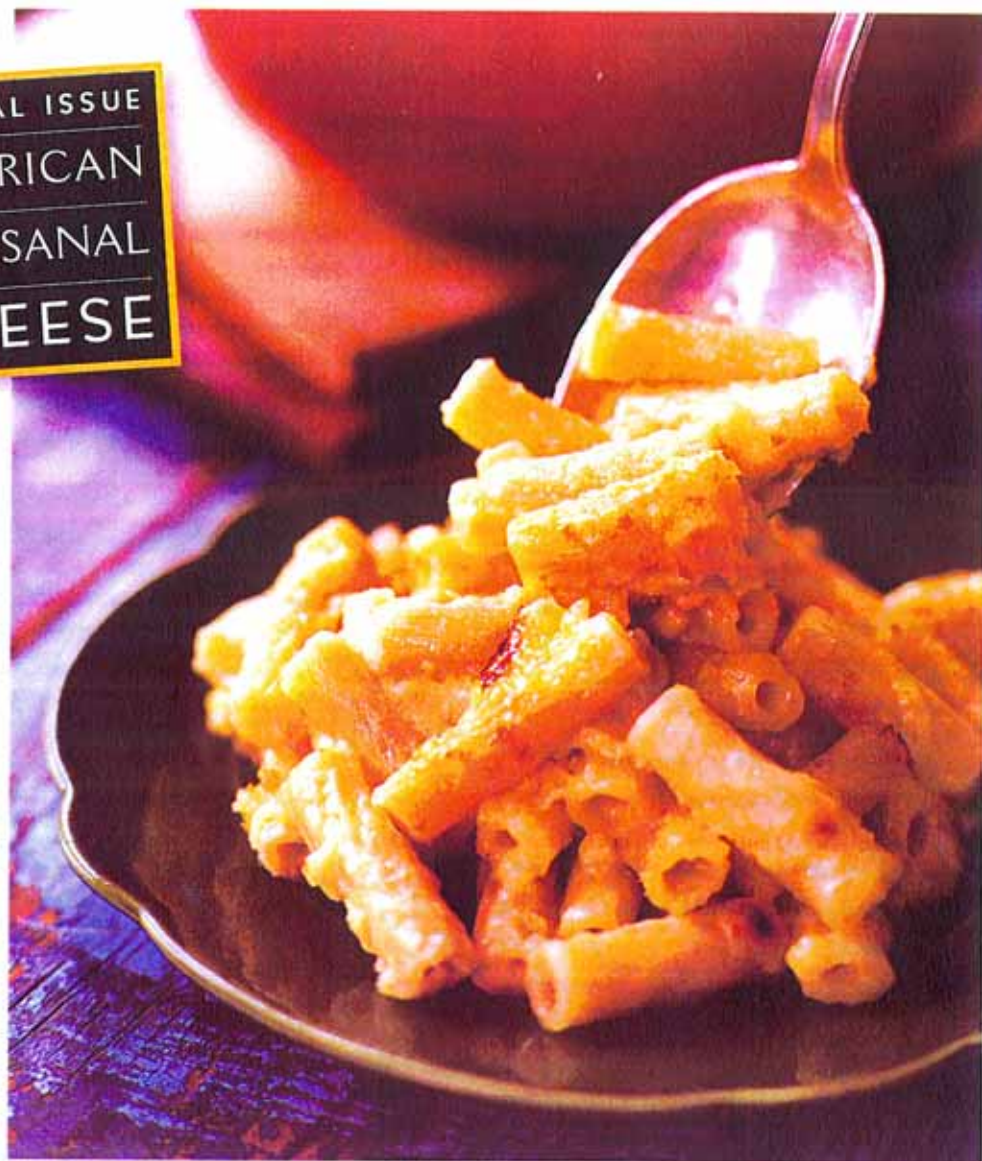


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# SAVEUR

SPECIAL ISSUE  
AMERICAN  
ARTISANAL  
CHEESE



CHEESE  
IN THE KITCHEN

NUMBER 83

# WHERE WE GO TO BUY AMERICAN CHEESE

**N**OT SO LONG AGO in this country, a good cheese shop was defined mostly by its European cheeses, its gorgonzola and its camembert. No longer. Specialty purveyors with wonderful American selections, whether stand-alone or within quality supermarkets like Whole Foods and Wegmans, are sprouting up everywhere. Here are 20 of our favorites. —RAYMOND HOOK AND THE EDITORS

**ARTISANAL FROMAGERIE & BISTRO** 2 Park Avenue, New York City; 212/532-4033. Terrence Brennan's cheese-themed bistro has a retail counter overseen by "maitre fromager" Max McCalman. The cheeses come from Brennan's Artisanal Cheese Center, which itself sells over 200 cheeses by mail order (877/797-1200; [www.artisanalcheese.com](http://www.artisanalcheese.com)).

