

# A true Quebec farmstead with a taste of terroir

## SUE RIEDL THE SPREAD

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Love at first sight can sometimes be cheesy. The eye-catching silhouette of Alfred Bolduc is pressed into every wheel of cheese that Fromagerie La Station makes. Not only does the imprint honour the lineage of this farming family, but it adds a sense of craftsmanship to the beige-orange rind, immediately drawing you to this rustic, artisanal cheese.

Alfred is a washed-rind, raw milk cheese that delivers phenomenal flavour. Once you slice into it, a supple, dense paste with small pinholes is revealed. A fragrant, sweet, floral aroma beckons. The flavour base is buttery with sweet, nutty notes and a woody taste closer to the edible rind. The rich taste develops over eight months as the wheels are ripened on spruce planks sourced from the family land.

Using raw milk from organic pastures (the business was certified organic last year), the family makes two other cheeses: Comtomme and Raclette de Compton. Alfred Le Fermier not only bears the imprint of the family patriarch, but also carries his name.

Mr. Bolduc, the founder of



This fragrant and flavourful artisanal cheese is made from the raw milk of Holsteins that graze in organic pastures of white clover, wild clover and alfalfa. JENNIFER ROBERTS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

### Beppi's wine matches

Here's a good cheese to pair with those big red wines everybody seems to be drinking with everything nowadays. A cabernet-based red from Bordeaux, California, Chile or British Columbia would certainly qualify. But my preference would be a big grenache-syrah/shiraz- or mourvèdre-based red such as Châteauneuf-du-Pape or Gigondas from France. Fruitier and often bigger, softer versions from Australia – labelled shiraz, or GSM to denote a blend of the three grapes – would be nice as well.

» Beppi Crosariol

the Bolduc farm, was the first of this family to settle in Compton, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, four generations ago. Cheese maker Simon-Pierre Bolduc's mother, Carole Routhier started the business in 2004 after experimenting with making cheese for herself and her family for many years.

Alfred qualifies as a true farmstead cheese, which means the milk comes from one herd of cows raised on the cheese makers' farm. Their 50 Holsteins come from a herd that has had no outside animals added for the past 40 years. Every year on May 15, the cows are led out-

side to graze in organic pastures, which grow grasses such as white clover, wild clover and alfalfa. This terrain, part of the Appalachian plateau, endows Alfred Le Fermier with a flavour specific to this region of Quebec. Only organic green fertilizer and manure are used on the land, and crops are rotated to keep the soil healthy and fertile.

Not to try this cheese unadulterated would be missing out on a great flavour experience. But for a real savoury treat, it's also great under the grill as the ultimate gooey, gourmet indulgence.

» Sue Riedl studied at the Cordon Bleu in London.

## On the block

**CHEESE** Alfred Le Fermier

**ORIGIN** Compton, Que.

**PRODUCER** Fromagerie La Station

**CHEESE MAKER** Simn-Pierre Bolduc

**MILK** Organic raw cow, from one herd of Holsteins

**TYPE** Semi-firm, pressed cheese, natural washed rind

**SHAPE** 4.5-kilogram wheel

**AWARDS** 2008, finalist in Quebec Fine Cheese Competition; 2006, finalist in Canadian Cheese Grand Prix

**DISTRIBUTOR** Fromagerie Atwater and Provincial Fine Foods

### AVAILABILITY

» **Montreal:** Fromagerie Atwater, Fromagerie Hamel

» **Toronto:** Whole Foods, Pusateri's, Leslieville Cheese Market

» **Ottawa:** Il Negozio Nicastro

» **Guelph:** Ouderkirk and Taylor

» **Vancouver:** Mount Pleasant Cheese, Les Amis du Fromage

» Sue Riedl