

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Cashel Blue**

Tipperary, Ireland

Cashel Blue is Ireland's most famous blue cheese. It was first made in the 1980's by Jane and Louis Grubb on Beechmount farm, using milk primarily from their own herd of 130 Holstein Friesian cows. The cheese takes its name from the Rock of Cashel, an outcrop overlooking the Tipperary plain near the village of the same name.

The impetus to make the first blue cheese in Ireland came from the glut of milk in Europe in the 1970's, which necessitated finding ways to use the excess of milk on their dairy farm. With several other Irish farms, such as Milleens and Gubben, having already turned to farmhouse cheesemaking, and with no existing Irish Blue, Jane and Louis began to research and experiment. Two years later came the first commercial production of Cashel Blue.

All milk used in the production of Cashel Blue is pastuerised. It is put into a 500 gallon vat, *Penicillium roqueforti* is added and the temperature raised. The curds are cut by hand, then drained in scrim cloth (raw Irish linen) and put into moulds, not pressed so as to retain their moisture. Over the next three days it is drained and turned. The wheels are put into brine for a day and then pierced with stainless steel needles to allow oxygen to enter the cheeses and aid the development of the blue mould. The wheels of Cashel Blue are then matured for twelve weeks.

Cashel Blue is made year round, but the best cheeses are made between April and October, when the cows are grazing on the lush green pastures of south-west Ireland. When young, Cashel Blue is quite firm and moist with a fresh, slightly sharp flavour. As it ages, the flavour mellows and deepens, developing a greater complexity with little salt and a rich melt in the mouth creaminess.