

A DOCUMENTARY SERIES

# RAW



THE GLOBAL FIGHT TO  
SAVE REAL CHEESE

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# MONDOVINO MEETS CHEF'S TABLE

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A FIGHT IS UNDERWAY TO SAVE THE WORLD'S GREATEST TRADITIONAL ARTISANAL CHEESES... AND PRESERVE A WAY OF LIFE ALMOST AS OLD AS WESTERN CIVILIZATION



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# SYNOPSIS

It's a paradox.

While the 'New World' (the US, Australia and New Zealand) is 'reinventing the wheel' producing extraordinarily flavoursome new styles of artisanal cheese, the traditional European cheeses which inspired them are being threatened with extinction from mass industrialisation and regulation.

Under our noses, some of the world's greatest cheeses are disappearing, but a fight to save them is brewing.

This blue-chip International documentary series tells the stories of both the cheesemakers who are changing cheese one wheel at a time and those who are fighting to preserve it.

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# THE PROPOSITION

## Why does this story need to be told?

1.

Cheesemakers (like their more celebrated cousins, winemakers) are in a daily fight to create perfection, to represent truthfully the terroir in their product. They are driven, passionate people, and as such, fascinating to an audience.

2.

We are losing some of the world's greatest cheeses. For example, only a handful of makers continue to produce real Camembert, in the traditional way using raw milk, from Normande cows, at the dairy.

3.

Unlikely as it may seem, there are, within this cheesy, microbe-obsessed world, transcendent universal themes (What price can be placed on creative vision and originality? Is it selling out if I do so to save my family and employees?). Each episode proposes an important question about the sort of world we are creating. Does it really matter if we lose hundreds of years of cultural heritage in the form of unique artisanal cheesemaking practice? Can science replicate artisanal cheese flavours? What will farming look like in twenty, fifty, one hundred years? Is science friend or enemy to traditional cheese making?

4.

It is time to celebrate the achievements of the world's greatest cheesemakers - as we have for other high-level artisans in the food world. There is an established market for television programs with ultra-high production values shot in exotic corners of the world. Call it 'food porn', call it vicarious travel - this series delivers all that with the added engagement of passionate characters locked in battles with the climate, big business, inevitable social change, and government regulations.

# THE CHARACTERS

Featuring the world's leading cheese makers and commentators



David Gremmels, innovator, entrepreneur, visionary cheesemaker, is on a roll. "Our cave-aged blue cheese is wrapped in pear brandy-soaked grape leaves and tastes like cured bacon, milk chocolate, vanilla, and truffles all at the same time." But it wasn't long ago that he feared he might lose it all. Rogue Creamery, in Oregon, challenged the status quo and sort to create a market for cheeses that had never been tasted. It was a high risk strategy that is only now starting to pay off.



Award-winning author, and cheese buyer for the esteemed Neal's Yard Dairy, Bronwen Percival is one of the leading voices in the world of cheese today. She has an encyclopaedic knowledge of current practices, and she has her own well reasoned views on what is wrong with the European cheese traditions. Her interest in mobilising science to the service of artisanal cheese makers has not always been warmly received, but she is always in the middle of the conversation about the future of raw milk cheesemaking.



Will Studd is the doyen of the Australian Cheese Industry. Provocative, opinionated and passionate about an industry that he had not a small part in creating. Will has seen the highs and lows, he has fought Australian food authorities at great personal and financial cost when he was sure that regulations were wrong. He has been an advisor to many of the best cheesemakers in Australia. What Will doesn't know about cheese isn't worth knowing. Will is a powerful advocate for sustainable farming practices and artisanal cheese making in Australia, and he carries a deep knowledge and respect for traditional cheese making in all parts of the world. As host of his own cheese-focussed TV series he has seen cheese made in all corners of the world.



Gregarious, passionate, driven cheese maker and television personality Nick Haddow is attempting an Australian first. He has already created the first successful raw milk hard cheese (C2) at his Bruny Island Cheese Co. But now he has purchased a dairy farm in the majestic Huon Valley, and has begun creating a state-of-the-art dairy and creamery what will allow him to produce the first soft-curd raw milk cheese in Australia. In a country that has been so highly regulated and so slow to adopt the best practices in other parts of the world this will be a landmark moment in food production in this country. The location of his farm with its native pasture and abundant water is sure to enhance the flavour profile of the much anticipated cheese.



Feisty and highly intelligent, Andy Hatch is doing it his own way. The lawyer's son speaks passionately about the relationship between his farming system and the flavour of his cheese. He knew that the most marginal land would be contain the most bio-diverse and, therefore, hold the most potential for creating flavour in cheese. 'We let the pasture do the talking and just get out of the way', he says about his prize-winning 'Pleasant Ridge' - perhaps the most awarded cheese in America today.



