

Richmond Hill cafe & larder

CHEESE NOTES

Artavaggio

(AR-tah-var-geo)

Cow's milk

Lombardy, Italy

Artavaggio is a fine example of the adaptation of an already famous cheese, Taleggio, and of a family not content to rest on its laurels. Hand made by the Mauri family near the village of Pasturo in the Italian Alps, this cheese uses similar methods to the celebrated and esteemed Taleggio, but being much smaller, it ripens faster and has different flavour characteristics.

Like its big brother, Artavaggio is ripened in a natural environment, inside mountain caves, which lie just below the snow line for most of the year. As the snow melts it dribbles through cracks in the rocks. This provides just the right amount of humidity and cool airflow to encourage wild yeasts present in the environment to grow on the rind. Sadly, global warming is causing some concern to the makers at Mauri as the snow line creeps higher and further away each year and less moisture makes its way into the caves. But we shall not despair just yet...the cheese is as good as ever and is still a favourite in the RHCL Cheese room.

Unlike the sweeter Taleggio, Artavaggio is quite savoury and displays a more robust balance of yeasty flavours. Texture also plays a large part in developing the character of this cheese, as the 'curd set' is lower than that of Taleggio, resulting in a more luscious, softer eating cheese.