

Richmond Hill cafe & larder

CHEESE NOTES

BLEU D'AUVERGNE

(Pron – blur de ove-urn)

Cow's milk, pasteurised

Auvergne, France

In 1854 reknowned cheesemaker Antoine Roussel made a batch of soft cheese and forgot about them for a few days. When he found the cheese he noticed small veins of blue had appeared through each wheel and although it was not meant to happen he tasted them, and was quite happy with the result. Bleu d'Auvergne was born.

For many months Roussel experimented with rye bread mould and discovered that pricking the curd with needles increased the aeration in the cheese allowing more blue to spread throughout the curds. Traditionally knitting needles were used but modern day mechanical needling allows for faster production.

Once the veining has started the 3kg wheels of Bleu d'Auvergne are left in cool, wet cellars for four weeks, during this time the cheese takes on pungent aromas and is soft and moist throughout the pate. Once the natural rind has formed on the cheese it is then wrapped in foil and matured for a further 2 months.

Hailing from the Auvergne region in the south of France, Bleu d'Auvergne gained AOC status in 1975. Auvergne is known as 'the green country', with a high annual rain fall and valleys rich in volcanic and granitic soil. The region is typically known for the production of Cantal and Salers cheese, famous cheddar style farmhouse cheese made using raw milk from the Salers cow. The mountains of Auvergne, between Puy-de-Dome and Cantal, are rich and abundant resulting in cheeses which are spicy with the flavour of cut grass and wild flowers.

This Bleu d'Auvergne has been hand-picked and matured by Herve Mons and his team of affineurs. When the cheese is only 2 months matured they take it to their maturing caves in Lyon and watch over them for a further 2-3 months, making this Bleu d'Auvergne relatively stronger than others from the region.