

Artisan Cheese Awards

The Artisan Cheese Awards are unique:

They focus on artisan cheesemakers (less than 400 tons annually) ranging from the medium sized Quicke and Lynher down to start-up micro producers making less than a ton of cheese a year. Over 50% of entrants make less than 25 tons a year and a third 33% we define as micro producers.

The Judges are chosen carefully and include representatives of wholesalers, cheesemongers retailers, deli owners etc ie those who might buy the cheese they are judging. They include The Fine Cheese Company, Neal's Yard, La Fromagerie, M&S, Tesco, Bradbury's, Buchanan's, Rennet & Rind, L'Affinage, The Cheese Hamlet, Anderson & Hill etc. Other judges include the Academy of Cheese food writers, bloggers and cheese lovers.

Unusually for awards, our entrants receive the actual judging sheets containing all the points scored and the judge's comments. These are designed to help the cheesemaker improve their cheese. For £12 this is great value for a small cheesemaker who wants to get a professional view on their cheese.

The entrants receive the certificates usual at these awards, but those who win a class also get to keep sizeable 'silver' cups - trophies and rosettes. The Supreme Champion wins a bigger cup and also £1,000 cash, courtesy of sponsor The Fine Cheese Company of Bath.

Class and Award winners (Gold, Silver, Bronze) receive marketing materials to help promote their cheese including logos, award cards (for trade stands) and stickers (used when wrapping cheese).

We also help small producers with publicity materials for their local press, broadcast and print, as well as social media. This year we will also produce a map of award winners similar to that we produce for the British Pie Awards which in the year since the Awards has had over 75,000 visits.

The Awards are open to British and Irish cheesemakers. The last Awards saw over 25 Irish cheesemakers enter with some outstanding cheeses rarely seen in the UK.

The Awards Ceremony is the informal "Cheesemakers Candle-lit Supper" which takes place in St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray (photo) on Saturday 17th July at 6pm. This large spacious church, designed as a cathedral, is the magnificent setting for the judging of the Awards as well.

Immediately following the Awards is the weekend Artisan Cheese Fair 17/18th July (10am – 4pm) where award winners can promote their cheeses on the basis of the awards won. Cost for a 3mx3m stand is just £24 (undercover and including tables, electricity etc). The Fair, the largest of its type in the UK, normally (pre-Covid) has 60-70 British and Irish cheesemaker and around 8,000 visitors. It takes place in the Livestock Market in town, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1JY.

The classes are: Class 1=Soft, 2=Semi-soft, 3=Hard, 4=Blue, 5=Cow, 6=Sheep, 7=Goat, 8=Vegetarian, 9=Raw Milk, 10=Organic, 11=Farmhouse, 12=British Territorial, 13=Protected Food Name, 14=New Cheese, 15 Washed Rind, 16 Flavoured Cheese. Awards are also given for Best English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Cheese, Best Newcomer and Best Small Producer and Best Micro Producer.