

# food & style

seasonal, modern, exuberant

## A unique cheese course: Five artisan cheeses, one truffle honey and a fizzy hard cider

March 30, 2010



I love dessert, but I love cheese even more. So when it comes to making dinner for friends, I make sure a cheese course is on the menu. And with the explosion of artisan cheese makers around the country, that cheese course has become more exciting than ever.

For today's cheeses, I went to [Murray's Cheese Shop](#) in Manhattan. Murray's is certainly not the only store in New York City that carries an extensive selection of American artisan cheeses, but the cheerful staff know their cheeses like their apron pocket, and that's what I was after.

My intent was to select five artisan cheeses from New England that I'd never tasted before, and pair them with [Gourmet Attitude's](#) stunning Truffle Honey. Then I thought, why not serve the cheeses with a local wine? Local all the way!

It turns out that it wasn't a wine that I ended up pairing my spectacular cheese course with, but a hard cider from [Farnum Hill Ciders](#).

As we savored every morsel of cheese, every drop of honey and every sip of cider, it struck me that artisan products made in the United States have completely come into their own – that they reflect the passion of their makers and the taste of the land every bit as much as their European counterparts.

 Search

Watch my videos on  
**Streaming GOURMET**



-  Chef & Writer: [Viviane Bauquet Farre](#)
-  [food & style website](#)
-  [Contact Viviane](#)
-  [Subscribe to Viviane's Newsletter](#)
-  [Cooking Classes](#)
-  [No Bones! Dinner Club](#)
-  [Press](#)
-  [Videos](#)

### Recent Posts

[A unique cheese course: Five artisan cheeses, one truffle honey and a fizzy hard cider](#)

[Roasted baby red potatoes with lemon and bay leaves](#)

[Pinto Bean Chili with Pan-Roasted Spices and Chipotle](#)

[Spinach-lentil soup with saffron and manchego](#)

[Dark chocolate panna cotta with raspberries and acacia-honey syrup](#)

[Poached eggs with shiitake mushrooms, wilted arugula and white truffle cream](#)

["Eat the Music" food series: Avocado and mango salad with Tequila-lime vinaigrette](#)

[Mac and cheese with braised leeks, asiago and parmesan breadcrumbs](#)

Now that's something to celebrate and dig your teeth into!



### Viviane's tips

Pick between 4 and 5 cheeses for a balanced assortment.

Choose cheeses made with different milks: goat, sheep, cow (although at this time of the year it's a bit harder to find sheep's milk, so today's selection is just goat and cow's milk).

Choose cheeses with different textures: soft, fresh, bloomy, semi-soft and hard.

Serve the cheeses in the order in which they should be eaten: from the softer, milder cheese to the strongest cheese.

### Five artisan cheeses *(listed in the recommended order of eating)*

#### Jasper Hill Farm – Caspian (\$12)

This soft, unripened cow's milk cheese comes beautifully wrapped in grape leaves that have been soaked in Boyden Valley icewine. The very creamy cheese is briny with a hint of sweetness – a wonderful introduction to any cheese course.

#### Nettle Meadow – Kunik (\$30/lb)

This bloomy triple-cream from New York State gives French cheeses like Pierre Robert a run for their money. A mixture of goat's milk and Jersey cow cream, it's unbearably buttery, with a lovely sweetness and a slight tanginess. It's impossible to have just one piece!

#### Vermont Butter and Cheese Creamery – Bonne Bouche (\$8)

This little round goat cheese has an ashen rind and a dense, creamy center. Depending on its age, it can be soft and tangy or, like the one I bought, a bit firmer, sweet and nutty. Its French name, Bonne Bouche, means "good mouth" – and what a good mouthful it is.

#### Jasper Hill Farm – Winnimere (\$26/lb)

A magnificent cheese made with raw cow's milk that reminds me a bit of a young taleggio. Winnimere is washed with Lambic beer, then bound with a spruce binding cut from the trees on the farm. It has a characteristic orange rind and a pale, semi-soft yellow center. It's deliciously creamy and mild with lovely smoky, woody notes. Winnimere was the ideal transition between the softer cheeses and the semi-hard one that comes next.

