



**This holiday season, we are offering four outstanding Alpage cheeses through an abbreviated version of Caroline Hostettler’s Adopt-an-Alp program.** If you’re not familiar with the program, she sources wheels from families who spend their summers in the Swiss Alps making cheese. These farmers and cheesemakers choose to bring their animals and families up the Alp every year, an ancient practice that is deeply tied to the cheesemaking tradition in Switzerland, but is in danger of dying out due to our constantly modernizing world.

**The Adopt-an-Alp program allows retailers to support a specific cheesemaker and signals to their customers that they value traditional cheesemaking and transhumance.** It also gives customers an unbelievable opportunity to try cheeses that rarely leave the Alp, let alone the continent.



Fritz Tschudi: head cheesemaker at Alp Heuboden

**It’s hard to overstate just how much work goes into these cheeses.** Both families and animals traverse the mountain at the beginning and end of each season. Milk must be transported from mountain pastures to the dairies, many times in areas that have no roads. The cheesemaking process is extremely labor intensive and is often over a wood fire. The dairies are small and can only produce a small number of wheels. **But a love for the land and the lifestyle compels people to continue the tradition, not because it’s easy, but because it’s important.** And once you’ve had a bite of cheese made from Alpine milk, which is full of the flavors of the hundreds of species of wildflowers and grasses that grow in the mountain pastures, you will not doubt that this is a tradition worth saving. Only through creating a connection between cheesemaker, retailer, and consumer will we be able to continue enjoying Alp cheese in the future.

### What is transhumance?

Transhumance is the seasonal movement of animals and people from one grazing area to another, typically to high mountain pastures in the summer and lowlands in the winter. When summer ends, the cows are guided down the mountains wearing flower crowns and traditional Swiss cow bells. Big celebrations take place in the Alp towns and the first Alpage cheese of the season is enjoyed. This festival is called the Désalpes and it takes place through September and October each year.





## *Alp Gantrischli | Fribourg*



### **Gantrischli Vacherin Fribourgeois AOP Alpage 2023**

CH134 | min. 3 months | 1/16lb

A Vacherin Fribourgeois made the old-fashioned way by cheesemaker Hans Glauser. 120 cows graze on pastures of up to 6,000 feet that look over the surrounding area and the chalets that house the eight families that spend their summers on the Alp. Their cheese is barnyardy and a bit funky with hints of sweet, clean milk and some yogurt-like acidity.

## *Alp Heuboden | Glarus*



### **Glarner Alpkäse AOP 2022**

CH317 | min. 12 months | 1/13lb

Three generations of the Tschudi-Lenzlinger family climb Alp Heuboden every year, moving locations several times throughout the summer to follow the blooming flora. This Alp is so remote that they receive provisions and supplies once a week by helicopter. Because of the lack of roads, their Glarner Alpkäse, made over a fire in a single cauldron, is aged on the Alp until the end of the summer, when it goes to the communal cellars. Their cheese is elegant, balanced, and lightly floral.

## *Alp Maran | Graubünden*



### **Raclette Round 2023**

CH170 | min. 4 months | 1/11lb

### **Raclette Square 2023**

CH188 | min. 4 months | 1/11lb



These Alpage Raclettes, one square and one round, are made by Walter Niklaus with milk from the 400 cows grazing in the surrounding Alps. Milk from these mountains, which reach altitudes of 5,500+ feet, is transported to the dairy via pipeline. Raclette is best enjoyed melted, and their cheese has lactic, earthy notes and an unbelievably creamy texture once heated through.