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EDITOR'S LETTER

Say Cheese



You don't need me to tell you that the cheese scene in the United Kingdom has undergone a revolution in the past twenty years or so. Cheese shops were few and far between in the seventies and eighties, and I confess I can't recall just what sort of a range they sold back then. I remember Cheddars and territorials. Edam, Brie and one or two blues, but not much else. Supermarkets, of course, were the centres of bland, plastic-wrapped block cheese, whose quality had yet to experience the improvement that it has in recent years. These days, amazingly, and to the delight of serious cheesesellers, supermarket ranges still like their block Cheddars much too well and with notable exceptions, don't stray too far from this. The growing number of flavour-added cheeses in some branches of often leaves little space for artisan cheeses, which seem to be regarded as having only niche appeal. This leaves a whole world of cheese just waiting to be sold, surely?

Of course, the market for British artisan cheeses is only a part of what is going on in the quality cheese scene. Increased knowledge about home-produced cheese may have spilled over into a curiosity about the wealth of great cheeses from across the Channel and if you want to find out which ones are current hot sellers with the cheesemongers who define this market, do take a look at "Continental Drift'.'

> "Cheeesemakers work hard to make a living and cheese awards offer them due recognition"

Cheesemakers work hard to make a living and cheese awards offer them them due recognition. Inside, you'll find a preview of this year's International Cheese Awards at Nantwich, along with a full run-down of the results of this year's British Cheese awards, with comment from British Cheeese Awards founder and Speciality Food columnist, Juliet Harbutt.

All this and a profile of this year's Farm Shop & Deli Awards Retailer of the Year winner, John's of Instow. We hope you enjoy it!

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

GM: FRIEND OR FOE?

Helen Browning, chief executive of the Soil Association on the future of genetically modified food.

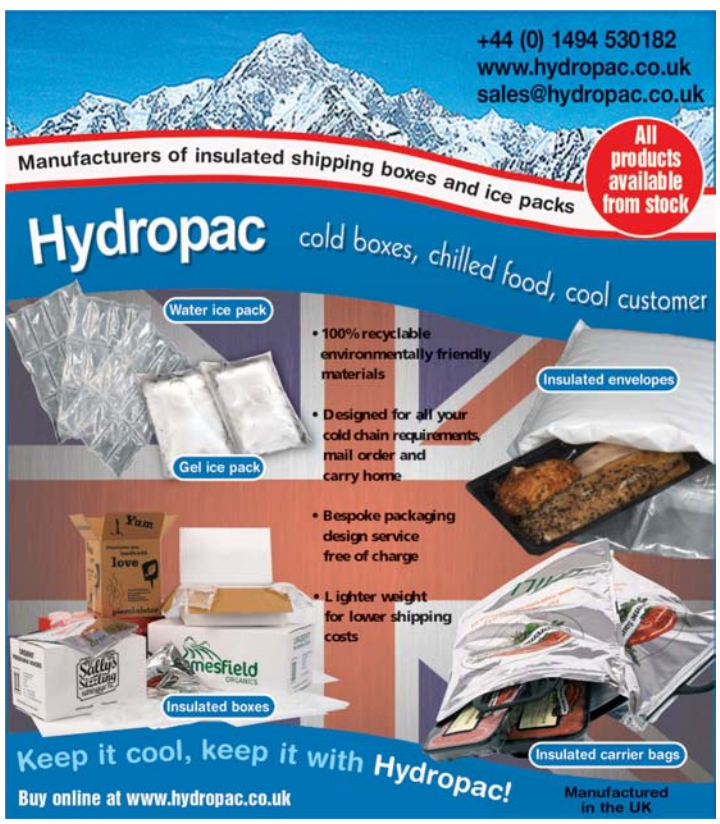
"Many proponents of GM argue that while there may be problems with current GM crops, the next generation will bring social and environmental benefits. Yet we still have millions of acres of GM crops that are harming the environment, sprayed with a chemical that is now thought be to be carcinogenic, and have not made any progress on maintaining consumer choice, labelling and liability for contamination of organic or non GM crops. For all these reasons and more, the Soil Association is firmly committed to campaigning against GM."

PARTRIDGES CHAMPIONS FAMILY RETAIL

Partridges, the independent retailer with two sites in South West London, has been named Retail Family Business of the Year and the People's Choice at the Family Business Awards 2015.

John Shepherd, managing director of Partridges said, "We're thrilled to have won both of these awards as they are testament to the hard work that we've put into the business.

"If you asked me what makes the business work, I think that it's our dedication to working directly with high quality food suppliers for the long-term. We aim to create good working relationships with the companies that we trade with. We champion new ideas and like to take controlled risks. We always look to offer something different."



Farm Shop and Group Food Buyer

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a driven Farm Shop Buyer and Group Food Buyer as part of the Blue Diamond Group.

There are 6 branded farm shops across England which incorporate a delicatessen and shop providing the best possible locally sourced produce and products.

We are looking for an experienced farm shop retail buyer to seize the potential of these stores, understand the customer base and what appeals to them and in doing so will grow sales and productivity.

The ideal candidate will have the ability to get underneath the brand and what it means to our customers, will have the vision to ensure a point of difference from competitor farm shops and create an aspirational look and feel to product and merchandising.

The role will also incorporate the buying of food produce for our 17 Blue Diamond Garden Centres, which incorporate 21 cafés and restaurants.

THE FOLLOWING SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL:

- Previous food buying experience
- Farm shop buying
- Ability to build relationships with local producers
- Highly motivated and able to work autonomously
- Excellent communication skills
- Competent in the use of Microsoft Office including Excel
- Confident in data analysis to identify opportunities and follow through to implementation

To ensure our continued success, the successful candidate will be passionate about and experienced in food buying and who can take the food category to the next level within the Group.

If you like the sound of a fantastic fast growing company with a great heritage and want to make a positive contribution to a business which in return helps all employees to maximise their full potential then see below for how to apply.

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Organic: Supply vs Demand

This year's Organic Market Report from the Soil Association may have heralded growing sales of organic products, particularly within the independent retail sector, but the actions of those at the grass roots of organic food – the farmers – appear to be telling another story. Despite rising solidly across Europe, the amount of land used for organic food production in the UK is falling, experiencing a decline of almost a fifth since 2010.

Slowly but surely, some organic farmers are moving to conventional methods to produce our food, citing unaffordable feed and fertiliser prices and vets bills as the reasons for their change of heart. The fewer UK farmers producing organic food, the less homegrown organic food there is for consumers to purchase – a situation which has led British retailers to sell organic food from as far afield as the US, Africa and Asia.

Despite this, UK sales of organic products are currently worth in excess of £1.86 billion, the highest level since 2009. Independent retailers alone saw a growth of 5.7 per cent in 2014. So what does this change of heart mean for us and the future of organic food in Britain? Two experts share their views.



Peter Melchett, policy director at the Soil Association

Organic production has been down here since 2008, but with the market now growing strongly, the real problem we face is increasing demand with what is now lower UK supply. Defra secretary of state Liz Truss wants us to be more self-sufficient in UK farming, and we agree, but without real encouragement from the Government, the shortfall between UK organic farming's supply of food and UK consumers' demand for organic food will continue to widen – sucking in imports. The UK was the only major organic market in the world that saw declines in sales in the recession. Demand, sales and supply of organic have grown in the other key global markets (by size – the USA, Germany, China and then a host of other EU countries) from 2008 right through the recession, so other countries will step in to supply the UK if British farmers do not.

We desperately need government ministers like Liz Truss and George Eustice to see the need to grow organic production in the UK as part of delivering on their key agricultural policy for this Government, namely to ensure that a higher proportion of our food comes from UK production. We think that organic is an absolutely crucial part of that, particularly as the organic market is growing by 4 or 5 per cent, whereas non-organic food sales have actually been falling recently.

I don't think the low level of subsidy is the one key reason why the amount of land in organic production in the UK has fallen recently, I think there are two key reasons. First, the fact that sales fell at the start of the recession in 2008, because the main multiple retailers took organic food off their shelves to make space for cheaper ranges as they focused on competing with Lidl and Aldi. Organic sales actually continued to grow in all the other main organic markets in the EU and in North America and China, so the market signals were completely different in the UK than in any other country with a significant organic market.

Second, as the Soil Association has been saying for many years, we get much less encouragement and non-financial support from the English government than is the case in other European countries, and the same tends to apply in Scotland and Wales too. So this is not just about money, but about the extent to which government ministers talk about the importance of organic food and farming, and public procurement encourages organic food purchases.



Roger Kerr, chief executive of Organic Farmers & Growers

At OF&G we work closely with the Organic Trade Board (OTB), and their research shows that the top reasons for people who buy organic food are organic's proven environmental and nutritional benefits, high animal welfare and social responsibility. None of these drivers are going to change with the news that some farmers are leaving organic, so I don't see people's desire for organic products decreasing. In fact, the OTB has indicated that 45% of consumers intend to purchase more organic products in future. So you can see that there is huge potential for growth, but we would very much like to encourage a sensible view of the clear economic advantages for those food producers who are able to take on organic production.

In the organic sector we have been building more resilient and productive farming systems, greater biodiversity, high food quality and fair supply chains. We need to keep going and to keep improving, keep development of organic agriculture at the forefront of food production. To achieve this, we need legislators both in Europe and nationally to join us in helping enable the sector to really grow, to flourish and to help in collaboration with the wider industry to produce ever more environmentally sensitive, fresh food while making farmland and farm businesses more resilient and more a part of communities.

> "Retailers and manufacturers need to send market signals to build the confidence of farmers and growers"



Ref: R14RD
Paper Roll Menu Holder
950x170x160mm
£129

Ref: R15GB
Modern Galvanised Grape Basket
£19.95

Ref: RD/CHIT
Kingsley Trolley and Trays
480x785x1300mm
£299

Ref: RD/PCSB
Sack Barrow and Crate Unit
1360x420mm
£345

Ref: RBK7
BRIX Display Unit
1600x400x1280mm
£775

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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Deli, farm shop and food hall openings and expansions across the country



GLOUCESTER SERVICES HOSTS WORLD'S FIRST MOTORWAY FISHMONGER

Westmorland has opened a Southbound site to partner with its popular Northbound Gloucester services on the M5, and the new premises is home to the world's first motorway fishmonger.

The new site also features a farm shop selling locally-grown rare breed apples, local cheeses, craft beer and baked goods, plus a cheese and deli counter, patisserie and butchery.

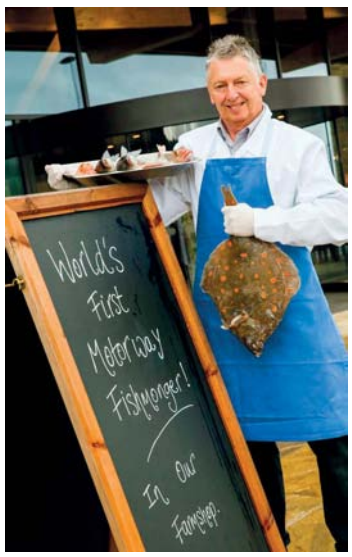
The fishmonger is run by Francis Phillips, a fishmonger with 26 years experience, and stocks only sustainably-caught fish from small scale British fishing boats landed in Newlyn.

Sarah Dunning, chief executive officer said, "We chose to build another Motorway Service Area because we have a particular niche in the market and we believe strongly in our alternative approach. Proper food matters, and that's why we serve it, where you least expect it, on the motorway."

"Local food and local producers are at the heart of our offering, alongside quality local staff, it's what makes our business special, it sets us apart. Bringing the concept of local food to the motorway is wonderfully democratic. Suppliers are given a shop window and accessible markets, motorists enjoy great local food, and we're preserving regional foods and identity. It's a game where everyone wins.

"Good quality, locally-produced food shouldn't be the sole preserve of high end shops, it should be affordable and available to everyone. That's why we serve it on the motorway."

"Gloucestershire and its surrounding counties have an abundant and impressive producer and agricultural community. It's the exceptional local producers that are the bedrock of our business."



FODDER ENTERS 'ON THE HOOF ' RETAIL MARKET

Yorkshire-based independent Fodder is offering its customers food on the go from an original 1960s Airstream.

The new addition to Fodder's retail portfolio aims to make the most of the change in people's eating habits, which increasingly include eating on the run and grazing, and has been named Fodder on the Hoof.

Fodder chefs will be serving a frequently changing menu of regional produce, including bacon and sausage sandwiches, chicken and vegetable burgers, hot dogs and Caesar salads. In line with the vehicle's American heritage, Fodder on the Hoof will also be selling milkshakes made from Yorkshire milk and ice cream.

Heather Parry, managing director of Fodder said, "Fodder's success in the first few years has been remarkable and proves how many people actively chose to support our local farmers and eat quality, local produce.

"Fodder on the Hoof will cater for the current surge of grazing and eating on the run. It will be open all day with a varied seasonal menu. It is a nice add on; once customers have done their shopping they can have a coffee or bacon sandwich on the way out – making shopping an even tastier experience than before!"





NEW DEDICATED CHEESE COUNTER FOR LUDLOW

Ludlow Food Centre has unveiled plans for a revised interior layout. The Shropshire food hall is currently developing a dedicated cheese counter that will change location and extend the existing deli area from July.

The proposed alterations have the additional benefit of providing direct access from behind the counter and into the dairy, where cheesemakers Dudley and Paul produce seven cheeses, as well as butter and yoghurt.

Edward Berry, managing director said, "Our cheese counter has always run across the back wall of the store. However, the dairy is located as you walk into the building on the left. Once the new counter opens, it will enable much more interaction between Dudley, staff on the counter and, of course, our customers. Dudley's expertise and extensive knowledge can be readily shared with the public, which will be a real bonus. There has always been window into each of our eight production units so that visitors can see the teams in action. Our recent experience of opening up the bakery has spurred us on to implement these additional changes. Now that Hazel and our bakers are more accessible, there is so much for people to see in terms of the sights, sounds and smells of scratch baked bread, cakes and cookies being produced. The overall experience has really improved and the dairy team will soon have the same advantage."





Make a Date for lunch! 2015



The award-winning lunch! trade show returns to the Islington's Business Design Centre on Thursday 24th September.

The London event will see thousands of senior buyers discover the latest innovations from the food-to-go sector across two days, with over 350 exhibitors showcasing thousands of new products and industry experts giving inspirational talks.

Show features include the new, bigger Working lunch! seminar theatre, Innovation Challenge Showcase, Innovation Zone, brand new Menu Innovation Theatre featuring the British Smoothie Championships (both sponsored by Magrini), VIP lounge and Café Life Design Awards Gallery.

At the time of writing, 95 per cent of the exhibition space has been booked, according to organiser Diversified Communications UK, with exhibitors including Cawston Press, Metcalfe's Food Co, Pipers Crisps and Simple Simon.

WBC Announces Bags For Life India Project

WBC, the UK's leading producer of printed Bags For Life, has launched a training project for the producers of jute bags in rural West Bengal.

The project aims to develop the stitching skills of local people, helping them to make handicrafts and other jute-based products and providing them with employment opportunities that may not otherwise be available to them.

All profits generated by the sale of products made through the WBC India project will be reinvested into developing the community and employment opportunities for those most marginalised in the local area. WBC has found that widowed women are most in need of practical skills in order to gain full time employment; this in turn will offer enough financial stability for them to send their children to school.

Stage one of the project, which focused on building a centre for training and development, is now complete. The first programme – which offers six widowed women training in stitching and sewing machines – is now in progress, and once it has been completed in August 2015, WBC plans to extend the project into 2016 and beyond with 100 delegates annually.