**BARRELMAN WINE AND CHEESE BY ENO** 800 Peachtree Street, Suite F, Atlanta; 404/228-8817; [www.barrelman-winesbyeno.com](http://www.barrelman-winesbyeno.com). The selection here is small but well edited, and the staff is adept at pairing cheeses with the wines sold at the shop.

**BEDFORD CHEESE SHOP** 218 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn; 888/

484-3243; [www.bedfordcheese.shop.com](http://www.bedfordcheese.shop.com). Shoe box-size and jam-packed with some 120 fine-quality cheeses from around the world—and with a hip crowd there to buy them.

**BEECHER'S HANDMADE CHEESE** 1600 Pike Place, Seattle; 206/956-1964; [www.beechershandmadecheese.com](http://www.beechershandmadecheese.com). Sells 40 to 50 cheeses, all artisanal, all from west of the Mississippi.

**CENTRAL MARKET** 4001 North Lamar, Austin (plus six other locations in Texas); 800/360-2552; [www.centralmarket.com](http://www.centralmarket.com). The store organizes its 700 cheeses by country and type. The friendly, knowledgeable staff makes buying here even more of a pleasure.

**THE CHEESE BOARD COLLECTIVE** 1504 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley; 510/549-3183; [www.cheeseboardcollective.coop](http://www.cheeseboardcollective.coop). Founded in 1967, it has been car-

rying American artisanal cheeses, starting with Laura Chenel's early chèvre, for more than 20 years.

**THE CHEESE STORE OF BEVERLY HILLS** 419 North Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills; 310/278-2855; [www.cheesestorebh.com](http://www.cheesestorebh.com). An oasis of butterfat in fashion land, this 38-year-old shop seeks out new cheese makers.

**DEAN & DELUCA** 560 Broadway, New York City (plus 14 other U.S. locations); 212/226-6800; [www.deandeluca.com](http://www.deandeluca.com). Cheesemonger Zahidul Hakim prides himself on offering 300 cheeses at peak flavor and texture.

**FAIRWAY MARKET** 2127 Broadway, New York City (plus two other locations in New York); 212/595-1888; [www.fairwaymarket.com](http://www.fairwaymarket.com). Steven Jenkins, author of *Cheese Primer* (Workman, 1996), has guided the bountiful cheese counter here since 1980.

Beecher's Handmade Cheese, below, in Seattle's Pike Place Market.



## CELEBRATING OUR NATION'S CHEESE

**O**ne of the first known cheese fests in America took place in 1802, when a 1,235-pound cheddar from the denizens of Cheshire, Massachusetts, was presented to President Thomas Jefferson (this was perhaps how the phrase "big cheese" originated). He promptly handed out slices to the gathered throng. Since then, celebrations of American-made cheese have popped up all over the country. At the 33-year-old **ARTHUR CHEESE FESTIVAL**, in Arthur, Illinois, devotees of the sport of curling may try their hand at rolling a four-pound cheese "stone" over a mat (September 3-5; 800/722-6474). The **GREAT WISCONSIN CHEESE FESTIVAL**, in Little Chute, features cheese curd-eating contests and cheese-carving demonstrations (June 3-5; 920/788-7390). At the **MAINE CHEESE FESTIVAL**, in Rockport, a dozen of the state's artisans offer everything from manchego-style sheep's milk cheese to chèvre marinated in olive oil (October 15; 207/785-4311). In Watonga, Oklahoma, home to the state's oldest cheese factory, folks line up at the **WATONGA CHEESE FESTIVAL** for samples of homemade chili cheese soup and cream cheese cinnamon bars (October 7-8; 580/623-5452). Try more than 600 artisanal and farmstead cheeses, all of them entries in the American Cheese Society's Annual Cheese Competition, at a tasting gala called **FESTIVAL OF CHEESE**, in Louisville, Kentucky (July 23; 502/583-3783). —CAMAS DAVIS