

To Brie or Not To Brie by Avery Aames: Book Review/Guest Food Post/Giveaway

IN THE **FEBRUARY 16** ISSUE
FROM THE 2013 ARTICLES,
AND FOOD FUN,
AND MYSTERY RAT'S MAZE,
AND SANDRA MURPHY SECTIONS

by Avery Aames
& Sandra Murphy

Just in time for last minute Valentine's Day celebrations this weekend we have a wonderful guest post called A Love Affair With Cheese that includes a heavenly chocolate and cheese fondue recipe from mystery author Avery Adams, author of the Cheese Shop Mysteries. We also have a review of Avery's latest book, To Brie or Not To Brie, and info at the end of this post on how to win a signed copy of one of the Cheese Shop Mysteries.

A Love Affair With Cheese

"Life is good; cheese makes it better." ~ Avery Aames

Do you think cheese is sexy? I do. It has sensual textures, aromatic scents, and luscious flavors. Ooh, la, la! It tastes good with beer, wine, and champagne. You can pair cheese with fruit, jam, honey, nuts and chocolate. Ah, chocolate. But that's another subject to be discussed at a later time...or maybe in just a moment. Cheese tastes great alone, but it also tastes fabulous in entrees, side dishes, salads, grated on pasta, on rice, on potatoes, on soup. Other than those who can't eat cheese for allergy reasons, do you know anyone who doesn't like cheese? Do you know anyone who doesn't make a beeline to the cheese platter at a party? Some might say cheese doesn't taste good with ice cream, but I would beg to differ. I made a delicious [Parmesan ice cream](#) that was salty and fun. I added chocolate, and the dessert was sassy, bordering on decadent.



Parmesan ice cream

So why do I rave about cheese? Because I write the Agatha-award winning, nationally bestselling A Cheese Shop Mystery series with fun titles like *The Long Quiche Goodbye* and *To Brie Or Not To Brie*. While doing research for each novel (there are now four in the series), I've fallen in lust with cheese. That's right, lust. I've tasted, I've baked, I've shared. With family, with friends, with all my Internet pals. One friend just shared with me that an Elvis impersonator doing a tribute act to Elvis was paid by a dairy...in cheese. Too funny!

To honor this blossoming relationship of mine, I'd like to share my recipe for a cheese platter that I have created for Valentine's Day. I've named it: [Like Cheddar for Chocolate](#), a send-up of the sensual novel: *Like Water for Chocolate*. Why did I combine the two? Well, I had used chocolate in cheesecake and in cookies. Why not on its own paired with a bite of cheese? Talk about sensual. The result was dessert and appetizer rolled into one. I didn't need the main course.



So answer me this. What is the most sensual meal you can remember...ever? And if you'd like to share, with whom did you dine?

I'm giving away three signed books to commenters—your choice of any of A Cheese Shop Mystery series. Say cheese! (more details on the giveaway at the end of this post)

CHOCOLATE AND CHEESE FONDUE

Ingredients:

- 1 package (11.5 ounces) Ghirardelli 60% cocoa chips
- 2 tbsps water
- 1 tbsp brandy
- 4 tbsps heavy cream
- 4 oz cheddar cheese, cubed
- 1 apple, sliced
- 1 bunch grapes
- 4-6 cookies
- 4-6 strawberries

Directions:

Prepare the fruits and cheeses, dicing cheese into ½" cubes. Prepare chocolate fondue pot. Set out the condiment dishes and heat about a ½ cup water in the lower half of the double-boiler. (I use Sterno to heat the water.)

In a microwave-safe mixing bowl, dump the chocolate chips and 2 tbsps water.

On medium high (power #7 on my microwave), heat the chips and water for 1 minute. Remove from microwave, stir, and heat

again (on medium high) for 30 seconds. The chocolate mixture should be smooth and silky.

Add brandy and cream. Stir. Pour the chocolate mixture into the ceramic fondue pot. Set the fondue pot over the warm water in the double boiler. (If the mixture is too thick, add a little cream or water. If you prefer not to use brandy, substitute with another liqueur or water.) Keep the chocolate warm throughout the dessert.