James Hayward, marketing director at WBC said, "WBC believes that a healthy, fairly paid and well cared for community offers better prospective employees. Women in the community who are trained in numeracy and literacy can go to work and therefore allow their kids to go to school rather than keep them out of school to work and pay for basics such as food.

"Western retailers often purchase a bag for life for less than the cost of a sandwich, so investing 5% of WBC Bags For Life profits in to a project that will benefit community at large is not only about trading ethically, but it makes good business sense.





JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES

"Blame it on the weather"

For us at Partridges, the weather only started in 2004 when we moved to the Duke of York Square. Until that time, weather was something that happened to other people. Until 2004 we were located in Sloane Street, where we had a constant flow of people passing by the front door, customers could park directly outside the shop and we were close to both a major bus stop and the tube station. Bad weather would have put customers off, but we probably subscribed to the comments of Sir Philip Rose in that "weather is for wimps." Or put another way, "A bad grocer blames his thermometers."

However, all this changed when we relocated. We are now set back at least 30 yards from the pavement, albeit fronting onto the beautiful Duke of York Square and adjacent to the King's Road. When it rains, those 30 yards become like 3000 miles without an umbrella. Basil Fawlty would no doubt have cursed his clientele, thinking that after at least two million years of British weather they should be used to it by now. Of course we would never think like that, but there is no doubt about it – the weather does have a great affect on sales, although perhaps one more complex than you initially might think.

I recently produced a graph to chart the ebb and flow of sales through the seasons, from which I can see that sales gradually improve through January and February to March, when the first flush of spring produces extra staff at the tills providing 8.5% of the annual turnover. However, this improvement is brought to an end by the Easter period and the school holidays. April falls to 7.6% of annual turnover, in contrast to the temperature which keeps rising.

May, at 8.5%, is slightly higher than June at 8.2%, but this is because of a local event (The Chelsea Flower Show) and two Bank Holidays that serve to drive footfall to Chelsea. Once again, July drops to 7.9% in contrast to the outside temperature which keeps rising, but this is again due to a local anomaly. A lot of residents and many of our customers leave London from mid-July and return at the end of August. This accounts for August sales, amazingly, being not much higher than January or February at 6.9%. Things get back to normal in September at 8.1%, and from then on our sales growth is at odds with the outside temperature decline. October stands at 8.8% despite the half term, and November at 10% and December at 11.8% are all about the festive rush.

On a day-to-day basis, the impact of the weather is striking. From a sunny Saturday to a rainy Saturday the difference can be many thousands of pounds. Heatwaves are good, at least initially, where spending goes up but average spend goes down. However, after a few days this effect wears off.





CHARLES CAMPION

"K.I.S.S."

No one places as much store by a fortuitous acronym than those toiling in the creative departments of advertising agencies. Nothing convinces a client like a handful of carefully chosen words that have been transformed into a neat sales aid. K.I.S.S. is a particular favourite and is exceptional in that it makes some sense. Many earnest creative directors stress its importance to young copywriters and art directors. But 'Keep It Simple, Stupid' shouldn't be the sole preserve of those in Ad Land, it should be part of the DNA of every shop and NPD Department.

In a world that pays much too much lip service to new products simply because they are new, the idea that there are advantages to keeping things single-minded is a welcome blast of fresh air. For example, look at what the street food folk have done with the humble cheese toastie. At outfits like the Kappacasein stall at Borough Market, they sell cheese toasties that touch a chord with even the most quality obsessed foodie. Some say Kappacasein has worked out the perfect combination of cheeses to deliver the ultimate in flavour, aroma and texture. The old kitchen principle of starting with the very best ingredients and not spoiling them holds good, but keeping the cheese sandwich simple doesn't mean it can't be sophisticated.

All too many chefs, and sadly all too many home cooks, think that the route to success starts with a complicated dish. A 'grandstand dish with numerous elements scattered across the plate flanked by blobs, smears and implausible garnishes. It is said of Albert Roux that in his heyday at Le Gavroche, whenever he had to assess someone who wanted to work in the kitchens he would wait until the end of their trial shift and then ask them to fry him an egg. A tough call, and one where K.I.S.S. would resonate. No salt on the yolk (it leaves a white mark); white pepper on the egg's white rather than those flecks of black; no browning of the egg white frills; just the right amount of those frills (dependent on the temperature of the pan); must use a fresh egg. Cooking the perfect fried egg to M. Roux's liking was a formidable challenge, and the apparent simplicity of the task conveniently overlooks the minutiae. God may be in the details, but he also commends simplicity.

The strength of K.I.S.S. isn't only a question of simplifying each plateful; man cannot live by cheese toastie alone. All well-made products should have a simplicity that makes them accessible. They are also likely to have simple packaging and honest pricing. But in that first important moment when the customer asks about a particular item, having a simple response is key. At one time, not so very long ago, the idea of paying £5.50 for a cheese sandwich would have sent a shiver down even the bravest spine, but now, (at least in London's Borough Market), that's a fair price, and there's ongoing communication between buyer and seller that emphasises the value. Keep it simple if you can... it's stupid not to.

DIARY DATES

14th–16th July
GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW
Harrogate
greatyorkshireshow.co.uk

19th–21st July
BELLAVITA EXPO LONDON
Business Design Centre, Islington
bellavitaexpo.com

28th–29th July
INTERNATIONAL CHEESE SHOW
Nantwich
nantwichshow.co.uk

11th–15th August
GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL
Olympia, London
gbbf.org.uk

6th–8th September
SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR
Olympia, London
specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk

11th September
GLOBAL CHEESE AWARDS
Frome, Somerset
globalcheeseawards.com

11th–13th September
LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL
Ludlow Castle
foodfestival.co.uk

13th–15th September
TOP DRAWER AUTUMN
Olympia, London
topdrawer.co.uk

GLEE
NEC, Birmingham
gleebirmingham.com

Garofalo Goes Organic

Authentic Italian pasta producer Garofalo has launched a new range of organic pastas, made from the same high quality durum wheat as the brand is best known for.



The new range contains three variants: Penne, Gemelli and spaghetti, and is presented in the brand's recognisable clear packs to highlight the structure of the pasta and offer retailers uniformity and a wider range to sell.

Mal Pullan, UK commercial director for Garofalo said, "We have started to see a real move in consumer attitude toward dry pasta in the UK. Consumers are increasingly looking for premium pasta as well as more 'healthier lifestyle pasta' such as organic and higher protein.

"The organic sector has significantly grown over the past 12 months and has huge potential. We believe that this trend will continue to grow as consumers become more 'health-aware' and care where and how their pasta is made."

The Organic Garofalo range is distributed by the producer's UK office.



Avocado Oil Boom

Ahuacatlan Avocado Oil, named after the world-renowned avocado producing region of Michoacán, Mexico, was recently launched in Selfridges Food Halls to celebrate the Year of Mexico in the UK.

Avocado oil is an increasingly strong seller thanks to its health benefits and versatility; you can both serve it cold and cook with it on a high heat without it losing its properties, which makes it popular with health conscious consumers.

Rich in monounsaturated fats and boasting a delicate nutty flavour, Ahuacatlan makes a delicious and healthy alternative to olive oil and butter in salads, marinades and baking.

Ahuacatlan is available in five variants: Natural, and Lime, Garlic, Onion and Chipotle infusions, and is distributed by MexImport MexImport.co.uk and sold online at mexgrocer.co.uk.

Eduardo Diaz Rivera, founder of Ahuacatlan said, "Our experience in the market is that once you try it, you never go back to other oils. The high smoke point (260°C) makes it the healthiest vegetable oil on the market. When you cook with it, the oil does not leave that oily smell that other oils do. It is an amazing oil."









Britons Back Farmers

Farmers and growers have grown in popularity with the public for the fourth year running, according to a recent survey by OnePoll.

Currently 68 per cent of the population of England and Wales has a favourable or very favourable view of British farmers – an increase of eight per cent since 2012.

The value of agriculture to Britain's economy is also increasingly recognised, up from 83 per cent in 2012 to 90 per cent this year, and 75 per cent of people believe that farmers have a beneficial or very beneficial to the state of the countryside.

Meurig Raymong, NFU president believes the trend is a result of farmers and growers increasingly openly championing their work and being more open than before.

Meurig Raymond, NFU president said, "I am seeing more and more how farmers are speaking directly to the public, including capitalising on social media to share with them compelling reasons to back British farming and buy British food.

"All of this is great news for a sector that has had its fair share of challenges in recent times. We've seen in recent weeks the very visible public support for farming and farmers both in the public and the media and I would like to thank them for that.

"But we cannot rest on our laurels. We must continue using all of the tools we have to tell our story and state the case for British food and farming. This survey is a clear indicator of public support. Now – at a time when farm gate prices are low – retailers and government must also continue showing their support and visibly back British farming."

What's the Value of Markets?

Recent research carried out by the University of Portsmouth suggests that markets increase the health, vitality and viability of British market towns.

The researchers found that markets, worth an estimated £10.5 billion to Britain's economy, are a significant employer of local people, encourage business start-ups, support farmers and strengthen a sense of social cohesion.

As well as offering higher levels of sociability than towns without them, the study suggests that markets promote food security and sustainability, and demonstrate the 'market effect' which increases footfall by between 15 and 27 per cent compared to towns without markets.

The report also discovered potential for markets to further develop an area's vitality by helping 'fixed' forms of retailing adapt to the public's changing expectations of towns and cities. Professor Hallsworth, visiting research fellow at Portsmouth Business School said, "We can unequivocally say markets contribute to the economic, social and political health of towns and cities.

"Footfall is a key indicator of town and city centre performance, representing activity, usage and relevance. Towns and cities with markets are attractive and welcoming to all, not just those with money to spend. We argue that a busy town is a healthy town."

This research was commissioned and published by The National Association of British Market Authorities.



GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL



"Five Monkeys and a Banana"

Systems and processes have been much on my mind recently and not in a good way. In fact, it's probably true to say I have been somewhat vexed, and being vexed is not an entirely nice feeling for me as I have a very definite OCD streak. Not quite 'Sleeping With The Enemy', you understand, but I do like the mugs to be nice and straight in the mug drawer. Someone once gave me a postcard about The Laws of Straightness, which rather pleased me as it reinforced my views about the direction of mug handles. Having said that, I also try to live by the maxim "There is nothing so useless as doing something efficiently that doesn't need to be done at all," which may seem counter intuitive, given my mug habit. However, my theory is that if we can adhere to the discipline of putting mugs away straight and carefully, it demonstrates a certain attention to detail that then flows through the rest of the business.

Now, the reason I mention this is that we have been reviewing a whole host of things we do, because there are some things that are just habit and no one really knows why we do them. Worse still, no one ever thinks to challenge them because a 'that's the way it is around here' attitude becomes the norm.

Some years ago there was an experiment involving five monkeys in a cage. In the middle of the cage was a step ladder with a bunch of bananas hanging from the roof. Obviously, the monkeys made a beeline for the ladder and the bananas. However, every time one of them made an attempt to climb the ladder and get the bananas they were hosed with water until none of them even bothered to try. Once this occurred they changed one of the monkeys and put a new one in. Naturally, the new monkey saw the bananas and went to get them, but the other monkeys, fearful of being hosed with water, hauled the new monkey off the ladder. One by one the monkeys were changed until none of the original five remained. Another monkey was introduced and immediately went for the ladder but all the others stopped it. Why? None of the monkeys now in the cage had ever been hosed with water but, because the 'that's the way it is around here' attitude was ingrained, none of them attempted change but accepted the forbidden ladder and bananas as the norm.

Our review of processes and systems has been a thoroughly cathartic exercise. We've dispensed with lots of crazy, outdated rules and habits that were thoroughly efficient but, on examination, found to be totally pointless, and it struck me that must be the same in lots of businesses. So, have a look and see if you've got any soggy monkeys of your own. If you find one, give it a banana and get rid of it because, whilst we hate change, it is the only thing that will bring progress. Just don't go monkeying about in my mug drawer.



Winner of 2 Golds, 6 Silvers and a Highly Commended at Taste of the West Awards 2015

AGENTS REQUIRED

We proudly produce award winning preserves, chutneys and curds and primarily sell them directly to the general public at food festivals and showcase events.
Due to popular demand we are now looking to supply Farm Shops and Delis.
If you are looking for a new and exciting range to sell, that is already being tasted at nearly 2500 events nationwide, please call Sarah Nias on 01308 458604 or email sarah@cherrytreepreserves.co.uk

Fudge Kitchen Launches Liquid Fudge



Kent-based confectionery producer Fudge Kitchen has released a range of Liquid Fudge jars, suitable for spreading, baking and serving with desserts.

The Liquid Fudge is available in three flavours: Salted Caramel, Rich Chocolate and Vanilla Toffee.

Sian Holt, founder of Fudge Kitchen said, ''The feedback has already been tremendous, particularly on the flexibility of the product and consequent breadth of potential consumer interest.

''The curiosity-provoking uniqueness has also struck a chord with consumers. There is nothing similar on the market. And, as with all our gourmet ranges, we've prioritized high end, eye-catchingly iridescent design on easy stacking jars; in a new plastic format for safety and reduced weight.

''We've kept it to an affordable, self-gifting and impulse buy suggested price point of £3.99, which, for an all natural product, handmade by our artisan staff represents good value.''

Seed & Bean Revamps



Ethical chocolate producer Seed & Bean has updated its product range, adding three new flavours: Coconut & Lemongrass (37% milk), Fennel Seeds & Almond (72% dark), and Rose & Vanilla (72% dark).

Stock of these products will be available from mid-August.

In order to make room for the new lines, three flavours have been discontinued – Just Ginger, White Raspberry & Vanilla and Milk Tangerine. The producer's Mini Bar range is also being dropped, and its Extra Fill Plain Dark and Plain Milk are reducing in weight from 100g to 85g.

Stephen Rudkin, founder of Seed & Bean said of the new flavours, ''Coconut works wonderfully well in chocolate, and whilst our Lemon & Cardamon has a Middle Eastern Flavour, this is the Tropical Far East in a bar. It's quite a remarkable taste that is nothing like I'd experienced before.

''For years I've seen the rise of all things aniseed, but finding the right one for chocolate has been quite a challenge. In our new Fennel Seeds & Almond bar, the fennel seeds are crushed to a powder to give a real fresh kick. The almond paste (made from 100% pure roasted Sicilia Almonds) is added as a background, while the almond oil helps the fennel taste linger and adds a rich depth.

''The rise of floral flavours is well known, as we've witnessed with the large increase in sales of our lavender chocolate, so we thought it time to bring back one of our favourites. This new dark bar is something rather special, it works tremendously well with very dark chocolate as organic rose otto oil is very strong – it takes around 12 roses to produce each bar! Blended with pure organic Fairtrade Madagascan vanilla essence for its subtle aromatic flavour, this is a great combination.''

Ice Cream Confectionry from Oliphant & Pomeroy



Artisan ice cream confectioners Oliphant & Pomery has launched its Epicurean No1 and Epicurean No3 selections – assortments of miniature chocolate-coated dairy ice creams.

The Epicurean No1 box contains four of its most popular flavours (Salted Caramel coated in dark chocolate, Mango & Passion Fruit coated in dark chocolate, and Pistachio and Mandarin coated in milk chocolate) and Epicurean No3 provides a frozen version of the after dinner mint – 12 pure mint and chocolate mint ice creams coated in dark Belgian chocolate.

The ice cream confectionery is made using Jersey cream, real fruit purées, nut pastes and handmade salted caramel, before being hand-dipped in Belgian chocolate.

