



**For:**  
**CALIFORNIA ARTISAN CHEESE FESTIVAL**  
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**12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CALIFORNIA ARTISAN CHEESE FESTIVAL  
ANNOUNCES STAR-POWERED LINEUP FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2018**

*Tickets available for seminars with world-class cheese experts*

**SANTA ROSA, Calif.**—January 23, 2018—California’s premier cheese and wine event, the [California Artisan Cheese Festival](http://www.artisancheesefestival.com), today announces the presenters for the **Seminars and Pairing Demos** on Saturday, March 24, 2018. Guests at the beloved weekend festival, which is expected to attract more than 2,500 guests from March 23-25, will have a rare opportunity to learn from some of the industry’s most knowledgeable experts – chefs, cheesemakers, cicerones, authors and more - at a variety of interactive seminars and pairings. Instructors include prominent cheese writer and author **Janet Fletcher**; winemaker **Arnaud Weyrich** of Roederer Estate; renowned cheese expert **Juliana Uruburu**; Master Cicerone and Brewmaster **Rich Higgins**; American Cheese Society (ACS) Certified Cheese Professional® and seasoned specialty food aficionado **Vanessa Chang**; Cheese Twins and Food Network celebrities **Charlie and Michael Kalish**; past judge of the International Cheese Awards, the World Cheese Awards, and the Global Cheese Awards **Michael Landis**; and **Debra Dickerson** and **Peggy Smith of Cowgirl Creamery**. Topics range from pairing artisan cheese and elegant sparkling wine to an in-depth tasting and discussion of the ultimate mac and cheese. As an added bonus, parking is complimentary and each seminar attendee will receive a year’s subscription to *Culture* magazine, the leading publication for cheese lovers. All seminars and demos will take place at the Festival’s new location, the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Event Center in Santa Rosa. Tickets are now available at [www.artisancheesefestival.com](http://www.artisancheesefestival.com).

The 2018 schedule includes the following seminars and demos:

**Seminar 1: Exploring Your Palate**

*Instructor: Juliana Uruburu, educator*  
*9:30 to 11 a.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds*  
*\$75 per person*

For more than 30 years, nationally renowned cheese expert Juliana Uruburu has taught cheese appreciation and the art of tasting at Market Hall Foods in Oakland, Calif. In this session, she will take guests and their palates on a delightful journey of discovery, starting with artisan cheese. Learn to identify the flavor profiles unique to cow, goat, and sheep's milk, and experience the way each specific texture plays on the palate. Explore and experiment with classic cheese accompaniments to understand how different nutty, fatty, acidic, salty, sweet, and bitter foods work (or don't work) with various styles of cheese. Leave this session with a well-honed understanding of general pairing principles and be able to identify pairings most pleasing to the personal palate.

**Seminar 2: Get Fresh - Mysteries and Hidden Flavors in Fresh Cheese**

*Instructors: Peggy Smith, co-founder Cowgirl Creamery; Debra Dickerson, sales manager at Tomales Bay Foods Cowgirl Creamery*

*9:30 to 11 a.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds*

*\$75 per person*

Fresh cheese, commonly referred to as "farmer cheese" or "housewife cheese," is at once simple and yet deeply complex. Debra Dickerson and Peggy Smith of Cowgirl Creamery will reveal the mysteries and hidden flavors in fresh cheese. These two industry dynamos will teach attendees about the rich history, evolution, and economics of fresh cheese in the American landscape. Enjoy a tasting of luscious local crème fraîche, fromage blanc, and clabbered cottage cheese, alongside a short demonstration of how cheese really happens. Raise a glass of bubbly to the versatility of these fresh cheeses, which are comfortable both as pairing partners and as ingredients. Take away some of the Cowgirls' favorite foolproof, quick and easy-to-make recipes and your spur-of-the-moment parties will never be the same!

