

Craving Cheese?

Explore Bristol Farms

by Barrie Lynn



Steve Howard, Senior Director of Food Service
Rich Ferranda, Director of Deli and Cheese

Photo: www.andycomins.com

Okay, I admit it. I dream about artisan cheese, crave artisan cheese and, think about artisan cheese probably more than the normal person.

When the "cheese jones" attacks and I want a beautiful piece of rare blue or a luscious and soft *Pont-l'Évêque* and it's too inconvenient to drive to a specialty cheese store, sadly, I've gone without my cheese fix because none of my local supermarkets carry the cheeses I crave.

It's true... my passion for non-industrial cheese left me frustrated and without this supreme enjoyment. That is — until I visited **Bristol Farms**. I was thrilled! Right there at their cheese counter were some of my favorites and, in beautiful condition.

Who was the BRAINS behind the brilliant move to add artisanal cheeses at Bristol Farms? I just had to find out so I called them. My call led me to **Steve Howard Senior Director of Food Service** — the main man when it comes to high quality at Bristol Farms. From there, Steve led the way to **Rich Ferranda, who is Director of Deli & Cheese** at this

wonderful specialty grocer. What a guy! Ferranda is not only passionate about artisan cheese, but he's an expert when it comes to choosing and caring for cheese (which is alive). Ferranda is committed to bringing the finest artisan cheeses from around the world to the shoppers at Bristol Farms. I caught up with both Howard and Ferranda at their Bristol Farms store, on Beverly Boulevard and Doheny and talked cheese.

According to Ferranda, this particular Bristol Farms location carries some 250 different types of cheese throughout the week. Translation: At any given time shoppers can choose from 12 types of fresh Mozzarella to satisfy their cheese-loving desires. Just stop by and take a look at the amazing variety of American artisan cheese available and, ask for a taste. You will be hooked, just like me.

"Everybody has their little special cheeses that they want. A lot of it has to do with where you were born and what cheeses you were raised on," says Ferranda. "Many of our customers travel extensively. They've been to Europe and, have had the opportunity to taste rare cheese. They know that they loved it, but

don't know the name. Then, they come to our stores and wammo, the cheese they had on their trip is in our cheese selection. We are pleased to give customers exactly what they want."

A trip to the cheese counter at Bristol Farms is truly an adventure. I usually ask for a taste before I buy, so I can learn and explore the many new artisan cheese makers.

I also gained valuable information about wine and cheese pairings, by asking advice from the knowledgeable people behind the cheese counter. Properly pairing cheese with wine, beer, ale and even vodka is thrilling, and a delightful topic of conversation for your guests. Serving cheese paired with unusual condiments, for instance a jam actually made with Cognac or Walnuts in honey from Spain (made from thistle wild flowers) — it's all right there at the Bristol Farms cheese counter.

I am now a devoted Bristol Farms shopper. With Steve Howard and Rich Ferranda providing the finest in quality and service to customers, my life has been improved. I hope yours will be too.

TOP 10 WINE & CHEESE PAIRINGS

- **Parmesan Reggiano** — Export Quality, raw cows milk cheese aged over 24 months;

Montelomas Malbec

- **Cave Aged Gruyere** — Nutty, buttery and slightly toasty flavor with fruity undertones;

Abadia Retuerta Rivola (Sardon del Duero)

- **San Joaquin Gold** — Natural, thin rind with a tawny buttery color. Mildly sweet and mellow when young, it develops a darker golden hue and nuttier flavor over time;

Firriato Altavila Corte Blanco

- **Manchego aged 1 year** — D.O.C. Made from the milk of the manchego sheep. Extremely buttery & aged, raw milk aged over 10 months;

Abadia Retuerta Rivola (Sardon del Duero)

- **Boonenkaas Gouda** — Raw cows milk, semi-hard aged 2 years and up, Carmel type finish ñ;

Montelomas Malbec

- **Piave Intense** — full bodied flavor, table cheese, crystallization occurs as cheese is aged, we carry the 1 year;

Firriato Altavila Corte Blanco
Montelomas Malbec

- **Brebiou** — Soft-ripened sheep's milk cheese with a sweet, milky flavor and slightly savory bite. Ingredients: pasteurized sheep's milk, cheese cultures, salt, rennet, annatto as coloring;

Geschickt Tokay Pinot Gris

- **Maytag Blue** — Soft yet crumbly with a lemony tang finish;

Montelomas Malbec
Fonseca Bin 27 Port

- **Grafton Cheddar 4 years** — Cows milk Naturally aged, sharp cheddar flavor;

La Vieille Ferme Cotes du Ventoux

- **Pont L'Évêque** — Semi soft, soft ripened cheese from Normandie region has a pronounced flavor, although it's taste is not as strong as it's smell, excellent dessert cheese that goes well with a robust wine.

L.Hermitage de Chasse Spleen Bordeaux

Bristol Farms
An Extraordinary Food Store.