



INSPIRED CITIZEN

with *Anthony Berklich*



LEARNING THE AGE-OLD ART OF MAKING PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE

[Parmigiano Reggiano](#) is a serious business – not just a family-run pastime one might think. Although the process of making the cheese hasn't changed much since the days of the monks nine centuries ago, the marketing and price of this dairy-filled work of art has. Today, the consortium of Parmigiano Reggiano represents over 450 small artisans who adhere to the strict guidelines laid out through Italy's laws, and also help bring the artisan's hard work and efforts to market internationally.

Thank God.

On a recent trip to the Parmigiano Reggiano factory near Parma, I saw firsthand how a cheese master initiates, nurtures and perfects his or her skills to become the best in the game. The factory produces and ages thousands of wheels of cheese a year, maintaining rigorous testing to be sure that only the best is brought to market. Through a very intense process, the raw dairy is boiled, cooled, stirred and molded into an incredibly decadent wheel of perfection.

I was able to view this process as well as tour the storage rooms where the cheese is aged and tested. Working with a man whose sole job it is to test each wheel to ensure it meets the guidelines for sale, I was able to use a small metal hammer to tap the cheese and listen for flaws like hollow areas. What a remarkable and delicious experience.