

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Bleu De Basque**

(Pron: blur-der-bask)

Basque, France

This comparatively new ewe's milk cheese is made not far from Roquefort in the rugged mountains that form a natural border between France and Spain. Anyone who has been lucky enough to see the French Basque region will have noticed the huge rolling hills the animals feed upon so it's no wonder the milk that goes into the making of this cheese is of incredible quality. Small pockets of salty blue Roqueforti moulds form in the cheese as it slowly hardens, developing a nutty texture and slightly sweet floral aftertaste reminiscent of the pastures of the high alpage.

This once rare cheese is a close cousin of the famous AOC sheep milk cheeses of Ossau Iraty and was made only when there was plenty of milk around. Not surprisingly, demand has grown so much in recent years that they are now made throughout the year and are much easier to find. The best examples of this cheese are still made during the lambing season which runs from early spring to late summer. The cheese is rubbed back consistently as it ages producing a natural crust that allows it to 'breathe' and mature slowly. The flavour is salty and sweet with a natural acidity, the pate is moist and slightly crumbly and the spring cheeses have a characteristic sticky, honey-like flavour.