

GORWYDD CAERPHILLY



MILK	Unpasteurised cows milk
RENNET	Traditional animal rennet
MADE BY	Todd, Maugan & Kim Trethowan
REGION	Gorwydd Farm at Llanddewi Brefi, Ceredigion
FLAVOUR & TEXTURE	Three distinct flavours run through this cheese-its springy, citric, lactic center; oozy, mushroomy cream under the rind, and musty, earthiness of the rind itself.

Todd Trethowan became interested in making cheese after a stint working behind the counter at Neal's Yard Dairy, having previously studied archaeology. Although hailing from Cornwall, originally, he had a Welsh grandmother and his parents had retired to Gorwydd Farm near Llanddewi Brefi. The obvious choice seemed to be Caerphilly, especially as his grandmother, Eleanor Lewis, had grown up in the Eglwysian parish, just outside the town of Caerphilly and had at one time made the cheese herself.

Invaluable help came from Chris Duckett, a third generation Caerphilly maker from Somerset and, by the 1990s, one of the only people making the cheese in a traditional manner and on the farm. Todd still refers to him as a living recipe. Todd lived in a camper van in Chris Duckett's farmyard for 6 months learning how to make the cheese then returned to his parents' farm to make cheese himself.

As the business became busier, cheesemaking has become a family affair, with Todd's brother Maugan and his wife Kim (also ex of Neal's Yard Dairy) now making the cheese. In the past couple of years, they started buying milk from only one supplier (previously they bought from 4 local farms).

This gives them much greater control over the quality of the milk and therefore the quality of the cheese. Around the same time, they also started using animal rennet which has also added complexity to the flavour.

MATURE OR YOUNG CAERPHILLY?

by Todd Trethowan

There are two traditions of Caerphilly. The earliest stems from small Welsh farm production. The cheese was made by hand and was a simple cheese for the farmers. It was the obvious use for surplus milk, vital before refrigeration and for people with little money to spare. It was usually for home consumption and any surplus was sold locally. The farmers ate what they had in the storeroom, which could be young or older, depending on what they had left.

A later tradition developed in the 19th century. West Country Cheddar makers began to make Caerphilly because they wanted a quick maturing cheese to sell young and help their cashflow while the Cheddars were maturing. They often made it using their cheddar equipment and their larger-scale methods of production resulted in a drier cheese. This drier, crumbly, young cheese favoured in later years by large-scale factory production is what is now available in most supermarkets.

We make our cheese in the earlier traditional way of the Welsh Caerphilly makers and mature it for three months. We take particular pleasure when our older Welsh customers say, "This tastes exactly like the cheese my grandmother used to make on the farm."

