

epicure

CELEBRATING FOOD & WINE



Surfing for your supper

Nina Rousseau finds out how to dine in style without leaving the house. PAGE 4

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CHEESE

Will, and a whey

The passion still burns bright in cheese king Will Studd, writes **Leanne Tolra.**

THE voice that shines through Will Studd's second colossal reference book, *Cheese Slices*, is confident, authoritative and calm. It's older and wiser, too; both man and writer have grown. But it's no less passionate than the voice of *Chalk and Cheese*, written eight years ago, as British-born Studd intensified his long battle to convince Australian authorities to lift bans on the importation and sale of cheese made from unpasteurised milk.

Cheese Slices is part of a kaleidoscopic journey (and the name of a companion 21-episode TV program first aired in 2006) featuring world benchmark cheeses and the regions in which they are produced, that Studd undertook to demystify "one of the oldest natural pre-packaged foods known to man".

"The challenges of making the series and writing the book helped me to be more open about my ideas and to explain more strongly the knowledge I have gained in 35 years of selling cheese," he says.

Studd's impassioned raw milk campaign, waged over the past two decades, has divided the Australian cheese industry, but none would doubt his commitment to his cause.

In 2003, Studd was ordered to bury 80 kilograms of Roquefort, a French raw milk blue cheese matured in caves, which he had imported to test the ban. The case ultimately led to relaxation of the law.

He says he's mellowed, and moved

on, running his cheese importing business, creating a TV series and writing a second book, but get him talking and you wonder whether it's a calm before another storm as he awaits the release of Food Standards Australia New Zealand's review of raw milk cheese production in Australia, expected early next year.

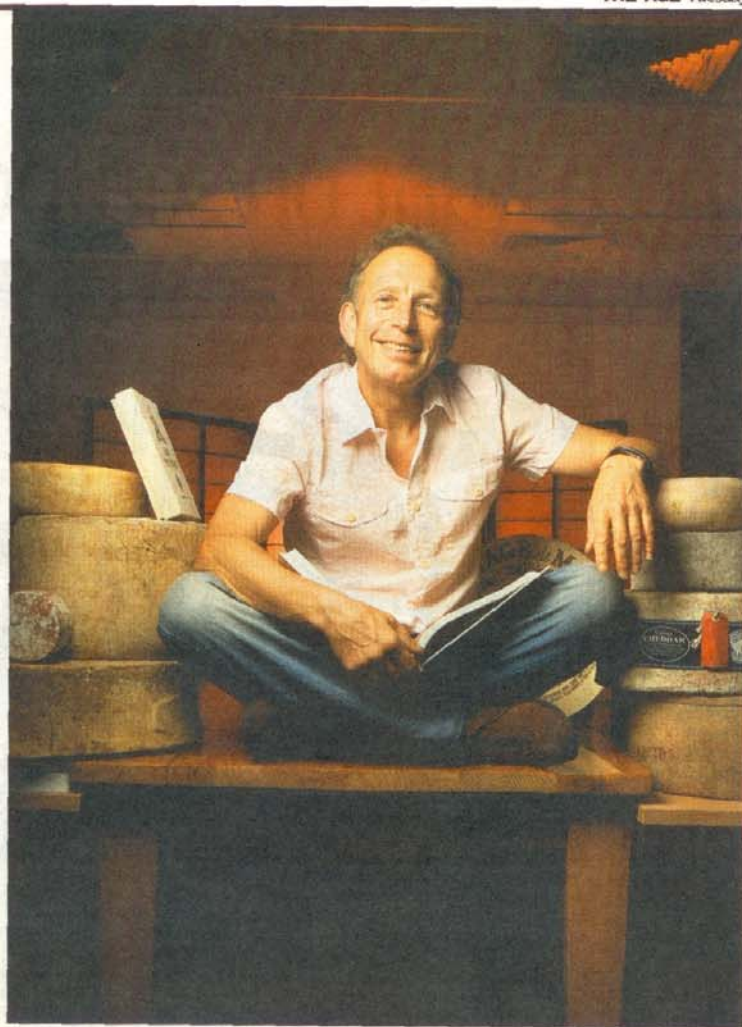
Chalk and Cheese was named the best cheese book in the world at the World Cookbook Fair Awards 2000 and this year Studd was admitted to the hall of fame in the Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Awards.

Through the book and the series, aired on the Lifestyle channel, Studd says he wants to teach people "how to recognise cheese and once they recognise it, they will understand how to serve it and what to serve it with".

He shares his knowledge, new and old: "During the making of the series I learned that Spanish Valdeon blue, which I always thought was matured in caves and wrapped in sycamore leaves, was actually wrapped in plane tree leaves and matured in fridges."

The book is a bold, uncompromising foray through the fields, farms, and dairies that produce the world's finest cheeses.

It overflows with lush, evocative photographs and insights into classic cheeses: "A common mistake with Parmigiano Reggiano is to assume that age is more important than flavour ... mould on the rind is often a sign that the cheese has been



Will Studd is ready for another fight over raw milk in cheesemaking. PICTURE: SIMON SCHLUTER

kept too cold for a long period"; "avoid Roquefort that shows poor mould growth near the edges, looks grey or discoloured or is 'weeping whey'". Studd says it is intended as both a read and a reference.

"The new book is 200 pages longer and very much focuses on the classics.

"There is an Australian cheese section at the back, which I put in there not as a comparison, but as a perspec-

tive of where we fit in the world," he says.

"I think it is important to recognise that Australian cheese is in a post-industrial phase. It is only in the last 25 years that we have had a handmade cheese industry. If we never gain the opportunity to use raw milk, we will be condemned as just another industrial producer."

There are recipes, too, but Studd describes them more as "serving sug-

gestions" and "ideas" — simple instructions for enjoying, and even making, good cheese. So what's next? He's thinking about a third book devoted to cheese recipes.

Would he consider his own specialty cheese outlet in Melbourne?

"Not until I'm allowed to sell raw milk cheese."

Cheese Slices, by Will Studd, Hardie Grant Books, \$75.

Baked Normandy Camembert

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 Normandy Camembert in its box
- 2 tbsp red wine
- sprigs of fresh thyme
- ½ tsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
- freshly ground pepper

METHOD

- Preheat oven to 200C.
- Blanch garlic cloves for about one minute. Remove and cut in half vertically.

Remove wrapping from Camembert and return cheese to box. Pierce rind in six places and gently push the garlic cloves into the cheese. Pour over the wine, making sure it seeps into the cheese. Sprinkle with herbs and freshly ground pepper to taste.

- Place the cheese on an oven tray and bake for 10-15 minutes.
- Enjoy this delicious, gooey delight with fresh crusty bread and good red wine.



Homemade Milk Ricotta

- A simple way of making a fresh, creamy Ricotta-style cheese from milk.

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 litres organic full-cream milk
- 3 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp sea salt

METHOD

- Heat the milk to simmering point in a medium, heavy-based saucepan. Stir in the lemon juice and salt and simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring frequently.



- Line a colander with muslin. Pour the hot liquid through the cloth and leave to drain. Gather the edges of the cloth and turn cheese into a bowl.
- Great eaten still warm, sprinkled with castor sugar and fresh berries.