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## **Norseland launches new Jarlsberg dip, debuts other new cheeses**

**By Kate Sander**

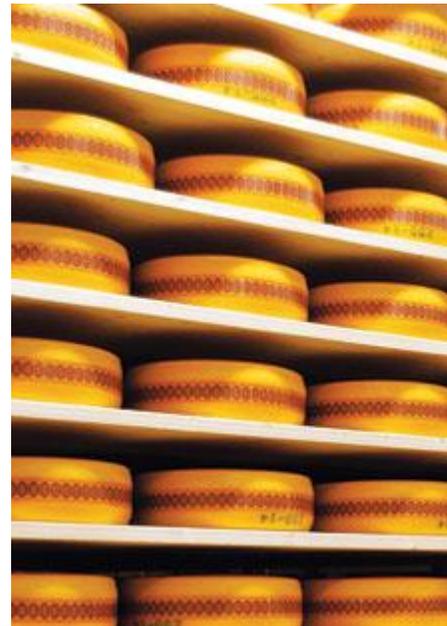
STAMFORD, Conn. — Jarlsberg has been exported to the United States for more than 45 years and is America's top-selling brand of specialty cheese. But its longevity and market penetration do not preclude innovation.

One of the few cheeses to have the distinction of being both a brand and a type of cheese, Jarlsberg — with its mild, nutty unique taste unlike any other domestic or imported cheese — can boost a regular hamburger to a "Jarlsberger" — a use annually promoted by Norseland Inc., the exclusive importer and sales and marketing agent for the Norwegian cheese in the United States as well as an importer of several other specialty cheese brands.

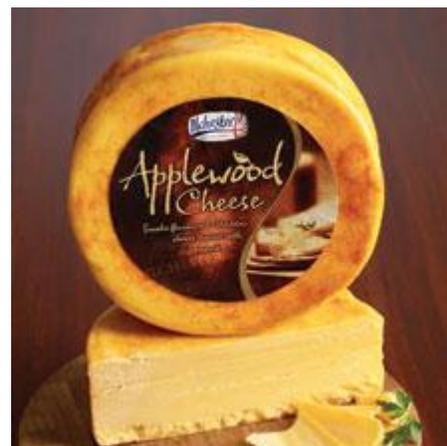
Consumers and retailers can get pretty creative with their Jarlsberg. Jarlsbergers can take on all different kinds of forms, and Norseland has developed numerous recipes to get consumers' creative juices flowing.

But the creativity doesn't stop with burgers. Another popular use of the cheese has been a dip, often made by delis in the Midwest. To add convenience for retailers and make this use of the cheese available nationally, Norseland launched a new Jarlsberg dip nationwide in September.

The dip, made with 50 percent cheese, combines Jarlsberg shreds with mayonnaise and red onion in an 8-ounce microwavable container, according to Deanna Finegan, marketing manager, Norseland Inc.



**WHEEL UPON WHEEL** — Jarlsberg, which has the distinction of being both a brand and a type of cheese, is a top-selling specialty cheese brand in the United States.



**ENGLISH FLAVOR** — Applewood Cheese is one of the many flavorful cheeses available under the Ilichester brand.

The dip can be served hot or cold, and its uses are versatile — it can be used as a topping on burgers or potatoes or as a snack with crackers.

“Right now, there’s a trend toward dips, healthier dips, and snacking, and this product coincides with that,” Finegan says.

“The initial results have been strong with good feedback from the marketplace,” she adds, noting that the company also is looking at developing flavored varieties of the dip as well.

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- Jarlsberg brand building

**“We’re doing a lot with Facebook. There are lots of ways to engage consumers with Facebook that work with our marketing efforts. And there’s been a huge increase in Twitter. We’re very interactive with consumers on a daily basis.”**

Deanna Finegan  
NORSELAND INC.

Jarlsberg’s roots date back to the early 1800s when Norwegian cheesemakers attempted to produce a domestic version of Emmenthaler cheese from Switzerland. As is often the case when cheesemakers replicate a cheese, their efforts produced a slightly different product. Further innovation came in the 1950s when the University of Agriculture in Norway conducted developmental research on a semi-soft, part-skim cheese with eye formation. Professor Ole M. Ystgaard is credited with developing the bacteria cultures and manufacturing techniques used to process the cheese. The new cheese was named after Count Vadel Jarlsberg, whose estate was on the Oslo Fjord near where it was manufactured.

Norseland Inc., owned by TINE BA, is responsible for the importation and marketing of the brand and also oversees production of the cheese in the

United States. As the cheese gained in popularity in the late 1990s, it began bumping up against import quotas, so the company began contracting commercial U.S. production of Jarlsberg in 2000. In addition to Jarlsberg and Jarlsberg dip, there is also Jarlsberg Lite, a 50 percent reduced-fat cheese with 30 percent fewer calories than regular Jarlsberg.

