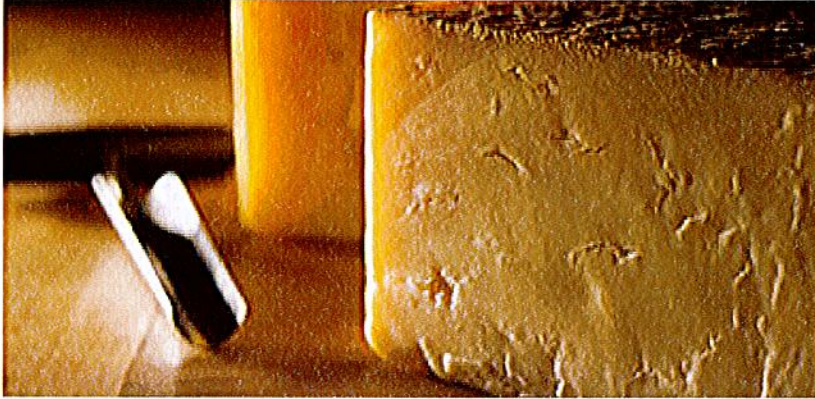


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Britain's best cheese 2009

The winners of this year's British Cheese Awards were announced in Cardiff at the weekend



Best cheddar: Quicke's traditional cheese

Nick Wyke

It's [British Cheese Week](#) and with more than 500 new varieties created in the past 25 years, including raw-milk home versions of European classics such as Parmesan, feta and buffalo mozzarella, there's plenty to celebrate.

The Supreme Champion at the British Cheese Awards, held in Cardiff on Friday, was a home favourite, [Quenby Hall Stilton](#), the smallest and newest producer of this blue veined cheese.

Freddie de Lisle, today's owner of Quenby Hall who resurrected its dairy a few years ago, said, "I've been eating Stilton all my life, and I decided if I was going to make it I was going to make it properly."

Not far down the road, an aged clothbound **Red Leicester**, made in Long Clawson, picked up Best English Cheese; Best Scottish was won by **Morangie Brie**, made by Highland Fine Cheese, and Best Irish was County Cork's **Gubbeen**, a creamy cheese with a mushroom flavour.

Although we learnt last week that the proportion of foreign cheddar on sale in British supermarkets is growing sharply the British cheese industry is in good shape.

Cheddar is made countrywide but only 14 makers of "West Country Farmhouse Cheddar" have EU Protected Designation of Origin. The Best Cheddar gong went to [Quicke's](#) in Devon which produces an outstanding mature traditional cheddar that is the colour of freshly churned butter, whiffs of farmyard and has a creamy, sweet, crystallised bite.

The Best Welsh Cheddar award went to Llandyrnog Creamery, which despite recent job cuts at the dairy is still one of the largest cheese factories in the UK.

As part of British Cheese Week M&S has expanded its range of speciality cheeses to include award-winners such as Colston Bassett Blue Stilton, Lincolnshire Poacher (winner of two awards this year), and Sparkenhoe Red Leicester.

Cheesy deals in London as part of British Cheese Week include a three-course cheese menu at the [Modern Pantry](#) for £25; a selection of seven Scottish cheeses and a glass of Warres 1963 Port for £15 at [Boisdale](#) of Bishopsgate, and Welsh rarebit, made with Neal's Yard Montgomery's cheddar, and a pint of Meantime India Pale Ale for a fiver at [Canteen](#) restaurants.

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