Elizabeth Prior, founder of Oliphant & Pomeroy said, ''Our ice cream confectionery is made by us from scratch using our own artisan ice cream, hand-dipped and decorated by us in rural Bucks. We're a real small company making what we think are interesting and supremely edible products.''



Yorkshire Chocolatier Creates Chocolate Jams

A Huddersfield-based chocolatier has launched a new range of jams with a chocolate twist.

The selection includes Raspberry Jam with 70% Aruca Dark Chocolate, Strawberry Jam with Nevado White Chocolate and Orange Marmalade with 40% Noche Milk Chocolate, each of which are made using the best Fino de Aroma Columbian cocoa.

The company also provides chocolate workshops, training and tasting events across the UK and internationally.

David Greenwood-Haigh, founder of Coeur de Xocolat said, ''The jams with a chocolate-twist lead shoppers on a 'food adventure' by taking a well-loved food and adding fantastic quality, single origin chocolate to give a smooth and surprising finish; a real treat on a warm croissant or thick scone!''

Mochi Hits UK Market

Tsuki Mochi, producer of mochi truffles, has released a range of new luxury Japanese desserts: Yuzu Lemon Cheesecake and Dark Chocolate.

Mochi – made with pounded and sweetened rice flour to create a distinctive chewy texture – is a Japanese delicacy and expected to become a culinary trend in Britain over the coming months.

Tsuki Mochi has updated the classic Japanese dessert for the UK, exchanging the traditional sweetened red bean paste with smooth ganache and hand-rolling each sphere in London before coating them in cocoa or a biscuit crumb.

Howard and Vivien Wong, founders of Tsuki Mochi said, ''We are committed to putting mochi on the map in Britain. Mochi has cult status in its home country of Japan and we are confident that they will be just as popular in the UK, as consumers are increasingly looking for luxurious and innovative desserts. Mochi is unlike anything else available in the UK and we believe that they are set to become an exciting new food trend in Britain.

''We make Little Moons and Tsuki Mochi from scratch in London – they are all hand-rolled according to the traditional method, guaranteeing that we produce the best and most authentic products.''





PRIME CUTS

Erin Hurst, founder of Notting Hill's Provenance Village Butcher, tells the story of a community-centric business



The concept behind Provenance was to bring free-range, grass-fed meat to people within an inviting atmosphere. My husband Guy, Tom (my brother in law) and myself are all New Zealanders and grew up on farms; we never consciously thought about the fact that not all meat is free-range and fed on grass. Even though I've eaten meat my whole life and know it well, I used to go to butchers in the UK and find the people behind the counter quite intimidating. We wanted to make sure that our customers felt comfortable asking any question they would like, and that they'd enjoy the experience – we've definitely succeeded in that.

The customer experience as well as the look and feel of the butchery make Provenance feel like a friend's kitchen; we have wooden floors and a very low serve-over – there's no high glass between the butcher and the customer. We have stories about our suppliers on the walls, and we know them all very personally. At the weekends, the boys take in turn playing music on the record player in the corner of the shop. All of our staff are avid foodies, but they also have very active lives outside of work which we're keen to support. For example, Tom, our general manager, is an amazing cricket player so we've agreed a set-up which means that he never misses a match. Not making employees choose between their two passions – whether it be sport or music and butchery – means that we have very happy staff.

Originally we were going to call the butchery after a person to give it a personal approach, but then we realised that the most important thing was the provenance of the meat. We wanted to know all of our suppliers and where the meat had come from. It's taken a little while for customers to cotton on to why it's so important, but now they appreciate being able to connect the meat in the counter to its story. My father lived in Britain for a couple of years when I was very small, and formed amazing relationships with the farmers he was doing business with. Having not ever been a butcher myself, when we set up the butchery and were looking for suppliers, we began with my dad's friends such as Packington – they're now our biggest suppliers.

Free-range and grass-fed is what we do, but our greatest philosophy is that our staff are there to help. One employee, Rachel, used to be a chef, so she's able to advise customers on how they should serve the meat that they buy from us, how to cook it and what to pair it with. We don't ask our staff to do that, they just do it naturally as they have such a love of food.

We offer some meal solutions – from Monday to Thursday people want the ease of a stuffed chicken breast, for example – but over the weekend they prefer to cook from scratch. Especially in Notting Hill, as people buy vegetables from the market and want to purchase their meat locally too. We've got a second location in West Hampstead opening early next year, and I think that will be more of a meal solution hotspot as people will be coming in before hopping on the overground or popping in on their way home from work – it's a slightly younger demographic, so there'll be more people buying on a day to day basis, whereas in Notting Hill people are purchasing meat for two or three days at a time to feed their families. It comes down to understanding your customers, and that's difficult to do until you've opened your doors.

> "People are more passionate about meat than they used to be"

We're not fixated on our meat being local, we just want the best free-range meat we can get. We get a lot of our meat from Wales, including all of our lamb. The welsh are quite similar to New Zealanders in that they farm for the love of farming.

We have a rule not to stock anything non-meat or meat-related; we want to be the best at one thing, and that is meat. Focusing on one thing rather than adding cheese and so on to the equation means that we have more room to present really different beautiful cuts. We also sell charcuterie, and world class condiments homemade in Hackney by Kylie of Newton and Pott. As long as they're good, we enjoy using small suppliers and giving them a chance to get off the ground.

We're tiny too, so it's great to work with like-minded people.

We went into this business, leaving the cut throat world of business, to have a nice time, so we make sure we only work with people we'd want to go for a drink with. It's difficult employing such people, as until they start work you don't know how they're going to pan out. We've employed people from lots of different backgrounds, but the key thing is that they're all passionate about meat and can engage with customers about it. There are lots of butchers who are happy to sit in a cold room all day cutting meat, but that's not the kind of place we are; we understand that some people will always prefer to buy their meat from a supermarket and not have to speak to anyone, but we're offering a real alternative for people who want to connect with their butcher.






A FRIENDLY, WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE



AT PROVENANCE, EMPLOYEES BALANCE WORK WITH PLEASURE

NEW FOR 2015
The Speciality & Fine Food Fair
Pocket Guide
To register your products for inclusion please contact
01206 505934 aaron.northcott@aceville.co.uk | 01206 505936 sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk | 01206 500240 richard.honey@aceville.co.uk
Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2015
6 - 8 September · London Olympia
The UK's leading showcase of fine food & drink
Trade Only!
Chocolate fair



SHOW PREVIEW: BELLAVITA LONDON

Bellavita London is the largest Made-in-Italy UK food and beverage trade show. The 2015 event features the best Italian products and demonstrations by Massimo Bottura and others

Do you love Italian food and wine? Do you want to watch Massimo Bottura creating some amazing recipes? Or maybe try some of the best wines and meet the Best UK Sommelier? Then Bellavita Expo is the place to be!

Bellavita Expo is the largest Made-in-Italy UK food and beverage trade show. Bellavita is the only B2B event aiming to increase the interaction between Italian producers and top buyers in every sector.

Bellavita Expo takes place in London, 19th-21st July 2015. The show was successfully launched in 2014, when 237 Italian producers joined Bellavita in London, showing their products to nearly 7,000 visitors, of which 72% were top buyers, experts and starred chefs.

The 2015 edition will bring Bellavita to a new venue, the Business Design Centre in London, and the event boasts many new features.

Aldo Mazzocco, CEO of Bellavita, explains the origins behind this Italian spectacular: "Bellavita Expo showcases only the best of Italian food and wine. The Expo will bring to the UK the excellence of Made-in-Italy through international exhibitions, and between 2015 and 2020 Bellavita is targeted to become the global benchmark of Italian food and also of its beverages."



Italian cuisine is full of treasures, as visitors to Bellavita will discover. Bellavita aims to highlight the best of the regional traditions but also to wipe fake 'made in Italy' products from the market. Aldo Mazzocco has a very clear idea on this: "If you travel through Italy, you will have at least 20 different traditions, one for every region, different gastronomy heritages and specific tastes. Bellavita is a picture of the incredible diversity that represents the Italian culture in every aspect. The show will be an occasion to meet small artisan producers, to taste their products and to hear their stories."

During the three days of Bellavita, many new events will be staged to raise the profile of Italian quality food. The jury for The Bellavita Awards, which is made up of over 100 experts drawn from top chains, and UK food industry figures, including specialists from Harrods, Marks & Spencer, Selfridges, Costcutter, Abel & Cole and Jamie Oliver Group, will be visiting individual stands and tasting the best products. The Best UK Sommelier competition, organised by the Association of Italian Sommeliers, is a unique competition and provides a fantastic opportunity for producers to meet global wine gurus.



But the most spectacular events are to be seen in the Bellavita Theatre, where the organisers will stage live events and host presentations and cooking experiences with such celebrities as Massimo Bottura, Aldo Zilli, Francesco Mazzei and many others. Wine-tasting sessions, workshops with buyers and professionals and regional traditions' promotional initiatives can all be seen at this venue.

Italy in London will be at Bellavita, where visitors will be able to source innovative products, as well at meet some of the producers who are showcasing their speciality foods abroad for the first time. As Aldo Mazzocco pointed out: "Some exhibitors are coming to this international event for the first time, because they believe that Bellavita is a good platform to start from."

If you are a food and beverage expert and you want to register for free through Speciality Food Magazine, you can connect on the Eventbrite website and use the code BELLASFM.

Bellavita opens to the general public on Sunday 19th of July, when exhibitors will get the chance to meet UK consumers.

And before Bellavita opens? If you have already registered, you can find interesting news and videos on the Bellavita Magazine, where you can also find fascinating features about Italian food and wine. The Bellavita project will continue throughout the year, with new events and initiatives. The Bellavita Shop is an e-commerce platform that will be online by November 2015, offering the best products seen at Bellavita Expo in London. It will be a virtual market open 24 hours a day, displaying the excellence of Made-in-Italy for UK users.

Bellavita will also open a new expo in Amsterdam on 22nd/23rd of November 2015. This new event will bring producers to the heart of Benelux and offer visitors the chance to meet some of Italy's most renowned buyers and restaurants owners.

IN DETAIL

BELLAVITA LONDON
WHERE: IThe Business Design Centre, 52 Upper St, London N1 0QH
WHEN: 19th-21st July 2015
WEBSITE: www.bellavitaexpo.com
CONTACT: +44 (0) 2035671040
email: info@quirismedia.com
Twitter: #bellavitaexpo
BY CAR: The Business Design Centre is located just outside the congestion charge zone on the A1
BY TRAIN: Nearest tube station Angel or just a little further, Highbury and Islington





Our showcase of the hottest products this season



My Olive Branch

Olive Branch are launching three attractive and superbly priced gift tube selections, which will be available from Autumn 2015. Made up with combinations of their best-sellers, the tubes are illustrated with mouthwatering icons of the product ingredients, giving them great shelf presence. With retail prices starting from just £9.99, these are sure to be popular gifts this season.

The first of the three varieties is the Trio of Chunky Olive Tapenade. Olive Branch has brought the classic olive tapenade recipe into the 21st century with their coarsely ground recipe and innovative flavour combinations. This trio of Chunky Olive Tapenade is perfect for any olive lover.

Next up is the Trio of Greek Mezze, a selection of pastes made with the finest ingredients from around Greece – perfect for dips and canapes.

The final variation is the Fine Dining Set which includes a Kalamata Olive Tapenade, Aubergine & Basil Paste and the cheeseboard favourite Sweet Olive, Fig & Almond Relish.

Each tube contains three jars and a recipe booklet. Available from Cotswold Fayre and Hider.

0208 573 4698 info@myolivebranch.co.uk myolivebranch.co.uk



Uncle Roys

"The Best" Onion Marmalade is the latest addition to Uncle Roy's Extra Special Condiments range.

Supplied in 220g jars, it is a perfect accompaniment for any cheeses or meats – or delicious mixed into cooked vegetables!

It got its name 'cos everyone at Uncle Roy's says it's the best they ever tasted, although unfortunately that means that they are all eating it like mad!

Like the rest of this range (Smokey Chilli Jam, 'Smokin! Barbeque Sauce, three great chutneys, Haggis Sauce, "Better Than Dijon" Mustard and three Great Taste Award-winning high fruit condiments), it is sold six jars per case at the trade price of £13.45. Plus, it's already proving popular with café owners, caterers and sandwich-makers in Uncle Roy's bulk range presentation of 2 kilo tubs @ £14.05.

01683 221076
uncleroy@uncleroys.co.uk
uncleroys.co.uk

Walker's Nonsuch

Family toffee makers, Walker's Nonsuch have just launched New 'Double Thick' Milk Chocolate Covered Toffee, a luxurious and indulgent addition to the popular Slab range.

For this new addition to the range, deliciously creamy toffee made with whole milk and butter and free from artificial colours, preservatives or hydrogenated vegetable oil has been covered thickly with pure Belgian milk chocolate. Not only is the taste combination of the toffee and chocolate second to none, but it's also gluten-free.

The complete range also includes Nutty Brazil, Real Liquorice and Original Creamy, and slabs come with a toffee hammer and instructions on how to break it.

Walkers was founded back in the late 19th century, by Edward Joseph whose mission was "to make quality toffee at affordable prices." This remains the same today, over 100 years on.

Stockists include Hider Food Imports.

01782 321525
sales@walkers-nonsuch.co.uk
walkers-nonsuch.co.uk





Tg Green Tea

Tg Green Teas take you back to where the tea culture started more than 4,000 years ago, and to an organic tea plantation near the Dao Ren peak. Ancient tea preparation methods help to produce a green tea with a delicate taste and soft, slightly fruity flavour that consumers will simply love.

A proud member of the Ethical Tea Partnership, Tg teas come in three refreshingly delicious varieties: Green Tea, Green Tea with Ginger & Lemon and Green Tea with Jujube & Osmanthus.

The teas represent carefully selected fruit and botanical inclusions – some long used here, some new to us, and all used for centuries in the Middle Kingdom for good health and vitality. 15 pyramid bags are hand-packed into resealable stand-up pouches which are uniquely non-transparent (so important for keeping green tea fresh).

Tg teas are available in cases of eight pouches and have an RRP of £4.15 per pouch.

0800 772 3885 hello@DrinkTg.com drinktg.com

Red Chilli Kitchen

Thao Ball, who was born in Vietnam but now lives in Suffolk, recently launched Red Chilli Kitchen so others could taste some of the delicious recipes her mother made in her Vietnamese kitchen.

There are currently three products in her range: a deliciously aromatic curry paste, a luscious tomato and chilli jam blended with lemongrass, and a spicy, fragrant tomato marinade.

Each product is authentic, easy to use and versatile, and great to have in the kitchen over Christmas! The indulgent, thick and rich jam is ideal to serve with cold meats and cheeses, while the curry paste and tomato marinade are great for turning those Christmas leftovers into a piquant stir fry or curry.

Introductory offer: Receive 20% off orders placed during July and August*.

*Offer applies to new customers only and minimum order quantity is a mixed case of 24 jars.

07977218169
sales@redchillikitchen.co.uk
redchillikitchen.co.uk





Mrs Bridges

The Mrs Bridges wooden gift range provides the ideal solution for retailers looking for a quality food gift contained within eye-catching, useful and reusable packaging.

The two hamper trays are themed, with the smaller of the two featuring afternoon tea products and the larger filled with a selection of items ideal for the festive period.

The RRP for the smaller tray is £19.95 and the larger £29.95. Both trays are embossed with the Mrs Bridges logo, and there are plans for an extension to the wooden range for Christmas 2015, to be unveiled in August.

The Mrs Bridges festive selection is available to ship to trade from Monday 24th August 2015.