Mateo and his brother, Andy, have a legendary reputation in US cheese circles. They are flavour pioneers and technology innovators from the cheese obsessed 'Kingdom' of Northern Vermont. Their farm - like many of the farms in this series - is also on "marginal land". This creates challenges, such as the need to use silage feeding in the long months of winter (which usually means using raw milk in the cheese isn't an option) but they have stuck to their raw milk guns and embraced technology to allow them to have the best of both worlds. It's a story of persistence and imagination.



Andrew and Sally Hattan are the unlikely producers of world class cheese on their extremely remote farm on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors. The Hattans are reviving production of a true farmhouse Yorkshire Wensleydale - milking Original Population Northern Dairy Shorthorns. Once the standard "small landholder" cow of the Yorkshire Dales, today only 150 female cows are left in the world, making it the only critically endangered breed used for cheesemaking in the UK.



Graham Kirkham inherited the cheesemaking gene from the women in his family. He says with a smile, making his artisanal Lancashire cloth bound cheese is 'bloody hard work which is probably why women did it traditionally'. His team of six make just 20 cheeses a day. A drop in the ocean compared with industrial manufacturers. In 1939 there were 202 families making cheese in Lancashire, now there is just Graham - producing one of the finest cheeses in the world.

OTHERS: Guy Chambon, the enigmatic producer of Salers, high in the Massif Central mountains of Auvergne. He is one of only five remaining producers of Salers Traditionale, the 45 kg wheels of feral, cheddar-like cheese, from his small herd of Salers cows. His story of persistence is intriguing as he relied on science to prove that his traditional methods were sound and sanitary.

OTHERS: Patrick Mercier, restless and irascible, fights and increasingly Pyrrhic battle with authorities over the production of real Camembert. He remains a passionate producer, and organic farmer, making farmhouse cheese - one of only a handful still doing so - in the face of huge odds and mass production of a cheese that has essentially stolen its name. Camembert is not Camembert de Normandie, but Patrick Mercier has not given up yet.

# STYLE

"RAW - The Global Fight to Save Real Cheese" draws inspiration from the David Gelb-directed *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* & *Chef's Table*.

The intention is to create a series of documentaries that are visually sumptuous and carefully crafted, using ultra-high definition cameras, cine-prime lenses, the latest grip gear and elegant lighting. At the same time, we draw inspiration from the 'obs doc' approach. Moments of 'actuality' will punctuate the more carefully planned material adding veracity and dynamism. WE HAVE A STORY TO TELL.

These are the stories of craftspeople who are at the creative peak of their powers, but stress and surprise is part of the picture when you are trying to use microbes to ferment raw milk. We will spend time with them as they create their unique and delicious products, getting to know them as creatives, and as people. We will interrogate how their lifestyles, philosophies and business approaches inform the products they create. There will be failures, triumphs and, in the case of the European makers, perhaps despair. Livelihoods and lifestyles that are, in some cases, hundreds of years old are under serious threat. We may see the closure of a cheese manufacturer with an international reputation for excellence and integrity in our time of filming. European artisanal cheesemakers are truly an endangered species.





# STRUCTURE

The series is envisaged as a 4 x 1 hr journey around the world

## EPIISODE ONE - FRANCE

High in the mountains of Auvergne, Guy Chambon - maker of the ultra-rare Salers cheese - in a desperate last attempt to fight new health regulations that threated his ancient traditional practices, resorts to science to demonstrate that his raw milk cheese is safe as well as delicious. Meanwhile Patrick Mercier, one of the last makers of real raw milk Camembert is locked in a fight to preserve the name Camembert for only those who use raw milk and traditional farmhouse practices. .

## EPIISODE TWO - AMERICA

Three very different cheesemakers in three very different parts of the US - with very different challenges, from climate to government regulations. We interweave the stories of these makers of arguably the three best cheeses in the US. How have they created their unique products, and what role did they play in creating demand for high value, highly delicious raw milk cheese that would have been impossible to produce even a decade ago.

## EPIISODE THREE - TASMANIA

Nick Haddow is taking a huge risk. He is a successful cheese and beer maker with a thriving retail business on Bruny Island but he is willing to risk it all to create a state of the art creamery so that he can produce soft curd raw milk cheese at the organic dairy where he runs his small mixed herd of cattle. Will the gamble pay off? Will he produce the first soft curd raw milk cheese in Australia, and what will the experts make of it?

