



ALL CHEESE CONSIDERED

On the Road to Anuga: A Tale of Feta, Medieval Cheese and Cannabis Iced Tea

Attending an international trade fair is both exhilarating and exhausting. For anyone who has ever walked the aisles of the Summer Fancy Food Show, imagine this: take the Jacob Javits Center and multiply it by 14. That's the number of buildings used for Anuga in Cologne, Germany, where we visited in October of 2007. Of those 14 buildings, several are two stories and at least one of them is three stories, and all the while you are moving through hordes of people (some 163,000 trade visitors from 175 countries). Ultimately, however, this type of show allows one the best perspective on new products, new trends, innovations in packaging and technology, and a chance to see what's going on in the rest of the world. This becomes increasingly important as the world continues to shrink and traditional borders continue to fade. Nevertheless, it is hard work, but we found some exciting new products and I'll talk about a few of them here.

Greece had a huge presence at Anuga, including a very large pavilion devoted to Greek companies, and several other Greek companies situated outside of the pavilion. A new company, Gourmante, had a beautiful array of products such as traditional dolmas packed in tins without preservatives; olives and organic olives; PDO olive oils from a mill that sits right next to the Kalamata groves; Greek balsamic vinegar that is aged in wood with no caramel color or sulfites; a selection of antipasti; and a unique mustard with olive oil, balsamic vinegar and herbs. The product most appropriate to this column was their PDO barrel-aged feta, ingeniously packed in smart little trays with a resealable cover. Best of all, the feta was absolutely delicious, and the packaging allows one to use small amounts at a time without having to fumble with the plastic wrap. Their first non-Greek product is a wonderful Haloumi cheese from Cyprus, made from 100% goat's milk.

Margaret Cicogna, the Italian cheese wiz for Atalanta, pulled me over to **Latteria Perenzin**, a fourth-generation, family-owned cheesemaking company from the Veneto region of northern Italy. Emanuela Perenzin runs the company her great-grandfather began in 1900, producing exquisite handmade cheeses that simply ooze with the concept of terroir. The cheesemaker, Carlo Piccoli, was also there to treat us to samples of his Goat Robiola and a Montasio Stravecchio DPO that made me really appreciate this cheese for the first time. It was outstanding in its depth of flavor and creamy texture. Perhaps the most interesting cheese, though, was called Castel Formaggio Medievale (Medieval cheese), in which whole cow's milk is left to stand prior to the cheesemaking in order to build up the acidity level. It was sensational and unique in my experience. To find out more about their cheeses, visit www.perenzin.com.

We also visited with Beemster cheese (again through Atalanta), whose premium Dutch gouda-style cheese is made on a small co-op in Northern Holland on land reclaimed from sea in 1512. The pastures are pesticide-free and the cheese is [...]