

## 'It's really an art': Saskatoon man sprucing up market with cheesy creations

*Kevin Petty saw a cheesy artisanal void in Saskatoon and decided to fill it.*

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For the past two years, he has been experimenting with various cheese-making methods. It wasn't until he met an 84-year-old French monk, named Brother Albéric, that his goal became a reality. Saskatoon Spruce was born.

Brother Albéric has been crafting wheels of fromage de la trappe — cheese in the Trappist style, made with unpasteurized milk — for more than 60 years using the traditional Trappist techniques. Petty had heard of the monk's cheese from a friend and was intrigued. He decided to reach out to Brother Albéric at the Notre Dame des Prairies monastery near Holland, Man.



*Photo: Submitted by Kevin Petty*

"I phoned him up and I asked if I could come learn from him and he said, 'Sure, come on down.' "Petty said. "He just wanted to pass on the tradition, so he was really happy to help me and I sort of took his process and copied it." His timing was perfect because, at that time, Brother Albéric was just about to retire his cheese-making equipment.



*Photo: Courtney Markewich/CBC*

Petty said that, although he uses a lot of Brother Albéric's methods, he has created his own raw-milk cheese using some of his own cheese-making techniques, from a homemade cheese press invention to the use of northern Saskatchewan spruce boards to age the product. "Public health and I worked together asking other jurisdictions about the regulations around it and ,so yeah, there was there was a lot to figure out," he said.

Petty began selling his cheese at the Saskatoon Farmers' Market in December 2018. "The response is really good," he said. "It's been good enough that I quit my day job, so I'm going full-time with making cheese and getting it into restaurants and stores." He has since expanded his brand to Saskatoon's Bulk Cheese Warehouse, as well as Italian Star Deli and Takeaway Gourmet in Regina.

"I like cheese because it's simple — simple to make, but then very hard at the same time. It's really an art."

Leisha Grebinski