Serve with condiments: cheese, apple, grapes, cookies, berries. Skewers required.

*Note: I used gluten-free cookies that dipped beautifully into the chocolate mixture. This way, everyone, including celiacs, can enjoy the dessert.

Avery Aames writes the Agatha Award-winning, nationally bestselling Cheese Shop Mystery Series. As Daryl Wood Gerber, she writes A Cookbook Nook Mystery Series featuring a cookbook store owner who is an avid reader and admitted foodie. Set on the coast of California, debuting July 2013. Daryl's short stories have been nominated for the Agatha and other awards. As an actress, Daryl has appeared in "Murder, She Wrote" and more. Visit Avery/Daryl at www.averyaames.com.

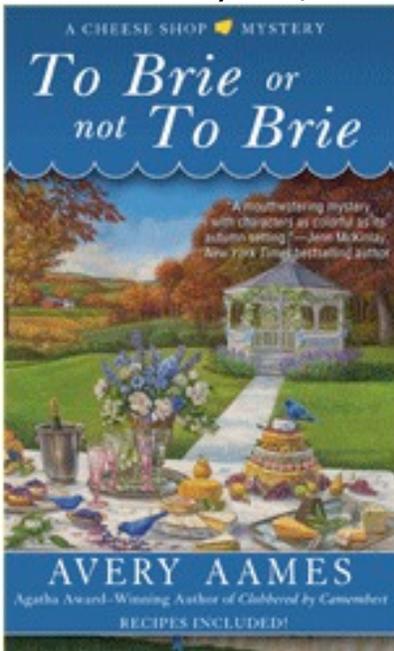
To Brie Or Not To Brie by Avery Aames

Review by Sandra Murphy

Charlotte Bessette leads a busy life. Her cousin and partner in the cheese/wine shop is marrying her best friend. Charlotte is in charge of the food for the reception. Her cousin (Matt) and his girls are moving out of the house they share with Charlotte and that's upsetting the dog and cat as well as the family. Add in Matt's kooky ex-wife Sylvie, who might sabotage the wedding just for the fun of it, Charlotte's own fiancé' pressing for a wedding date, Grandmere's production of Hamlet, and the development of a new signature ice cream (Brie and blueberries!), and, well, her plate is overflowing.

But not to worry, she can handle it—at least until a problem arises in the form of a dead body. Did it have to be a murder? And did the murder weapon have to be a container of Brie Blueberry ice cream? With the victim a round-about threat to

Charlotte's own happiness, what else can she do but solve the murder herself—in between food tastings, cheese sales and trying to control Sylvie, of course.



As usual, the characters work well together. With each book, the side characters gain more personality and add definite flavor to the story. The plot works well with red herrings and clues dropped in plain sight, enough that the reader can spot some but will have to work on others—a good balance in not giving away the murderer too soon. While some of the previous books could be read out of order without a problem, this book is so rich in details of relationships, it would be best to read the first three before jumping into Charlotte's hectic schedule this time out. The only problem with an Avery Aames book is—it will make you hungry! Here's why:

At the back of the book, there are recipes. They include: Brie Blueberry Ice Cream, Blueberry Sauce, Broccoli, Pine Nuts and Edam Cheese Quiche, Gluten-Free Popovers, Delilah's Grilled Cheese with Grapes, Onions and Bacon, and Ricotta Stuffed Mushrooms.

The next Avery Aames book, coming soon from Berkley Prime Crime, is *Days of Wine and Roquefort*.

Previous books in this series are:

The Long Quiche Goodbye

Lost and Fondue

Clobbered by Camembert

To enter to win a signed copy of your choice of the Cheese Shop Mysteries, simply email KRL at [life@kingsriverlife\[dot\]com](mailto:life@kingsriverlife[dot]com) by replacing the [dot] with a period, and with the subject line "Cheese", or comment on this article. A winner will be chosen February 23, 2013. U.S. residents only.