

The Hidden Life of the Best Cheese in Paris

By **Dina Glore** - March 17, 2016



© Caliwa Photography

*At **Alléosse**, cheese is king in the beautiful store. Made of lightly-colored wooden slats, the store's décor is very elegant and highlights each cheese's true value. Cow cheese, goat cheese, ewe cheese – no cheese is left behind. Like stars they shine, and like stars they mask a fascinating “behind-the-scenes” life.*



Alléosse cheese shop in Paris © Calywa Photograph

Rachel and Philippe Alléosse, owners of the store, welcomed me into their cellars and introduced me to their profession with love and passion. The cellar is like a dairy beauty sa where every cheese is pampered and brought to the height of its quality. Philippe's parent opened the original cheese shop in 1980; but the family moved in 1984 to **Marché Poncele**, the 17th *arrondissement* in Paris where they are now. From here, they began selling top of range quality cheeses.



Alléosse Cheese © Calywa Photography

Philippe Alléosse is an experienced **master cheese refiner**. He quickly understood the magic of his know-how, and bought the cellars in 1987. The refining process is the last and most important step of the production, where the cheese develops its flavor and acquires its final texture. Each cheese Philippe buys from producers is groomed in the cellar for a certain period of time: on average, two to three months, depending on the cheese, before being sold in the store.

As humidity is a very important factor in the maturing process, a sophisticated system sets the humidity level in each room. Under 85% to 95% humidity, the cheese will flake, crack, and dry. Only a few cheesemongers in Paris can afford to have a cellar of **Alléosse's** caliber as it takes not only great skill but also considerable financial capital to maintain.



Author with cheesemonger Philippe Alleosse © Caliwa Photography

Phillippe separates his cheeses into four different cellars with different temperatures, each dedicated to a specific kind of cheese. One for washed-rind cheeses such as the *Epoisse* or *Soumaintrain*; the fermentation is done naturally and produces a very strong smell of ammonia.



© Caliwa Photograph

Another for goat cheese: every individual goat cheese has its own characteristics and its own refinement process. It is left to the refiner to choose whether the cheese is to be soft and creamy or dry. There are as many shapes and kinds of goat cheese as there are producers. The shape of the cheese doesn't modify the taste; it's left to the fantasy of the producer. For example, a producer who feeds his sheep clovers in order to give a particular taste to the cheese shaped his cheese like a clover as a reminder.



© Caliwa Photograph

Third cellar is for cheeses with a firm and pressed paste such as *Tommes*, *Stilton*, etc. Philippe is a creative and likes to add his own spin. At one point he started to explore the English cheeses. He got the idea of injecting Port into Stilton. Not only was the idea interesting but the result was terrific!



Cheesemonger and shop owner Philippe Alléosse © Caliwa Photography

It's quite interesting to see the change of color between when the cheeses arrive from the producer and how they leave **Alléosse's** cellars. Take, for example, the time when Philippe bought an ordinary **Corso Vecchio** from a producer and he kept it in his cellar to make it evolve. The aging process completely changed not only its color but also its taste and highlighted certain features of the cheese, allowing it to become more fruity and powerful. It was a big hit!



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And last but not least: the cellar for soft, ripened, moldy cheeses such as *Brie*. These cheeses are very fragile, and the slightest mistake can ruin several months of work, not to mention the financial loss involved. The humidity is kept very high, between 97% and 98%. Four hours in that cellar and you emerge completely wet. Say goodbye to your blow-dry!



© Caliya Photograph

To end with some anecdotal evidence of the reputation of **Alléosse's** cheeses, both President **Obama** and **Hollande** were offered a selection of **Alléosse's** cheeses for their official dinner during the COP21 forum. Having heard of this, **Alléosse's** Japanese clients have been requesting the same presidential selection to sell to their own clients in Japan!



© Caliya Photography

Rachel and Philippe Alléosse run this flourishing family business with their three children and Rachel's brothers. They sell between 150 and 180 different kinds of cheese, and have won several prizes, including a gold medal for a *Reblochon* five years in a row. Their *Brie* was also honored in the **Gault et Millau** as best *Brie de Savarin* with truffles in 2015.

Watch out for more of **Dina Glore's** exclusive food and restaurant reviews on **INSPIRELLE** and check out her passionate food blog: worldfooddina.com

The beautiful cheese images are provided by [Caliwa Photography](#).

Alléosse

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Having spent many years as an interior designer and graphic designer, Dina is now working as a food blog focusing on her passion for food and restaurants. Born in Beirut, Dina subsequently lived in Brussels, Detroit, Tokyo, and is now based in Paris. Each move sparked new challenges and perspectives in her cuisine, helping her grow as a cook and a critic. Her passion for food and cooking further bloomed as she travelled the world. Dina has followed cooking courses at prestigious schools like Le Cordon Bleu and Le Nôtre. She has also taught cooking classes to share her passion and interest for food. What she expects from a restaurant is a combination of great service, a welcoming atmosphere, a high quality of food, innovation in cooking, and an appealing presentation.