**Seminar 3: Fast Food 1.0 - The Cheese & Charcuterie Plate**

*Instructor: Vanessa Chang, American Cheese Society (ACS) Certified Cheese Professional®*

*9:30 to 11a.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds (Saralee & Richard's Barn)*

*\$75 per person*

Long before instant noodles and drive-thrus, the seemingly simple pairing of cured meat and cheese fed farmers and food lovers. Vanessa Chang, ACS CCP, a seasoned specialty food aficionado, will guide attendees through the types of meats, cheese, and the pairings one might commonly find on restaurant menus across the country. Explore which types of cheese pair best with prosciutto and pâté and everything in between. Guests will leave with the knowledge on how to curate the perfect cheese and charcuterie plate at home.

**Seminar 4: Beer & Cheese Pairing - Sour vs. Hoppy**

*Instructor: Rich Higgins, Master Cicerone and Brewmaster*

*12 to 1:30 p.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds*

*\$75 per person*

Cheese and beer have a natural affinity for each other, and when properly paired, they elevate each other to new heights. These days, sour beer styles and hoppy beer styles are all the rage. Join Master Cicerone and Brewmaster Rich Higgins for a deep dive into these two important beer families and the cheeses that love them. Taste your way through three elegant sours and three heavy hop hitters, each expertly paired with a California artisan cheese, while learning

the finer points of fermentation and flavor development. Leave this session with a solid foundation of beer and cheese pairing techniques and several new beer and cheese pairings to love.

**Seminar 5: Taste & Judge Cheese Like a Pro**

*Instructor: Michael Landis, Cheese Judge*  
12 to 1:30 p.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds  
\$75 per person

California is home to many award-winning cheeses but what does an award-winning cheese taste like? How do cheeses win awards and who decides? As a past judge of the International Cheese Awards, the World Cheese Awards, and the Global Cheese Awards, Michael Landis knows a thing or two about tasting and scoring cheese. Join him for a behind-the-scenes course on the professional cheese judging process. Play like a pro for the day (and maximize cheese enjoyment at home) as Michael guides attendees through the tasting and evaluation of five different styles of cheese, helping them to understand the technical characteristics and flavor profiles of each type of cheese. Guests will leave with an understanding of why it takes more than just exceptional flavor to be an award-winning cheese and a deeper appreciation for the hard work of California's award-winning cheesemakers.

**Seminar 6: The Art of Melting Cheese**

*Instructors: Charlie & Michael Kalish, The Cheese Twins*  
12 to 1:30 p.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds (Saralee & Richard's Barn)  
\$75 per person

Join The Cheese Twins, winners of the Food Network's *Great Food Truck Race* (Series 7), to explore the art of melting cheese. Charlie and Michael Kalish will kick off this session with a tasting of California artisan cheeses rich with melting potential. The Cheese Twins will guide attendees through flavor profile, texture, aroma, and explain the science behind cheese's magical melting capability. Using these cheeses, they will demonstrate how to create unique and delicious recipes. Taste their legendary grilled cheese and macaroni and cheese recipes and be prepared for your next molten adventure.

**Seminar 7: Cheers to Cheese (& Bubbles!)**

*Instructors: Janet Fletcher, author and educator; Arnaud Weyrich, winemaker*  
2:30 to 4 p.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds  
\$75 per person

Cheers, Santé, Prost! However you say it, sparkling wine is one of cheese's most seductive partners. Raise a glass to two of life's greatest pleasures with *Planet Cheese* publisher Janet Fletcher and winemaker Arnaud Weyrich of Roederer Estate, California's premier sparkling wine producer, for this fizzy and festive session. Learn about the fruit, farming, and winemaking decisions behind the bubbles in your glass. Taste a range of artisan cheeses with two distinct styles of Roederer Estate sparkling wine and learn when and why bubbles are the cheese lover's best choice.

