



INTRODUCING

THE CHEESE COMPOSER GILLES VARONE

A NEW CULINARY COLLABORATION UNDER JAEGER-LECOULTRE'S
MADE OF MAKERS™ PROGRAMME CELEBRATING A SWISS SPECIALTY

KEY FACTS:

- **Reinventing the 12th Art:** challenging preconceptions of a polarizing ingredient, cheese
- **Gilles Varone:** an exclusive collaboration with a two-Michelin star Swiss Chef, who unveils the true character of cheese, elevating it from rustic to refined
- **Precise journey of sensations:** unexpected flavours, unconventional textures and intriguing visual presentations

At Watches and Wonders Geneva 2026, Jaeger-LeCoultre unveils the latest collaboration under its Made of Makers™ programme: an experimental gastronomic journey into the world of Swiss cheese with two-Michelin-starred Chef Gilles Varone.

The 2026 theme 'The Valley of Inventions' traces back Jaeger-LeCoultre's origin-story in the hidden valleys of the Swiss Jura. This challenging place shaped the character of the people whose inventions shaped the course of watchmaking history. By paying homage to the Swiss terroir with his culinary creations around cheese, Gilles Varone offers his perspective on the Maison's annual theme.

PUSHING FURTHER THE BOUNDARIES OF CLASSICAL ARTS

The Made of Makers™ programme draws a parallel between the worlds of horology and art, fostering collaborations with artists, designers, and craftsmen from disciplines outside watchmaking, who share the Maison's values of creativity, expertise, and precision. The programme challenges the perception of classical arts as static or bound to the past, instead emphasising their continuous reinvention and honouring them as a leading source of creativity today. Just as today's classics were once seen as radical at their inception, the Made of Makers™ programme explores how traditional forms and techniques can be reinvented through new materials and media, offering a fresh perspective on the dialogue between past and present. Like the watchmakers of La Grande Maison, these artists respect tradition as a foundation for creativity, while pushing boundaries and exploring new horizons, highlighting how both watchmaking and classical art express human creativity, reflect the culture of an era and trigger emotions.

To date, the Made of Makers™ community has embraced the worlds of contemporary visual art, gastronomy, music and perfumery – with artists including Zimoun (Switzerland), Michael Murphy (USA),



Guillaume Marmin (France), lettering artist Alex Trochut (Spain/USA), pastry chef Nina Métayer (France), mixologist Matthias Giroud (France), digital media artist Yiyun Kang (Korea), musician TØKIO M¥ERS (UK), multi-media artist Brendi Wedinger (USA), Chef Himanshu Saini (India), street light-painter Roy Wang (China), perfumer Nicolas Bonneville (France), designer Khalid Shafar (UAE), *chef-chocolatier* Mathieu Davoine (France/Switzerland), and animation film director Jackie Wang (China) and webcomic designer Lily May Catan/Olivecoat (Philippines). This new collaboration with Gilles Varone (Switzerland) adds another fresh interpretation of gastronomy to the Made of Makers™ portfolio.

A GASTRONOMIC CHALLENGE ON A CONTROVERSIAL INGREDIENT: CHEESE

A cornerstone of culinary heritage, cheese stands as one of gastronomy's most expressive and divisive ingredients. Shaped by centuries of tradition yet open to perpetual reinvention, it embodies both Swiss excellence and a world challenge. Revered as elitist and refined in some countries, it can inspire apprehension - perceived as smelly, overpowering, intimidating, or even too cheesy in other cultures.

Demanding absolute respect for its origin, cheese rewards only those who master its raw intensity. From fresh tomme to raclette and Maréchal, each selection is deliberate. Through cream, foam, melt and crust, the ingredient is continuously transformed, guided by texture, temperature and time.

This pursuit of precision, ingenuity and transformation finds its contemporary expression in the vision of renowned chef Gilles Varone. Paying homage to Jaeger-LeCoultre's 'Valley of Inventions', Gilles Varone's creations will be revealed during Watches and Wonders Geneva and offered to Jaeger-LeCoultre's invited guests at Le Chalet, within the Maison's booth. Sourcing only from artisanal producers, complemented by local and seasonal ingredients that he forages himself, the chef presents cheese not as familiar, rustic fare but as a symbol of creativity and transformation.

THE CHEESE COMPOSER

Born and raised in the village of Savièse, in the Valais canton of Switzerland, the Cheese Composer Gilles Varone lets his love of *terroir* speak through every dish that he crafts: the delicacy and harmony of flavours, matched by a restrained yet surprising beauty on the plate, all a testament to the precision, purity and respect with which he approaches every ingredient.

For Chef Gilles Varone, local sourcing is the best way to express a place, and tell a story – his return home to Savièse during the Covid lockdowns proved to be a great gift, “after the excitement and intense lifestyle of London, it was amazing to rediscover this place – its beauty, the high quality of life, the mountains... There's something magical here that we'll never find anywhere else. Now, I am grounded in my *terroir* and creating from the source. It makes me truly happy to go out into the mountains and forage for wild herbs, berries and other ingredients, create something beautiful with them and serve it to guests. To say, ‘that's what we picked this morning, and this is what we made with it’, is so rewarding.”



