingness from the cheese

makers to talk about their cheeses and share their knowledge is inspirational. The answers allow me to get a better understanding about what has been created, why the cheese is sharp, mild, herbaceous, firm or soft and I am richer for the experience.

One of the unique offerings I stumbled upon was a Romanian fresh curd cheese. This cheese is made in the skin of a baby goat. No rennet or starter culture is used. Only fresh raw goat milk, which was placed in the skin and hung for several days. The milk sours and thickens. When I tasted the cheese I was pleasantly surprised by the pure milkiness and sweetness. My mind needed some adjustment around milk sitting in what appeared to be a newly culled goat skin, which was presented, bloated with cheese, full and hairy. I explained the sensitivity this may have in Australia to the young lady who offered me the tasting. "Perfectly clean inside," she told me, as it is a tradition dating back hundreds of years. This is what I love about cheese making – the history and the limitless forms cheese can take.

There were several standout cheeses but in particular the Gorgonzola styles were superb. One producer presented an immense wheel of Gorgonzola Dolce (sweet) that was perfectly ripened through, with gentle veining of blue mould. The cheese maker was scooping the cheese into small wooden cups as one would gelato or ice cream. Hundreds of people queued to buy a taste. No bread or crackers - just a little wooden spatula and plenty of smiling faces.

Taste workshops are held in beautiful churches and halls full of history, with their ornate ceilings and wall murals. The cheese makers conduct carefully orchestrated workshops where they discuss the history, nuances and techniques particular to their cheeses, often matching them with wines from the same region and at times introducing the local winemaker. Much discussion happens, and you realise the Italians know how to talk, the occasional argument and then affirmation of a job well done as they all agree in the end, I think...

Cheeses are matched with beverages often



from the regions where the cheeses are made – reds, whites, sparkling, cider, grappa, whiskey and, more recently, beers.

I have had the opportunity to present my cheeses at these workshops over the years with translations into Italian and French. My offerings have been scrutinised by the Italian experts while I nervously await their response. I discuss our milk quality, our vast land and the type of grazing our husbandry allows. There is always keen interest in Australian cheese makers. I presented our native lemon myrtle herb chevre this year. Along with the lemon myrtle cheese I decided to also take some of the rich aromatic herb neat to give the workshop an experience of this truly magnificent native plant. At the conclusion of the workshop participants were queuing to take away a small sample of the crushed dried herb and to discuss the peculiarities of this amazing product. It taught me the importance of innovation and not to take things in my backyard for granted.

The gastronomic experience in Bra is simple, traditional, historic and flavoursome. I discovered that the Salsiccia di Bra is a

traditional product of braidese charcuterie. Salsiccia di Bra is a raw sausage, which is made in a continuous wheel. It is normally eaten raw and is just splendid with a seasoning of cinnamon, cloves, coriander, pimento, nutmeg, mace and caraway. The mixture obtained is obligatorily packed in natural lamb gut. The utilisation of synthetic gut is forbidden. The product must be sold fresh and can be stored for a period of five days at the most in a cold store at zero to four degrees.

I bumped into Will Studd, a good cheese mate, and shared a risotto dinner with him, with some freshly shaved white truffle from Alba (Tartufo di Alba), a town famous for truffles nearby. We also grated a small amount of locally produced Parmigiano Reggiano over our risotto and pondered the joys of cheese.

---

» **Kris Lloyd** is **Woodside Cheese Wrights'**  
Head Cheese Maker

---

[woodsidecheese.com.au](http://www.woodsidecheese.com.au)

