

BelGioioso Cheese Inc.

When the judging concluded at the 2008 World Cheese Awards last September, BelGioioso Cheese Inc. once again ascended the medal stand to receive accolades for the taste and quality of its cheeses. Reviewers singled out its creamy gorgonzola for a gold medal and burrata for a bronze.

The honors are nothing new to BelGioioso. The Denmark, Wisconsin-based cheesemaker's commitment to authentic Italian craftsmanship has earned it no less than 38 awards spanning 13 cheese varieties. Its products have been recognized not only at the World Cheese Awards, but also the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, the American Cheese Society Competition, the Royal Winter Fair of Toronto and other events.

"Consistent quality, exclusive recipes and clean, distinct flavors are behind our success," says Francesca Auricchio Elfner, Export and Operations Manager. "Because we are a family-owned business, with total control over the cheese-making process from start to finish, including production, aging, packaging and shipping, we deliver a superior product with every variety we craft."

And that's not just rhetoric – BelGioioso backs up such a pledge with an impressive pedigree.

Founder Errico Auricchio's cheese roots stretch back more than 100 years – all the way to Italy, where his great-grandfather first began producing traditional artisan-quality cheese. Errico moved to

the United States in 1979 with his family "to start a company that would make great Italian cheeses as we did in Italy," he says. He also brought along Italian master cheesemakers Gianni Toffolon and Mauro Rozzi.

The company began by manufacturing internationally popular Italian varieties, like provolone, parmesan and romano, but soon found itself branching off into styles less familiar to the average consumer, like asiago and pepato.

Today, BelGioioso, still owned and operated by the Errico Auricchio family, runs five cheese production facilities and makes more than 20 varieties.

"The plant environments are designed around each cheese and the needs of our cheesemakers to achieve the highest product quality possible," says Elfner. "Every cheese is treated individually, according to its own personality."

Toffolon still manages production and devotes time to further develop his skills. This includes completing the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Program, a one-of-a-kind, three-year training curriculum. Toffolon carries Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® certificates in parmesan (a variety he's been making for more than 25 years) and fontina.

Rozzi has been making cheese for 46 years now and takes a personal and meticulous approach to artisan cheese craftsmanship. "Precise steps must be followed intricately, and the passion must come from within," he says. "Making cheese isn't a job. It's a calling."



Export Products

Of the more than 20 varieties BelGioioso makes, its export efforts focus on asiago, American Grana®, Auribella®, fontina, parmesan, pepato, Peperoncino®, sharp provolone and romano. The three trademarked varieties are proprietary BelGioioso products.

- American Grana®, premium parmesan made using the same authentic craftsmanship as practiced in the old world, is matured in the company's own cheese cave for a minimum of 18 months, resulting in a deep nutty flavor and granular texture.
- Auribella® is a semi-firm whole-milk cheese aged at least six months with a full-bodied, robust flavor and slightly crumbly texture that makes it perfect for shredding.
- For its Peperoncino®, BelGioioso adds red pepper flakes to its asiago to create a hot, zesty cheese – and possibly the next to win cheese contest honors.

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