01241 432 500
contact@mrsbridges.co.uk
mrsbridges.co.uk

Summerdown Mint

This range of peppermint chocolates is truly different. We use the pure English mint that your grandparents and great grandparents would have known – a taste that has been lost for generations.

During the last fifteen years, Summerdown has reintroduced traditional Black Mitcham peppermint to this country, relearning lost farming skills from America and combining them with the latest technology at our farm in the foothills of the Hampshire downs.

After harvest, the mint leaves are taken to our purpose-built distillery. The result is a rare single-estate peppermint oil, with consistent quality and a soft, lingering taste. It has a cooler, more intense flavour and scent than other varieties.

As a result, it's no surprise at all that our chocolates have won so many awards. Bright, fresh and aromatic, this is a very different taste from the harsher, blended, imported peppermint of the past 60 years.

01256 780 252
sales@summerdownmint.com
summerdownmint.com



Seed & Bean

Seed and Bean continues to be 100% ethical, and develops its flavours with creativity and nature in mind using selected artisan chocolate from the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Sao Tome islands.

We are delighted that more and more consumers are enjoying Seed & Bean chocolate and getting their 'kaleidoscopic moment of pleasure,' whether at Glastonbury Festival, where it is the supported chocolate of choice, or a private moment at home with a cup of coffee or glass of wine.

Later this year, Seed & Bean will introduce three new flavours: Rose & Vanilla, Coconut & Lemongrass and Fennel & Almond in various chocolate combinations.

0208 343 5420
info@seedandbean.co.uk
seedandbean.co.uk



Island Bakery

Island Bakery offers your customers a range of six great tasting all-butter biscuits, perfect to enjoy at any time. Each one is made from quality organic ingredients and has been mixed and baked using local sources of renewable and sustainable energy.

The products' fun packaging tells the story of Island Bakery's Scottish island home and the characters to be found on the Isle of Mull.

Luckily, you can enjoy our biscuits beyond the island's shores, as our best-selling Lemon Melts are being enjoyed en route to many exotic locations aboard British Airways aircraft.



If you would like your store to be included in the Island Bakery stockist database please email stockist@islandbakery.co.uk or look out for a reply paid postcard inside cases, which you can return and be entered into a draw to win a hamper of Mull produce.

01688 302 223
dawn@islandbakery.co.uk
islandbakery.co.uk



Chazwinkle's

Chazwinkle's advocates seasonal eating and supporting British produce and farming. For when the fresh version is out of season or out of reach, the people behind Chazwinkle's have created a range of Chazwinkle's to capture the flavour of various seasonal fruits and vegetables to make them available to use all year round – to provide meal solutions, create nibbles or as a typical condiment.

The aim behind the range is to help encourage pairings with meats, fish, grains, pulses and other produce already stocked in-store. For customers lacking time during the week, these pots can be relied upon as their kitchen helper to help put together easy and simple meals or inspire ways to use up fridge leftovers. For other shoppers, Chazwinkle's can take the intimidation out of cooking or trying new foods.

Food pairings are illustrated on the jars and are supported by recipe cards provided with each order. Current seasonal ideas are also fed onto the Chazwinkle's social media pages and website.

07887597463
hello@chazwinkles.co.uk
chazwinkles.co.uk



Balsajo Black Garlic

Balsajo is the new brand name from Black Garlic UK Ltd, the original producers of Black Garlic in the UK since 2011.

Balsajo Black Garlic is regular white garlic which has been aged for several weeks. During this natural process, the cloves turn black and soft and the flavours become sweet and balsamic-like with no more after-smell.

A versatile cooking ingredient, it's delicious sliced onto scrambled egg or in a wild mushroom and black garlic risotto.

Use in chillies or bolognese to boost the flavours and get that next-day richness straight away.

Balsajo Black Garlic is available in Bulbs, Pots of Cloves and, new to market, Balsajo Black Garlic Paste – all with 18 months shelf life.

07972285071
brett@blackgarlic.co.uk
balsajo.com



Stag Bakeries

Something Different for Cheese by Stag Bakeries is an exciting alternative to traditional biscuits for cheese.

This luxurious fruit cake is made with raisins, sultanas, currants, dates, cherries and cranberries which have been generously soaked in ruby port and whisky for four weeks.

The cake is also delicately flavoured with pecan nuts, almonds and a selection of warming spices including cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg to create a rich, delicious eat.

Perfect with a strong Cheddar, tangy blue cheese or mellow, ripe soft cheese such as Brie. Works equally well eaten on its own or when enjoyed with either a glass or whisky or gin!

Makes an attractive Christmas gift, presented in a classic 300g box made from balsa wood.

01851702 733
sales@stagbakeries.co.uk
stagbakeries.co.uk



Ross & Ross Food

Award-winning fine food company Ross & Ross Food has created the perfect winter warmer foodie gift – The Homemade Curing Kit... Bacon.

The Cotswolds-based specialist in handmade British food gifts has won awards for its online selection of own-brand gifts and those sourced from high quality local food producers, and this bacon curing kit perfectly combines the British love of bacon and the current trend for 'doing it yourself' in the kitchen. The number one best-seller for food lovers this Christmas and a hit with top industry buyers, the kit contains everything you need to create original, sweet, and smoky bacon – curing mixes, gloves, muslin, curing bags, butchers hook and full instructions – all you need to add is pork.

01608 645 503
orders@rossandrossfood.co.uk
rossandrossfood.co.uk



field fare

Get ready for the colder months with field fare's range of autumn and winter-ready meals.

These high quality recipes are perfect for busy households when time is precious, but you want to eat high quality, wholesome, hearty food.

The extensive range includes main meals such as Lancashire Hot Pot, Cottage Pie, Lasagne Verde and Steak & Kidney Suet Pudding, plus an enticing selection of traditional puddings including Bramley Apple Pie and Rhubarb & Ginger Crumble.

All meat dishes use Red Tractor meat, are made with the finest ingredients and have on average 25% more meat per pack than other notable ready meal suppliers.

There is no minimum order quantity for any of the field fare ready meals – simply add from one case upwards to your usual field fare order of loose fruit, veg, bakery etc.

01732 864344 enquiries@field-fare.com field-fare.com

Merangz

Award-winning and innovative bakers Merangz have the festive season all boxed up! They have created a luxurious presentation box filled with a selection of deliciously decadent bite-sized Chocolate Merangz – the perfect gourmet Christmas gift.

There are five mouthwatering mini meringues to indulge in: Chocolate Orange, Chocolate Strawberry, White Chocolate, Mocha, and White Chocolate & Raspberry.

Each Merangz bite is lovingly made with the finest hand-separated, free-range eggs and natural flavours baked to a traditional Swiss recipe. They are also naturally gluten-free. The gift box is available from October until March and have an SRP of £4.95-£5.95.

01743 443 864
hello@merangz.co.uk
merangz.co.uk





Cartmel Village Shop

It's never too early to be thinking of your Christmas foodie treats, and Cartmel Village Shop has two great offerings alongside our ever popular Sticky Toffee Pudding.

As Christmas approaches we hear the cries of 'We all want some figgy pudding, we all want some figgy pudding' and so we thought, well, if you're not going home until you get some, we had better oblige! After a successful launch in 2014, our Festive Figgy pudding is back. A pud packed with moist figs, gooey deliciousness with hints of Christmas spice, citrus and chocolate, it's certainly a special treat.

Available as a 2 serving, wholesale £2.25 and a 6–8 serving, wholesale £5.75.

Our Cartmel Christmas Pudding is stuffed with raisins, sultanas, carrot, apple, mixed peel, dates, cherries, apricots, stem ginger, almonds, walnuts, spices and glugs of brandy and sherry – a very special Christmas pudding!

Available as single serving, wholesale £1.20 and a 4–6 serving, wholesale £3.90.

For the discerning caterer we can also offer Christmas pudding and Festive Figgy puddings as a single serving at 95p per portion.

01539 558 300
jo@stickytoffeepudding.co.uk
cartmelvillageshop.co.uk



Gourmet Spirulina

Gourmet Spirulina is the UK's only provider of raw culinary-grade spirulina.

Ineffective tablets and poor tasting powders are a thing of the past as we invite you to use our Nibs, Petals and Crunchies as wholefood ingredients. Mix through cereals and smoothies, sprinkle on pastas or salads, or use throughout the cooking process.

One teaspoonful a day will provide your entire RDI for iron and vitamin B12, as well as massive amounts of vitamins A and K. Furthermore, it is the most protein dense food on the planet, and has incredible anti-oxidising qualities.

Our entire range is sourced from fairtrade and humanitarian partnerships, and is available from all serious health food retailers.

You can also find us online at gourmet-spirulina.co.uk where for the first time we will be able to offer large pouches, ideal for the catering industry. All you have to do is decide how you want yours!

0207 193 4737
fergal@gourmet-spirulina.co.uk
gourmet-spirulina.co.uk



Blue Lagoon

Blue Lagoon Pasta & Noodles made with eggs is now the best-selling pasta in the UK kosher sector.

Fast becoming known for its premium quality and finest taste, it's no wonder Blue Lagoon was chosen in May by British Airways and Hermolis and supplies kosher meals to all airlines, travel and public sectors worldwide.

Blue Lagoon has recently released its tri-coloured twists and toasted couscous speciality, and very soon will be launching their special Spaghetti and Fettuccine. Keep your eyes peeled on this quality company and get your hands on a packet!

If you're looking for a pasta a cut above the rest, Blue Lagoon will tailor its products to your requirements. Ask about their fun Christmas shaped pasta. Currently available in all kosher stores across the UK.

0203 417 7477
info@bluelagoonfood.com
bluelagoonfood.com

Charpak Ltd & Food Utopia Avana

Charpak Ltd, working with Food Utopia Avana, has designed and produced the packaging for an exciting new product launched into Sainsbury's: Food Utopia Avana's Happy Birthday Cake Cubes, which are individual cakes in a carton board wrap with a tear strip for ease of eating.

Charpak worked with the NPD team at Food Utopia to develop packaging that was going to show off the product to its best. Traditionally these would have gone in a carton board box with window, however with Charpak's clear packaging the product is highly visible. The added benefit with Charpak's design is that the cakes have an additional two days shelf life compared with a standard box.

Jane Berry, commercial director of Food Utopia said, "Charpak have supported us throughout this project, we are delighted with their design. The Cake Cubes are a fantastic product and are one of many innovative ideas we are bringing to the market. Charpak are consistently coming up with new and better ways to show off our product."

01480 434 434
sales@charpak.co.uk
charpak.co.uk





Devilishly Delicious

At Devilishly Delicious we use our extensive professional culinary experience and knowledge to blend the finest ingredients to create a unique and high quality range of products.

With the rise in popularity of home baking and at-home entertaining, our easy-to-use desserts, ready-to-use sweet sauces and wonderfully simple cake mixes allow consumers to recreate restaurant quality meals and cakes in the comfort of their own home.

Devilishly Delicious products are the perfect store cupboard stand-by for seasonal entertaining, and are ideal for consumers to have on-hand to impress friends and family with their signature creations.

Sure to be a winner, and with something to suit all tastes, these products are must have items for the well-stocked farm shop and delicatessen.

Available now from Cotswold Fayre and the Cress Company.

0800 652 8220 **info@devilishlydelicious.co.uk** **devilishlydelicious.co.uk**



Cottage Delight

Gourmet food company Cottage Delight has introduced a garden-themed gift set within its new collection for Christmas 2015.

Kitchen Garden Favourites includes two award-winning preserves – Sweet Apple Chutney, a slightly spicy accompaniment to hard cheeses or hot roast pork, and best-selling Strawberry Extra Jam, made with the finest ingredients in small batches to create a wonderful homemade taste.

Presented in two beautiful classic Cottage Kitchen plant pots and a rustic wooden tray to offer an attractive gift that can be used beyond the festive season, together with an affordable recommended retail price of £15, Kitchen Garden Favourites is an ideal pick-up item that will enhance displays in-store and help to drive gift item sales.

Kitchen Garden Favourites is just one of the 47 new gifts and unique products available within Cottage Delight's Christmas Collection for 2015.

01538 382 020 **info@cottagedelight.co.uk** **cottagedelight.co.uk**



Tg Green Tea

NEW Tg! Drink[up] to a healthier you. Inspired by ancient wellness traditions of the Middle Kingdom, designed and bottled in Britain.

Brewed using real green tea leaves with a sprinkling of ginseng in every bottle, Tg is the perfect pick me up at mealtime or while on-the-go.

Other naturally good-for-you ingredients – many familiar, a few excitingly new (to us) – are blended in to create delicious infusions.

Your consumers will love the great taste of iced Tg - surprisingly low in sugar and only 30 calories per bottle! Squash and energy drink lovers will happily switch to Tg Green Tea with Mandarin. Beauty drink seekers will cherish Tg Green Tea with Jujube.

Tg teas are available in cases of 12 x 330ml bottles and have an RRP of £1.69 per bottle.

0800 772 3885
hello@drinktg.com
drinktg.com



Potts' Partnership

Stock up for Christmas with Potts' Christmas essentials.

Turkey Gravy with Maderia & Sage – using flavoursome turkey stock and seasoned with sage and madeira, this tasty gravy is perfect drizzled generously over a roast turkey.

Cranberry Sauce with Wild Cranberries & Honey – a rich cranberry sauce made with wild cranberries and sweetened by a little honey, this is a luxurious condiment.

Turkey roasting kits – everything you need to dress and serve an impressive and tasty Christmas turkey. Each kit contains a perfectly-balanced Turkey Gravy with Maderia & Sage, a Cranberry Sauce with Wild Cranberries & Honey, Honey and Mustard Turkey Glaze and Shallot, Smoked Garlic & Sage Stuffing mix.

Brandy Sauce – the traditional topping for Christmas pudding.

Toffee & Whisky Sauce – for a twist on the classic, drizzle generously over Christmas pud, rich chocolate ice cream or poached peaches.

01672 556 109
info@pottspartnership.co.uk
pottspartnership.co.uk

Ceramic Contracts Ltd

Ceramic Contracts Ltd was founded in 1977 when the business started importing ceramics for the garden trade. Now with 38 years of experience importing ceramics including terracotta, stoneware and porcelain, we supply some of the most prestigious brands in the retail and restaurant sectors.

If you are interested in a jar for Stilton, a bowl for a pudding, a dish for roasting, a board for serving, a plate for cheese or a teapot then drop us a line.

Our in-house design team can incorporate your ideas and needs to produce visual representations, taking them through the sampling and production process and ending with successful retail products.

0844 5616755
enquiries@ceramiccontracts.co.uk
ceramiccontracts.co.uk



Country Puddings



Autumn offers an abundance of nature's bounty, and homely comfort food is at the forefront of our minds and shopping baskets as the days grow shorter and the log fires burn.

Fruit crumbles served with a generous portion of custard satisfy the need for something fruity and sweet at the end of the meal and are always a popular choice of pudding. Country Puddings offer three varieties of crumble: Rhubarb, Bramley Apple and Blackberry & Apple, and all are topped with a butter and oat crumble (2 x 120g, RRP £3.29).

They contain no artificial preservatives, colourings or flavourings, and transport you back in time with a taste just like Granny used to make.

Serve with Creamy Vanilla Custard (available in 330g and 500g pots, RRP £2.25 and £3.25 respectively), to complete the meal perfectly.

01768 480 864 info@countrypuddings.co.uk countrypuddings.co.uk

Hawkshead Relish

Hawkshead Relish's Beetroot & Horseradish Chutney is the essential savoury addition to summer dining.

