

The cheeseboard in Dutch fine dining restaurants, I: Practices and opinions of restaurant professionals

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The difficulties in serving a cheeseboard are explored in this paper. From literature 1940–2010, for accompanying cheeses, a shift was found from red to white wines and from dry to sweeter wines. There is also a tendency to more and sweeter garnishes with the cheese. Interviews with professionals from nine Dutch restaurants largely confirmed these tendencies. In most restaurants, a varied cheeseboard was offered with sweet breads and garnishes. Many customers only finished the wine from the main dish with the cheeseboard. When a new wine was ordered, it was most of the time a sweet wine that did not match with all the cheeses of the cheeseboard. Recommendations for improving this situation are given.

Keywords: fine dining restaurants, wine-food combinations, flavour profiles, flavour style

Introduction

When enjoying a four or five-course dinner in a good restaurant, and when ordering a cheeseboard as part of the dessert, one will often be confronted with an assortment of four to six excellent cheeses of a widely and wildly diverse flavour profile. The cheeses are mostly presented in order from low to high flavour richness, starting for example with a fresh goat's milk cheese and ending with a very old Gouda or a blue mould cheese. Even if the cheeses themselves are of an impeccable quality, several problems present themselves. In the first place: how does one cope with a fresh young cheese after a game dish, for example? In the second place: what might be the appropriate beverage to go with this diversity of cheese?

The present paper is the first of a series of three that explores these difficulties by providing an inventory of the customs of fine dining restaurants in presenting the cheeseboard and the beverages and garnishes to go with it, leading to proposals for improving the present situation. In the literature review and the discussion, these practices will be placed in a historical perspective and put on trial by the flavour theory of Klosse (1998, 2004, 2014). The second paper deals with achieving a sensible integration of the cheeseboard into the whole dinner and the third paper explores the use of flavour profiles in matching cheeses and wines.

Literature review

In Dutch households, a cheeseboard as part of the dessert is only for a festive meal on a special occasion (Dimarso, 2011). But all the same, the custom has a long history. Some of the most influential Dutch culinary journalists have occupied themselves with the cheeseboard, the way of presentation and the beverages to go with it: J.W.F. Werumeüs Buning (1891–1958) and Wina Born (1920–2001). Their ideas about the cheeseboard will be presented here, together with the

ideas of others. In 1940, Werumeüs Buning (n.d.) made a plea for taking some cheese after the main dish, in the essay "Kaas na tafel" (Cheese as a dessert, p. 122–128). He gives much advice for a variety of breads; he explicitly mentions butter as a necessity; he pleads for both Dutch and foreign cheeses. As for the wine, he mentions the simple solution of having the cheese to finish the wine that was served with the main dish. For a festive meal, he suggests coming up with "the best bottle". His advice about the wine to choose is summary: he highlights the principle that wine and cheese should match, but gives just a few examples: "A Roquefort flatters a full-bodied wine but it murders a light claret" (p. 125).

Wina Born (1968) does not specify the composition of the cheeseboard. She recommends in the first place French bread to go with the cheeses, and besides other kinds, like rye bread, knäckebröd and crackers. Further garnishing can consist of nuts, grapes and raw celery. Butter is an option but not a necessity. She gives fairly detailed wine-cheese combinations, with predominantly red wines. The white wines are limited to young cheeses of low flavour richness.

Sander (1968) gives the most detailed suggestions for the cheeseboard. It should consist of three to five different cheeses, presented in the order from low to high flavour richness. He gives several examples. Not all his cheeseboards start with fresh cheeses; the lightest one may be Brie, for example. He advises to compose the cheeseboard in such a way that one appropriate wine may be found. Basically, the bread should be French. However, in a table he gives many suggestions for specific bread and cheese combinations. He never mentions butter. Other garnishes are limited to grapes. He makes suggestions for appropriate wines for 65 cheeses. Red wines are dominant (the best choice for 39 cheeses), red or white (18) and only white (8). According to Sander, therefore, in the 60s in the Netherlands, white wine with cheese was the exception, red wine the rule.

Van Es, Stuit and Kruik (1973) likewise recommend three to five different cheeses, presented in the order from low to high flavour richness. They prefer a cheeseboard from just one country. They think butter is not necessary for a cheeseboard as dessert, although they admit that opinions vary.