[Creamy butternut squash polenta with spicy wilted spinach](#)

[Parmesan-crusted fennel fritters with Meyer lemon dip](#)

[Scotch fizz](#)

[Cardoon velouté with black truffle carpaccio](#)

[Prepping and blanching cardoons](#)

## Categories

["Eat the Music" food series: luscious recipes with a tropical flair](#)

[Appetizers](#)

[Breakfast](#)

[Brunch](#)

[Bruschetta, crostini & tartines](#)

[Canning](#)

[Cheese](#)

[Cocktails & drinks](#)

[Desserts](#)

[Bon Appétit Blog Envy Bake-Off](#)

[Cakes](#)

[Chocolate](#)

[Cookies](#)

[Crème brûlée & custards](#)

[Fruit desserts](#)

[Holiday desserts](#)

[Ice cream, gelato & sorbet](#)

[Tarts](#)

[Egg dishes](#)

[Gifts from the kitchen](#)

[Grains](#)

[Gratins](#)

[Hors d'oeuvres & Tapas](#)

[Jams](#)

[Pasta](#)

[Picnic](#)

[Pizza](#)

[Polenta](#)

[Pulses](#)

**Spring Brook Farm – Tarentaise (\$22/lb)**

Another Vermont cheese made it to my cheese course! This one is an unforgettable raw cow’s milk, semi-hard cheese, aged for at least five months. “By the time Spring Brook Farm Tarentaise is ready for sale, it has been turned and washed at least 50 times,” says owner Jeremy Stephenson. All you have to do is take a bite to taste how very handcrafted this cheese is. It’s bursting with grassy, tangy and spicy notes. And, if I may borrow from the wine world, the Tarentaise has an extraordinarily long finish.



**Gourmet Attitude – truffle honey (\$19)**

The very moment you open this little jar\*, the scent of truffles leaps out and hits your nostrils with powerful force. This acacia honey infused with white truffles is pungent and exploding with intoxicating truffle flavors that are beautifully balanced with the sweetness of the honey.

I do not recommend drizzling the honey on the cheeses directly as the truffle will overpower their delicate flavor; rather, dab a bit of bread in the honey and savor as a palate cleanser (or teaser!) between cheese nibblings.



**Farnum Hill Ciders – Farnum Hill semi-dry (\$12)**

I have loved hard cider since the tender age of 7, when, vacationing with my parents in Normandy, somebody handed me a glass. (It tickles me to think that in France even children are allowed to have hard cider.) This first experience made a strong impression on my young taste buds, and carved a special spot in my heart.

- [Risotto](#)
- [Salads](#)
- [Sandwiches & burgers](#)
- [Sauces](#)
- [Side vegetables](#)
- [Soups](#)
- [Techniques](#)
  - [Cooking oils](#)
  - [Drying fresh herbs](#)
  - [How to cook quinoa](#)
  - [Making fresh winter squash purée](#)
  - [Making herb-infused honey](#)
  - [Making vegetable stock](#)
  - [Prepping & blanching cardoons](#)
- [Thanksgiving](#)
- [Veggies & fruits](#)
  - [Apples](#)
  - [Artichokes](#)
  - [Asparagus](#)
  - [Avocado](#)
  - [Beans](#)
  - [Beets](#)
  - [Berries](#)
  - [Broccoli & broccoli rabe](#)
  - [Cardoons](#)
  - [Carrots](#)
  - [Cauliflower](#)
  - [Citrus fruits](#)
  - [Cucumbers](#)
  - [Fennel](#)
  - [Leeks](#)
  - [Legumes/pulses](#)
  - [Lentils](#)
  - [Lettuces & leafy greens](#)
  - [Mango](#)
  - [Mushrooms](#)
  - [Okra](#)
  - [Olives](#)



So I was delighted to discover Farnum Hill's line of hard ciders. They were kind enough to send four bottles for me to sample.\* Two of the bottles truly stood out for me, including this semi-dry sparkling hard cider. (I will

feature the other in a later post.)

