



ACS 2012 WINNING CHEESE PLATE

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[Whole Foods Market](#)

San Jose, CA

- ★ [Harbison](#) from Cellars at Jasper Hill
- ★ [Truffle Tremor](#) from Cypress Grove Chevre
- ★ [Roth Grand Cru Surchoix](#) from Emmi Roth USA
- ★ [Red Hawk](#) from Cowgirl Creamery
- ★ [Oregon Blue](#) from Rogue Creamery

★ HARBISON, CELLARS AT JASPER HILL (VT)

The Harbison from Cellars at Jasper Hill is a cheese that I love to carry in my cheese case. It has such a delectable earthy and creamy flavor. I love when I first cut into a wheel; the cheese just starts to ooze out. I have to resist the temptation to dip my finger in and have a taste.

Pairing: To balance out the creamy richness of this cheese, I decided to pair it with the *Jimtown Store Fig and Olive Spread* from Healdsburg, CA. The acidity of the olives in the spread really cuts through the butterfat in the cheese and adds a slight taste of salt, while the figs add to the decadence of the cheese. If you are in a truly decadent mood, try adding a nice dry sparkling wine to the mix.

★ TRUFFLE TREMOR, CYPRESS GROVE CHEVRE (CA)

Living in Northern California, I am very lucky to have Cypress Grove as a local creamery. The next cheese on my plate, Truffle Tremor, is a staple in my cheese case. The goat flavor in this cheese is bright and slightly gamey while never overpowering. The truffles bring a whole other dimension to the cheese by adding an earthy, woody quality that hits you little by little as you taste more of the tiny flakes of truffle throughout the cheese.

Pairing: To pair with this amazing cheese, I chose *Brassfield Sauvignon Blanc* from Clearlake Oaks, CA. Sauvignon Blanc with goat cheese is a classic pairing and it's a classic for a reason. This wine has a lovely sweet acidity that cuts through the slight gamey flavor of the goat milk. The wine is nice and bright and balances out the umami-ness of the truffles.

★ ROTH GRAND CRU SURCHOIX, EMMI ROTH USA (WI)

My next cheese is the Roth Grand Cru Surchoix from Emmi Roth USA. Last May I was lucky enough to visit the Emmi Roth creamery in Wisconsin and got to see the huge rooms where they age their wheels of Grand Cru. It was inspiring to see what great care they took in choosing which wheels would make the cut to be called the best, or "Surchoix". The name is by no means misleading. This cheese is another staple in my cheese case, and for the customers who are looking for a domestic cheese to use in their fondues, this is the cheese I point to.

Pairing: For this plate, I decided to pair the *Wild Boar Salami* from Creminelli Fine Meats located in Salt Lake City, UT. The nutty, creamy flavor with little hints of fruit from the cheese is accentuated by the meaty, tangy, slightly sweet flavor of the boar and the fat and salt from the pork belly used in the salami. On a textural level, the subtle crystallization of the Surchoix contrasts quite nicely with the smoothness of salami. The *Tartufo Salami* from Creminelli is another fun salami to pair, if the Wild Boar variety is unavailable.



★ RED HAWK, COWGIRL CREAMERY (CA)

Another local creamery that I love to feature in my case is Cowgirl Creamery. The cheese I chose from Cowgirl is their Red Hawk – a stunning, 100% organic, triple cream, washed rind cheese they offer year-round. This is a cheese I like to use when introducing my customers to the washed rind cheese category. It does have the distinct aroma of a washed rind cheese, but the flavor inside is so rich and creamy that most customers don't believe me when I say this is a "stinky" cheese.

Pairing: To pair with this unbelievably buttery cheese, I chose the *Hazelnut Brown Nectar beer from Rogue Ales* in Newport, OR. This is an example of a cheese really bringing out the best in a beer. The beer on its own has a wonderful hazelnut flavor, but when you add the Red Hawk, the creamy butterfat brings the richness that the hazelnut in the beer is calling for. When tasted together, the flavors you get are reminiscent of a hazelnut latte. Simply scrumptious.

★ OREGON BLUE, ROGUE CREAMERY (OR)

The last cheese on my plate is Oregon Blue from Rogue Creamery. This is another staple in my case because of its approachability and hard-to-beat taste. The briny flavor of the cheese, along with the bite of the blue, does not overwhelm your palette due to the creamy notes throughout the cheese.

Pairing: I chose to pair it with the *Old Foghorn Barleywine Style Ale from Anchor Brewing* in San Francisco, CA. The saltiness of the cheese and the sweet richness of the beer really balance each other out and elevate both flavors. The flavor I get is reminiscent of salty dates, and it keeps you coming back for more.

About the American Cheese Society (ACS): ACS is the leading organization supporting the understanding, appreciation, and promotion of farmstead, artisan and specialty cheeses produced in the Americas. At 1,500 members strong, ACS provides advocacy, education, business development, and networking opportunities for cheesemakers, retailers, enthusiasts, and extended industry. ACS strives to continually raise the quality and availability of cheese in the Americas.

Since its founding in 1983, ACS proudly hosts the foremost annual educational conference and world-renowned annual cheese judging and competition. The 2013 ACS Conference & Competition will be held in Madison, WI from July 31-August 3, 2013. For more information, visit www.cheesesociety.org.