This distinguished preserve, made of hand-grated beetroot with a subtle hint of English horseradish, adds a deliciously sweet contrast to burgers and bangers as well as tartlets, poached salmon and seasonal salads.

Handmade with optimum quality ingredients and completely natural without any artificial flavouring, colouring or additives, this preserve elevates the simplest of dishes with added colour and flavour. Suitable for vegetarians and gluten and nut-free.

£15.25 case/6 RRP £3.75

01539 436 614
info@hawksheadrelish.com
hawksheadrelish.com

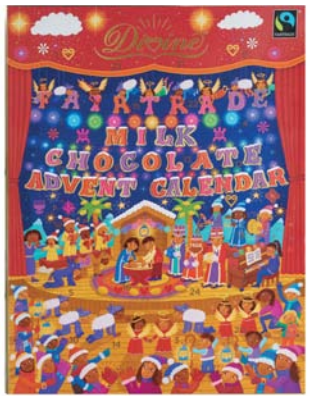


Divine

As ever, Divine's best-selling chocolate advent calendar features 24 milk chocolates hidden behind a brand new illustration by Stephen Waterhouse. This year it features a lively colourful scene, where everyone has a role in the Christmas story. Each door reveals a heavenly milk chocolate heart and part of the Nativity story, which unfolds day by day. All Divine chocolate is made with the 'best of the best' Fairtrade cocoa from Kuapa Kokoo, the co-operative that owns 44% of Divine.

Nothing gets you in the Christmas spirit quite like an advent calendar, but shoppers often need to be prompted to buy. You can signpost the festive season by placing this advent calendar with your first seasonal displays, then stock up and give them additional display space in November to capitalise on impulse sales in the peak selling period leading up to 1st December.

0207 378 6550
wendy@divinechocolate.com
divinechocolate.com





BBQ Gourmet

BBQ Gourmet offers a range of championship-winning barbecue rubs from the United States.

Barbecue rubs, the true source of the taste of real barbecue, are blends of spices and herbs which are rubbed onto meat, fish or vegetables prior to cooking to add flavour.

BBQ Gourmet has carefully selected a range of the very best rubs from the USA for the wholesale market in the UK. They have been developed and proven in the heat of BBQ competitions in the United States, where real BBQ is considered the national cuisine and almost a religion.

Oakridge BBQ rubs have won over 2,500 BBQ competitions in the USA over the last 3 years and are 100% all-natural, with no MSG, fillers, artificial colours, flavours or additives.

These BBQ rubs are not available from any other UK supplier.

07703812848
info@bbqgourmet.co.uk
bbqgourmet.co.uk

Barbers 1833



Barber's is the oldest cheesemaker in the UK with over 180 years of experience making cheese at Maryland Farm in Ditcheat, Somerset.

As guardians and producers of traditional starter cultures that were once widely used, Barbers can claim that its cheeses has a totally unique flavour and character.

Barber's 1833 is matured for a minimum of 24 months to provide the Cheddar with powerful intensity, complexity and depth of flavour. It has a slightly brittle and crunchy texture – a result of its long and slow ageing.

Look out for Barber's 1833 Vintage Reserve Cheddar, available in a 190g wedge or a 1.2kg block for your deli counter.

01749 860 666 sales@marylandfarm.com www.barbers.co.uk



Lupetta

Lupetta is a range of authentic, regional Italian ingredients, highlighting the great pride Italy's regions have in their unique products. Lines include Cherry Tomato Sauces and Semi-Dried Cherry Tomatoes from Sicily, San Marzano Tomatoes DOP from Campania, Balsamic Vinegar of Modena PGI and 'Nduja Paste, a spicy pork spread from Calabria. Other lines include a range of high protein, bronze die pastas, Tuscan almond Cantuccini and delicious Soft Amaretti as well as Taralli from Puglia. Sourced by long-established Italian food experts Donatantonio, who have used their sourcing expertise to ensure that the products are sensibly priced to achieve a good rate of sale, they also feature stand-out pack designs developed with input from the Design Council, which aim to bring a contemporary yet authentically Italian look and feel to the range.

0208 236 2222
sales@lupetta.co.uk
lupetta.co.uk



Kanté

Kanté is a beautifully designed, premium, gourmet product range imported from Mexico by new UK fine food and beverage distributors MexImport.

The range includes Dark Agave and Amber Agave, a natural sweetener with a delicious, caramel-like flavour; Vanilla Syrup ideal for desserts and beverages, and a range of avocado oils in natural and basil, lemon or garlic infusions.

Vanilla, agave and avocado are just some of the ingredients native to Mexico and represented in the range.

The Kanté brand promotes having a healthy lifestyle through choosing ingredients that are natural and have health benefits – such as avocado oil which is rich in mono-unsaturated fats, and agave syrup which has a lower glycaemic index than other sweeteners.

Recipes for the products and a cooking channel can be found on kante.com.mx. The Kanté range launched recently at Selfridges and appeared in Foodism magazine.

This range not only looks beautiful on store shelves but customers will want to take it home for themselves or as a gift.

The range is imported and distributed by MexImport.

01582 391 511
info@meximport.co.uk
meximport.co.uk

Gruyère AOP

Made in western Switzerland, Gruyère AOP has been produced in the same way since 1115AD, using raw milk from cows fed on grass in summer and hay in winter. The skilled cheesemakers use 400 litres of fresh milk to make a single 35kg Gruyère AOP wheel. It is the only cheese that has won the title of Best Cheese in the World at the World Cheese Awards four times, which just goes to show how much work and skill is needed to create its unique and delicious flavour.

Gruyère AOP can be found with different maturities: the Classic is matured for six months and has a delicate, nutty, creamy flavour. The Reserve is matured for ten months, and has a drier, more grainy mouthfeel. Then you can find an older Gruyère AOP, 14 months or more, giving it a much stronger flavour. The age brings a difference in taste, but the recipe always stays the same.

www.gruyere.com





Laterra Artisan Harvest

With a passion for Mexican cuisine and a great love for their countryside, food producers Finisterre and chef Ada Valencia have created Laterra Artisan Harvest, the authentic flavour of Mexico.

Laterra Artisan Harvest is a range of speciality cooking sauces, marinades and marmalades made using all-natural ingredients, artisan methods and traditional recipes from Mexico.

Ingredients are blended to create a unique fusion of flavours such as Spicy Sweet Chipotle Sauce, Black Bean Chipotle Dip and Spicy Sweet Chipotle Sauce, finalist at this year's World Food Innovation Awards at IFE in London.

The range recently launched in Selfridges Food Hall and has been a big success.

The authentic Mexican products make great gifts for adventurous cooks and food lovers who are looking for an alternative to Tex-Mex and mass-produced sauces.

The products are all 100% natural and gluten-free with no added preservatives.

Add a taste of Mexico to your shelves with Laterra Artisan Harvest.

This great new range is imported and distributed by MexImport and is available to Diverse Fine Foods customers.

meximport.co.uk
info@meximport.co.uk
01582 391 511

Quickes Traditional



To guarantee the consistency of their traditional, clothbound matured Cheddars, Quickes has enhanced its selection process for assessing their truckles. Rigorous internal assessments have been implemented to consider the different spheres of flavour, aesthetics, and the exact characteristics of each cheese.

As specially selected truckles mature from 12 to 18 months to 2 years, Quickes can enhance the complexity of certain flavours – making them even more appealing to customers. Improvements to the way the maturation process is monitored have already paid dividends at the British Cheese Awards 2015, where Quickes won Best English Cheese.

This outstanding record for consistency is also supported by external auditors, where 85% of Quickes stock has scored 90/100 or above in recent months.

The dedicated team of cheesemakers at Quickes continue to innovate, and their ongoing commitment really shines through in the quality of the end product.

quickes.co.uk sales@quickes.co.uk 01392 851222



Barú

A new seasonal collection has been launched by contemporary confectioners Barú.

New flavours added to their signature chocolate marshmallows include Dark Chocolate Strawberry & Toasted Coconut: marshmallow with a layer of strawberry truffle, enrobed in dark chocolate and topped with a sprinkling of toasted coconut; Milk Chocolate Coffee Crème: marshmallow with a generous topping of coffee and cream ganache and enrobed in Belgian milk chocolate; and Milk Chocolate Dark Caramel, marshmallow topped with a rich, layer of luxurious dark caramel and finished with milk chocolate. Individually wrapped and presented in attractive packaging for RRP £3.69 for 60g box.

Complementing the chocolate drinks range are three new flavoured powders: White Chocolate Latte, Salty Caramel Hot Chocolate and Peppermint Hot Chocolate. A fun experience, each is packed with moulded chocolate pieces that gently melt into the chocolate drink. RRP £4.00 for a 250g tin.

Available all year from Cotswold Fayre, The Cress Co, Springvale and HF Chocolates.

baru.be

Folkington's



Sussex-based fruit juice producer Folkington's prides itself on using the best pure juices to create its varied range – from Mango Juice nectar to Pink Lemonade, every item in Folkington's offering tastes as good as it looks.

All Folkington's juices are 100% natural and free from added sugar and artificial additives, making them ideal for those with a discerning palate.

Folkington's Cloudy Pear Juice is a popular choice – combining Conference and Comice pears grown in Kent and the Three Counties of Worcestershire and Herefordshire, it brings together the brand's core values of quality, provenance and authenticity.

folkingtons.com
info@metrodrinks.co.uk
01323 485 602

Elizabeth Shaw



Timeless chocolate brand Elizabeth Shaw has extended its already successful chocolate range to include new Bites, delicious flavour chocolate segments topped with tempting sprinkles.

Following on from the success of its Flutes range, these smaller, bite-size chocolates will be a welcome addition to the Elizabeth Shaw collection, adding a more contemporary feel to the whole range. The delicate layers of quality chocolate are decorated with freeze-dried raspberry, caramelised almond or cocoa nib pieces.

With a brand new modern and contemporary design, now is the time stocking these temptingly tasty treats.

For more information, please get in touch using the details below.

elizabethshaw.co.uk
sales@elizabethshaw.co.uk
01179 599 810

Gran Stead's Ginger



New Spiced Ginger Punch is the latest addition to Gran Stead's Ginger Co's award-winning range of exceptional soft drinks. Its sophisticated flavour combines a secret blend of exotic spices with a signature kick of ginger for a lively and intriguing beverage.

Fuelled by the growing trend for no-alcohol alternatives to mass-market soft drinks, Gran Stead's latest launch comes at the perfect time for retailers to take advantage of the increased demand in the still soft drinks sector.

Hand-made in Sussex by Chris and Rosemary Knox, the collection of six drinks includes Great Taste Award winners Mellow Ginger, Traditional Still Lemonade and Still Lemonade With Zing, along with Blackcurrant with Zing and Fiery Ginger.

Fiery Ginger taps into the consumer demand for lower calorie drinks, with 40% less sugar (and twice the ginger) of its sister product Mellow Ginger.

All the drinks are free from artificial sweeteners and preservatives.

01273 231152 gransteadsginger.co.uk enquiries@gransteadsginger.co.uk



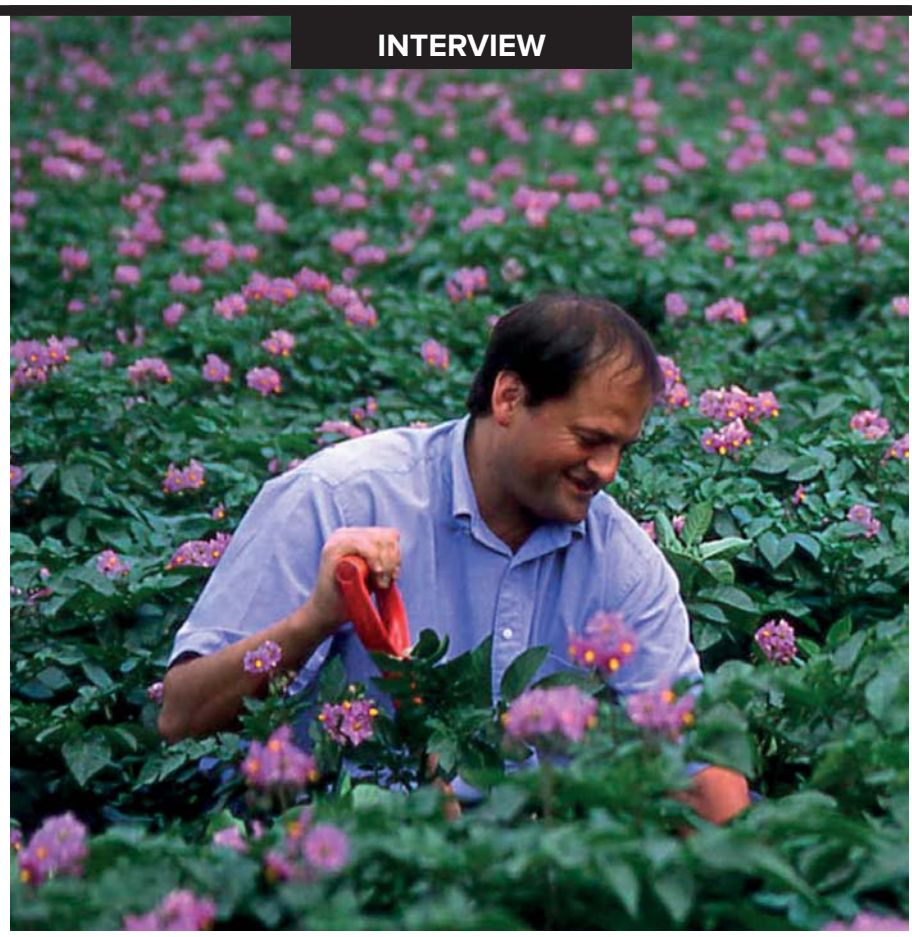
Shepherds Purse

Formerly known as Yorkshire Feta, Yorkshire Fettle was one of the very first cheeses developed by Judy Bell in 1987, giving it a special place in the history of Shepherds Purse Cheeses. Adapted from a traditional Feta recipe, our Yorkshire Fettle is made with 100% fresh ewes' milk and each cheese is hand-salted.

The hand-salting and quality whole ewes' milk help to deliver the Gold medal award-winning flavour – a balance of piquant and salty yet meadowy sweet flavours is delivered by a slightly crumbly, rich and creamy texture.

In 2007 we had our wrists slapped over the name Yorkshire Feta and a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) was awarded to the Greeks, which meant that to call a cheese Feta it could only be made in Greece. We prefer cheesemaking in Yorkshire, so now call it Yorkshire Fettle, which we're told is better anyway!

shepherdspurse.co.uk
orders@shepherdspurse.co.uk
01845 587 220



THE INTERVIEW

A passionate advocate of diversification, William Chase of Chase Distillery is no stranger to stepping out of his comfort zone

The first thing you need to make it in the fine food and drink industry is genuine quality and pedigree, because you're dealing with people who know what they're talking about. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I've found this isn't so much the case when it comes to dealing with supermarkets. Secondly, you need to be genuine; communicate as a human being and not as a faceless, corporate company. Have your own name on email addresses, and talk to people in the fine food industry as you would a friend rather than a corporate customer – that means no PowerPoint presentations or boring waffle. The great thing about the speciality food sector is that you're talking to intelligent adults who set up their own businesses out of passion, and are probably sitting up at their kitchen tables at 9pm doing their accounts. Being successful in this industry means being honest and true to what you believe in. Don't try to pull the wool over people's eyes; they can see through it.

