LONG PADDOCK CHEESE

THE CHEESE SCHOOL

Welcome to the Long Paddock Cheese Club - and our January 2024 subscription box!

And a Happy New Year!!

We'd like to start by saying THANK YOU to our dear customers for what was an amazing year, whether we met you at any of the large number of the Food & Wine festivals, gin or sake collaborations we took part in in 2023, or at our little shop here in the wonderful community that is The Mill Castlemaine. Or perhaps you picked up some of our cheeses at your local cheesemongers, who do a wonderful job in supporting small artisanal Australian dairies.

In this month's box, you will find a wedge of 3 of our well-known artisan cheeses:

1. Flannel Flower, a soft bloomy brie-style cheese,
2. Ironbark, a hard-cooked Alpine-style cheese made in the traditional way, and
3. Banksia, a semi-hard small tomme-shaped cheese

You also have:

1. a beautiful hand-rolled ball of our cultured-cream lightly-salted Butter, and
2. a jar of our pot-set Vanilla Yoghurt, made with a touch of certified-organic raw cane sugar and whole vanilla beans (the black flecks you see on the bottom of the jar),

both of which are loved by chefs and consumers alike around Australia.

Flannel Flower - soft bloomy brie-style cheese

Flannel Flower is made using the traditional artisan French method of a non-animal rennet-set soft bloomy rind cheese in the style of Brie de Melun, produced in a thin 1kg wheel. It spends a little over a month in our ageing rooms so that the surface yeasts and moulds begin to work their magic and gradually break down the chalky interior.

This beautiful cheese differs considerably from the smaller, stabilised 'Brie' versions that are widely available across the Australian market, which have been developed in order to create a standardised product with a predictably soft, but often bland, paste in order to maximise retail shelf life.

When young, Flannel Flower is lactic and buttery with mild mushroom notes, a chalky centre and resistant to touch before opening. As it ripens, the fats &

proteins break down and flavour enzymes are released, resulting in a more creamy/runny paste, and nutty & forest-floor flavours become more overt and complex.

Why do we call this cheese Flannel Flower, you may ask? Well, like all our products, it is made by our skilled cheesemakers, headed by French/Australian cheese guru, Ivan Larcher, by respecting its European origins (in this case, French). But, also in common with all our products, it is made with Australian milk by our Australian team in central Victoria on Dja Dja Wurrung country, so we want it to have an Australian identity. The Flannel Flower is a beautiful small creamy-white petalled flower indigenous to Australia. And, when our Flannel Flower cheese is cut into wedges, it looks remarkably like the full-petalled flower it takes its name from.

Ironbark - hard cooked alpine style cheese

Ironbark is a large 8kg wheel of long-aged, cooked-curd cheese, similar to famous European semi-hard cheeses such as Comté, Gruyere & Beaufort, hailing from the French & Swiss Alps. We are the only ones in Australia to use the traditional rennet preparation typical of these PDO cheeses (known as Caillette, using natural enzymes derived from the lining of the cow's fourth stomach, the Abomasum), resulting in a cheese with greater complexity and unique savoury/umami flavours.

While excellent simply with just a glass of nice Riesling or Pinot Gris, it also lends itself famously to a variety of cooked dishes. Most memorable for me is when used in a Gougere, a baked choux pastry mixed with gruyere, usually served as an appetiser with Champagne!

Other ideas to get you started are to add it to a Gratin, as a part of a fondue, Croque-Monsieur, in a Quiche Lorraine, cauliflower & onion tart, macaroni & cheese - or even a souffle if you really want to show off your cooking skills!

Banksia - semi-hard tomme

Endlessly versatile, with its savoury-sweet & vegetal-nutty paste, Banksia is a great addition to any cheese board, but also excellent when melted.

Recipe ideas

Our favourite way is to serve it in the Raclette style, grilled and scraped overboiled potatoes, cured meats such as thick-cut ham, capocollo or saucisson, with cornichons & salad. It adds an amazing depth of flavour to fondue, potato gratin, lasagna, French onion soup or a simple grilled cheese sandwich.

Vanilla Yoghurt (pot-set)

So fragrant and light it feels more like a pudding than a breakfast item. Serve with poached or fresh fruit (it's my favourite breakfast dish, eaten as is with the wonderful fresh raspberries and blueberries currently in season). This is yoghurt made as it should be – delicate, creamy, fragrant – who would know that it's literally just milk & bacteria, with the vanilla beans and cane sugar added to set it off. We respect tradition and add no fillers whatsoever to our yoghurts.

Cultured-cream Butter, lightly-salted

We don't think we need to suggest what to do with this. Suffice to say, it is highly sought after by top restaurants in Sydney and Melbourne. So, go for it!