



## OVERVIEW

The Seattle Cheese Festival presents more than 250 cheeses from local and international producers along the cobblestone street of Pike Place Market. The festival is the first of its kind on the West Coast with artisanal cheese at center stage. The three-day event offers the general public and the restaurant trade the opportunity to taste, celebrate and learn more about artisanal cheese through the Cheese Concourse, informative seminars and panels, cooking demonstrations, a wine garden and a children's scavenger hunt. Local restaurants and chefs bring the Seattle Cheese Festival to the table for their customers by providing "Cheese Fest Best" cheese dishes during the month of the festival at celebrated restaurants throughout the Seattle area.

The Seattle Cheese Festival is a nonprofit originally conceived by DeLaurenti Specialty Food & Wine. DeLaurenti Specialty Food & Wine has served Seattle residents and visitors for close to 60 years from its outpost on First and Pike in Pike's Place Market. DeLaurenti owner Pat McCarthy wanted to create a way to give exposure to artisanal cheese – the centerpiece of the store as well as recognition to artisanal producers.

Always believing that tasting cheese is the best way to experience it, McCarthy and Connie Bennett, DeLaurenti cheese manager, wanted to bring their cheese counter to the street and offer free tastings to the public during the festival. With the help of sponsors and individual cheese producers the Seattle Cheese Festival did just that in 2005, its first year. DeLaurenti was awarded the *Gourmet News* Retail Leadership Award in 2005 for establishing the Seattle Cheese Festival.

The 2006 festival brought more cheeses and a larger event space with a special area dedicated to small and limited cheese producers. More than 70,000 people actively participated in the festival over the course of the two days. Cheeses and cheesemakers came from all over the country and the world to sell and sample their cheeses, including the famed cheesemaker Hervé Mons. Mons also participated in leading a seminar on washed rind cheeses. Within the wine tent attendees could find dozens of wines to taste, specifically selected to pair well with the artisanal cheeses on display at the festival.

2007 will bring an even bigger and better festival to the Market with additional street space devote to the Cheese Concourse. Chef demonstrations will be held in the heart of the festival area beside the cheesemakers' booths. On May 18, four top Seattle chefs will host cooking classes in their restaurants, giving attendees an intimate look at cooking with cheese along with the opportunity to dine at the restaurant for a limited prix-fixe offering. The 2007 festival will kick-off with a truckle race. A truckle is a barrel-shaped cheese, taller than it is wide. The 18 pound barrels of cheese will be rolled with cheesemaking spatulas by three Seattle personalities on Saturday morning of the festival. From the famous Market pig to Beecher's Handmade Cheese, the race is surely a can't miss event. The truckles feature Beecher's soon-to-be-released Flagship Reserve.

Seattle Cheese Festival's purpose is to educate the public on artisanal, handcrafted and farmstead cheese and to benefit specialty cheese producers – opening the doors to cheese for everyone. Taste, celebrate and learn about cheese – it's that simple.