Norseland keeps the momentum growing with a number of promotions. A cross-promotion sandwich-making campaign, for example, will be launched this summer with Jarlsberg and Mezzetta brand peppers, Flatout flat bread and Foods Should Taste Good chips to promote sandwiches and meals using those products. The campaign includes a recipe contest for consumers that runs Memorial Day through Labor Day, with the grand prize winner receiving \$25,000. The promotion will include in-store displays, point-of-sale materials and on-pack instantly redeemable coupons. In addition, the cross-promotion will include a Celebrity Chef Sandwich Charity Challenge. Chefs will submit a sandwich recipe and consumers will vote, with the top chef winning a

\$10,000 donation to the charity of their choice.

Norseland also will continue to grow its promotion of Jarlsbergers with this year's summer promotion theme "Throw a Jarlsberger in Paradise Party."

To engage consumers in all of these efforts, Jarlsberg utilizes social media including Facebook and Twitter.

"We're doing a lot with Facebook. There are lots of ways to engage consumers with Facebook that work with our marketing efforts," Finegan says. "And there's been a huge increase in Twitter. We're very interactive with consumers on a daily basis."

Jarlsberg also has its own dedicated website, [www.jarlsbergusa.com](http://www.jarlsbergusa.com), which Norseland has updated with trendy pictures of the cheese.

The company also utilizes more localized advertising including radio ads in the New York metro area leading up to the Super Bowl. This coming week, Jarlsberg Lite will be a co-sponsor of Elle magazine's Style 360 New York Fashion Week.

Finegan says the company believes in tailor-making regional promotions, both within stores and outside them, as a way to promote the brand and meet the needs of a variety of audiences. This includes incorporating all of the various aspects of promotions that are at its disposal.

"For example, some retailers don't allow point-of-sale materials, but we can do a lot of digitally integrated promotions online," she says. "There's been a huge shift with a lot of consumers participating in social media, and we can reinforce that."

- Innovating with other brands

Strong promotions are what Norseland excels at, and the company utilizes a variety of tools for the other brands it represents as well.

While Jarlsberg is Norseland's flagship brand, the company also markets several other well-known brands including Ilchester, Woolwich Dairy, García Baquero, Old Amsterdam, Gabriella Suprema and Snøfrisk.

There have been exciting new developments in the English Ilchester brand, which the company purchased a few years ago, says Ruth Flore, who manages multiple brands for Norseland. For starters, there is a new packaging format that is replacing the full wheels of fruited and herb blended cheeses. Now in split/half wheels, the colorful products — such as Wensleydale

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with Cranberries, White Stilton with Lemon, and Double Gloucester with Onion & Chive —feature an easy-peel opening and are vacuum-packed for excellent display potential. New sampling/demo kits have been developed, Flore adds. The traditional or territorials (including Red Leicester, Cheshire, Double Gloucester, Cheddar Wensleydale and Stilton) remain in full wheel format and exact weight cheeses are available in parchment.

Flore says two exciting cheeses the company is featuring are Applewood Smoked Cheddar, a golden-amber, dense semi-hard cheese with a unique, delicate essence, and Beer Cheese, in which an extra strong ale and a secret blend of spices are added to a mature Somerset Cheddar for a smooth texture and piquant flavor.

Flore also notes that the company cycles different cheeses for retailers at different times with Wensleydale Date & Honey, Plum Pudding and Cheddar with Sticky Toffee proving popular during the holidays.

Another product gaining attention in the marketplace is Tapas de Queso, a Spanish cheese plate introduced by García Baquero.

“It’s a wonderful item. It can be used for snacking but isn’t limited to that. It’s very versatile,” Flore says, noting the package is perfect for building a cheeseboard.

The easy-to-peel 5.2-ounce package includes 12 slices of Spanish cheeses, four each of García Baquero Topsy Goat, a wine-bathed pasteurized goat’s milk cheese, García Baquero Iberico, a mild and firm blended sheep, goat and cow’s milk cheese with a complex flavor, and Gran Maestre Manchego, a 3-month aged sheep’s milk cheese.

“We’re very excited about the response we’re getting,” Flore says, noting the cheeses are produced in a state-of-the-art facility in Spain and pair well with most Spanish foods and wines.

This year, the company also will be introducing Cinco Lanzas, a 16-month aged mixed milk cheese made from a culture that García Baquero has specifically developed.

“It’s a hard cheese with a complex flavor profile and a very smooth finish,” Flore says, adding that she believes it will prove to be quite popular in specialty shops in the United States.

Manchego and Iberico are the cheeses that most people in the United States identify as Spanish cheeses, but this new “beautiful” cheese is significantly different from these two and yet fits well with them, Flore says.

“We tested the waters at the Winter Fancy Food Show, and we had lots of positive feedback from key retailers,” she says, adding that the company is now finalizing the label and getting ready to bring the cheese to market. The cheese, sold in 3-kilogram wheels, will be sold in a wood box.

The market continues to grow for the Woolwich brand cheeses as well, Flore says. The company recently has launched 5.3-ounce cups of its spreadable Crème Chèvre in three flavors: Plain & Simple, Big Kick Herb & Garlic and Inevitable Vegetable.

“Beyond using as a great dip or spread, they’re great for cooking and come in resealable cups,” Flore says.

Old Amsterdam also is working on a couple of new packaging concepts, and the brand remains one of the best, consistent aged Goudas in the marketplace.

“You can always count on it,” she adds.

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