

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Chabichou du poitou**

Poitou-charentes, France

Goats were introduced to the south west of France in significant numbers following the Saracen invasion in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Today the region is famous for producing a magnificent range of traditional goat cheeses in a variety of shapes and sizes.

Chabichou is probably one of France's most well-known goat cheeses and is found in many fromageries throughout the world made by any one of the smaller or larger co-operatives that produce this cheese. Finding it in good condition however is another thing altogether.

It is a small barrel-shaped cheese made entirely of goat milk and basically hand-made by the Soignon Dairy who are known for their quality goat cheese. The fresh curds are set slowly taking around 24 hours which ensures the complex texture and flavour of the finished cheese. It is then matured under a 'geotrichum' strain of mould which displays the characteristic wrinkly skin. This allows for a slow even ripening over four weeks without the intervention of early ammoniac flavours that appear with goat cheeses ripened under 'penicillium candidum'. Perfectly ripe cheeses have 'broken down' under the rind and have a firm fudgy texture with a concentrated creamy faintly goaty flavour. The rind should not however have consistent blue moulds developing as this would suggest incorrect maturing conditions and storage.