**Seminar 8: Proof Positive - Artisan Cheese & Craft Cocktails**

*Instructors: Lassa Skinner, co-founder of Culture magazine, and Ian Winget, founder of Napa Valley Bitters*

*2:30 to 4 p.m., Sonoma County Fairgrounds*

*\$75 per person*

It's 5 o'clock somewhere. Join cheese maven and *Culture* magazine co-founder Lassa Skinner and Ian Winget, founder of Napa Valley Bitters, to shake-up your notions about what to serve at the next cocktail party. Using local spirits and bitters, this dynamic duo will distill the basics of pairing cheese and cocktails. Originally developed for medicinal purposes from various aromatic herbs, bark, roots, and fruit, bitters are a key component in classic and modern cocktails. A drop here and a dash there can make (or break) a cocktail. Understand how bitters interact with spirits to create a well-balanced cocktail whose sum is greater than its parts. Explore general pairing principles, experience how spirits partner with cheese, and leave the session with some foolproof pairings.

Following the educational seminars, cap the day with the *happiest cocktail hour ever*. This walk-around tasting is the ultimate indulgence for fans of artisan cheese and craft distilled spirits.

**\*Cheese & Cocktails**

*5 to 7 p.m.*

*Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Saralee & Richard's Barn*

*\$45 per person*

Start off the night with two hours of fun artisan cheese and cocktail tasting. Cheesemakers showcase some of their favorite cheeses while local craft distilleries share samplings of their best spirits, both as straight pours and mixing them into cocktails, for guests to discover and enjoy. Cheesemakers will be on hand sampling their favorite cheeses to pair with spirits and discover the legendary Fantasy Cheese table – a plethora of artisan cheeses assembled and manned by the Certified Cheese Professionals at Whole Foods Market. This event presents the perfect opportunity to sample, compare, and pair some of California's best cheeses and spirits.

Participating spirits producers include Alley 6 Craft Distillery, American Craft Whiskey Distillers, Golden Bear Bitters, Griffio Distillery, Monarch Bitters, No. 209 Gin, Siddiqui Rum, Sonoma Coast Spirits, Spirit Works Distillery, Venus Spirits, and Young & Yonder Spirits.

\*21 and over only, no children will be admitted.

For more details about the California Artisan Cheese Festival and to purchase tickets, visit [www.artisancheesefestival.com](http://www.artisancheesefestival.com).

Generous sponsors of the California Artisan Cheese Festival include American AgCredit, Beehive Cheese Company, Bellwether Farms, Central Coast Creamery, Cowgirl Creamery, *Culture Magazine*, Cypress Grove, Donald and Maureen Green Foundation, *Edible Marin & Wine Country*, Fiscalini Cheese Co., Flamingo Resort Hotel & Conference Center, Hotel Petaluma, Lagunitas Brewing Company, Nicasio Valley Cheese Company, Pennyroyal Farm, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company, Pure Luxury Transportation, Real California Milk, Rustic Bakery, Sheraton Sonoma County – Petaluma, Valley Ford Cheese & Creamery, Whole Foods Market, and Willapa Hills Cheese, and Wm. Cofield Cheesemakers.

**About California Artisan Cheese Festival**

A 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, the California Artisan Cheese Festival strives to increase cheese appreciation, educate consumers about artisan cheeses, support the cheesemaking community and its sustainability and celebrate the creations of California’s many farmers and cheesemakers. The festival began in March 2007 as the first-ever, weekend-long celebration and exploration of handcrafted cheeses, foods, wines and beers from California and beyond. In keeping with its dedication to the community, the Artisan Cheese Festival has donated more than \$105,000 in grants to local nonprofit partners that support local sustainable agriculture including the California Artisan Cheese Guild, Sonoma Land Trust, Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), the Redwood Empire Food Bank and the Petaluma Chapter of the Future Farmers of America. For more information about the California Artisan Cheese Festival , visit [www.artisancheesefestival.com](http://www.artisancheesefestival.com) or follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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