The bread should be primarily French, but other kinds might also be useful. Further garnishing can consist of olives, cucumber, celery, grapes and nuts. They advise just one wine; for their three examples of cheeseboards, this is invariably a rather heavy red wine. They advise white wine only for fresh, goat and hard cheeses.

Eekhof-Stork and Bailey (1976) explicitly recommend building up the cheeseboard from different types: at least one soft white mould cheese, one hard or semi-hard and one blue-veined cheese and preferably also a fresh cheese. They give suggestions for nine cheeseboards, from three up to 11 different cheeses. They do not give any suggestions for bread and garnishing. Their wine suggestions are very limited. They explicitly warn against sweet wines. They consider the Stilton-Port combination as coming from social prejudice; in their opinion, the tastes do not belong together.

Matze (1984) limits herself to Dutch cheeses – an obvious choice for a booklet ordered by the Nederlands Zuivelbureau (Dutch Dairy Office). She recommends for a dessert three to six cheeses, to be eaten in order of increasing flavour richness. Bread should be varied: rye bread, French bread, Knäckebröd, crackers. Butter is a must (not surprising in a booklet by the Dairy Office). She mentions that the cheeseboard should be used to finish the wine, without giving any advice for the composition of the cheeseboard. Red port can be an alternative. She does not further specify which cheeses should be chosen with this wine.

Klosse (1998) does not give any hard and fast rules for the composition of a cheeseboard; a cheeseboard with widely different cheeses is just one of the many options. Nor is he specific about bread and garnishings. About the wine, he is very explicit: different cheeses require different wines. He gives some examples:

- Soft red bacteria: Gewurztraminer or old cream sherry
- Blue mould: Botrytis sweet wine.

With a mixed cheeseboard he considers a New World Chardonnay as the best compromise – but a compromise!

Although the first edition of the classical Dutch household cookery book by Wannée was published in 1910, the advice in the 27th edition (Wannée and Scheepmaker, 2005) is clearly by the second author, Anne Scheepmaker, and therefore characteristic for the beginning of the 21st century. Actually, Wannée (1910) did not give any advice about the cheeseboard as dessert. Scheepmaker is in favour of variety: four to six different cheeses, in progressive order of taste. For a minimum, one neutral, soft cheese, one white mould, one red bacteria and one blue mould. She doesn't specify anything about bread and garnishes, and the wine advice is summary: light red wine.

Looking back from 1940 to the beginning of the 21st century, the advice of Dutch experts looks fairly stable and uniform: four to six different cheeses, of different types and therefore of different flavour intensity, to be eaten in the order from low to high flavour richness.

Garnishing is primarily bread, with a strong position for the French bread and some use of other types of bread.

Gradually, butter loses its position on the cheeseboard. While Werumeüs Buning (n.d.) is still strongly in favour of butter, gradually, with Born (1968) and Van Es et al. (1973) it becomes optional or even unnecessary.

Other types of garnishing gradually come up; Werumeüs Buning does not mention anything but bread and butter, but since 1968 some other items like grapes, nuts and celery are given, perhaps at the expense of the butter.

From 1940 to 2005, red wine is dominant. Sweet wines, with the exception of port, are not mentioned or even declared undesirable.

Werumeüs Buning, Born and especially Sander agree about the desirability of specific wine-cheese combinations but only Sander gives a very elaborate table. They are rather taciturn about the right wine with a mixed cheeseboard.

Klosse is exceptional with his choice of white wines and sweet wines. This stems from the theory he developed about flavour. This theory will be briefly explained in the next section.

International literature from the first years of the 21st century yields a picture that is closer to Klosse (1998) than to most Dutch literature from the second half of the 20th century. Beckett (2009, 2012) proposes harmony between cheese and bread: heavy cheese requires heavy bread, e.g. sourdough or rich in herbs. She pleads for other garnishes according to the season: in spring a fresh garnish like herbs or leafy vegetables, in summer fresh fruits and vegetables, such as berries, melon, apricots, tomatoes or paprika, in autumn apples, pears, grapes, figs and nuts and in winter dried fruit such as raisins. Likewise, she pleads for a balance between cheese and beverage. Other beverages than wine can be taken, all in accordance with the flavour profile of the cheese: sparkling wines, port, sherry, cider, Pommeau, apple brandies, beer, whiskey, rum, grappa, gin, jenever, sake, tea, sodas and juices fit all well with a specific cheese.

