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CHEESES OF FRANCE TO BE FEATURED AT 1,000 “FRENCH COCKTAIL HOUR” PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE U.S. ON JUNE 4TH

Party pictures, blog posts and videos to be streamed live for worldwide interactive experience

Portland, Maine – On June 4th, a taste of France will be savored by thousands when French cheeses, wines, and music are celebrated at “French Cocktail Hour” parties spanning the globe. The French Cocktail Hour has become an annual June 4th event during the past six years, offering participants the opportunity to learn more about French ingredients and culture at large-scale events in major cities around the world. What makes the event so unique in the U.S. this year is that the French Cocktail Hour has added a different, more intimate twist: the parties next month will be brought directly into 1,000 American homes, where hosts will entertain their guests with festive French flair, and have the opportunity during their gatherings to socialize in real time with other French wine and cheese lovers from around the world.

The French Cocktail Hour (FCH), an idea originally generated by the French government to promote the country’s two main exports, wine and cheese, has gained a tremendous amount of support and interest from the public at large, as well as from various prominent wine and cheese producers. Together, these organizations have developed the idea into French Cocktail Hour parties now held in 19 countries that celebrate French culture and cuisine – and make both more approachable in the process.

This year’s French Cocktail Hour parties in the U.S. are co-sponsored by The Cheeses of France Marketing Council, in conjunction with the French government and several prominent French wine and cheese producers. The parties in the U.S. will be smaller, more intimate gatherings in homes throughout the country, while larger-scale events are being held in city centers around the world. At the parties this year, premium French cow’s milk cheeses will be featured such as Fourme d’Ambert (a creamy, blue cheese) and Chaource (the most famous artisanal cheese of the Champagne region), as well as aged goat’s and sheep’s milk selections, such as Bûche de Chèvre and Tomme de Belloc (respectively).



French entertaining with a twist: 1,000 French Cocktail Hour parties to take place in American homes June 4th.

Sign-Up Information:

For those interested in hosting their own French Cocktail Hour party in their home, visit www.houseparty.com/FrenchCocktailHour . The 1,000 individuals selected as official party hosts will receive a FCH “Party Pack,” courtesy of sponsoring organizations, to be filled with ideal ingredients for throwing a primo party, French style!

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The Party Pack items, sure to be crowd pleasers, include:

- Cheese and wine coupons from participating retailers www.lgourmet.com and Sam's Wine & Spirits (www.samswine.com);
- French music CDs, aprons, magnets and corkscrews;
- Brochures with helpful hints on French entertaining; and,
- Streamers, napkins, garland and stars.

Additionally, the parties' "virtual travel" to France will become a traveling reality for one FCH host and one party guest, each of whom will win a trip for two to France.



For further info about the 2009 French Cocktail Hour parties to take place throughout the U.S., visit [www.houseparty.com/FrenchCocktail Hour](http://www.houseparty.com/FrenchCocktailHour) .

Fromage Plate suggestions and photos, as well as further information about the cheeses of France – including tips on serving, storing, and purchasing – can be found at www.CheesesOfFrance.com .

Making for a truly interactive experience, French Cocktail Hour party hosts will be able to share their experiences with the rest of the world both during and after the parties. Online blog posts, pictures, and videos can be added to hosts' own individual party pages, as well as streamed live via the national party page (www.houseparty.com/FrenchCocktailHour).

The French Cocktail Hour concept and parties themselves have caught the attention of a variety of outlets, including National Public Radio and *The Wall Street Journal*.

"We're so impressed by the level of interest we're seeing in this year's French Cocktail Hour parties being planned here in the U.S.," said Mike Collins of the Cheeses of France Marketing Council.

"Whenever a diverse array of French Cheeses and wines are served at gatherings of family and friends, it can help spark interesting conversation, and inspire the connoisseur in us all," Collins added. "The 2009 parties give us the opportunity to spread the word even more about how fun and easy it can be to bring a touch of French culture into American homes."

About The Cheeses of France Marketing Council

The Cheeses of France Marketing Council represents the promotional interests of all the imported cheeses of France. The Council oversees the development and execution of national and regional communication programs in the United States targeted at building the awareness, interest and demand for The Cheeses of France. Composed of industry and promotion agency personnel, the Council is led by French representatives from the Centre National Interprofessionnel de l'Économie Laitière (CNIEL). A key objective of the Council is to bring a highly recognized and appealing brand identity to the extensive and distinctive varieties of imported French cheeses in order to strengthen their competitive position as a unique group in the growing specialty cheese category.



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