My life within the food industry started with me working as a farmer, growing potatoes in Herefordshire in 1980. For the first couple of decades of my career I focused on growing potatoes; I was a potato trader, earning my money from growing, buying and selling potatoes, then one day I had some rejected from a supermarket because they weren't 'attractive enough' to sell to consumers. I didn't want to waste them so sold them to Kettle Chips, which shone the spotlight on the potential within the artisan crisp sector. I'm proud to have been involved with the rise of the vegetable crisp with Tyrrells – as they were unique at the time, it was these which helped us make a name for ourselves.

We de-listed Tesco as they wanted to sell Tyrrells at the same price as Kettle Chips, Walkers Sensations and other mass-produced crisps. We knew from the get go that we were different to those brands, thanks to our homegrown provenance and unquestionable quality. Independents were always of key importance to us – not least because they appreciated what we were doing differently – and we wanted to support them; when we started Tyrrells, we'd sell a packet of crisps to a deli or farm shop for £1 and they'd sell it for £2, therefore making a 100% mark-up. Sincerity is imperative; I've learned that you have to be true to your customers, and that the service you provide is incredibly important to the relationships you build. If you're supplying small businesses directly, you have to provide fantastic quality service. Treat your customers as friends, rather than another link in the chain, and you'll reap the rewards.

It was during this period that we learned a lot about marketing and being honest to our customers. You mustn't be fake – a number of businesses sell themselves as growing, grass roots producers who are making their product themselves, then when they get bigger they still cash in on that branding even though it's not true any more. It's important to me not to cut corners or pretend, which is why Chase is the first and only distillery in the UK to make our own spirit from beginning to end – all others buy it in and flavour it, therefore making an artisan product out of a mass-produced base. It's like going to a restaurant and finding out that the chef has just heated something up from a foodservice brand and put his name on it. Transparency is very important.

I sold Tyrrells because it grew into a more corporate entity and I missed the connections I'd made in the speciality food industry; since then it's been such a pleasure to come back and catch up with all of the hundreds of characters across the sector. That's why I enjoy attending shows like Speciality & Fine Food Fair and Farm Shop & Deli Show; they have a real sense of community and warmth, and are so much more enjoyable than some generic corporate trade show where everyone's in suits and talking in riddles.

These are fantastic times for the independent and speciality food markets. As the economy is improving, people are turning away from discount food and wanting to spend a little more on quality. There's a huge rise in delis and farm shops again, as people can see the value and worth of good food. In the mass-produced, cheap market things aren't looking so rosy, as the only way to grow is to produce higher volumes at lower prices, meaning more work for less money. The good thing about the way we work – producing our own product from the ground up – is that we don't need to be lowering our prices to keep business... And it's fun!

Quality is key to the future of our industry. There's huge potential in our sector for creating something entirely bespoke, which you simply can't make using mass-produced methods. Everyone appreciates something personal and unique.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

ROLE MODELS?
I've been disappointed by a few. I'm very inspired by people like James Dyson, who have created something refreshingly new and put their names on it.

PROFESSIONAL MANTRAS?
When in a hole, stop digging, and when it looks too good to be true, it normally is. If you work hard enough and believe in something, you can make it happen.

WHAT DRIVES YOU?
Working hard to create something, then seeing it on the shelf and seeing people appreciate it. It's very important to me to do what I enjoy – you have to have your heart in what you're doing.

WHAT'S NEXT?
I'd like to focus on spirits and wines and create something really exciting. Our whisky, in its sixth year of being aged, is being released this autumn at Speciality & Fine Food Fair.

> "The nice thing about the speciality food industry is that you're talking to intelligent adults who set up their own businesses and are probably sitting up at their kitchen tables at 9pm, doing their accounts"

MAKING IT WORK

I was travelling around the world looking for export markets for Tyrrells when I discovered potato vodka. Then, when we built the distillery, I learned that gin was made from vodka. I decided to make spirits different from all others, to be the first British producer to grow and make them from scratch. Rather than buying in cheap spirit, boiling it up and adding the flavouring, we could make our own from the very beginning of the process.

We're very proud of our first vodka, not least because we beat huge, billion pound brands for it to be named World's Best Vodka at the prestigious San Francisco Spirits Competition. The vodka came from the heart and we'd invested in all the necessary equipment to make it from scratch, but when you're up against such big businesses it's difficult to keep your cool. This is the best award in the world for spirits as it's based on tastings, not on branding or advertising spend, and it helped endorse our brand across the world exponentially.

The most challenging thing with our spirits – like with crisps, whisky or wine – is that people consume them neat so they need to be superb. People buy ours for the quality, whereas they traditionally drown those from other brands in tonic or cocktails so you never experience their true taste. That's why we created Marmalade Vodka, something which was completely new to the market. We don't add flavouring, we distil real marmalade in the gin still to ensure an honest, quality product.

As a farmer it's lovely to be able to grow something and make a product out of it myself. We have 50 acres of 200 year old apple trees which aren't really of any use to people who make modern ciders, but the tannins in the skin are like a fine wine so we make those into cider which is distilled into our Naked Vodka then again into our Elegant Gin. We're cider farmers as well as potato farmers, and selling a cider helps tell our story.

After travelling around the world with our spirits, I discovered that wine is a really exciting place to be (not least because I've always had a fondness for it). In 2012 I started growing red and white grapes in a vineyard in Provence and found it was the rosé which was really selling. The sector is booming, with more men drinking it than before, and more consumers drinking it in the colder months than traditionally have done. Our artisan approach runs through our wine making, too: we ferment it in amphoras – Italian clay pots like those used by the Romans – and oak barrels, and everything's hand-picked.

Branding which truly represents your product is imperative. The Tyrrells branding was inspired by the sign at the end of the farm's drive! We looked around at various design agencies and in the end decided to simply copy the sign on our gate. With branding, it's always best to keep it simple. It's also important to strike a positive balance between humour and seriousness – it's good to be a bit quirky, like our bow ties are, but at the end of the day, producing alcohol is a very serious pastime. Our inherent Britishness is the primary thing that sells Chase products; it's made us what we are, and is probably more important to consumers than our field-to-bottle story. We're doing brilliantly in Australia, Japan, America and even France, surprisingly enough, thanks to the international fondness for the Union Jack.

Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts



JULIET HARBUTT

"The science of combining food and wine"

I was recently invited to be part of a panel to talk about the science behind matching cheese with wine – first the wine expert talked about the wine and how each was made, then I talked about the cheeses and how they were made with emphasis on moisture content, fermentation and moulds. Next, we did the combinations and our bio-chemist talked about the science behind the matches.

Over the last 30 or so years I have done hundreds of masterclasses on matching cheese with champagne, sweet wines, wine, beer, cider, whisky and even tea, and have been amazed what does and doesn't work and always curious why some very similar wine combinations do and some really, really don't work. I have also been extremely irritated by the stubborn determination of some wine experts to ignore any suggestion I put forward for possible matches, and instead stubbornly stick to the belief held by most English people that cheese can be bunched together into just three types: hard, blue and soft, and so perpetuate the myth that red wine is better than white with cheese and, worse, that sweet wines go with blues – a generalisation based on the assumption that all blues have similar strengths of flavour, levels of acidity, sharpness and salt levels.

An attempt to point out that in Britain alone we make over 80 different blues is met with a tight lipped explanation as to how the variation in wine from one vine to the next is far more significant. At this point I have to assume they are likely to belong to the camp that believes all goats cheeses taste the same and will therefore be perfect with a Sauvignon Blanc. Ha! They do not and, in fact, some combinations are reminiscent of Three Billy Goats Gruff or my dog's breath! Surprisingly, many a rosé, my favourite summer tipple, has proved a good partner!

Despite Britain alone now making over 750 cheeses, most people – including many retailers – fail to understand that any cheese that can be made with cows' milk can be made with goat, ewe or even camels' milk – yes, there is a Camelbert! The myth that all goats cheese goes with Sauvignon Blanc comes from the classic combination of Sauvignon Blanc with Chevre. But 'chevre' in this case doesn't mean any cheese made with goats' milk, in fact it refers to a very specific style of cheese found mainly in the Loire – a small, misshapen, mould encrusted cheese with a very pronounced nutty taste and goaty tang.

And don't waste your favourite vintage port with a Stilton – the assumption that Stilton and port is a marriage made in heaven is based on the assumption that all ports tastes the same which they definitely do not. In fact, a tawny port is lovely with a ripe Stilton but horrid with a young Stilton, which would much prefer a dry Riesling.

> "Over the last 30 years I have done hundreds of masterclasses, and I've always been amazed what does and doesn't work"

So what I and the audience were really hoping for were some excellent combinations, as well as answers to the question "why do some combinations work and others don't? Why did the Mozzarella di Bufala paired with bubbly taste like the smell of BO, or the Capricorn Goat (a Camembert-style cheese) with the lovely Wrexham Bacchus White taste like salty, acidic milk with a soapy finish?"

We had a great time tasting, some great questions from the audience and a lot of laughs about what didn't work, but I will have to do it again next year to find the answer. Meanwhile, I shall dedicate a few more hours to drinking some excellent wines with some of my favourite cheeses, discovering great combinations and avoiding the really bad ones – asparagus and the Gamay grape is a total no no. Pinot Noir and Merlot with their softer tannins work better with more cheeses than Cabernet Sauvignon, and Shiraz is too big and boisterous for all but the hardest cheeses.

What I would love is for you to send me in combinations of cheeses with specific wines, beers and ciders that work and I will summarise and publish the results in Speciality Food later in the year. Then you can all send them off to the wine experts in your life and share them with your friends and colleagues! Maybe then we can get them to think of cheese as being as complex and diverse as their precious wine – I find my favourite line : "unlike wine, cheese has a vintage everyday!" works well when trying to convert a non-believer!



GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S

"Cheshire days"

Nantwich Cheese Awards has magical memories for many who have enjoyed its days in the past.

40 years ago it was so different and amateurish, with only lines of trestle tables in an unrefrigerated tent, groaning under the weight of huge traditional and block cheeses. As for the hospitality, in those days it was shared between four major local makers and distributors, and since it was by invitation only, only the senior or well-connected people mattered.

Today, the world's largest cheese show dominates the UK cheese competition calendar with well over 4,500 entries. But more than that, the whole setting has evolved into a world class feature, worth travelling nationally and internationally to. Chilled facility, walkways, world class stands, entertainment including the likes of James Martin, and at its heart the influential competition, with maker and retailer classes fully supported, and the open opportunity to join the social events no matter how commercially big you are.

But beyond the panorama of the show, so much has changed under the expanding roof of this huge event.

For the grandees who have walked these formerly dust-clouded or mud-caked walkways, the rise and fall of the dairy trade and its retail partners has always been the main topic of discussion. If it was good, we quietly understated it, and if not, we berated matters loudly. Usually at these times, there was one outstanding issue common to all on which we could focus. How times have changed.

Right now we have an unbalanced dairy trade, where the farmers in the security of retailer partnerships can still achieve 30p, but those not aligned can be at 18p and – it has been said – some at 11p. This cannot be right no matter how fond retailers are of selling milk at crazy low prices. We all know sales do not increase significantly and everyone in the chain loses, and this drags cheesemaking into the same forum.

The shopper has, and is, changing as the legacy of the last years goes to the future. The rise of the savvy shopper, a drive to less waste, and still the consumer remains aspirational through all this. As the financial strictures ease, the move to premium and different is alive and well. The question is, how will it be accommodated for the shopper, independent or premium retailer?

With all that swirling around the event, it's important to recall that the real centrepiece of the show is the competition to find the best cheese in the UK and the world.

The retailer class is now keenly fought over, and following several years of M&S domination, that crown was wrested away from them by Waitrose in 2014, with Morrisons hard on their heels. I suspect this will be a full-on fight in 2015.

Elsewhere, the chance to be Supreme Champion, Reserve or Continental Champion, as well as winner of a host of other classic awards, is keenly contested. The judging panel here is simply the best in the world. Not because it's full of cheese experts, but because it embraces a series of judging skills that allow the voice of not just the profession but also the consumer to be represented. But whether is a classic British Cheddar, Blue Stilton, Parmesan or Dutch goats cheese, the show will always deliver the best, and never be afraid to show it is truly international.

So all that's wanted is fair weather, and we shall have another glorious day to add to the long history of magical days at Nantwich. This poses the question of how this huge event must continue to change and reflect the evolving dairy trade, its split between the greatest and the smallest, and who will be represented and what their objectives must be for the future.

A show like Nantwich is a reflection of the health of the dairy nation, but it has frequently been used as an opportunity to see and be seen. That too must come under some change as the trade advances and the market sectors change, and there is enough to be discussed on this subject alone. This annual celebration of cheese has something for everyone, and all must work to make it so – in Cheshire days and Cheshire ways!

> "With so much swirling around the event, it's important to recall that the main centrepiece of the show is the competition to find the best cheese in the UK and in the world. The show will always deliver the best, and never be afraid to show it is truly international"

Cooleeney Reveals Irish Ruby



Tipperary-based Cooleeney Farm has recently introduced three new cheeses to its range of 12 cows' and goats' milk cheese. The cheese is handmade using milk from the Maher family's herd of pedigree Friesians that has been bred over four generations.

The first addition is Ruby, an ale washed soft cheese. Ruby is created using locally crafted red ale, made by The White Gypsy brewery in the nearby village of Templemore. The resulting Ruby cheese has a soft, velvety texture, an earthy aroma, and is smooth on the palate with a distinctive malt flavour and pleasant, lingering aftertaste.

The family has recently built their own smokehouse on the farm, which has resulted in two new variations; Smoky Tipperary Brie – a mild, creamy body with a subtle oak smokiness, and Smoky Tipperary Orchard – a semi-hard cow's milk cheese that is cellar aged before being smoked using apple wood.

Calls to Make UK World's #1 Cheese Destination



Elizabeth Truss, Environment Secretary, has called upon West Country cheese producers to make Britain the world's number one cheese destination by applying for protected status.

The announcement, made at the Royal Bath & West Show, aims to inspire British cheese makers to overtake France and Italy as the top international producers of protected name cheeses. Currently, France has 51 cheeses registered under the scheme and Italy has 49, but only 16 cheeses made in the UK are listed.

Elizabeth Truss, Environment Secretary said, "Given we have more types of cheese than France and Italy, it's only right we should have more trademarks and more recognition. And what better place to lead the charge than the West Country – home to our iconic Cheddar. Growing our British cheese industry will help bring greater investment, jobs and tourism to local communities. And by trademarking our best-loved cheeses we are not only celebrating our rich heritage of cheese making, but also protecting them from pale imitations."

George Streatfeild, chairman of the West Country Farmhouse Cheddar Association said, "Having Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status guarantees the authenticity and provenance of our cheese. It is handmade on the farm and matured for over nine months. This means that when consumers buy West Country Farmhouse Cheddar, they know with confidence that they are buying the real thing. It has helped us stand out in an increasingly competitive world, particularly when exporting to countries like China, Korea and USA."

Producers interested in obtaining protected status can get in touch with Defra via **protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk.**

Džiugas Does Lactose-Free



With 12 per cent of the British population avoiding lactose, a number of the visitors to the International Cheese Awards will be seeking lactose-free options.

Suitable for vegetarians and consumers with lactose intolerances, Lithuanian best-seller Džiugas qualifies as a lactose-free product because of the way it is made and the maturities at which it is sold (12, 18, 24, 36 months), and will be in attendance at the Awards.

Recent Mintel research has shown that customers who follow lactose-free diets will pay a premium for the right product, which offers an opportunity for retailers to generate profitable sales; Džiugas is dedicated to not compromising on taste in order to achieve free-from status, and has recently received its second three star rating from the international judging panel of the Superior Taste Awards.

