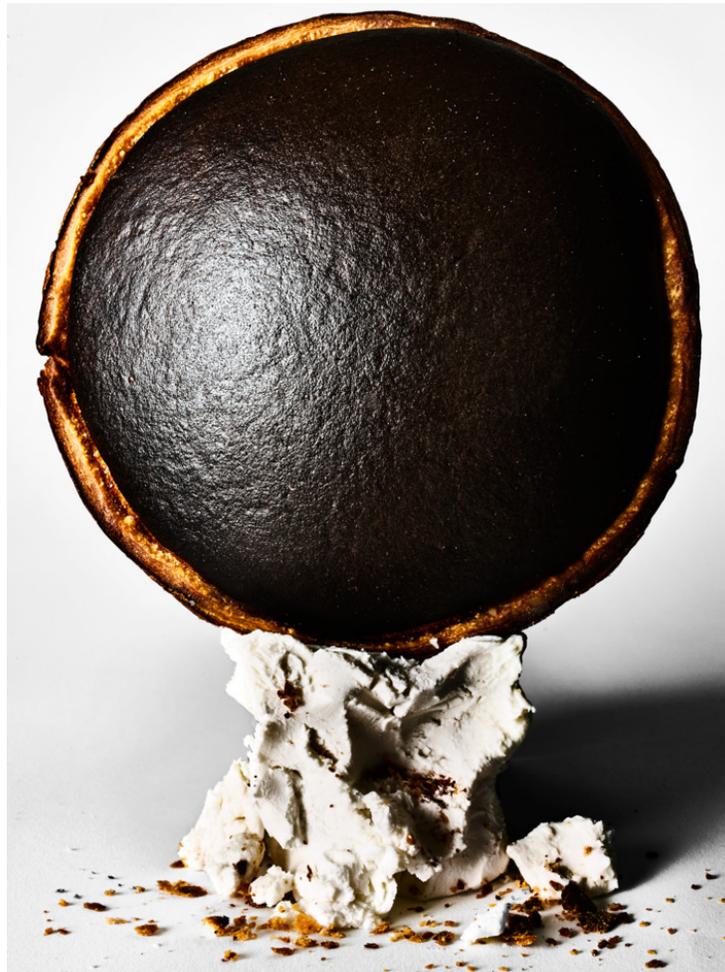


# GRUB STREET

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## Marie-Aude Rose, Wife of Le Coucou's Daniel Rose, Brings Obscure French Cheesecake to New York

By Robin Raisfeld and Rob Patronite



La Mercerie's tourteau fromagé, with one of its main ingredients. Photo: Bobby Doherty/New York Magazine

It's a rare thing to come across a new pastry, which is probably why the Cronut became such a sensation. But this week, New York will encounter, perhaps for the first time, the tourteau fromagé, an obscure cheesecake that originated in the

Poitou-Charentes region of western France and hasn't made much headway since.

"You can find it in a few cheese shops in Paris," says chef Marie-Aude Rose, wife of [Le Coucou](#)'s Daniel Rose and the person responsible for the confection's local debut. Inspired by childhood memories of being intrigued by its (intentionally) burnt domed surface—achieved by baking at very high, then low temperatures, to replicate the defect that became its signature—Marie-Aude has included it in her repertoire of baked goods for sale at La Mercerie, the all-day café inside [Roman and Williams Guild New York](#), the interior-design firm's new home—furnishings store in Soho.

"It was born in that region at a time when the only oven was the baker's oven," says Rose. Villagers would bring their cakes to bake in it, she says, but owing to the oven's intense heat and lack of a fan, the tops would burn, adding a note of bitterness and acidity that eventually became part of the charm. The tourteau is traditionally made with the region's famed goat cheese; for hers, Rose uses a fresh chèvre from Troy, New York. Her cake is fluffy and light with only the suggestion of richness, closer in texture to a Japanese cheesecake and so subtly delicious it may ruin you for the classic New York or Italian styles. It has a flaky piecrust and requires a special mold, and in France, fans have been known to dip a slice into a glass of Pineau des Charentes, an apéritif produced in the same region.

Customers can do likewise at La Mercerie when it opens its doors this week for coffee, pastries, and cocktails, although Rose's plans for the full-service restaurant, slated to launch in mid-January, go way beyond baked goods: Her breakfast, lunch, and supper menus will focus on simple French fare like morning eggs, lunchtime sandwiches and soups, and such comforting dinner dishes as boeuf bourguignon. "The menu is about traditions, French regional specialties, good products prepared with no fuss," says the chef. "Imagine having lunch in a café in Lyon or at that little crêperie down the street in St Germain." And in the great lifestyle-emporium tradition of ABC Carpet & Home, every glass, napkin, table, chair—and, yes, tourteau plate—will be for sale.

*53 Howard St., at Mercer St.; 212-852-9097*