

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Pont l'evêque**

(pron: pon -lee-veck)  
Normandy, France

The Graindorge Dairy produces probably the most consistent traditional cheese of all the brands. It takes three litres of milk collected from surrounding farms to make one 350 to 400g cheese. After the cheeses are hooped, they are then regularly washed and turned until they develop a moist pink crust that reddens with age and eyes or holes appear in the pate. The cheeses are placed at 3 to 4 weeks into special wooden poplar boxes that are essential for the cheese's maturation by providing an important micro-climate.

Pont L'Eveque should have a moist sticky rind with no apparent cracking in the crust. The aroma should be quite smoky with scents of hay and the barnyard. It should not be acid or have ammonia, nor should there be a great deal of white mould on the rind that could suggest that the cheese has been kept too long in cold temperatures. The flavour should be sweet, succulent and meaty and the texture glistening and bulging.

Maitre fromager and world-wide cheese expert, the late Patrick Rance, stated that Pont L'Eveque "monstrously, the A.O.C does not demand lait cru (raw milk) nor protect the proper area of origin, the Pays D'Auge, including all the Norman departments and Mayenne." Understandably, the characters of the cheeses from other parts of Normandy are very different. Pont L'Eveque is probably the oldest Norman cheese still in production and some say the recipe originated in an abbey, but that story has never been substantiated. There are however, documents confirming the cheese's long history. One in particular from the 12<sup>th</sup> century says "a good table always finishes with dessert d'angelot," which may have been the old name for the cheese. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, cheeses made in the village of Pont L'Eveque were sent all over France and were very popular. A.O.C status was granted in 1976.