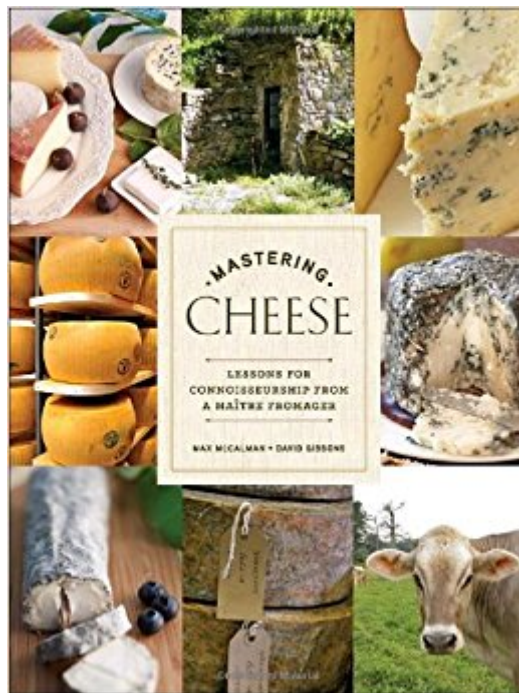




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# Mastering Cheese: Lessons For Connoisseurship From A Maître Fromager



## Synopsis

Master fromager Max McCalman, author of *The Cheese Plate* and *Cheese*, is steeped in the world of artisanal cheeses like no one else. In *Mastering Cheese*, he shares the wealth of his expertise to help cheese lovers on their path to connoisseurship. After years of teaching courses for amateurs at the Artisanal Premium Cheese Center, where he is Dean of Curriculum, McCalman has developed a compelling set of classes for understanding and experiencing cheese. A full master's course in a book, *Mastering Cheese* covers the world of cheese in twenty-two distinct lessons, featuring tasting plates that deliciously demonstrate key topics. For example, a chapter titled "Stunning Stinkers" explains why some of the strongest-smelling cheeses can be among the best tasting and then recommends several stars of this category. Learn about the issues facing real raw-milk cheeses and then go out and taste the differences between these cheeses and those made with pasteurized milk. For the first time in any of his books, McCalman includes extensive information on the modern artisanal cheese revolution in the United States and prominently features these artisans and their products alongside the famous cheeses of Italy, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Complete with helpful charts and an invaluable index of more than 300 cheeses, *Mastering Cheese* is the definitive course that you can use in your own home to pursue your passion for cheese.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Cheese experts McCalman and Gibbons already have two James Beard awards

for previous fromage-focused tomes (Cheese, The Cheese Plate); this outstanding examination of the subject could nab them another. Regardless, it should be required reading for any cheese-lover. The duo start slowly and distantly, with Sumerians, Mesopotamians, and suggestions for the contemporary cheeses that recall the food's earliest versions. After explanations of the cheese making process and tips for detecting flavors and determining ripeness, the two roll up their sleeves and attack cheese in all forms and locales. Suggested tastings are frequent and varied, enabling readers to sample at their own pace as they familiarize themselves with different styles and regions. Even those in the business are sure to pick up a few pointers: tips on the art of preparing a cheese trolley, structuring a tasting, and sophisticated topics like the debate over pasteurized and raw milk. Sample menus give readers a painless introduction to the symphonic pairings of a single wine or beer as well as a multi-wine, multi-cheese event. McCalman and Gibbons prove anything but snobby, employing a down-to-earth, encouraging tone and an egalitarian approach to taste, encouraging readers to eat what they like, not necessarily hunt down "the best."

MAX MCCALMAN is America's first restaurant-based Maître Fromager and a Garde et Juré, as designated by France's *Guilde des Fromagers*. He established the critically acclaimed cheese programs at New York City's Picholine and Artisanal Brasserie & Fromagerie restaurants. He is Dean of Curriculum at Artisanal Premium Cheese Center in New York and is a highly visible advocate for artisanal cheese production around the world. DAVID GIBBONS has collaborated on many books, including two with McCalman: *The Cheese Plate*, which was nominated for James Beard and IACP awards in 2003, and *Cheese*, which won a James Beard Award in 2006.

