

Pairings That Go Beyond the Grape: Beer and Cheese Please

(NAPSA)—As small, local artisan creameries across the country continue to gain popularity, many cheese lovers are looking to these small shops for the hottest new trends in culinary delights (not to mention the least expected). That's what makes cheese and beer pairings such a novel and fun concept.

"A flight of cheese served with a flight of lagers or ales can be infinitely more interesting than the typical cheese and wine flight," said Nathaniel Davis, brewmaster, Anheuser-Busch, Inc. "The subtle nuances of a beer and its refreshing or sultry finish can play off a range of cheeses, resulting in a delicious, unique taste."

A few simple rules when pairing beer and cheese compiled by cheese artisans throughout the country include:

Contrast: It's all about the texture

- Light beers contrast the richness of soft, bloomy-rind cheeses such as a triple-cream Brie by cutting through and lifting the cream off the tongue.

- The lift comes from beer's natural carbonation and delicate, balanced hopping.

- Best paired with a light lager such as Michelob Light.

Complement: It's all about the harmony

- Complement more flavorful and complex cheeses such as aged cheddar with full-flavored lagers.

- These beers will play off the nutty character of the cheese and the elegant hopping will balance



Photo courtesy of the farmers who own Cabot Creamery.

the buttery, smooth texture of the cheddar.

- Best paired with American lagers such as Michelob or Budweiser Select.

Balance: It's all about stability

- Balance is important. The cheese should not overpower the beer or vice versa.

- Ales and some darker lagers can be fruity, malty sweet, robust and hoppy. Their substantial body and assertive hopping can stand up to big, smoky cheeses such as a semisoft, smoked Roquefort-style blue.

- Best paired with a stout or a bock, such as Michelob AmberBock.

Don't forget to add wheat crackers, rustic breads, roasted hazelnuts, almonds, green apples, pears and preserves to your customized cheese spread. For more information, visit www.herestobeer.com.