

# Hinterland says cheese!

by Tonya Jennings - On the Ridge Cooking School

The Australian love affair with cheese is long standing and we have an ever increasing variety to choose from. Here in the Hinterland, we are fortunate to have many award-winning, passionate cheese makers producing quality products—both goat's milk and cow's milk cheeses and combinations. We might not have the legendary 365 plus varieties that France boasts, but ours are worth seeking out.

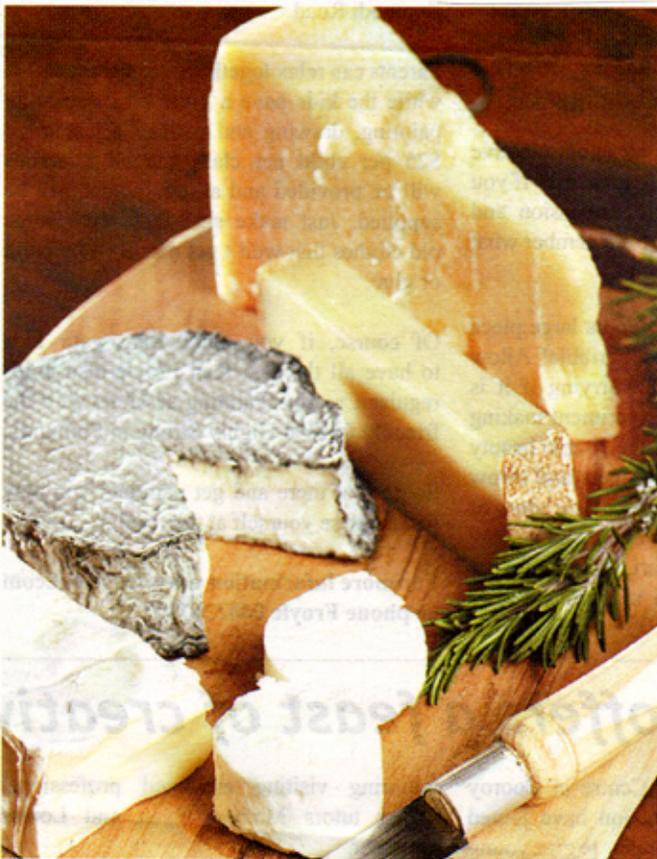
We have several artisan goat's cheese-makers in our region including Coolabine Farmstead Goat Cheese, Gympie Goat Farm, Maleny Cheese, Kenilworth cheese and Gympie Farm Cheese at Conondale. They sell either at the farm door, by appointment, at their own retail outlet or at our local farmers' markets. Some produce hand crafted cheeses and some make everyday cheeses, and they all use local milk.

According to Judith Elen in the Weekend Australian in February, a "very new thing" is sheep and goats milk cheese, or cow and goats milk cheese, which has "hit the market in the past 18 months". Gympie Farm Cheese has been making a fine blend of half goat and half cow's milk cheese called Tango for a long time!

Goat's cheese is extremely versatile and needs very little done to it before serving. Just remember not to leave it in the oven or under the griller once it has melted or it will become grainy and separate. To serve, make sure it is ripe and at room temperature for optimum flavour, aroma and texture. This applies especially to soft cheeses.

Goat's cheese is highly nutritious. It's an excellent source of calcium, protein and vitamins A and D. It also has smaller fat globules than cow's milk and is more easily digested, so it's fine to eat late at night with that last glass of red wine! Instead of dessert,

serve sliced goat's cheese with quartered fresh figs, drizzled with local honey and scattered with toasted flaked almonds. Delicious.



The choices with goat's cheese are endless - be adventurous and use it in a variety of new ways. Pipe goat's cheese mixed with freshly ground black pepper and lemon into cherry tomatoes. Crumble it over broccoli soup, or scatter over new potatoes with olive oil, lime juice, shallot rings and black pepper.

**One of our favourites at On the Ridge is marinated goat's cheese on garlic croutons. You'll find the recipe on our website: [www.ontheridge.com.au](http://www.ontheridge.com.au)**