REVEALING CHEESE'S TRUE CHARACTER

By defying conventions, the cheese bites commissioned by Jaeger-LeCoultre to Chef Gilles Varone aim to reinvent the classical notion of a cheese board:

ELEVATING A CULINARY CLASSIC: The four bites guide guests through a structured tasting experience, starting with softer flavour notes and gradually building intensity: from sweet to salty, young to aged, light to strong.

UNCONVENTIONAL TEXTURES AND FORMS: presenting cheese in many guises – creamy, crisp, foamy, solid and liquid – textures both familiar and unconventional add an exciting sensory twist to the tasting experience, while the visual presentation surprises and delights with unexpected proportions, shapes and surface finishes.

VALLÉE DE JOUX INGREDIENTS: Elevating fine cheese by incorporating Vallée de Joux cheeses and other ingredients such as pine, honey and mountain herbs to create surprising harmonies, with layers of skillfully blended and balanced flavours that evolve in the mouth.

CHALLENGING PRECONCEPTIONS AND SENSATIONS

Crafted for Jaeger-LeCoultre, the four cheese bites exemplify the essence of melting tradition, precision and innovation:

‘PERLE D’HIVER’: Sensual, creamy and light, the savoury note of white tomme cheese is balanced by the sweetness of honey and subtle acidity of fresh pear.

‘MACARON FORESTIER’: Transforming a well-known sweet macaron into a savoury surprise that balances the subtly herb-infused roundness of Maréchal cheese, with the woody note of fir powder.

‘QUICHE DU CHALET’: a burst of robust flavour and deft aromatic balance unite mountain herbs and turmeric with fresh tomme cheese, elevating traditional quiche to a gastronomic discovery.

‘COEUR DE NEIGE’: The tasting finishes on a strong note that reinvents classical fondue in a hot canapé that blends breaded bread, pepper, fir spices & wild garlic buds with raclette and Gruyère cheese.

To complement the four gastronomic treats, Gilles Varone has created two special beverages based on fresh apples – one non-alcoholic and the other with alcohol. Sipped between bites, the fresh, lightly tangy and mildly sweet taste of the chosen drink acts as a palate-cleanser and an additional layer of flavour, emphasising or counterbalancing certain notes in the cheese bites. A rare white wine, *Lafnetscha* made from an ancient variety of grapes endemic to Gilles Varone’s home in the Valais, will be offered as a third option.

“We are honoured to collaborate with Chef Gilles Varone,” says Jérôme Lambert, Chief Executive Officer of Jaeger-LeCoultre. “As a craftsman of the highest order, his approach to his art embodies many of the values inherent in high watchmaking and underlines our Maison’s belief in the convergence of craftsmanship across many disciplines. The originality and purity of his creations add depth and richness



to our Made of Makers™ programme, and his passion, humility and dedication to craftsmanship make him a natural partner for us.”

ABOUT GILLES VARONE

Born and raised in Valais, Switzerland, Chef Gilles Varone embarked on a culinary journey and quickly gained international acclaim. After an apprenticeship in Sion, his talent flourished in London's elite kitchens. Further refining his craft at Johny Lake's Trivet and Claude Bosi's Bibendum, Varone returned to his native Savièse in July 2022 to open his own restaurant. His impact was immediate and profound. By October 2023, he earned his first Michelin star, alongside a Green Star, celebrating his deeply local and responsible approach to cooking – a philosophy rooted in foraging and cultivating strictly seasonal produce. In April 2024, Varone realized his dream of a completely open kitchen, personally presenting dishes and sharing his vision with guests. This innovative spirit was further honored in October 2024 with 17 Gault & Millau points and the Michelin Guide's 'Young Chef of the Year' award, culminating in the prestigious second Michelin star in October 2025. Chef Varone's remarkable trajectory and commitment to culinary transformation perfectly embody the spirit of innovation celebrated by Jaeger-LeCoultre.

ABOUT MADE OF MAKERS™

The Made of Makers™ programme brings together a community of artists, designers and craftsmen from a variety of disciplines outside watchmaking. Expanding the dialogue that exists between horology and art, the programme is founded on the core principles that have always defined La Grande Maison: creativity, expertise and precision. It focuses on world-class creators who share the Maison's values and whose work explores new forms of expression through different and often unexpected materials and media. Each year, new works commissioned through the programme animate the exhibitions that Jaeger-LeCoultre stages around the world, amplifying the chosen theme and creating new opportunities for audiences to engage and to become part of the wider conversation about art, craft and design.

ABOUT JAEGER-LECOULTRE – THE WATCHMAKER OF WATCHMAKERS™

Since 1833, driven by an unquenchable thirst for innovation and creativity, and inspired by the peaceful natural surroundings of its home in the Vallée de Joux, Jaeger-LeCoultre has been distinguished by its mastery of complications and the precision of its mechanisms. Known as the Watchmaker of Watchmakers™, the Manufacture has expressed its relentlessly inventive spirit through the creation of more than 1,400 different calibres and the award of more than 430 patents. Harnessing over 190 years of accumulated expertise, La Grande Maison's watchmakers design, produce, finish and ornament the most advanced and precise mechanisms, blending passion with centuries-old savoir-faire, linking the past to the future, timeless but always up with the times. With 180 skills brought together under one roof, the Manufacture creates fine timepieces that combine technical ingenuity with aesthetic beauty and a distinctively understated sophistication.