The first sniff was all about apples, but then something deeper evolved. My untrained nose picked up a hint of spice, reminiscent of caraway seeds. The first sip was a complete surprise. Although the apple flavors were present, they were complex, balanced and leaning more towards apple skins than fleshy apples. Also, despite its name, the cider was not sweet at all. It was more on the dry side — which to my palate made it that much more interesting.

But the magical moment came when I tried the Farnum Hill semi-dry with the artisan cheeses I'd selected. The apple tones complemented the sweet, grassy and tangy cheeses, while the dryness of the cider cut through their rich texture. I'd never thought of serving hard cider with a cheese course before, but I can assure you it won't be the last time I do.

There is so much here to be grateful for... I can taste the hard labor and the passion that went into making these cheeses, infusing the honey and fermenting the cider. As I savor every bite and every sip I am reminded that there is something very special at play here. As artisans bring forth their talent, they in turn pass their passion onto us, and in this way enrich our own experience of life.

*\* Disclosure: I received unsolicited free samples from Gourmet Attitude and Farnum Hill Ciders — but would not have featured them here if I didn't think their products were outstanding.*



#### Possibly related posts: (automatically generated)

- [My Christmas list](#)

Posted by Viviane Bauquet Farre

Filed in [Cheese](#), [Truffles](#)

Tags: [Artisan](#), [Cheese](#), [Cider](#), [Hard cider](#), [Local](#), [Truffle honey](#)

[1 Comment](#) »

## One Response to "A unique cheese course: Five artisan cheeses, one truffle honey and a fizzy hard cider"

*katy* Says:

March 31, 2010 at 10:50 am

this looks like an absolutely perfect way to end a meal. i live about three blocks away from

[Peaches & apricots](#)

[Pears](#)

[Peas](#)

[Peppers](#)

[Potatoes](#)

[Spinach](#)

[Tomatoes](#)

[Truffles](#)

[Watermelon](#)

[Winter squash](#)

[Zucchini flowers](#)

### Archives

[March 2010](#)

[February 2010](#)

[January 2010](#)

[December 2009](#)

[November 2009](#)

[October 2009](#)

[September 2009](#)

[August 2009](#)

[July 2009](#)

[June 2009](#)

[May 2009](#)

[April 2009](#)

[March 2009](#)

### Farmers' markets links

[NYC Greenmarkets](#)

[Piermont Farmer's Market](#)

### Food links

[Bohemian Plates](#)

[David Lebovitz](#)

[Jacqueline Church / LDGourmet](#)

[Jane Ward](#)

[Laura's best recipes](#)

[Local in Season](#)

[Local Lemons](#)

[Sense & Serendipity](#)

murray's cheese, and it is the best store ever.

### Leave a Reply

Name (required)

E-mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

**Submit Comment**

- Notify me of follow-up comments via email.
- Notify me of new posts via email.

[Showcook](#)

[Steamy Kitchen](#)

[Streaming Gourmet](#)

[The sophisticated gourmet](#)

[Wasabi Prime](#)

### Other favorites links

[Abitoff Design](#)

[Bluamaryllis](#)

[Head Kleaner](#)

[Marc Farre](#)

[Nyack Backyard](#)

[Ricky Restiano Photographer](#)

### Travel links

[Andrew Smith / Piedmont & Le Marche](#)

[Andrew Smith / Venice & the Veneto](#)

[Borgo Pretale](#)

[Provence Paradise](#)

### Wine & spirits links

[Bonny Doon Vineyard](#)

[For Scotch Lovers](#)

[For Tequila Lovers](#)

[Maker's Table](#)

[Palate Press](#)

[Wine for All / idrinkwine](#)

### Pages

[Videos](#)