

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### Asiago

(pron: Az-eeh- ah-goh)

**Cow's milk, cooked curd.**

Veneto, Italy.

*I can almost hear the members out there of Italian origin... "Asiago, at home we eat that for breakfast, lunch and dinner! Give us something we don't know!" Fair point, although this is different to what most of you have been used to, for one good reason... age. We have, as promised, matured these wheels for five extra months, and the result is fantastic.*

A typical product of the Veneto region, Asiago was and probably still is, one of the most widely used cheeses in Italy. It is said that very flavoursome cheeses were produced around 1,000 A.D in the Altopiano dei Sette Comuni, an incredibly fertile highland area of Northern Vicenza. By the middle Ages, these same types of cheese were made, but with ewes milk. Cow's milk eventually replaced ewe's milk as cattle became the primary milk source and most cheeses were made in the shepherd's Alpine cottages in summer grazing areas, where the animals fed on an abundant variety of local grasses, wildflowers and herbs. In the 1920s, the local cheese makers began to produce unripened cheeses called 'Asiago Pressato', pressed Asiago. The newer product quickly became popular with modern consumers who preferred sweeter, softer flavours and it is now extremely difficult to source aged, or as the locals call it 'Pegorin,' Asiago outside of Italy.

Before the cheese making process begins, the full milk undergoes a partial skimming treatment. Coagulation then occurs by means of the addition of a traditional coagulating enzyme at temperatures of around 35 degrees, which is then heated further to 47. The cutting of the curd begins where it is broken up into a mass of granules, whey is released and the curds are scooped into moulds for forming. The cheeses are rested for a few hours and then turned and pre-salted and marked with a seal of the regulatory board. A couple of days later the salting operation is carried out with the dry salt of brine. The all-important ageing then begins at 11-14 degrees and 80-85 % humidity.

These wheels have been relatively easy to care for, seemingly enjoying their not so humid position near the Cheese room door, where they have developed pleasing intense fruity flavours with quite a zing mid palate! Displaying all their characteristic oily, savoury flavours we're quite sure you'll agree with us when we say this is not your average Asiago.