Bobbi Davy, Džiugas spokesperson said, "Besides the growing interest in Eastern European and Baltic cheese, Džiugas is also benefitting from the increased interest in lactose-free products. Market forecasts show that the demand in this area is going increase 75% between 2012 and 2016 reaching €529M by the end of this period."







Dairy Food Labelling: MP Calls on EU to Take Action

British consumers should have the right to know where their dairy products originate from, according to George Eustice, farming minister.

The MP is pushing for country of origin labelling to be adopted across Europe, stating the shoppers should be able to trust that the cheese and milk they are buying which has been labelled British has indeed been produced in the UK.

An EU-wide scheme would help support the UK dairy industry and meet the growing domestic and international demand for British produce.

Current regulations mean that a dairy product can be labelled British if it has been imported so long as it is processed and packaged in the UK.

Country of origin labelling (CoOL) for beef has been compulsory for over a decade, and was made mandatory for unprocessed, fresh and frozen pre-packaged poultry, pork, sheep and goat meat across Europe on 1st April 2015.

Recent research commissioned by the European Commission stated that compulsory CoOL for dairy products would incur considerable costs, but George Eustice said costs would be low if the focus was on milk, cheese, cream and butter.

George Eustice, farming minister said, "We know people place a premium on buying British and I believe they have the right to know where the milk, cheese and butter they buy has come from.

"We successfully campaigned for country of origin labels on beef, lamb, pork and poultry, which has allowed consumers to show their support for the British meat industry. Extending it to dairy products is a sensible next step and will be a significant boost for our hard working dairy farmers."

British Cheese Awards 2015: Supreme Champion Announced

The winners of the British Cheese Awards, held at the Royal Bath & West Show on 26h May, have been named.

The winners were chosen by a judging team of 60 cheese professionals, food writers and chefs.

The Supreme Champion accolade was awarded to Two Hoots Cheese for their Barkham Blue, a buttery blue cheese made in a 1kg ammonite-shaped round.

Andy and Sandy Rose, founders of Two Hoots Cheese said, "We were over the moon with the news that our Barkham Blue had won Best Blue Cheese and Supreme Champion at the British Cheese Awards last night.

"It's still sinking in at the moment. To have won these prestigious awards means so much to us and we would like take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their support. It's just amazing!"

Barkham Blue also won the blue cheese category, and the Reserve Champion title was awarded to Goddess by Somerset-based White Lake Cheese.





JUSTIN TUNSTALL OF TOWN MILL CHEESEMONGER

"What's in a name?"

How do you describe your shoppers? Recently I participated in a marketing workshop where I was asked how I defined my customers, both actual and potential. Rather than opt for the socio-economic clusters of ABC1 etc, I started listing the segments to which my marketing efforts are directed: Full-time local residents, second-homers, holiday-cottage renters, holiday-makers without refrigeration, day-trippers etc., all of whom have different behaviours and requirements. Clearly this went further than the point that he was trying to make and he suggested that ultimately they were all 'foodies'.

While some of my shoppers could certainly be defined as foodies, we'd soon go broke if we addressed ourselves solely to that tribe.

The blizzard of media coverage for food and its provenance has helped prepare the ground for more discerning shoppers, but it's only at the front line of retail that conversion can occur. Customers need to see how our shop could be relevant to them, feel welcome rather than excluded, and be listened to rather than preached at. We sell a lot of cheese that's destined to be a gift for dog or cat minders and plant waterers back home. For these purchases, our cheese is an alternative to a stick of rock or a piece of local pottery. Often they opt for a whole small waxed cheese, but with the upsell of biscuits and preserve, their basket value is not inconsiderable – and so far we haven't had to cut and wrap! We always offer these shoppers tasters of other local options – our PDO Dorset Blue Vinny is an attractive addition to a gift pack, and if we can get them to take a cut cheese we're on the way to converting someone to the slow food shopping ethos.

Naturally, we love it when a cheese aficionado comes in and we can discuss the finer points of seasonal variation and the results of the latest cheese awards, but bringing a newcomer into the fold has its own satisfaction.

Some townsfolk describe our current wave of visitors as the 'Nearly Dead and Newly Weds', an old local catch-all for those not tied into school holiday times. Sometimes free-spending and sometimes on a tight budget, we try to cater for them all. It's at this time that we encounter a particular kind of shopper whom we describe as an 'Atom-Splitter'. Not feeding a large family gathering, they want the smallest piece possible of a variety of different cheeses and will have tasted three varieties for every purchase that they make. Of course, they are most noticeable when they come into the shop a couple of minutes before closing time.

We draw the line at one type of shopper – the 'Brie-Prodder' – who, regardless of purchasing intention, feels that soft cheeses need to show how much they can yield to touch and then to bear their fingerprints..

I wonder what new tribes, market-segments (or whatever you wish to call them) we'll encounter this year?





2015 BRITISH CHEESE AWARDS: THE WINNERS

This ear's British Cheese Awards sees urban cheese making its mark, says Juliet Harbutt

For the first time in 15 years the number of flavour added cheeses has dropped, and by nearly a third. There have always been mutterings amongst the judges about how they shouldn't be in the awards but I think they should be, because they are a style of cheese that has introduced thousands of people to cheese. However, by only rewarding medals



to a small percentage of entries, the judges over the years have encouraged the producers to raise their game. This year there were fewer weird, wobbly and far from wonderful entries. Instead they were better quality, more interesting, carefully seasoned, flavour added cheese and this was reflected in the increase of medals to nearly 26% over the category. Excellent cheeses like Cornish Yarg and traditionally smoked cheeses like this year's Best of Category winner, Courage from Swaledale, however, will always rise to the top.

And the urban cheesemakers, a trend started a decade or more ago in American cities, have worked their way into SE London. There are now three, all of whom entered the Awards this year. Bill Oglethorpe of Kappacasein started five years ago and was the first, having been inspired while travelling through Switzerland and seeing Gruyère being made in one of the many small hillside dairies. He now makes Bermondsey Hard, roughly based on Gruyère, Bis, which is based on Reblochon, and Tito, a Caerphilly-style cheese. Bill makes cheese three to four days a week in small 300 litre batches and you can buy them direct every Saturday where they are made from 9am-2pm at 1 Voyager Industrial Estate, Southwark, or at various salubrious establishments in London.

Gringa Dairy, started by Kristen Schnepp, obviously owes its influences to a very different cheese culture. After burning out on corporate life, and unable to find the cheeses essential to making her favourite Mexican dishes, Kristen decided to follow her passion. In April 2013, she set up a small dairy making authentic Mexican cheese in a railway arch in South East London. Like Kappacasein, the fresh daily organic milk comes from Commonworks Farm in Kent. It is collected and turned into traditional Mexican cheeses including Queso Fresco, Queso Chihuahua and the Queso Oaxaca, which won a gold medal this year and looks like a ring of pulled mozzarella. They are proving very popular with Mexican food lovers and restaurants.

David Holton started in September 2013 with two Australian friends, Rory and Cameron, who have since moved on, and were replaced by Tim Jarvis, an Englishman and cheesemaker. Also using the superb organic, raw milk from Commonworks, they make a very small fresh cheese, Edmund Tew, which won Gold at the Awards this year, and William Heaps, which is another fresh cheese. Graceburn, named after a river in the Yarra Valley where David started his cheese career, is a fresh, very soft cows' milk cheese marinated in oil and herbs. This cheese won a Bronze Award.

To make a great cheese you need great milk, and Commonworks Farm's organic herd of Friesian cows mixed with some Montbeliarde produces superb milk. Ther dairy is located in 500 acres of beautiful, organic farmland at Bore Place, near Sevenoaks in Kent **www.commonwork.org**

WINNING PROFILES

Barkham Blue from Two Hoots Dairy, this year's Supreme Champion, has a rich blue taste, and smooth buttery texture with a melt in the mouth flavour. Reserve Champion Goddess, made by White Lake Cheeses, is a spicy and savoury washed-rind cheese. Best English Cheese this year goes to Quickes Goats Cheese, which has a clean, buttery flavour. Best Scottish is Fearn Abbey Ewe, This smooth and creamy, slightly sweet Brie style cheese is made by Scottish producer Ruaridh Stone from Highland Fine Cheese. Best Welsh is Celtic Promise, a Caerphilly type washed-rind cheese with a slightly moist, orange-red rind. Burren Gold, named Best Irish, is a Gouda-type cheese made with unpasteurised cows milk.









AWARD RESULTS:



Supreme Champion
Barkham Blue
Two Hoots Cheese



Reserve Champion
Goddess
White Lake Cheeses



Best English
Quickes Goats Cheese
Quickes Traditional Ltd



Best Scottish
Fearn Abbey Ewe
Highland Fine Cheeses



Best Welsh
Celtic Promise
Teifi Farmhouse Cheese



Best Irish
Burren Gold
Aillwee Cave



Best Fresh Cheese
Tor
White Lake Cheeses



Best Soft White Cheese
Wicklow Ban Brie
Wicklow Farmhouse Cheese



Best Semi-Soft
Goddess
White Lake Cheeses



Best Cheddar
Mature Cheddar Traditional Organic
Belton Cheese



Best Territorial
Original Sage Derby
Fowlers Forest Dairies



Best Modern British
Cornish Kern
Lynher Dairies Cheese Co



Best Blue
Barkham Blue
Two Hoots Cheese



Best Flavour-Added
Courage
Swaledale Cheese Company



Champion Retailer
Claxton Smooth Blue
Marks & Spencer



Best New Cheese
Darling Blue
Doddington Dairy



Best Export Cheese
Mini Marches Blue-black
Shropshire Cheese Co



Best Goat Cheese
Tor
White Lake Cheeses



Best Creamery Cheese
Vintage Cheddar
Dairy Crest Davidstow



Best Organic Cheese
Charlton Farmhouse
Goodwood Estate Company



Best PDO/PGI
Cave Aged Extra Mature Cheddar
Ashley Chase Estate



Best Dairy Product
Sweet Cream Butter
Brue Valley Farms



Best Packaging
Bath Soft Cheese
Bath Soft Cheese



Best Show Dressed Cheese
Creamy Lancashire Traditional
Dewlay Cheesemakers



SHOW PREVIEW: INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS 2015

Your guide to the most prestigious event in the dairy-lover's calendar

With a history beginning in 1897, the International Cheese Awards has had plenty of time to establish itself as the world's greatest cheese awards event. It sits firmly at the top of the dairy industry ladder, with its dedication to quality cementing its reputation worldwide, and is still growing every year – last year's event saw 4,450 entries, an impressive boost from 2013's 4,285, while this year's show can boast a world record 4,600 entries.

The Awards' constantly-evolving categories are recognised as a true reflection of the international cheese industry, covering sectors as diverse as speciality soft cheeses, traditional Cheddars and yoghurt, butter and ice cream and producers ranging in size from artisan to truly international. It's this variety which makes the International Cheese Awards a must-visit event for all professionals involved in the dairy industries.

Competition within the event's retail classes are becoming increasingly fraught, and sees all the UK-wide multiples, as well as some major retailers from overseas, fight it out to be publicly recognised as Britain's best cheese seller. Like all the categories at the Awards, the retailer category is judged by industry experts respected across the world.

Diary Dates

TRADE DAY: 28TH JULY

Trade Day at the International Cheese Awards hosts 5,000 visitors from within the cheese world, ranging from specialist retailers and producers to packaging and machinery manufacturers. The Trade Day Lunch – a unique opportunity to catch up with fellow industry professionals – will be held at 1pm, which anyone can attend by completing the relevant form on the website. Beforehand, from 9am to 1pm, over 200 industry experts will be judging the cheese and dairy entries to the Awards.

SHOW DAY: 29TH JULY

With the number of visitors expected to be over 36,000, Show Day is set to be a huge event in the cheese-lover's calendar. Not only will these thousands of visitors have access to some of the world's finest cheeses to taste and purchase inside the Cheese Pavilion, but the event's popular Cookery Demonstrations will see some of Britain's best-loved celebrity chefs demonstrating their skills. With James Martin, Will Holland, Jonathan Harrison and Sean Wilson on the roster, this is an opportunity not to be missed.

And don't forget, the Nantwich and South Cheshire Show is running alongside the International Cheese Awards, offering visitors a taste of the region's agricultural scene including countryside pursuits, sheep and cattle.



International Cheese Awards: the figures

- Formed in 1897
- 4,600 entries this year
- 36,000 visitors
- 4 celebrity chefs









SUPREME CHAMPION 2014: BLUE STILTON, COLSTON BASSETT

"The International Cheese Awards is a really key date in the calendar for Colston Bassett and for most cheesemakers around the world. The awards have a long and illustrious heritage, spanning almost 120 year,. so taking the top prize in 2014 is something that we're very proud of.

"Being named Supreme Champion at the Nantwich Show is always going to be the pinnacle in any cheesemaking career. At Colston Bassett, we have been fortunate to enjoy a great run of awards success recently. It has been an illustrious start to the dairy's second century and demonstrates that our Stilton is consistently produced to an exceptionally high standard.



"Each year the number of entries to the Awards continues to grow, meaning that the competition becomes even fiercer. It will be interesting to see what happens on 28th July."

Billy Kevan, dairy manager at Colston Bassett



THE CATEGORIES

Farmhouse/Traditional Cheese
Creamery/Block Cheese
Cheddar
Territorials
Modern British Cheese
Stilton
Other Blue
Cheese with Additives
Goats Cheese
Sheep Milk Cheese
Speciality
Soft, Semi Soft or Cream Cheese
Smoked Cheese
Cheese with Health Benefits
Health Drinks
Specialist Cheesemakers Section
Organic Dairy Products
Vegetarian Cheese
Home Internationals
Best English/Irish/Scottish/Welsh Cheese
International Cheeses
Convenience Cheeses
Butter
Cream
Yoghurt
Quark
Milk
Ice Cream
Novice Cheesemakers
Student Cheesemakers
Best New Dairy Product
Cheese Board
The DuPont Danisco Cheddar Grand Prix
Packaging Classes
Label Class
Past Masters Class
Catering & Food Service
Cheese for Children
Cheese Snacks
Cheese Lovers
Retailer Classes

INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS 2015

WHERE: The Showground, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 8LD
WHEN: Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th July
WEBSITE: internationalcheeseawards.co.uk
CONTACT: Telephone: 01270 780306
EMAIL: Adrian Lawrence via adrian@internationalcheeseawards.com
TWITTER: @iCheeseAwards

"We are delighted to be staging the largest cheese show in the world – we had entries from 26 countries last year and more this year. It is an event staged by volunteers for the whole industry and for the public, too"

ADRIAN LAWRENCE, SHOW SECRETARY



CONTINENTAL DRIFT

While British cheese makers continue to produce homemade examples of Continental cheese types, there are signs of renewed interest in Continental cheeses themselves

The British artisan cheese industry may appear to be in better shape than ever before, but few cheese sellers would be happy to leave Continental cheeses off their counters entirely. To do this would be to ignore the traditional and long-established market for French Bries, strong Dutch Goudas and Swiss classics such as Gruyère and Emmental, which have sold solidly for many years and are now attracting new followers as interest in cheese grows and people become more adventurous.



ROQUEFORT, A BLUE, SEMI-HARD SHEEP'S MILK CHEESE PRODUCED IN THE ROQUEFORT-SUR-SOULZON REGION





WHEELS OF ARTISAN FRENCH CHEESE ON SALE IN A PROVENCE MARKET



LA FROMAGERIE: SCANDINAVIAN REVELATION

"The Continental cheese market has expanded over the last five or ten years," says Patricia Michelson, founder/director of London's La Fromagerie. "Whereas we were concentrating on France, Switzerland, Italy and Spain, we are now looking further afield to Germany, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and, of course, Holland, Belgium and Greece. With Eastern European countries entering into the EEC, we will see more new cheesemaking emerge as both governments and entrepreneurs invest in a variety of new business.

