

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Berthaut Affidèlice**

(bear-toe affy-dell-ees)

**Cow's milk, surface ripened washed rind**

Burgundy, France

Affidèlice is made to the same specifications as Époisses, in terms of method and care, the point of difference is that it is washed in Chablis, the classic white wine made from Chardonnay grapes grown in Burgundy.

Berthaut Fromagerie was started by Robert and Simone Berthaut in 1956. They originally intended to resurrect the ancient local cheese, Époisses and have been integral in the rebirth of Époisses, which received its AOC in 1991. Today the dairy is run by their son Jean and the company has since expanded the range of cheeses they make. The range now includes Trou du Cru, a mini Époisses, and Soumaintrain, a washed rind made in another local village.

Farmhouse production of Époisses started to decline in the 1930s and was almost non-existent after World War II. Modern manufacturing methods almost saw the end of this special cheese as it requires extensive labour. It undergoes a slow lactic fermentation technique called *caille lactique*, which literally translates as lactic curdling. The curd is developed over 16 hours at a cool temperature, allowing enough bacteria to develop so that only a small amount of rennet is required for the curd to set. The resultant curd is incredibly fragile and must be carefully ladled by hand. This gentle curd means the cheese will become runny and gooey over time.

Curds are gently hooped, sprinkled with salt and then left to drain naturally before being un-hooped and allowed to further dry before being ladled. For the next five to eight weeks maturation occurs with a regime of washing and turning by hand. Jean Berthaut observed that the drying and maturation rooms of the ancient rural buildings faced North-East and so has incorporated this into their drying process.

There have always been cheeses washed with white wine in Burgundy; it gives an aromatic perfume to the cheese. The young cheeses are washed constantly with Chablis, not a generic white wine, to ensure a cheese of quality. As the cheese matures it becomes stronger in flavour and develops a stickier rind, gooey unctuous texture and a meaty flavour.

Serve as is, enjoy with a French Chablis and crusty bread. A much milder flavour than Époisses, Affidèlice is an excellent introduction to this family of washed rinds.