

# The Big Cheese

He teaches beer and cheese pairings at taprooms, gives presentations on the science of cheese at libraries, and helps customers at the new Whole Foods Market in Dublin create perfect holiday cheese platters. David Fleury is the East Bay's biggest cheese advocate—and one of about 400 Certified Cheese Professionals nationwide.

## Career Change

It wasn't until 10 years ago, when a sudden job loss led Fleury to Whole Foods, that his passion for food began. He started in grocery, "but I'd always find myself hanging around the cheese counter," he says. So when a position opened on the specialty team, he took it.

## On-the-Job Training

The rigorous Certified Cheese Professional exam, run by the American Cheese Society, is three hours long and covers cheese types and terms, the aging process, distribution, and FDA laws. Fleury studied for six months.

## Office Space

Behind the wedges at the cheese counter is a hand-drawn display highlighting local wine and cheese pairings and a giant photo of Fleury. "People walk up and go, 'You're the cheese guy!'"

## Tools of the Trade

Fleury uses skeleton knives (for cutting soft cheese without having it stick to the blade), parmesan tools (a scorer to cut through the rind and several almond-shaped daggers to crack the wheel), and cutting gloves (with tightly woven fabric to protect his hands).



## Bio

**Name:**  
David Fleury

**Age:**  
45

**City:**  
Concord

**Job:**  
Specialty Team Leader  
at Whole Foods Market  
in Dublin.



## Mission Statement

"I want this to be the best cheese selection in the Tri-Valley," Fleury says. He stocks both unique and everyday cheeses, with a strong focus on local labels (check out Bleating Heart from Tomales Bay), select artisanal offerings from around the United States, and some international imports.

## Goal Setting

Look for cheese-pairing classes to launch at Whole Foods Market in Dublin this fall. At home, Fleury hopes to convert a shed in his backyard into a cheese-aging facility. "I'm still in contract negotiations with my wife on that one." —LeeAnne Jones