

THE CHEESE *Le Petit Bethmale*

This small, seasonal natural-rind cheese is made for just a few months a year from unpasteurised ewe's milk in the Ariège region of south-west France. The original cheeses of the Bethmale area were predominantly made from cow's milk, but most of these have now disappeared and today several small artisan dairies have adapted the techniques using goat's and ewe's milk. The kaleidoscope of funky flavours found in its moist, semi-soft texture are a true reflection of the region's quality spring milk, and of course, the skills of the cheese maker.

THE WINE 2006 *Domaine du Crampilh Madiran, Madiran (France), A\$29*

Madiran is produced in south-west France from the local tannat grape (see page 108), which, as its name suggests, has plenty of dry tannins allied with full, deep, meaty fruit. These qualities are a perfect contrasting complement to the Bethmale: the weight of fruit in the wine matches the goaty funk in the cheese, while the tannins melt into its dense, fudgy texture. A bold and meaty Rutherglen durif would be a very satisfying substitute.