Werlyn (2003) gives detailed suggestions for cheese-beverage pairing – approximately as detailed as the Dutch author Sander (1968):

Light wines can be matched with light cheeses: goat's or sheep's milk cheese blend well with, for example, a chenin blanc.

Acidic white wines need acidic cheeses, e.g. a chèvre would do justice to a cool-climate sauvignon blanc.

Low acid wines should be paired with lower acid cheeses. It can be narrowed down to a neutral chardonnay from California, in combination with a neutral cheese such as Gouda.

Strong, characteristic wines need an opponent matching their strength. A Syrah or Rhône red will pair well with aged cheddar.

Sweet dessert wines marry well with salty, strong cheese such as blue-veined cheeses.

Like Klosse (2014, p. 230–236), Werlyn criticises the idea of pairing wine and cheese from the same region. However, cheese and beverages from different regions, even different nationalities, do not fail to match up with each other. For example, the Pourriture noble wines or *vins doux naturels* are hundreds of kilometres away from excellent cheese matches.

Harrington (2008) comes up with suggestions that are much in the same line as those of Werlyn. Additionally, he gives suggestions for beer and non-alcoholic beverages. With a varied cheeseboard he advises wines that are generally

cheese-friendly, like wines made from pinot noir (red) or an off-dry Riesling (white). On the other hand, hard cheeses can cope, according to him, with almost any wine.

When finishing the wine accompanying the main dish with the cheeseboard, the match between wine and cheese may not be what one should wish. Also, cheese with low flavour richness after a main dish with high flavour richness is not attractive either. Schulp, Gerritsen and de Leeuw approach this problem in the second paper of this series.

In enjoying food and beverage, flavour plays a key role. The flavours of foods and the perceptions of humans, however, are hard to describe. The work of Klosse (1998, 2004, 2014) on this problem has resulted in the model flavour style cube (FSC) in which two dimensions are related to the mouthfeel: coating or contracting. The third dimension is the flavour richness. Contracting is a mouthfeel that stops the saliva flow; examples of tastes and foods with this effect are salt, acid, many fresh fruits and vegetables; also tannins in vegetables or wines. Sweet, fatty and umami substances cause a coating mouthfeel: substances of these kinds leave a thin layer in the mouth. A special case of a contracting mouthfeel is “dry”: substances that make the mouth dry by absorbing saliva, like toast or rusks, or by coagulating saliva, like tannins (Klosse, 2014, chapter 3, p. 61–84). The flavour richness is analogous to sound intensity or light intensity. Flavour richness, unfortunately, cannot be expressed in unambiguous units like dB for sound and candles for light, because flavour has a variety of causes. From the FSC model, Klosse derives eight basic flavour styles, as summarised in Table 1.

In Klosse’s own words:

This model is a depiction of the world of flavour and serves as an instrument for classification. It doesn’t imply that there are only eight flavours left. Compare this to light for example. The flavour styles correspond to the colours of the rainbow. Every colour has many shades and they fade beautifully into each other. There is an obvious difference as well. The exact position of any colour is precisely known. If you go to a paint shop or a printer you can give a number to get the desired colour. In flavour we are as yet nowhere near such exactitude. It is even hard to conceive that we would ever get to such detail (p. 74).

Flavours are further distinguished into two flavour types: fresh and ripe. It is not easy to grasp these two concepts clearly, but examples will help. When comparing the (botanically closely related) fruits apple and pear, then the apple is fresh; the pear is ripe. In herbs and spices: chives, dill, tarragon and chervil are

fresh; thyme, rosemary, basil and tropical spices like mace, clove and vanilla are ripe (p. 69–72).

Using these concepts together, it is possible to create a flavour profile of a given food or beverage. One or more tasters score for the elements coating and contracting (mouthfeel), flavour intensity, ripe and fresh. Other elements can be added, like dry, and the five basic tastes.

Applying these views to cheese-wine combinations, for many cheeses that are coating, wine rich in tannin is far too contracting to give a good harmony. This explains why a cream sherry, with high flavour richness, ripe tones and a coating mouthfeel gives the best harmony with a red bacteria cheese. This is just one example out of many.

