



**For Immediate Release**

**California Artisan Cheese**

**Festival**

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**THE 18th CALIFORNIA ARTISAN CHEESE FESTIVAL  
TASTE, LEARN AND CELEBRATE CHEESE  
IN AND AROUND SONOMA COUNTY**

*Tickets now on sale for the weekend's variety of cheese-centric events,  
March 22-24, 2024, featuring many one-of-a-kind learning and tasting experiences*

SANTA ROSA, Calif.—February 21, 2024—Tickets are on sale now for California's premier cheese festival, the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual [California Artisan Cheese Festival](#), March 22-24, 2024. The Artisan Cheese Festival brings together cheesemakers, farmers, educators, chefs, cheesemongers, brewers, distillers, winemakers and food artisans from near and far for three full days of cheese tasting, education and celebration in and around Sonoma County.

While Friday's farm tours are almost all sold out, there are still tickets for the weekend's activities including Saturday's dynamic educational Seminars and Pairing Demos, the Cheese Crawl at The Barlow in Sebastopol, and Sunday's grand finale Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa.

Cheese lovers aged 21 and up who are eager to learn and taste can look to Saturday's five pairing seminars helmed by some of the country's leading cheese experts. Sarah Simms, president of the California Artisan Cheese Guild and co-founder of Lady & Larder elaborates, "Saturday's limited seating seminars with industry pros like Executive Chef Tracey Shepos Cenami, Laura Werlin and Janet Fletcher will feature a wide selection of California's best cheesemakers will offer people of all cheese knowledge levels a rare opportunity to learn. The seminars will feature cheese tastings paired with options such as beer, wine, or vermouth-inspired aperitifs made with local California citrus and wine."

18<sup>th</sup> Annual California Artisan Cheese Festival

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She adds, “This year, we are excited to introduce the Aperitif & Cheese Pairing workshop with Mommenpop and Lady & Larder where attendees will have the opportunity to taste tinned fish from Siesta Co and learn how to make the iconic Spanish tapa known as a Gilda. Participants will enjoy a full portfolio tasting of Mommenpop products and a Spritz-making lesson with the cheese tasting. To round out our program of Saturday seminars, we’ll have two sessions, morning and afternoon, of last year’s popular cheese and charcuterie board building workshop taught by Alyssa Gilbert of Graze + Gather, a local favorite cheese shop in Oakland!”

Sunday’s grand finale Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace will feature over 100 cheese and food and beverage producers sampling and selling their products. Some highlights include a newcomer to the Festival, Oakdale Cheese with their Dutch style cheeses, Marin French Cheese Co. will debut its new Petite Garlic and Pepper soft ripened cheese, and Central Coast Creamery returns for the first time since Covid shutdown, to name a few.

The Festival, which began in March 2007, has grown into three days of cheese tasting, education and celebration that brings together California’s premier cheese makers and offers cheese enthusiasts of all experience levels an unparalleled opportunity to taste and purchase new, limited production, and rare artisan cheeses as well as meet with and sample products from Bay Area farmers, chefs, brewers, winemakers, distillers and artisan food purveyors.

Saturday and Sunday event details as follows:

### **Saturday, March 23, 2024**

#### **Seminars, Workshops and Pairing Sessions**

*Various locations around Santa Rosa and Petaluma. Times vary.*

Bringing attendees face-to-face with the experts who work with and create some of America’s best artisan cheeses and the libations that pair with them, the Saturday seminars, workshops and pairing demonstrations tend to sell out early every year. Seminars will cover topics ranging from cheese and wine pairings to building a cheese and charcuterie board to tasting cheese with beer or aperitifs. Some seminar locations also feature a special add-on for guests who want to stay a little longer to enjoy the wines or participate in other tasting experiences.

**Seminar 1: Cheese & Wine Pairing with Executive Chef and Certified Cheese Professional Tracey Shepos Cenami at the Kendall-Jackson Wine Center, Santa Rosa.** Chef Tracey, is Executive Chef and cheese specialist leading Kendall-Jackson’s wine and cheese program, which she developed from the ground up. Her recipes have been published nationally, she is co-author of *Season – A Year of Wine Country Food* and a three-time winner of Guy’s Grocery Games. She will guide you through a seated wine and cheese tasting with homemade accompaniments.

**Add on:** Guests are then welcome to add-on a wine pairing lunch on the scenic grounds of the winery afterwards. *Must purchase add-on lunch at time of booking seminar.*

**Seminar 2: Cheese & Wine Pairing with Cheese Superstar/Edu-tainer Laura Werlin at Balletto Vineyards, Santa Rosa.** Join Laura Werlin, a James Beard award-winning author of six books on cheese and “edu-tainer,” and Balletto Vineyards for an interactive, educational, comprehensive, and delicious tasting of the spectacular Balletto Vineyards estate grown and bottled wines together with, what else – the equally spectacular California cheeses. Attendees will learn how the fruit, oak, acidity and alcohol in wine interact with the salt, fat, and protein in cheese to create good, great, and even the occasional not-so-great pairing too. What works? What doesn’t? Laura and the folks at Balletto will lead you through this fun and delicious tasting at the beautiful Balletto Vineyards event center in West Sonoma County.