I'm here to tell you that this book -- "Mastering Cheese" -- is the real, full meal deal, and then some. I've spent just a few hours with my newly acquired copy and am already certain I will be spending much, much more time with the book. There is plenty here to absorb. A brief history of cheesemaking. An outline of the basic steps in making various styles of cheese. The many elements of "terroir" and their effect on the texture, appearance and flavor of various cheeses. The basic "palette" of cheese flavors and aromas and the chemical compounds responsible for them, along with a glossary of common descriptive terms. Principles for mixing and matching cheeses for a cheese plate. Brief overviews of the cheeses of France, Italy, Switzerland, Britain, the U.S. and other dairy and cheesemaking regions. There is extensive discussion about the growing number of New World artisanal cheeses being made in Oregon, Washington, California, Vermont and elsewhere. A short review like this simply cannot begin to summarize the wealth of information

included in this book. In the short time I've spent with it I'm sure I have come nowhere near to taking it all in. This is the most comprehensive, attractive and readable guide to cheese I have ever seen in the English language. McCalman presents it all with the fervor of a lover and true believer. Above all, he is a powerful advocate for small scale, artisanal cheese production, for restoring the character and diversity of real cheese. As McCalman says in the early going, some people are fortunate enough to find their true calling in life, and he found it in the world of cheese. McCalman is a man with a mission to teach us all about the vast array of cheeses made around the world, how to enjoy them in their peak condition and to appreciate all their nuances. This is his magnum opus. The book is as rich, creamy and full of life as a perfectly ripe and runny Vacherin Mont d'Or, as dense and mouthfilling as the very best Salers. If you really care about cheese and want to expand your knowledge and horizons, you want to own this book. I've previously reviewed McCalman's "Cheese, A Connoisseur's Guide," something of a coffee table guide to a rather limited selection of cheeses, marred, in my view, by McCalman's resort to a Robert Parker-like 'point scoring' system that seemed to make no sense at all. This book has no such faults or flaws. It is the book to buy. Just two teeny quibbles: First, I probably could do without the little "chapter reviews" at the end of each chapter. Yes, these are posited as "lessons," but let's not get too pedagogical! Second, and more of a bother, there does not seem to be a bibliography, although McCalman does refer to a number of other books and I assume he did go to other sources for a lot of the information contained here. I'd love to have a list of sources and the ability to seek them out, as this book successfully piqued my interest in learning more. This is sweating the small stuff, however; perhaps both points can be addressed in a second edition someday. As it is, this is a really wonderful resource on the subject of cheese.

This is a great book. I am a HUGE lover of cheese, and this book does a great job covering all of the bases that a cheese-head might want to know about, such as the history of cheese, how to make cheese, and various types of cheese around the world. My only question is why does it not cover all of the types of cheeses available on the markets today? Port Salut cheese is not mentioned in this book, anywhere? There are others that are not mentioned, but this is just one example. Overall though, I'd recommend this book to a cheese-head-enthusiast.

This book has not only been interesting and informative for an amateur cheese lover like me, but the book itself is a work of art. Sewn binding, top-quality paper, beautiful photographs, great design and layout. Just top quality, similar to Rizzoli art museum books. Beautiful, heavy in the hand,

substantial. The artful nature of the book itself lends credence to its topic of fine cheeses. Really fun!

This is seriously one of my favorite books. I love food, so naturally I love reading about how my food is made and why it tastes the way it does. Out of all the foods in the world, I am most enraptured by the world of cheese. There is so much history to be learned, and so many exciting options to be explored. The book is just brimming with delightful, educative material and photos that are really just good enough to eat. I've learned a lot about the cheeses I've been familiar with, and I've also discovered so much about new cheeses both foreign and domestic. I still reference this book when it comes to picking out new cheeses at my local store. Pick this up if you need more cheese in your life!

Very informative and a good reference when throwing a wine and cheese party - either private or for a fund raiser

Very informative and inclusive. I am so pleased with this book. Helped me along in my quest for knowledge of artisan cheese! And SO great to learn from the great cheese monger Max McCalman

The BEST book on cheese I have ever read. Max's writing style is personal and informative, without the snobbery that many of his peers have. He is not trying to promote himself, rather cheese. From novice to advanced expert, this is a must-have book on cheese.

Great read and I recommend if your studying for the ACS CCP exam

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