In the first part of the literature review we saw a shift toward sweeter wines and sweeter garnishes since the ‘90s. Partly, it may be explained by a “sweeter tongue” with many consumers. The increased sugar consumption, worldwide and in the Netherlands, may contribute to this development. According to CBS (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) between 1950 and 1980 the per capita sugar consumption in the Netherlands increased from 35.4 to 41.9 kg. According to Kenniscentrum Suiker en Voeding (Expertise Centre Sugar and Nutrition, 2014), total per capita sugar consumption was 44 kg in 2010; 26 kg were so-called added sugars: sugars that are added to industrial foods like soft drinks, dairy desserts, chocolate, jam, cookies and sweets. Increasingly, sugar is added to products where one wouldn’t expect sugar (www.suikerwijzer.nl, 2010): bread, meat products, mayonnaise, gherkins or canned soup. Klosse (2014) indicates that the addition of sugar to products will have consequences for the wine to go with it: generally, more residual sugar will be needed in the wine (p. 85).

Methodology

Owners and staff members of nine fine dining restaurants were interviewed about their practice of serving the cheeseboard. The restaurants were chosen from the authoritative Dutch restaurant guide *Lekker* (“Delicious”) that for more than 25 years has presented reviews of the best 500 Dutch restaurants. The selection of the nine restaurants was also based upon location, close to Stenden University or the home of some of the authors. The interviews were held in 2012; some of the restaurants meanwhile have changed location or format. The restaurants are listed in Table 2.

The respondents were interviewed about the following topics:

- What is the place of the cheese course in your restaurant?

Table 1: The basic characteristics of the flavour styles. Derived from Klosse (2014), Table 3.2 p. 75.

Flavour style	Primary flavour dimensions		Flavour richness	Description
	Contracting	Coating		
1	Neutral	Neutral	Low	neutral, light
2	Low	High	Low	round, smooth, supple, creamy
3	High	Low	Low	fresh, sour, contracting,
4	High	High	Low	can be eaten/drank continually, simple
5	Dry	Dry	High	Robust, solid, powerful
6	Low	High	High	Full flavour, ripe flavour, filling
7	High	Low	High	Pungent, spicy, hot, explosive
8	High	High	High	Complex, differentiated, subtle

Table 2: Information about the respondents

	Name and location	Persons interviewed	Remarks	Abbreviation in text
1.	Restaurant NL, Leeuwarden, province of Fryslân	Executive chef Mr. Albert Kooy, SVH Meesterkok	Stenden University restaurant; since October 2014 the name is Wannée	NL
2.	De Nieuwe Mulderij, Leeuwarden	Henk Markus, chef-owner	In 2013 moved to Heerenveen under the name Het Ambacht	NM
3.	De Waard van Ternaard, Ternaard, province of Fryslân	Michaël Roest, executive chef, and Mathilda Broekstra, sommelier		WT
4.	Librije's Zusje, Zwolle, province of Overijssel	Debbie Winkes, headwaiter	Moved to Amsterdam in 2014	LZ
5.	De Bokkedoorns, Overveen, Province of Noord-Holland	Eva Rodenrijs, headwaiter, and Ruben Kwakman, sommelier		BK
6.	Long Island, Hoofddorp, Province of Noord-Holland	Mrs. Brinckmann, headwaiter		LI
7.	By Ús, Leeuwarden	Owners Douwe van der Lei and Ypie Tjeerdsma, chef and headwaiter respectively		BU
8.	Eindeloos, Leeuwarden	Willem Schaafsma, chef-owner and Jorrit Bokma, headwaiter		EI
9.	Mes en Vork, Hoofddorp	Ilse Schijf, headwaiter		MV

- How do you present the cheeseboard? To what extent can the customer influence, by his or her preferences, the composition of the cheeseboard?
- What do you do to make the cheeseboard profitable?
- What is the origin of your cheeses and where do you source them?
- What garnishes, including bread, do you serve with the cheeseboard?
- Which wines or other beverages do you serve with the cheeseboard and actually recommend to your customers? And how do your customers react to your recommendations? How flexible are you to meet their specific wishes?

The interviews were recorded and summarised. Afterwards, interviews 1–5 were analysed and a summary was created; later on, the same was done with interviews 6–9. A total analysis and integration was done afterwards.

Results

In this section, a summary of the nine interviews is given. Restaurants are designated by the abbreviations as given in Table 2.

1. Place of the cheeseboard

All respondents agreed that the cheeseboard is part of a multi-course dinner, after the main dish and before the sweet dessert. BU and LZ also mentioned the possibility that the cheese could be the last dish, especially for customers who don't like sweet things or at any rate prefer cheese above sweet. NL, WT and BK explicitly mentioned the transition to sweet by special new flavours after the main dish. WT, BK and BU mentioned their own liking of cheese and therefore, their enthusiasm to serve it. Additionally, NM considered the cheeseboard as a means of profiling the region by serving regional cheeses.

