

# Her Cheese Stands Alone

*Mozzarella Maven Finds the Perfect Balance of Art and Science*

—By JUDY DARMER FERGUSON, *Texas*

She might be a mozzarella maven, but PAULA STEPHENS LAMBERT, *Texas*, is far beyond curds and whey. Paula has perfected cheese making, a blend of art and science. Founder of The Mozzarella Company, an artisanal cheese factory in Dallas, Paula continues to develop the art of cheese making after more than 25 years in the business.

Artisan skills are passed down through generations, but Paula is a relative newcomer on the cheese scene. After graduating from the University of Texas and teaching first grade for several years, she took a life-changing trip to Italy. She studied Italian and art history and also taught English and worked in a winery.

While in Italy, Paula developed a taste for pure, fresh Italian cheeses—a superior quality she couldn't find in the U.S. In 1981, during another visit to Italy with her husband Jim, Paula learned to create handcrafted cheese herself. The following year, Paula founded The Mozzarella Company.

Paula attributes her success to determination, hard work and an apprenticeship in Perugia, Italy—without it she would not have achieved more than creating a few batches of cheese in her home kitchen. Her dedication has elevated the art of cheese to something far more refined than a good disguise for broccoli. While she started by perfecting mozzarella, Paula has branched out to more than 35 different types of handcrafted cheeses.

Paula credits those who have shared her passion and assisted her over the years. To get started, she invited a professor from Italy to come to Dallas. Another mentor, Rodney Lockhart, advised her on the purchase of dairy equipment. Several of her employees have been with her for more than 20 years. Her friend Chuck Williams of Williams-Sonoma introduced her to a location in the Dordogne region of France where Paula teaches cooking classes. Paula's friendships grew quickly as she made deliveries and spoke personally with chefs and retail marketers.

Paula's cheeses, now famous, have been served at the Academy Awards and to Presidents and royalty. She has been featured in *Gourmet*, *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appetit* and *The New York Times*. While receiving more than 100 awards for her legendary cheeses, Paula says her passion for making cheese continues to offer her

stimulating interaction. She enjoys sharing ideas and expertise with others in the field and related areas.

"Cheesemaking is an art. It involves balance as well as technique. It is a dance. It is a symphony," says Paula.

Paula also enjoys "enduring" Kappa friendships. In 2005, she was the featured speaker at the Ft. Worth Tablescape, a charity event sponsored jointly by Kappa Kappa Gamma and Pi Beta Phi. She continues to spend time with Kappa friends as she travels in her business or cooks with them in her classes.

## RESOURCES

- *The Cheese Lover's Cookbook & Guide*, Paula Lambert, 2000, Simon and Schuster
- *Cheese, Glorious Cheese!*, Paula Lambert, 2007, Simon and Schuster
- [www.mozzco.com](http://www.mozzco.com)



PAULA STEPHENS LAMBERT, founder of The Mozzarella Company