Pairing Cheese and Wine for Thanksgiving

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This Thanksgiving, let the cheeseboard set the tone for the feast, like a dramatic opening act. A thoughtfully chosen selection of cheeses, paired with wines that complement or contrast their flavors, can introduce the aromas, textures, and seasonal ingredients that define the holiday table.

Harvest vegetables, woodsy herbs, apples, pears, and cranberry sauce offer plenty of inspiration. Build a board with a range of textures, ages, and flavor profiles, from creamy to crystalline and sweet to sharp, with savory and fruit-forward notes that capture the warmth and richness of the season. Best of all, once you've enjoyed the first course, there's no reason not to continue drinking the same wines with dinner. That is, if you have any left.

Aged Gouda and Cabernet Sauvignon
An aged Gouda, ideally 18 to 24-months old, develops concentrated nuttiness, caramel notes, and the crystalline crunch that comes with maturation. These characteristics make it a natural companion for a Cabernet Sauvignon with dark fruit and baking spice.

Samantha Silva, estate director at Larkmead Vineyards in Napa Valley, recommends pairing an aged Gouda such as Marieke Super Aged Gouda with the winery's 2023 Solari Estate Cabernet Sauvignon. The cheese's "concentrated nuttiness, caramel notes, and little crystalline crunch are wonderful with Solari's dark fruit and baking spice," she explains.

Silva cautions that an excessively mature Gouda can become intensely salty and butterscotch-driven, potentially overshadowing the wine's more subtle nuances. An 18 to 24-month-aged cheese offers a better balance of nuttiness, sweetness, and texture, allowing both partners to shine.

Serve with: Toasted pecans, dried cherries, fresh apple.