2. Presentation of the cheeseboard

Here there is an important distinction: BK where they use a cheese trolley, and all the others where they did not at the time of the interviews. LZ used to have a trolley, but they have given it up because of cost. EI was temporarily without a cheese trolley. Customers in LZ can still state their preferences, and then the cheeseboard is made up accordingly in the kitchen. In all other restaurants, a standard cheeseboard is prepared in the kitchen. In VM, BU and LI, customers can indicate that they would rather not have a certain cheese; they will receive a bigger portion of one of the remaining cheeses. Ready prepared cheeseboards are presented on rectangular platters or on a rectangular piece of slate (VM). NL gives three different cheeses; the other restaurants mention "varied", which ranges between four and six. BK has 40 cheeses on the trolley; in practice, the customers will select three to five different cheeses. Only EI mentions the logical order between main dish and cheeseboard; however, due to the limited stock of cheeses, the ideal order is not always possible.

3. Profitability of the cheeseboard

Here, the answers varied greatly. Cheese is expensive and especially the softer cheeses are prone to spoilage. All respondents described their careful keeping practices of cheese.

NL, NM, LZ, EI and VM reported a very low profitability on the cheeseboard; in contrast, LI, BU, WT and BK were satisfied or even very satisfied. BK explicitly mentioned the great sales effort of the waiting staff as a crucial factor in the high profitability. To a lesser extent, this was also the case with LI, BU and WT. Keeping only a limited stock (five different cheeses at LI, eight at BU and EI and "not many" at VM) is an important factor to limit losses and thus increase profitability.

4. Origin and sourcing of the cheeses

NL, NM, WT, LZ and BU serve (almost) exclusively Dutch cheeses; they give extra attention to Frisian cheeses; BU even

has nothing but Frisian cheeses. These restaurants try to avoid the trodden path of the “well-known names”. Only WT buys a considerable part of his cheeses directly from the local producer. All other restaurants use the services of a wholesaler. EI mentions Michel van Tricht, an authority in the Benelux and also a cheese writer.

5. Bread and garnishes

BK takes a radical stance. Basically, they do not serve any garnishes. “The wine should be the garnish”. However, in case the customer asks for bread, dark brown bread with seeds and dried fruits is served. LI, BU, EI, NM, WT and LZ explicitly mention the role of bread and garnish as providing contrasting or complementary flavours and textures. NL mentions the role of bread – the only garnish – as weakening the intensity of the cheese.

The greater part of the garnish is on the sweet side, and also the bread contains sweet elements like figs or raisins (VM, EI and LI). BU gives a regional turn to the sweet bread by serving Frisian sugar bread. Besides sweet breads, bread with nuts is served (LZ). Other sweet components are apple pear syrup (EI, LZ, VM), honey (BU) or fig jam and apple jelly (LZ), apricot compote (LI). EI explicitly states: “Guests are very used to receiving something sweet with the cheese”. Some less sweet garnishes are unprocessed fruit like grapes (LI, WT) or apple and pear (NM). They mention this because they plan also to give non-sweet, savoury garnishing like celery.

7. Beverages with the cheeseboard and customer reaction

NL, BU and WT mention finishing the wine served with the main dish. All other restaurants sell a special wine or other beverage with the cheese. Mathilda Broekstra (WT) clearly sees the problem of a varied cheeseboard: “If you really want to it the right way, you should serve a different wine with each individual cheese”. Implicitly, other respondents share this opinion, but they consider it as not feasible. Only EI sometimes serves several beverages in small amounts. Part of the attraction and profitability of the cheeseboard is in the possibility of additional sales of beverage. However, the customers’ capacity for absorbing wine is not unlimited. Therefore, some restaurants experiment with low alcoholic or alcohol-free drinks. EI mentions *Carpe Diem* Quince. The recommended alcoholic beverages are generally on the sweet side: Banyuls, cream sherry (BU), Port or a specific red wine (EI), *Macvin du Jura* (LZ) or *Pineau des Charentes* (BK). LI states that, due to the narrow assortment of cheeses, they cannot adapt the cheeseboard to the wine chosen by the customer. Therefore, the customer must make do with an optimal recommendation of the wine. BK clearly has customers who want to pay attention to the best combination, but even here, most customers just go for a glass of port.