## EPIISODE FOUR - ENGLAND

The Hattans, Andrew and Sally, live on a hard scrabble corner of the North Yorkshire Moors with their small herd of Original Population Northern Dairy Shorthorn cows, the only breed of dairy cow listed on the endangered species list. They have a daily battle with the elements and the precarious nature of creating a world class cheese in this difficult location. It's said you need to be obsessive to make cheese of this quality. Perhaps Andrew and Sally fit the bill..

# LOCATIONS

**BRUNY ISLAND - TASMANIA**



**AUVERGNE - FRANCE**

**NORMANDY - FRANCE**



**NORTH YORKSHIRE - ENGLAND**

**LANCASHIRE - ENGLAND**



**OREGON - USA**

**VERMONT - USA**

**WISCONSIN - USA**



# THE TEAM

Sean Cousins

writer/director/producer

Sean is an award-winning director, writer and series producer who has created work for the ABC, SBS, Network Ten, Foxtel, History Channel, National Geographic and Animal Planet. His work includes Tony Robinson Time Walks, Lonely Planet Roads Less Travelled, Family Footsteps, Indian Wedding Race, Search For a Supermodel, Designer Babies, among many others. This is a passion project for Sean who has had a long involvement in the hospitality industry through his restaurateur family.

Will Studd

Executive Producer

Will provided the development investment for this project from his own funds. His passion for this subject is unsurpassed. Will has won numerous international awards for his work in cheese, including the French government-bestowed title of Officier of the Ordre National du Mérite Agricole for his work in the defense of traditional raw milk cheese. He is also recognized by France's famous Guilde des Fromagers as an 'Ambassadeur' and Maître Fromager. Will has visited hundreds of dairies and cheese makers in more than two-dozen countries around the globe while presenting and producing his own TV series, Cheese Slices. The research for this series is based on the relationships Will has created over a lifetime.

Richard Kickbush

DOP

Richard is an award-winning DOP with extensive credits that include work in Giant Screen (iMax), 3D, VR, Scripted and Non-scripted. He has a special interest in ultra-high definition image making. Richard is also a qualified underwater cinematographer.

Rikki Paul Bunder

AC/Photographer

Rikki is a Melbourne based creative and film educator. He spent over a decade working for some of Australia's leading advertising agencies and brands. He is a freelance camera operator, equally at home with stills and moving pictures, and also a film lecturer at SAE Institute in Melbourne, Australia.

Damian Corboy

Editor

Damian has worked as an editor for close to 20 years. His award-winning work has screened on all the major networks, and includes John Saffran vs God, Tony Robinson Time Walks, Tony Robinson Time Travels and Family Footsteps.

# STRATEGY

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

We have budgeted to create bridging material and commission a study guide to connect and promote the documentary series to the expanding educational sector. With supporting cine-literacy material it may be possible to have this film included in curriculum or as a teaching aid for one or more of the VCE subjects of Food Studies, Health and Human Development, Agricultural and Horticultural Studies, Global Politics or Environmental Science.

A key to the strategy will be to enter the film in the ATOM awards. In researching this application I came across "Education paths for documentary distribution: DAF, ATOM and the study guides that bind them" by Ruari Elkington & Sean Maher. They discovered that 50% of all successful DAF productions had an educational strategy involving ATOM. As an educator myself, who is engaged by ATOM to run workshops on documentary film craft, and as a judge of the ATOM industry documentary awards, I think I am uniquely placed to have a clear insight into the requirements both for development of study guides and the requirements of films that are successful at the ATOM awards.

I would also seek support from DAF in the role of cultural philanthropic bridge between individuals, foundations, and corporations. A marketing strategy and resources (EPK, DCP etc) will be produced for the documentary series targeting the festival audiences in addition to the supplementary campaign targeting the educational sector. Using figures gained from analysing Screenrights licensing fees the Education Sector of Documentary market is estimated to be worth more than \$10Million dollars. Even a small share of that market makes it worth pursuing the education sector as a strategy.

# WHAT IS TRADITIONAL OR ARTISANAL CHEESE?

TRADITIONAL CHEESE MAY REFER TO EITHER A PARTICULAR CHEESE STYLE, OR TO A CHEESEMAKING APPROACH, THAT CELEBRATES A RICH LIVING-HERITAGE. AS SUCH TRADITIONAL CHEESES CAN COME FROM THE LOIRE VALLEY IN FRANCE OR THE SWISS ALPS BUT ALSO FROM THE GREEN MOUNTAINS OF VERMONT OR A REMOTE ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF TASMANIA. TRADITIONAL CHEESES HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN MADE FROM RAW MILK AND MANY TRADITIONAL PRODUCERS (THOUGH NOT ALL) CARRY THESE TIME-HONORED RECIPES INTO THEIR MODERN PRODUCTION. IN ADDITION, TRADITIONAL CHEESES ARE GENERALLY MADE WITH ARTISAN TECHNIQUES THAT TAKE A LESS MECHANIZED APPROACH AND COMMONLY ASSUME SMALLER PRODUCTION SCALES. CONSCIOUS, SKILLED, CHEESEMAKING AND CAREFUL ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICES ARE INTRINSIC TO TRADITIONAL CHEESE.

