

Southern Living®

DECEMBER 2010

YOUR
ULTIMATE
HOLIDAY
GUIDE!

The *Joy* of Christmas

ALL THE RECIPES,
DECORATIONS &
INSPIRATION
YOU NEED
NOW

50 GRACIOUS
GIFTS
UNDER \$50

EASY,
ELEGANT
DESSERTS

101 WAYS
TO DECK
THE HALLS



Luscious
Spice Cake with
Citrus Filling
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Special Bonus Section
23 PAGES OF ENTERTAINING IDEAS



our favorite
southern-made
cheeses

Homegrown & Handmade

Food tastes even better when you know where it's from. Our Travel and Food staffs taste-tested more than 200 artisan foods to discover the South's best authentic flavors. Each one here comes with a face and a story. All can be mail-ordered for special gifts or your own holiday table.



ARTISAN SPOTLIGHT

Jeremy and Jessica Little, Sweet Grass Dairy, Thomasville, GA. *Makers of Green Hill (1) and Asher Blue (7)*

Chat up Jeremy and Jessica Little, and you'll soon believe the path to enlightenment is paved with cheese. Preaching the gospel of sustainable dairy farming—open pastures, old-fashioned methods—the first family of Southern fromage embodies the importance of reconnecting with our food.

"We're trying to get people to look at food differently," Jeremy says, "to understand where our food comes from and how it's produced." They're one of the few operations nationwide that tackle both the dairy farming and the cheesemaking, with award-winning results.

Happy, grass-fed animals produce an herby, buttery milk that translates into great cheese. The foodies have noticed: Sweet Grass is on menus from Tennessee's Blackberry Farm to Per Se in New York. —KIM CROSS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENNIFER DAVICK

TRY IT HERE: For their cheese course, Restaurant Eugene in Atlanta pairs **Blackberry Farm Trefoil** with toasted cranberry-walnut bread and persimmon conserve. restauranteugene.com

- 1 Green Hill, Sweet Grass Dairy, Thomasville, GA** This buttery take on Brie won top honors at the American Cheese Society—the "Super Bowl of cheese." \$8 for an 8-oz round; sweetgrassdairy.com
- 2 Go "Fig"-ure Chèvre, Belle Chèvre, Elkmont, AL** French-style goat cheese is sweetened with fresh figs. Owner Tasia Malakasis encourages singing while making cheese—she believes you can taste the love. \$9; bellechevre.com
- 3 Palmetto Cheese with Jalapeños, Pawleys Island, SC** This spicy "pimiento cheese with soul" gets its heat and twang from extra-sharp Cheddar and jalapeños. \$5; palmettocheese.myshopify.com
- 4 Shenandoah, Everona Dairy, Rapidan, VA** Dr. Pat Elliott, "queen bee of Southern cheesemakers," makes a Swiss-style sheep's milk cheese that won bronze in the U.S. Cheese Championship Contest. \$33/lb.; everonadairy.com
- 5 Crottin, Carromont Farm, Esmont, VA** Dusty with French tarragon, this creamy goat cheese is made by chef-turned-cheesemaker and goat farmer Gail Hobbs-Page. \$10/lb.; carromontfarm.com
- 6 Trefoil, Blackberry Farm, Walland, TN** A dramatically assertive washed-rind specialty, it's made for stinky-cheese connoisseurs by the appointed artisans of this farmstead inn. Available April–November. \$24 for 12 oz.; blackberryfarmshop.com
- 7 Asher Blue, Sweet Grass Dairy, Thomasville, GA** Not too sharp or stinky, this crumbly beginner-friendly blue won a bronze medal at the 2009 World Cheese Awards. \$10 per ½ pound; sweetgrassdairy.com
- 8 La Mancha Reserve, Locust Grove, Knoxville, TN** Handmade in small batches, this hard-aged sheep's milk cheese has the crystallization of Parmesan and the flavor of Pecorino Romano. \$20/lb.; locustgrovefarm.net