



**The World Cheese Awards 2008 acknowledge the only
Cheddar cheese produced in Cheddar:
The Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company Ltd wins Best Cheddar in show 2008**

The World Cheese Awards, which took place last week at RDA Simmonscourt, Dublin has awarded the coveted award for Best Cheddar in show, sponsored by the Traditional Cheese Company, to The Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company for its Vintage Farmhouse Traditional Cheddar.

Owner of The Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company, John Spencer, comments on winning an award at the World Cheese Awards 2008, *'As a small artisan maker competing against producers from all over the world we were all thrilled to receive this accolade. The team here have worked incredibly hard to reach this standard and deserve immense praise. However, it does seem fitting that the best cheddar has returned to its birthplace – Cheddar in Somerset.'*

On August 13th 2003 John Spencer took over the assets of the old Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company determined to restore the only cheddar made in Cheddar to its proper place. In order to achieve this he decided the only route was to make a Cheddar that truly reflected its heritage and authenticity. To this end only unpasteurised milk is used, drawn from one farm itself situated in Cheddar. The true nature of the Cheddar pastures is thus reflected in the cheese, as was the case many centuries ago when Cheddar was first made in the area.

All the cheeses are hand made in an open vat in the small dairy by one of three cheesemakers, all of whom have produced prize winning Cheddar. Although there is a recipe to follow, each cheese is slightly different and the cheesemakers have to allow for this when practising their art.

The methods used throughout reflect traditional practices and so it takes more than three days from when the milk fills the vat until the cheese is put into store. During this time the cheese is dressed in traditional cheesecloth which remains its only wrapping during maturation. While maturing over the next 10 to 16 months the cheese is turned regularly.

The care and attention throughout its life mean that when ready to eat either as Mature, extra Mature or Vintage, the flavour and texture truly epitomises authentic Cheddar cheese. John's wife Katherine is in charge of all technical and quality issues having worked previously for some of the biggest names in UK cheesemaking.

Just over 18 months ago, the Company started maturing some of the cheese in the Cheddar Caves. The flavour and texture achieved by maturing in this way is unique. Initially, relatively small quantities were matured in the caves to test the whole method but increasing space has been made available by Lord Bath, the owner of the caves and more is now maturing for future sale. As John Spencer

says, 'We use milk from Cheddar, hand make in the village of Cheddar, and we now mature the cheese in the Cheddar caves – it realises the aim I had when I arrived'.

Throughout the last 5 years the focus of The Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company Ltd has been on quality and consistency and the company recently achieved BRC accreditation.

Authentic Cheddar from the Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company is available direct from the company at their shop in Cheddar, via their website, at the Wholefoods/Fresh & Wild stores in London and at a number of small specialist retailers throughout the country.

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Notes to Editor:

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www.finefoodworld.co.uk

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