

BEST CHEESE SHOPS

WE'LL TAKE THE STINKY ONE



ATLANTA AREA

owner Doug Strickland tries to keep "a small, well-edited list of artisan cheese from the U.S., France, Italy, Spain, and a little bit from Greece." Strickland also focuses on local cheese producers like Sweet Grass Dairy of Thomasville, Georgia. His favorites include Chabis Baies Roses, a goat cheese covered in red peppercorns. *The Barrelman, 800 Peachtree St., Suite F, Atlanta, (404) 228-8817*

Todd Mussman and Ryan Turner of will break a cheese open and try it on the spot. Big sellers include nevat from Catalonia and England's Hereford Hop. Their hottest item is Persian Feta from Australia's Yarra Valley Dairy. "It's like contraband now," says Turner. "It sells out within days." *Muss & Turner's, 1675 Cumberland Pkwy., Smyrna, (770) 434-1114, www.mussandturners.com*

cheesemonger Tim Gaddis stocks about 130 cheeses at a time and says American artisanals like Vermont's Jasper Hill Farm have been popular lately. The shop occasionally carries a Tibetan yak cheese, too. "Gamey" would be the best way to describe it, says Gaddis. "Not in a bad way," he insists. "It's just very different." Whenever possible he also stocks unpasteurized-milk cheeses. *Star Provisions, 1198 Howell Mill Rd., Atlanta, (404) 365-0410, www.starprovisions.com/star*

BOSTON AREA

The astonishing cheese wall at includes selections imported exclusively by the shop. At times there are more than 150 different cheeses on the premises, from nutty comté to the Vermont-made Bayley Hazen Blue. The cellar of the small shop functions as an aging cave, where wheels of cheese reach perfection. On a slow day, you might be able to see it. *Formaggio Kitchen, 244 Huron Ave., Cambridge, (617) 354-4750, www.formaggiokitchen.com*

The focus at is on wine, but the selection of cheeses, while small, is satisfying and usually includes aged gouda and ultra-rich triple creams. *The Wine and Cheese Cask, 407 Washington St., Somerville, (617) 623-8656, www.thewineandcheesecask.com*

Most of the cheeses at are pre-wrapped, but the store offers a broad selection and good prices. *Russo's, 560 Pleasant St., Watertown, (617) 923-1500, www.russos.com*

CHICAGO

stocks loads of local and European cheeses, wine, crackers, breads. *Fox & Obel Food Market, 401 E. Illinois St., Chicago, (312) 410-7301, www.fox-obel.com*

DALLAS

With the demise of Marty's a couple years back, is currently Dallas's only independent cheese shop. It's spent 23 years turning out handmade cheeses and currently has a menu of more than two dozen. Owner Paula Lambert also runs monthly cheesemaking classes in which students learn to make mozzarella and ricotta. *Mozzarella Company, 2944 Elm St., Dallas, (214) 741-4072, www.mozzco.com*

DETROIT AREA

cheese buyer Nancy Weiss-Giffels offers some 500 different cheeses over the course of a year. She groups them by type rather than country so that American artisanal cheeses appear alongside their French counterparts. "Usually what stops people is the name, like Oregonzola, a raw-milk blue. People stop when they see that." *Holiday Market, 1203 S. Main St., Royal Oak, (248) 541-1414, www.holidaymarket.com*

For 22 years, cheese's Midwest home has been V&J's specializes in small, family-produced imports that don't get major U.S. exposure, like Fulvi Romano, the only cheese of its kind from Rome that's available in this country, and tetilla, a smooth, creamy, hard-rind Spanish cheese.

Vince & Joe's International Gourmet Market, 41790 Garfield, Clinton Township, (586) 263-7870, www.vinceandjoes.com

The folks at are passionate about food, and cheese is no exception. From classic American selections to British stilton and Italian taleggio, this place has the goods. Zingerman's ships cheese to lots of it—so if there isn't a decent cheese shop in your area, you can still get your Zingerman's Delicatessen. *422 Detroit, Ann Arbor, (734) 663-3354, www.zingerman's.com*

LOS ANGELES AREA

claims to have the largest selection of goat and cheese anywhere. The ad prices say "Beverly Hills," but the cheese is outstanding, including hard to find specialties like Il Boschetto al Tartufo, Sottocenare al Tartufo and unusual ones like Etorki and Crottin du Chavignol. *The Cheese Store of Beverly Hills, 419 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, (310) 278-2855, www.cheesestorebh.com*

etor Chris Pollan herds goat, sheep, and cheeses together and then explains to like how goat cheeses tend to be the and easiest to digest. Pollan's favorites include Spanish sheep's milk cheese.