

# Richmond Hill cafe & larder

## CHEESE NOTES

### **Queso Valdeon**

(pron: kess-o Val-dey-on)

Valdeon Valley, Northern Spain

Long before the invention of cling film people used what they had at hand to preserve and protect their foods. Despite modern inventions Queso Valdeon is still surrounded in local sycamore leaves which not only provide protection and appearance, but contribute to the cheese's unique flavour.

Made with a blend of cow and some goat's milk in the remote Valdeon Valley in the Leon province of Northern Spain, the animals are free to roam on lush mountain pastures in the spring and summer.

The finished cheeses were originally wrapped in sycamore leaves to protect them from the journey down off the mountains to the maturation cellars in limestone caves some distance away. The cheese is matured for three to four months in these perfect conditions where abundant colonies of micro-flora are present. Similar to the principals of wine-making, cheese-makers often blend milks to achieve a cheese's unique flavour. The cow's milk gives the cheese its creaminess and the goat's milk lends a sweet, fresh flavour.

The cheese has an even bluey-green veining that is interspersed with a rich ivory coloured pate. The flavour is spicy and very rich with an almost syrupy finish. Beware of cheeses that are overly crumbly and if the ivory pate has become at all grey as the cheese has probably been mistreated, or is well past its best and will be acidic and bitter.