**Add on:** Balletto Vineyards is offering California Artisan Cheese Festival guests a “Wine Club for a Day” discount of 20% on all wines to those who attend the workshop on Saturday, March 23, 2024

**Seminar 3: Cheese & Beer: Better Together with Janet Fletcher at Moonlight Brewing, Santa Rosa.** IPAs, pilsners, porters, pale ales: they all have their cheesy soul mates. Enjoy the cult classics of Moonlight Brewing (Death & Taxes!) with the cheeses that love them in this guided tasting with Janet Fletcher, *Planet Cheese* publisher and author of *Cheese & Beer*. You’ll be a cheese and beer pairing whiz when you leave, whether you’re already a craft brew fan or merely craft beer curious.

**Seminar 4: Aperitif and Cheese Pairing with Sam Sheehan, Founder of Mommenpop and Sarah Simms, Co-founder of Lady & Larder and President of the California Artisan Cheese Guild at Silver Penny Farm, Petaluma.** Join Sam Sheehan, Founder of Mommenpop and Sarah Simms, Co-founder of Lady & Larder and President of the California Artisan Cheese Guild for an afternoon workshop and tasting at Silver Penny Farm. Come learn about Spritz culture and how to make your own spritz using Mommenpop aperitifs, made in Napa with wine and organic CA citrus, grape-based spirits, and whole botanicals. Sarah will take you through a guided California Cheese tasting paired with each of Sam’s aperitifs. We will talk about all things cheese, tinned fish, vermouth, Gildas, how-to’s for hosting and more!

**Seminar 5: Cheese & Charcuterie Board Building Workshop with Alyssa Gilbert, owner of Graze + Gather Co. at the Sheraton Sonoma Wine Country, Petaluma.**

Join Alyssa Gilbert, owner of Oakland’s Graze + Gather Co. to learn tried and true methods to building your very own Instagram-worthy cheese and charcuterie board. There will be two sessions of this seminar; Morning Session (Seminar 5A) and Afternoon Session (Seminar 5B)

Ticket Price Includes:

- One seat at our Cheese + Charcuterie Board Building Seminar
- One hour of instruction with Graze + Gather Co.’s owner + founder, Alyssa Gilbert

- All ingredients to build a beautiful cheese + charcuterie board using 100% California Artisan Cheese
- Single-use wood board + box to take your creation home
- Complementary cheese bites and beverages provided

\*The full lineup of seminars and pairing demos may be found at <https://artisancheesefestival.com/schedule/seminars/>

### **Cheese Crawl at The Barlow**

3:00pm - 7:00pm | Saturday, March 23  
The Barlow (6770 McKinley St, Sebastopol, CA 95472)  
\$35 per person, guests 21 and over only

Embark on a savory journey through The Barlow in Sebastopol for a lighthearted yet energetic evening of cheese tasting and discovery. Participants will receive a map directing them to various businesses where cheesemakers will offer samples, accompanied by featured food or beverage tastings. Tickets must be purchased in advance, and detailed check-in information and parking details will be provided to ticket holders closer to the event date. This experience is exclusively for guests 21 and over.

\*All sales are final, and the event takes place rain or shine.  
<https://artisancheesefestival.com/event/cheese-crawl/>

## **Sunday, March 24, 2024**

### **Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace**

**Early Entry: 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

**General Admission: 12:00 Noon - 4:00 PM**

Event location: Grace Pavilion at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Event Center, 1350 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Ticket Prices:

\$90 per person Early Entry + Bubbles

\$65 per person General Admission

\$30 for children 12 and under

In this banquet for the senses, the Artisan Cheese Tasting & Marketplace brings together more than 100 artisan cheese and food producers, winemakers, brewers, distillers, cider makers and chefs who will offer their hand-crafted cheeses, delectable products that complement cheese, boutique wines, artisan-brewed beers and handcrafted ciders. Discover the next wave of interesting cheese products, books and recipes. Taste, sip, and explore! Bring your wallet as there will be an opportunity to purchase your favorite cheeses and artisan products. Every

guest brings home a coveted Artisan Cheese Festival insulated cheese tote bag as well as a festive wine glass. Live entertainment included. (Strollers are not permitted in the Marketplace.)

\*All sales are final. The event takes place rain or shine.

\*\*Parking at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Event Center is complimentary at the Pavilion and Brookwood Lots.

Early Entry + Bubbles:

<https://artisancheesefestival.com/event/early-entry/>

General Admission:

<https://artisancheesefestival.com/event/ticket/>

For more updates and details and to purchase tickets to the California Artisan Cheese Festival visit, <http://www.artisancheesefestival.com/>.

### **Hotels**

The festival's hotel partners are offering special pricing for Festival goers. Properties include: Sheraton Sonoma Wine Country Petaluma, Hampton Inn & Suites, Courtyard Marriott Santa Rosa, The Astro, Flamingo Resort & Spa and The Sandman.

<https://artisancheesefestival.com/hotels/>

### **Sponsors**

Generous sponsors of the California Artisan Cheese Festival include Beehive Cheese Company, Bellwether Farms, Cowgirl Creamery, *Culture Magazine*, County of Sonoma/Sonoma County Ag Preservation & Open Space District, Cypress Grove, Dairy Connection, Donald and Maureen Green Foundation, *Edible East Bay*, *Edible Marin & Wine Country*, Horizon Specialist, Lace House Linens, Laura Chenel, Marin French Cheese Co., Nicasio Valley Cheese Co., Oliver's Markets, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company, Pure Luxury Transportation, Qualtech, Real California Milk, Rustic Bakery and Sonoma County Tourism.

### **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. In keeping with its dedication to the community, the Artisan Cheese Festival has donated more than \$180,000 in grants to nonprofit partners that support local sustainable agriculture including the California Artisan Cheese Guild. For more information about the California Artisan Cheese Festival, visit <http://www.artisancheesefestival.com/> or follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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