Discussion

From the literature review, it is obvious that sometime in the ‘90s the preferences around the cheeseboard changed dramatically: doing away with the butter, sweetening the bread, ending the dominant position of red wines, the white wines served instead being sweetish or very sweet.

This change can only be explained by a combination of factors.

One factor may be the “sweeter tongue” of many consumers apparent from direct sugar consumption (CBS, 2014) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) and the increase of so-called added sugars, both to obvious and not-so-obvious products. (www.suikerwijzer.nl (2010). Sweeter food demands sweeter wine (Klosse, 2014, p. 85).

A second factor may be the increased insight into flavour and into the role of mouthfeel (see Klosse, 2014). Considering that many cheeses are coating due to the high fat content, the presence of many umami components and the changed structure of the casein, a coating wine for many cheeses is the obvious choice, thus breaking out of the routine of having contracting, astringent, tannin-rich red wines with the cheese. These coating wines may be rich in umami (Klosse, 2004, chapter 6) or not altogether dry or outright sweet. In addition, many cheeses are stronger on the ripe than on the fresh tones, requiring wines of corresponding flavour profile.

At the same time, there are also fresh, acidic cheeses: more contracting than coating and with more fresh than ripe tones. Many young goat’s milk cheeses are in this category, together with Frisian fresh ewe milk cheese, *Boursin* and *Meikaas*. These cheeses are better off with a rather contracting white wine.

From this perspective, there is a contrast between the practice in the majority of the restaurants in the present research and the recent literature like Klosse (1998), Beckett (2009, 2012), Werlyn (2003) and Harrington (2008). In the first place, there is the follow-up between the main dish and the cheeseboard. Often, this main dish has high flavour richness and the coating element in mouthfeel is stronger than the contracting. In most restaurants, the cheeseboard starts with a light fresh cheese that would be best off with a light, dry, contracting wine. Actually, the cheese has to cope with the remaining wine that in most cases will have high flavour richness and tannins. Also, after the main dish, the light first cheese will be an anti-climax (see the next paper, “Integration of the cheese course into the menu”).

In the second place, it is hard to find one acceptable wine with a varied cheeseboard as served by most restaurants. Even if the compromise of *New World Chardonnay* (Klosse, 1998) might be acceptable, the higher flavour richness of the preceding wine might make this compromise less viable. The sommelier of WT admitted this explicitly: an appropriate wine with each individual cheese. But both the cost and the quantity of alcohol would not be acceptable to the customer. The practical choice, therefore, would be to decide first what wine the customer should like and to create the cheeseboard accordingly. Here, the cheese trolley is a valuable asset, provided that the waiters are expert on their cheeses and on wine-cheese combination. Most likely, they also need to combat the propensity of many customers “to want it all”. The combination of expertise, salesmanship and tact will pay itself out by generating extra beverage sales, as the practice of BK demonstrates, where the cheese trolley is very profitable in itself.

As for the garnishes, the shift to sweeter things to go with the cheese can also be explained from the “sweeter tongue” and the need for more coating accompaniment of the cheese. At the same time, then, it is hard to explain why the butter with the cheese has almost disappeared: butter will add to the coating character of the cheeseboard.

Finally, the factor “fashion” should not be underrated: the “sweetening” of the cheeseboard around 2000 can partly be a matter of restaurateurs imitating each other.

Recommendations for industry

To increase the profitability of the cheeseboard, both by stimulating total sale and creating extra sale of beverage, the education of staff is crucial, as stated in the discussion.

Waiting staff should be able to advise the right cheese and beverage after a given main dish. Limiting the choice of cheeses, e.g. to only a variety of blue mould cheeses with a *vin doux naturel* might be a viable option.

Gently discouraging the practice of “finir le vin” (taking the cheese with the last half glass of the main dish) will be a good thing from a gastronomic and commercial perspective. Exploring the possibilities of alcohol-free beverages with the cheeseboard will also stimulate sales while limiting the alcohol consumption of customers, especially drivers.

Recommendations for further research

Two lines of research can be recommended. The first is further analysis of cheese and wine combinations. Much has been done, more needs to be done. The second would be a close monitoring of restaurant practices in serving the cheeseboard. This might shed light on the fashion element in changes that no doubt will occur.

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