



*Why It is the Most Luxurious
Olive Oil in the World*

ÉTEO

Olive oil has been part of the history of Greece; hence, it is fitting that the 'most luxurious' olive oil in the world also comes from this country. Called Éteó, this is the most exclusive ultra-premium olive oil brand. Each bottle is handmade using porcelain and olive wood, preserving the oil sealed inside like its Hellenic forefathers. Each bottle is designed to look like a work of art. The olives are harvested and pressed. The certified Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil is a product of the Koroneiki variety, Greece's most famous and well-known olive, recognized for its low acidity.

"What gave birth to Éteó was the vision to create something that is the purest, the most genuine product of all, much like Athena's gift to humans," explains Alexandros Papadopoulos, the CEO of Éteó. The Olive is also one of Greece's most sacred fruits; the olive tree is traditionally a symbol of fruitfulness and peace. It is said that many years ago, Zeus challenged Athena and Poseidon to a contest for control over Athens. Athena chose to gift the Athenians an olive branch, while Poseidon gave a saltwater spring; the Athenians chose the olive branch as the superior gift, and Athena took patronage of the city. Since then, the olive tree has been a much-loved part of Greek life and health. Many believe the olive groves around Greece today contain small pieces of Athena's original olive tree.

Due to the rising popularity of olive oil, the rise of luxury olive oils has begun. The value of olive oil revolves around how the olives are harvested, how the end product is made, and how the healthy nutrients are preserved during the manufacturing process. All this contributes to the oil's value. Éteó uses a combination of ceramic wood and olive wood along with the handmade bottle. The organic extra virgin olive oil for the luxury market is a relatively new segment, but as demand rises, this niche is undoubtedly growing. ❖ | BY SOMNATH CHATTERJEE



CALIFORNIA ARTISANAL CHEESES

| BY TRACY ELLEN BEARD

Who doesn't love great cheese? Most people know European cheeses like Parmesan, feta, and brie, but cheesemakers in California are producing some phenomenal artisanal cheeses. I recently attended the 17th Annual California Artisanal Cheese Festival, where guests toured local creameries, tasted limited-production and rare artisan cheeses, learned about production, attended educational seminars and demonstrations, and helped support California farmers and cheesemakers.

After a spectacular weekend of tastings, choosing products to highlight is difficult, but Cypress Grove, Cowgirl Creamery, and Point Reyes made my list of favorites.

Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co.

In 1959 Bob and Dean Giacomini built a sustainable dairy farm along Highway 1, just north of Point Reyes Station. Later, in 2000, the couple and their daughters began making cheese on the farm with milk from their Holsteins. Today, three of the Giacomini sisters, Diana, Lynn, and Jill, own and run the WBENC-certified, 100% women-owned company, recognized internationally as an award-winning producer of best-in-class, hand-crafted, artisan cheese.

The cheese is produced on the farm and in nearby Petaluma. The Point Reyes Farmstead product line contains several kinds of cheese: Original Blue, Bay Blue, Toma, flavored Tomas, Gouda, and Quinta. My favorite is the Original Blue, with its creamy but crumbly textured, tangy flavor and slightly spicy finish. www.pointreyescheese.com

Cypress Grove

Mary Keehn began her journey in cheese making after seeking to find healthy milk for her four children. Her neighbor had goats, and Mary asked if she could buy two. The neighbor replied, "Honey, if

you can catch 'em, you can have 'em." So, Mary went to work with a handful of grain to build rapport with the goats. Soon Esmeralda and Hazel were Mary's. Over time, Mary collected more goats that produced more milk.

Mary traveled to France, where she learned from expert cheesemakers. After all the tasting and testing, she flew home, but during her journey, she had a clear vision of a new kind of cheese, one accented with a thick line of ash reminiscent of the fog that blankets the Humboldt Country coastline—and the idea of Humboldt Fog[®] was born.

Mary opened Cypress Grove in 1983. Humboldt Fog[®] is a soft-ripened cheese with a fudge-like texture and a tangy flavor. The rind is very thin and boasts a touch of minerality.

www.cypressgrovecheese.com

Cowgirl Creamery

Sue Conley and Peggy Smith, two college friends, and business partners, began Cowgirl Creamery in 1997. They wanted to highlight organic practices of local, sustainable agriculture in Sonoma and Marin counties. They started making cheese in their backyard, and now their products are available nationwide. My favorite is the triple cream Mt. Tam bloomy rind cheese ranging in texture from buttery soft to fudgy and with flavors spanning from crème fraîche to mushrooms.

<https://cowgirlcreamery.com/>

I still love cheese from around the world, but California produces some incredible artisanal cheeses. ❖

