

ARTISAN CHEESEMONGER KURT GURDAL OF KURT & WHEY ANNOUNCES BRICK & MORTAR ‘CANYON GROCER’

Los Angeles (November 22, 2022)— Kurt Gurdal, a second generation cheesemonger, has opened his own small neighborhood cheese shop and market in Santa Monica Canyon. The space is stocked with products from great producers who have passion and dedication to their craft. It is a combination of interesting, hard to find products and everyday items for the community. Gurdal also offers cheese pairing classes, gift boxes and cheese & charcuterie platters.

In a recent Instagram post, Gurdal shared the news about his new indoor space: “This cozy ‘lil brick & mortar will be packed with great yummy items from producers I love to represent. I’m excited to add a small market to such a wonderful community and make it easy for people to walk on down and pick up a loaf of bread or a missing ingredient to their dinner recipe.”

Over the past 10 years, Gurdal has attracted a local following of an enthusiastic clientele who hire him for private parties, tastings and pairings, cheese and charcuterie boards — as well as grazing tables for weddings and special events. His cheese and charcuterie aesthetic presentations are often praised as being a work of art, filled with a variety of colorful, tasty accouterments, served with bread or crackers. Gurdal works with a handful of partners who provide the wine, spirits, and beer selections to pair with the cheese and charcuterie. Gurdal’s main goal is to share what he has learned over the years with as many people that are willing to listen, while also continuing to learn and better himself as a food professional.

Guided Pairings and Classes

“These pairings are some of my favorite things to do. Sometimes in the hustle of the shop, you rarely have the time to talk in depth about the product and the producer. These tastings are what make me tick and are why I do what I do on a daily basis.” Whether it is cheese and wine, cheese and beer, cheese and spirits, cheese and chocolate, etc. Gurdal can cater and customize a tasting and pairing event to the client’s needs. His cheese education classes give insight into how to pair things, how cheese is crafted, where his products originate, and some of the stories behind their creation.

Grazing Tables for Parties and Events

A showstopper for any private party or event, appealing to both the eyes and stomach, Gurdal curates a lush artistic arrangement of cheeses, charcuterie, bread, spreads, nuts, pickles, vegetables, and seasonal fruit, displayed in a complex array across a long table. It will be the talk of any great party. Perfect for large gatherings, where guests can come and nosh.

Cheese & Charcuterie Platters

When you have smaller to midsize gatherings, Gurdal can make cheese and charcuterie platters for as little as 2 people to as many as you would like. They come with all the accouterments, such as pickles, olives, nuts, and fresh & dried fruit. He offers preset platters but can also customize to the guest’s needs.

Gift Boxes

Perfect for corporate gifts and events, holidays, birthdays and so much more. Gurdal can customize any basket based on the recipient or can come up with themes for larger orders, such as office snacks, pantry items, for the home cook, etc.. Gurdal loves the idea of sharing the great producers he represents in a gifty way.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Gurdal was raised eating goat cheese on toast and carrying Comte and salami sandwiches in his school lunch. Gurdal had the privilege of being born into this industry. His parents, Ihsan and Valerie Gurdal are owners of the world renowned cheese shop, Formaggio Kitchen. They are known for introducing the United States to a lot of small artisanal producers both overseas and domestically. At the same time, they are run like a small mom and pop market and have strong ties to the community - a place to meet for the neighborhood. Kurt shares the same passion in supporting good producers who have passion in their craft and also has a strong sense of community.

"Although I literally grew up immersed in cheese, becoming a cheesemonger still requires formal training. So I began mine at Neal's Yard Dairy in London, which has the reputation of being one of the world's best shops — and is truly an institution of British Isle cheese," says Gurdal.

He didn't just work in the shop, but also at the maturing facility, also visiting numerous dairies to learn about cheese from beginning to end. After his visa ran out, Gurdal returned to his family's shop. He started working in the kitchen, grilling for their sidewalk BBQ, and managing their cheese caves. Eventually, he became the cheese buyer and was promoted to the store's general manager.

Gurdal spent time researching and learning from small cheese makers throughout Europe and New England, where he found unique products from small traditional producers which he includes in his selections today: "All of those opportunities opened up experiences for me to travel and meet such amazing producers and actually see first hand the food culture of the area, how a cheese was made and who was behind it. It's an amazing feeling introducing someone to something they've never had before, while also supporting traditions and amazing producers."

After his training in Europe and working with his family business for a decade, Gurdal set his goal to open a neighborhood specialty cheese shop in Santa Monica that would be reminiscent of his parents' cheese shop. He had attended UC Irvine for his undergrad and missed the lifestyle of sunny California.

To get the lay of the land, Gurdal worked in a variety of restaurant/market concepts throughout Los Angeles, which allowed to start to understand the food culture and learn from numerous local chefs and collaborate with other cheesemongers.

To get in touch with Kurt and his services: Call 310-592-4196 to order or for details. You may also email Kurt Gurdal at kurt@kurtandwhey.com.

Canyon Grocer from Kurt & Whey will be open 7 days a week. Monday - Saturday 9:30-6 and Sunday 9:30-5.

For more information, visit kurtandwhey.com