(BASED ON "OLDWAYS CHEESE COALITION"  
MANIFESTO)



# WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

## - A PITCH TO PHILANTHROPISTS -

1. The PROGRAM exists to raise awareness of the loss of highly prized and widely admired artisan cheeses in the 'old world'. Many of the world's most famous cheeses are threatened with extinction in their traditional forms - by increasing monopolisation and industrialisation of food manufacturing and the 'frog in a pot' creep of red tape and bureaucracy. Simultaneously the project weaves another story which raises awareness of the high quality 'new world' cheeses being produced in places like Australia, New Zealand, and the US. These cheesemakers are trying to convince the marketplace that their more expensive cheeses are worth the price. It's a battle to change the buying habits of Western consumers who have for decades made food choices based largely on price before quality. These farmers and cheesemakers have staked their future on value adding to raw milk as a way to survive the industrialisation of farming and the power of the milk coops. They too face seemingly insurmountable challenges from governments opposed to the use of raw (unpasteurized) milk in food production. Two worlds, facing unique challenges, united by a desire to create quality cheese products and find a way to make small-scale farming and food production economical again. In this respect, they share values with the "old ways" movement in the US and elsewhere that advocates for artisan cheesemaking as a means to preserve cultural heritage and terroir.
2. We aim to create empathy with the plight of these talented artisanal cheesemakers, most of whom produce their own raw milk. The cheesemakers have been chosen not just because of their quality products, but because they are great characters. They are all, part artisan, part salesperson, part evangelist for a different way of life. Chefs and Winemakers have become celebrities over the past decade, perhaps it is time for the cheesemakers to achieve recognition for their commitment to quality, heritage, and sustainability.
3. The ambition for the film is to be a call to action. Once people appreciate the threat to the livelihoods of the artisans and the lose of cherished food products - some with hundreds of years of history behind them - we feel we can be part of a "revolution" in our approach to buying, selling and growing 'value-added' foods like cheese. Our hope is that we will become part of the dialogue around "slow food" and tap into the growing support for organisations like the US "OldWays Cheese Coalition". Part of the vision is to convert the consumer market to the idea that good cheese (like good wine) is worth paying for. The film has a third ambition - we want to share the important idea that food created by small holding farmers sold in local markets is healthier, and a sustainable way to live. We want people to value flavour, understand the real cost of food production and see that as a price worth paying. Only when consumers can shift their attitudes from a solely price point concept of food buying to one based on provenance and flavour and shared responsibility will we create a future that has a place for smallholding farming to survive the encroachment of agri-business and giant vertically integrated food production monopolies.

# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We are aiming high.

Market research suggests a documentary series, which emphasises stunning high-end image quality of benchmark food products, while telling a powerful story about the social impact of governmental regulation and changes in food science technology on a traditional way of life (universal themes of David V Goliath and even some Kafka-esque moments) woven around a timely message about respect for the environment, will find a significant audience on broadcast or streaming services.

It is noteworthy that the highly successful Netflix series 'Chef's Table', in the latest series (five), has begun to take on bigger, deeper, issues (such as US immigration policy) without foregoing it's visual style and emphasis on characters. This is more in line with my ambition for 'Raw': style with substance.

A further ambition for this series, should the story elements play out in our timeframe, is to create a cinema version for the festival circuit - the international festival audience is one, we believe, will be highly receptive to the film's messages.

The series also has great potential for the secondary educational sector, not just here but also overseas; DVD sales, supported by an informative website and PPV downloadable version.

Poignant personal stories illustrating themes of environmental stewardship, care for the planet, preserving traditional ways of life and animal husbandry are 'on message' for the education market.

We would also like to gain financial assistance from, and share our message through, the growing "Old Ways" Movement in the US who share many of the philosophies that underpin this series.

We want people to understand firstly, what is traditional cheese, secondly alert the public to the fact that time-honoured and delicious traditional cheeses are being lost every year, and finally to connect these stories to a broader message about environmental stewardship, the value of artisanal food production for both cultural and health reasons.