LONG PADDOCK CHEESE

THE CHEESE SCHOOL

Welcome to the Long Paddock Cheese Club and our February subscription box!

The holidays have come to an end, and we all rush around madly to prepare to go back to work or school.

We are craving things that are quick, delicious and nutritious. Lucky for us it's the time of year where there is an absolute abundance in the garden. Tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, sweet corn, cucumbers, stone fruit, berries by the bucket load (and the promise of figs, just days away!), all requiring minimal intervention.

This month's box includes:

- 'Silver Wattle' Soft lactic cheese
- 'Banksia Special Reserve' Semi-hard long aged cheese
- Cultured Cream Salted Butter
- Fromage Frais/Fresh Curd

Plus, this month, it is our pleasure to introduce to you a wonderful new cheese on the market, named '**Curdsy**', made and developed by the delightful Alex Cleanthous, a friend and former student of The Cheese School, here at Long Paddock Cheese. Read on to discover more about Alex's journey.

Curdsy was a project in the making for years, even before I knew cheesemaking would be the path I would follow. Cooking was always a passion and so, after obtaining my Master's degree in International Relations, I applied for the Culinary course of "Paul Bocuse Institut" in Lyon.

Life is a strange journey; even as a student, I worked some casual shifts at 'Mons Fromagerie'. After the end of my studies, I gained my professional experience from working in restaurants, events, and catering services. This journey has taken me from France to Melbourne, where I've been based since 2018.

During the pandemic, I re-discovered my love for cheesemaking, a skill I started exploring whilst working in restaurants. After completing my training at "The Cheese School" in Castlemaine, and a lot of trial and error, I created a cheese that I'm proud of, which represents who I am and where I come from…. the grilled cheese, a hybrid between halloumi and mozzarella.

In November 2023, I took the leap of faith and launched "Curdsy". The name was inspired by "curd", the milk jelly, and my favourite hobby, tap dance, as we always finish class with a lovely curtsy.

You can currently find Curdsy at "K-sein Fromagerie", a specialty cheese shop located in South Melbourne Market, "Cornehls and Blackburn Butchers" in Mont Albert, and at Long Paddock's retail shop in Castlemaine.

Don't forget to give Curdsy a follow at @curdsy_melb, where you can find serving suggestion, behind the scenes and just some casual chit chat!

Recipe ideas

- *Sear in olive oil in a hot pan on high heat until each side is charred and caramelised. Serve with a simple salad, with fresh or grilled nectarines, toasted pecans, and leaves of your choice.*
- *Serve with your favourite tabbouleh salad recipe, try swapping the bulgur for moghrabieh, or pearl couscous for a more robust salad.*

Banksia Special Reserve – Semi-hard long-aged tomme

By now you may be familiar with our ever-popular Banksia, a semi-hard tomme-style cheese. But have you tried its bigger sibling, **Banksia Special Reserve**?

We produce Banksia in two formats, a smaller 3kg wheel and a much larger 9kg wheel, using the same cultures & techniques. The Special Reserve can age for up to an additional 6 months in our maturation rooms, where the proteins break down and release new flavour compounds, allowing the development of more complex brothy, nutty and sweet flavours.

Why cook, when all you need is some crusty bread, a serious wedge of cheese, maybe a few ripe tomatoes or figs, and good company?!

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Silver Wattle - soft lactic cheese

Based on a French cheese eaten throughout France, St Marcellin, this soft cheese has a unique flavour and evolution as it ages. It's sure to impress. A truly celebratory cheese, it pairs beautifully with anything sparkling, perfect for special occasions. When eaten young, it is fresh, citrusy, fudgy & lactic. For those who like a more pungent style of cheese, wait until closer to the 'Best Before' date (sometimes referred to by cheese afficionados as the 'Best After' date) for the full gamut of flavours, when more complex and nutty/barnyard/animal flavours begin to emerge and the pungent paste oozes.

A ripe Silver Wattle is like a delicious flavour bomb – experience just how long those flavours stay on your tastebuds. You may even need a spoon to eat it with!

Time for a technical dive: So, what is the cheese we call Silver Wattle? Well, we'll need to get a bit technical to explain it properly. In fact, it's the oldest form of cheesemaking, literally thousands of years old. Yes, it's a soft bloomy cheese but, no, it's nothing like a Camembert or Brie-style cheese. Lactic cheesemaking relies on a long fermentation process, with lactic acid bacteria rather than rennet doing most of the curdling or coagulation work (turning the milk into curds & whey), followed by gentle ladling of the delicate curds by the cheesemakers. Then follow several weeks of ageing in our temperature & humidity-controlled ageing rooms, during which the cheesemaking yeasts, especially the cheesemaker's favourite, *Geotrichum candidum*, work on the cheese to develop its thin wrinkled rind and amazing flavours and textures.

It's also one of the most gut-friendly cheeses you can eat. Made with whole certified-organic cow's milk from which we skim much of the cream (which gets transformed into our butter), not only is it gorgeous to eat, it's chock-full of beneficial microbes. It's a living food, which means it goes on developing while sitting in your fridge, becoming gooier and more pungent as it ages.

We are sometimes asked why we call it Silver Wattle. Well, it's for two main reasons: we want all our cheeses to have an Australian identity, so their names reflect the flora and geology of the part of Australia where we work; and, when you look at *Geotrichum* on a soft cheese rind under a microscope, its formation looks like the blossom on a Silver Wattle tree.

Fromage Frais – Fresh Curd

With its creamy texture and light & tangy flavour, this luscious, fresh cheese has so many uses. It can be enjoyed on its own, spread on toast with jam or used as a base for dips & dressings.

Recipe Ideas

- *At this time of year, we can't go past a simple salad of tomatoes, with balsamic, olive oil, basil and plenty of cracked pepper on a bed of fresh curd.*
- *Or try it served with shaved zucchini, fennel, chilli and mint, with a red wine vinegar dressing.*
- *Mix the fresh curd with fresh herbs, garlic & shallot as we do with our 'Boronia' (available at our shop & farmers' markets), as an accompaniment to almost anything, particularly with smoked fish, potato salad, grilled lamb, or stuffed into a zucchini flower, lightly battered and fried.*
- *Fancy a fluffy oven-baked jacket potato with your lamb chops? – split the hot baked potato and stuff it with fresh curd mixed with herbs, garlic & shallot, finished with salt flakes and cracked pepper. Simple, fresh, delicious & nutritious - we promise you won't regret it!*