

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Coulommiers**

(pron: coll-lomee-airs)

Ile de France, France.

Let's take a moment to examine the complex relationship sustained for several centuries between war and cheese. In many instances, war brought wonderful new cheeses to countries as they were conquered by victorious armies marching forth, populating their new lands and bringing with them the foods and agriculture of their homelands (such as the fifth century Saracen invasion into Gaul providing Tomme de Chevre, another famous and much-loved cheese).

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 left the rich dairy country of the Seine-et-Marne region close to ruin. Following this was the advent of the industrial age, resulting in much of the centuries-old agriculture of the region never fully recovering and, as a consequence, many of the cheeses of the Brie region were lost forever.

The art of making Coulommiers, was revived only late this century by Madame Storme and her 50 cows. This cheese is thought to have ancestral ties to the now more famous Brie de Meaux (many believe the Brie which Charlemagne wrote so favourably about in 774 AD was actually Coulommiers). Production is now managed by Robert Rouzaire, whose company produces the cheese as well as acting as affineurs for other local producers. His cheeses have a distinct aroma of truffles with a sweet, milky flavour. The cheese is matured in its original poplar wooden box which provides the all important micro-climate necessary for the cheeses maturation. Ask if you can have the box when you buy the cheese and store it in there.