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WRITTEN BY: JAMIE JAVOR

COOK, EAT, TRAVEL:

Do it all with Paula Lambert and the Mozzarella Company



When asked what three things make Paula Lambert supremely happy, she answers quickly and with certainty: cooking, eating, and traveling. Luckily, she found a way to marry her business with her passions. At Mozzarella Company in Dallas, guests have an opportunity to enjoy all three of Owner Paula Lambert's favorite things right alongside her.

The Mozzarella Company was born in 1982 from a simple love of mozzarella cheese. Lambert, a Texas native, knew that fresh mozzarella was not readily available in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, so she took on the task of supplying her city with what she loved most.

Thirty-five years later, nestled in the Deep Ellum neighborhood of Dallas, there sits a quaint little factory. The small retail shop sells cookbooks, take-home cheesemaking kits, and of course, an array of cheeses. The walls are adorned with ribbons and awards for their product that is so lovingly produced every day just behind the plastic curtain. Lambert and her employees, several of whom have been with her since the very beginning, share their love of cheese with the world through her passions.



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Paula Lambert knows more about cheese than many people can ever hope to know in their lifetime. She showcases her knowledge in her two cookbooks, *The Cheese Lover's Cookbook & Guide* and *Cheese, Glorious Cheese!* The two books are markedly different, with the first one geared towards the basics. It is a guide and teaching tool for the foundation of cooking with cheese. The recipes are classic and all originals of Lambert's, from her kitchen to yours.

"I made up the recipes, and I had a recipe tester test them, every single one," said Lambert. "The first time I wrote them and gave them to a recipe tester, the second time I wrote them, tested them, and then changed them and gave them to a recipe tester. And that's why I love the second book." The second cookbook is more advanced, with more eclectic recipes and is less of a guide than the first.

But her cookbooks are not the only way cheese lovers can cook with Lambert. Anyone wishing to learn how to make fresh mozzarella is invited to take a cheesemaking class at the factory. Classes are offered twice a month and consist of a factory tour, hands-on cheesemaking, take-home product, and a tasting.

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Like many entrepreneurs, Lambert struggled in the beginning. Not many people knew how to cook with fresh mozzarella.

"It was going so poorly that I had to expand the line. People were not buying enough mozzarella, so I thought if I could get them to buy more things then maybe we would have enough volume to cover the overhead," she said. "I would see the same kind of cheese made several places, and I would take a little from this and a little from that, just like a recipe"

And so the days of selling strictly mozzarella are long gone. Today Mozzarella Company sells over 30 types of

cheeses from mild ricotta to an award winning robust blue cheese, smoked cheeses, cheeses made with goat's milk, and of course, their classic mozzarella. "Everything we make are cheeses that I created, except two, and Mauricio created those," said Lambert.

Everything is made by hand, starting the day with milk and ending with cheese. Mozzarella Company cheeses are sold at their small factory in Deep Ellum, in many local grocery stores and farmer's markets, and also online.

There is also the cheese of the month, a gift for the ultimate cheese lover. Each month Mozzarella Company ships a different cheese. "I try to choose, in the summer, cheeses that are fresh that can go with vegetables and fruits and things like that. And in the winter we can ship the cheese by ground if it's an aged cheese. Those typically are more robust flavors," she explained.

Mozzarella Company also offers wine and beer pairing classes. While there are some classic pairings such as blue cheese with Sauternes or Chianti with Pecorino Toscana, Lambert has one rule of thumb for the perfect pairing, "Eat and drink what you like." Sounds too simple, but it makes an enormous amount of sense. Just consume what you enjoy. "But you don't want to have a cheese that's too robust against a wine that can't meet it," she warns. The classes explain those basic pairing techniques and open discussion is welcomed.

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In 2011, *Viaggi Deliziosi*, translating to "delicious travels," was conceived. This tour group is a union of all Lambert's loves. For eight days, guests travel the Italian countryside, cooking, eating, drinking, and sightseeing. And who better to be by their side, sharing her knowledge and passion than Paula Lambert? Guests take intimate cooking classes and learn how to make minestrone, risotto, osso bucco, and handmade pasta. The tour includes picnics and dinners as well as sightseeing like locals.

"I took all those things that I love and started doing this," said Lambert. "When you have a cookbook, the way you

“Eat and drink what you like!”

sell it is by going to cooking schools and teaching cooking classes. I was going on these little trips and I'd go around and teach at a school every day. And I met this person who had a cooking school in France . . . They suggested that I be a teacher over there at her school and I loved it. I could find people that wanted to go with me. And so I went 25 times in ten years. And I just loved it.”

A new addition to Lambert's travel group is the Silver Seas Cruise. Lambert and Chef Stephan Pyles host a nine-night international cruise, complete with excursions, cooking classes, and cocktail parties. “We were the hosts of our group. We had four excursions, we had two cocktail parties on the boat, we had dinner at the fancy restaurant, and we had a cooking class. It was very fun,” she said.

For the last 35 years, Paula Lambert has shared her passions with the world each and every day. She will continue to make cheese, teach others how to use it and enjoy it, and travel the world seeking and sharing knowledge. When asked if she sees herself slowing down anytime soon, her response is once again made quickly and with complete certainty, “Why stop when I love it so much?” And that love shines through in each of her recipes, her attention to detail, her faithful and dedicated employees, and in every single one of her cheeses.

Visit our website to read more about Jamie Javor's personal experiences from taking Paula Lambert's class at Mozzarella Company.



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