

## Empire Builder Cheese Tasting

Thanks for participating in today's wine and cheese tasting. As a part of this unique experience, we're confident that knowing a little more about today's cheeses will enhance your experience overall. For premium passengers, we are proud to offer a trio of cheeses, one each from the states of California, Oregon and Washington. All cheeses are designed to complement and harmoniously contrast today's vineyard selections.

### Eastbound on Train 8 – Seattle to Chicago

#### **Farmstead Smoked Gouda – Washington**

Small family owned dairy farm operations have seen their numbers dwindle in recent days and are now very much the exception when compared to the number of large agribusinesses with which they compete. The Appel family of Ferndale, Washington, has managed to defy those odds and is thriving within their niche market. Today's sampling features their Farmstead Smoked Gouda, which combines textural creaminess with a balanced smokiness that harmonizes exceptionally well with the mild nutty flavor qualities of this young cheese. Possible libation pairings include; fruity Sauvignon Blanc, Washington state Syrah and hop-balanced micro-brews.

#### **Lavender Cheddar – Oregon**

Since 1935 Rogue Creamery's handmade pasteurized cheese has been using old world practices. A unique example of their artistry is their Lavender Cheddar, which blends imported French lavender blossoms with Rogue's creamy buttery cheese. This magical balance is subtle, fragrant and yet mysterious with floral flavor notes which provide a fresh lingering finish. While suited to a variety of pairings, it is especially complimented by fruity and floral varieties such as Semillon, Gewurztraminer and Viognier.

#### **Jalapeno Pepper Jack – California**

Crescent City California's Rumiano Cheese Company has been championing local and sustainable production practices, essentially since their beginnings in 1921. One of their consistent award winners has been their Jalapeno Pepper Jack cheese. A semi-firm, creamy white, sweet and hot pepper flecked pasteurized cows milk cheese that is as much at home with a crisp Chardonnay as it is with a tall cold brewed long-neck. Rumiano has been a long time award winner recognized by both the American Cheese Society and the California State Fair.

Prices are in U.S. currency and include all taxes. Amtrak accepts major payment cards. Gratuity is at the passenger's discretion. Water served upon request.



If you paid by cash, credit card or traveler's cheque and did not receive a receipt, your purchase is complimentary.



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## FEATURED WINE & CHEESE SELECTIONS



Enjoy the journey.™

## **Welcome to the Empire Builder Wine & Cheese Tasting**

*Thank you for joining us today, as we will sample some of the many fine wines and cheeses from along the route of this legendary train. All of these wines are available for purchase at the end of the tasting, or during the trip between Chicago and Whitefish.*

### **Empire Builder Wine Tasting**

#### **Airfield Estates Unoaked Chardonnay Yakima Valley, Washington**

This family owned winery takes its name from a World War II training facility for pilots that used to be located in the middle of their home vineyard. We selected this wine because it gives our customers a chance to taste chardonnay without the use of oak barrels. Over 95% of all Chardonnay sold in Washington has spent time aging in oak, and what you often taste is the flavor of the oak barrel, and not the elegance of the fruit. This winemaker has done a great job of showing just how aromatic and unique the Chardonnay grape is, and in our tasting notes, we found aromas of melon, tropical fruit, and some citrus. A very lovely wine, in our humble opinion. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$21.50**

#### **14 Hands Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley, Washington**

This wine is a lovely combination of a beautiful label and great wine as well. Sometimes Cabernet Sauvignons can be harsh in their youth, needing time to soften and reveal their charms. This wine is already enjoyable, with or without food, and we found aromas of black currant, plum, and a hint of chocolate. Be sure and ask your Amtrak host to tell the story of how the winery got its unique name (hint-it has something to do with measuring the height of a horse). This wine is part of the portfolio of St. Michelle Wine Estates, and we are always proud to feature one of their many amazing selections. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$18.00**

#### **Hudson-Shah Malbec Rattlesnake Hills, Washington**

The Malbec grape has achieved great fame in Argentina, where it outsells all other red wine grapes. Here in the United States, it is still pretty rare to find a Malbec, and we were excited to be able to offer you a selection from the Woodhouse Family Cellars. All of their wines are named for family members, and the Shah family named this particular wine after their son Hudson. It has a ripe and powerful aroma of blackberries and spice, and you might notice a faint hint of spice as well. We think you will particularly enjoy this wine, and we predict that Malbec may become quite a bit more common in this country, if wineries like Woodhouse are able to keep making such great wine at reasonable prices. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$21.75**

#### **Pacific Rim Gewurztraminer Columbia Valley, Washington**

We saved this wine until last, as it has a bit of sweetness to it and is a perfect finale to the tasting. The only negative is the pronunciation of the grape, and we will ask the Amtrak host to provide a brief explanation on how to pro-

nounce this name. What is most important is what is in the glass, and this wine has an unmistakable, and quite unique, aroma of honeysuckle and other floral notes, along with all sorts of fruit flavors. Just under 2% sugar levels make this a very refreshing wine for summer afternoons (or any other time, for that matter), and this wine has the added benefit of being very versatile with a large group of food selections. The Pacific Rim winery specializes in white wine grapes from Washington, and they are most famous for their Riesling. Nonetheless, we have a special place in our heart for this great selection as well. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$22.50**

### **Empire Builder Cheese Tasting**

*Thanks for participating in today's wine and cheese tasting. As a part of this unique experience, we believe that knowing a little bit more about today's sensory event will enhance your experience. For premium passengers, we are proud to offer a regional trio of dairy-land cheeses produced in the great state of Wisconsin that are designed to complement and contrast today's wine selections.*

#### **Westbound On Train 7 – Chicago to Seattle**

The Roth family has been crafting old world, Alpine style cheeses in Switzerland since 1863. Roth Käse America has produced today's on-board tasting which highlights three distinct examples of their workmanship and dedication to the art of Wisconsin cheese making.

#### **MessaLuna Gorgonzola**

Fresh Wisconsin milk from Jersey and Holstein cows provides the cheese-makers with the raw foundation for making this Italian-style blue veined cheese. It bears an assertively piquant flavor and can exhibit a pronounced aroma as it ages. It offers a complex, peppery finish that is deliciously flavorful while being somewhat creamy in its mouth feel. Aged a minimum of 60 days, the cheese is youthful but concentrated and partners well with medium to full bodied dry red wines and with Port.

#### **Asiago**

This young, pale straw colored cheese is mildly nutty in flavor with a hint of a lemony after-taste. As it ages, the flavor becomes concentrated and the texture increasingly firm, the finish longer and more pronounced in character. Asiago partners well with a variety of libations, ranging from Chardonnay to Late Harvest Gewurztraminer, but exhibits an affinity for Pinot Noir and craft-brewed pale ales as well.

#### **Alp and Dell Sharp Cheddar**

Cheddar is the most widely made cheese in the world, with Wisconsin being America's number one producer of the variety. While there are several stylistic takes on this classic, Roth Käse infuses their version, as the name implies, with an Alpine tradition. This produces a medium aged, tangy version that is 'pleasantly biting,' but smoothly flavorful and easy to enjoy. Cheddars intensity is suited to a variety of pairings which include medium to full bodied red wines and high gravity ales and lagers.