"We are also seeing some dairies and producers closing their cheesemaking facilities and just selling their milk to larger co-operatives, because a) they can't keep up with new EHO regulations or b) they don't have anyone to pass on their dairy to, or willing to take it on. Cheesemongers like La Fromagerie "go to great lengths to source and work with cheesemakers, even as far afield as the USA," says Patricia, who believes that an important function of the cheeseseller now is to highlight what is happening and how well cheeses are being made and how well it is marketed."

DIVERSE SELECTIONS

In Patricia's opinion, some Continental cheeses are currently undervalued and deserve to be much better known, Scandinavian cheeses in particular. "The Geitost is such a revelation when you taste a real farmhouse one," she says. "The German and Austrian cheeses are incredible and, taking into account the improvement in their wines too, it is only right to explore them in depth. Also, the Greek cheeses are amazing when you can get the real artisan ones that have a good cheesemaker ensuring that the milk is pure and not too gamey."

The cheese business is growing "and truly energetic," Patricia says. "However, some countries like France and Italy have not put enough effort into their marketing and championing of their small production. There is a wonderful organization called Profession Fromagers in France and of course, Slow Food in the UK, which are pushing out information. Let's hope it gets to the right eyes and ears."

BEST-SELLING CONTINENTALS: LA FROMAGERIE

Blues: Roquefort, Gorgonzola Dolce and Naturale, Fourme d'Ambert, Blu '61, Zelu Koloria
Rind-washed: Epoisses, Langres, Moelleux du Revard, Moelleux du Revard, Val de Loubieres, Munster, Nisa, Reblochon, Sounal, Citeaux, Bachensteiner
Ewe: Pecorino Sardo, Caciotta Etrusca, Ossau, Napoleon
Goat: Selles sur Cher, Ste Maure, Robiola (mixed), Cathar, Rove des Garrigues, Crottin de Chavignol, Pelardon, Picodon, Torta de Dehesa, Petit Jabron, Farfars Parla (Sweden)
Hard: Beaufort Chalet d'Alpage, Comte d'Estive from 18 month, two year to three year, Gouda Vieux, Gruyère, Alp Bergkase, Unterwasser, Adelegger Urberger (Bavarian), Parmigiano Reggiano three year, Grana Padana 18 month, Ragusano, Almnas Tegel (Sweden), Wrangebaksost (Sweden), artisan Geitost (Norway)
Soft and semi-soft: Asiago Pressato, Morbier, Brie de Meaux, Pont l'Eveque, Tou delTilers (Spain), Mozzarella di Bufala, Burrata di Corato, Serra d'Estrela









PAXTON & WHITFIELD: CLASSIC CONTINENTALS

London's oldest cheese shop, Paxton & Whitfield began to increase its stock of Continental cheeses as long ago as the 1960s, when the taste for British farmhouse cheeses gave way to one for cheese from France and other sources across the English Channel. The company now offers a very strong selection of the best in Continental cheeses.

"Over the past five years our sales of Continental cheese has been fairly constant, and equates to a third of our annual sales," says Ros Windsor, managing director of Paxton & Whitfield. "Where we have seen a slight shift is in actual countries – French cheeses have always had the highest number of sales for us, but over the past few years we've seen increases in cheeses from Italy, Ireland and Spain, and the relative percentages between countries shift." The single best-selling Continental cheese at Paxton & Whitfield remains unchanged since last year and is "Brie de Meaux PDO from Donge. This classic and delicious cheese is the best Brie available," Ros says.

"It's the classic continental cheeses that sell well," Ros says, "but we do carry a range of over 50 Continental cheeses, and the challenge is to get customers to taste the lesser known ones, which are also delicious. They all deserve to be better known and enjoyed and we support them by having them on taste on a regular basis. A new cheese for us this year is Moliterno with truffle. Produced in Sardinia, Pecorino Moliterno al Tartufo is a raw sheep's milk cheese shot through with thick veins of truffle. During maturation, the cheese is rubbed with vinegar and local olive oil. This creates a rich earthy cheese enhanced by the truffle flavour. It's simply delicious!"

"At Paxton & Whitfield our customers are still interested in these Continental varieties and we sell a good amount of them. Customers are looking for good cheeses for their cheeseboard, whatever the cheese's country of origin. Demand for Continental cheeses, Ros says, is presently stable. "As a cheesemonger for over 200 years, Continental cheeses have always been popular at Paxton & Whitfield," she says. "Customers want the best and we expect sales to continue as they have."



THE EVER POPULAR FRENCH BRIE DE MEAUX

ÉPOISSES DE BOURGOGNE, A SOFT, WASHED-RIND CHEESE FROM THE COTE C'OR.



Cheese of the Month at Paxton & Whitfield for July is the American cheese Cabot Clothbound, a pasteurised cows' milk cheese made with vegetarian rennet by the Cabot Creamery Cooperative, located in Vermont. Today, Paxton & Whitfield say over 1,200 family dairy farms from throughout New England and New York State make up the cooperative. Cabot Clothbound is a clothbound, simple Cheddar-style cheese that has impressive layers of nutty, buttery and fruity flavours.

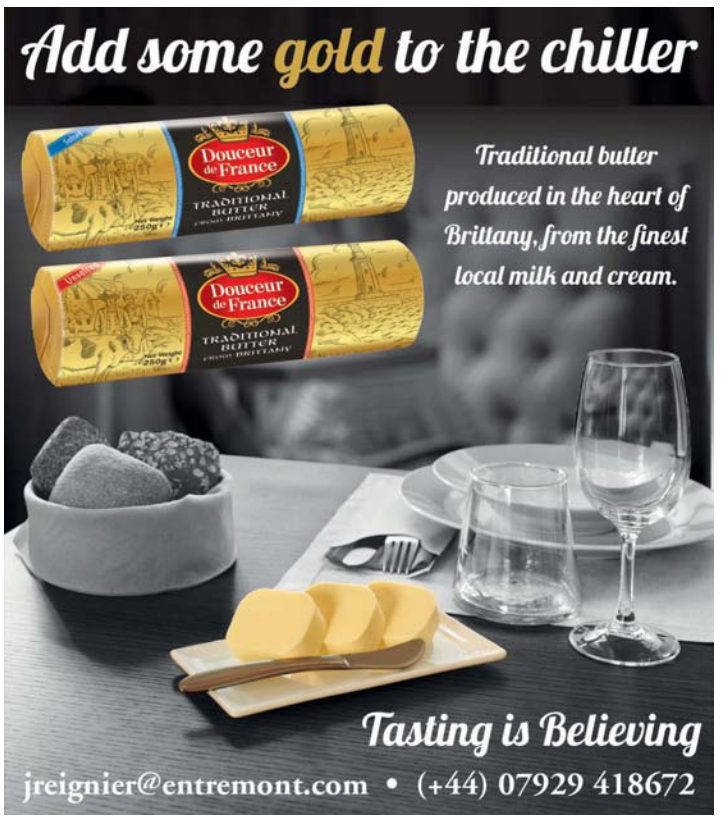
BEST-SELLING CONTINENTALS: PAXTON & WHITFIELD

Blue: Roquefort PDO* (French)
Rind-washed: Epoisses PDO (French).
Goat: Mothais sur Feuille (French)
Sheep: Roquefort PDO (French)/ Ossau Iraty (French)
Hard: Parmigiano Reggiano PDO (Italian)
Soft and semi-soft: Brie de Meaux PDO (French); in-house made Brie aux Truffes (made with Brie de Meaux, Brillat Savarin (French) and minced black truffles a close second



International Cheese, whose three shops are based at London rail termini, is dedicated to the promotion of mainly European cheeses. Owner Ray Kenny says that over the last few years, when it comes to Continental cheeses, people have become "more aware, more interested and keen to be more knowledgeable." One to watch at present, says Ray, is Lithuanian Džiugas. The shop is currently selling "a lot more truffle Gouda," he says. The Continental market as a whole appears to be growing, Ray says "and we predict it will grow even more, as interest increases. "People are more confident and proud of English cheeses" and this confidence, Ray says, has spilled over into experimentation with Continental cheeses. Among top selling Continentals at International Cheese at the moment are Cabrales, Munster, Epoisse , Buche de Chèvre, Dutch goats Gouda, Comté, Vacherin Fribourgeois, Gruyère and Brie de Meaux.





STOCK CHECK



LE GRUYÈRE AOP
The classic Swiss cheese which is available at a subtle six-nine months or as the more assertive Gruyère AOP Réserve, which is matured for at least 10 months.
gruyere.com



ST PAT
Creamy, semi-hard cheese made from organic milk and wrapped in nettle leaves produced in San Francisco, USA.
cowgirlcreamery.com



OLD AMSTERDAM
A characterful, Dutch Gouda-style cheese which is smooth and slightly granular in texture with a rich, savoury and sweet flavour.
oldamsterdam.co.uk



DŽIUGAS
Available as 12month matured mild, 12 month piquant or 24 month delicate, this flavoursome Lithuanian cheese has a distinctly pleasing character
dziugashouse.lt



CABRALES
This Spanish semi-hard, fatty blue cheese is a mixture of raw cows, goats and sheep's milk which is aged for between two and four months in naturally formed limestone caves.
brindisa.com



OCCELLI AL BAROLO
Made from cows and goats milk, the hard Occelli al Barolo cheese is aged for a long period before being left for a further two months in Langa pomace enriched with Barolo wine.
occelli.it



BLEU D'AVERGNE
A creamy rich blue cheese made from pasteurised cow's milk which has a sharp tang and an even spread of blue vein.
turnersfinefoods.com



PARMIGIANO REGGIANO
This famous hard cheese produced in Italy's Emilia Romagna region has an attractively rich, salty yet sweet and fruity flavour.
parmigianoreggiano.com



COMTÉ
This French unpasteurized cow's milk produced in the Franche-Comté region of eastern France usually features a dusty-brown colour rind, and creamy yellow paste..
comtecheese.co.uk



MONTAGNOLO AFFINÉ
This blue vein cheese from Bavaria is soft and creamy and became Nantwich Supreme Champion in 2012 and World Cheese Awards Champion in 2013.
elite-imports-limited.co.uk



BRADBURY'S: NEW FLAVOURS

At Buxton-based Bradbury's, which has a long tradition of sourcing and distributing fine cheeses from the Continent, owner George Paul has noted "new flavours and types emerging in the UK market. Cheeses such as Comte, Ossau Iraty, that a few years ago were only available in high-end delis, are now commonplace in retailer ranges." The Continental classics continue to do well for Bradbury's, he says, with "Parmesan continuing to sell extremely well."

The public's appetite for Continental cheese has grown with the easy access to travel, availability of information and the proliferation of new products, George says, and the market should



continue to grow as "consumers find new ways of using these different types of cheeses. New products and formats will enter the market and have different cooking uses, too." Bradbury's Mature Goat Gouda deserves to be better known, George says, citing a "fantastic mature flavour without the goatiness." In the same category, he says, fall mixed milk cheeses. These are are still not too well known or fully understood in the UK, despite having "great flavours." Cheeses currently exciting his interest, are Ossau Iraty "like a buttery Manchego" and Burratta, "a cream filled Mozzarella."

BEST-SELLING CONTINENTALS: BRADBURY'S

Blues: Gorgonzola and Roquefort
Rind-washed: Epoisses and washed rind Brie
Goats: Fresh, soft goats log
Sheeps cheese: Manchego
Hard: Mature Gouda like Old Amsterdam or Comte
Soft and semi-soft: Brie, Camembert and Feta



ANTHONY ROWCLIFFE & SON: PROUD TRADITION

Anthony Rowcliffe and Son stocks "more than 120 appellation d'origine and farmhouse cheeses that, we believe, represent the proud tradition of cheese making in France." The company also imports a wide variety of fine cheeses from all over Europe. With a long tradition of cheese selling dating back to 1967 and a well-earned reputation for selling quality cheeses from Europe, Rowcliffe's has been ideally placed to note any shifts in the market.

"The market has moved on dramatically over the last 10 years as we have grown to understand more adventurous cheese from the Continent," says chairman, Tim Rowcliffe. Certain Continental cheeses from across the Channel have now firmly entrenched themselves in the British market. "An example of this," Tim says, "would be the expansion of Brie De Meaux, which is now available in most supermarkets." Perhaps not surprisingly, Rowcliffe's best selling Continental cheese these days is a Brie de Meaux (Rouzaire Brie De Meaux).

BEST-SELLING CONTINENTALS: ROWCLIFFE'S

Blue: Montagnola from Germany
Rind washed: Berthault Epoisse.
Goat: 1 kilo Buche Ruffec (or Chevre Log). Ours comes from a small producer called Verneuille. This has been our biggest seller for as long as I can remember.
Hard: A constant battle between Monsieur Arnout's Comtéand our Le Cret Gruyère from Switzerland.
Soft and Semi soft: sales of late range from Spanish Monte Enebro to German Montagnola to French Brebirousse D'Argental



MEET THE PRODUCER

Big brands, passion and determination have proved a winning combination for Cornwall's Get Fruity

With the food world's eyes firmly set upon the free-from sector, the time is ripe for ambitious producers to step into the limelight. Enter Get Fruity, brainchild of Cornwall-based mum of two, Davina Whiteoak. Although the story of the brand begins some 12 years ago, the bar was devised, designed and produced unto great applause within the last two years. This year Get Fruity's Moist Mixed Berry bar was named the overall winner of the Free From Awards, proof indeed that Davina's hard work over the past decade has paid off.

Get Fruity is happily a part of Cornwall's speciality food scene, however Davina's career began with internationally-known brands. As a food developer for Kerry Foods, Del Monte, KFC and McDonalds, Davina strengthened the skillsshe needed to go it alone. And go it alone she did in 2003, when production plans for the fruit bars she'd created for Del Monte (she also produced and launched the brand's 100% Juice and Smoothie ice lollies) were shelved. Davina says, "I actually cried when they told me they weren't launching the bars, then read a book about the creation of Coffee Republic, went back to Del Monte and told them that if they weren't going to launch the bars, I would. Thankfully, they gave me the go ahead. However, halfway through the process, the manufacturer put his prices up by 20% so I had to cancel the launch and return to full-time employment."

The next few years saw Davina promoted within Del Monte and working at KFC and McDonalds, before relocating to Cornwall with her husband to start a family. In 2012 she received a letter from a trading company, asking if she was still doing Get Fruity and if they could order 5,000 bars! "I went back to basics and did all my market research again, and there was a very positive response to the product"


DAVINA WHITEOAK: "THE COMMMUNITY WE'VE BUILT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US"

Since then, Get Fruity has gone from strength to strength thanks to the founder's hands-on approach. "We manufacture ourselves – it's not easy because, as you grow, the investment goes back into the plant and people – sales feed the family, as they say! Manufacturing the bars ourselves makes a big difference, as it means we have control over all the ingredients and procedures in the factory, so can easily explore recipe development. Everyone in the team is learning together and making everything more efficient as we go along; the community we've built is very important to us," says Davina.

How the bars taste is of the utmost importance to Davina: "I've developed the bar purely on taste. I don't think too much about what it will all cost, I just focus on what will make the product delicious. I tried making the bars cheaper by altering the main ingredients but it just didn't taste as good, so I went back to the original plan of using only real, high quality ingredients.

"We use virgin coconut oil in the bars, and a very high percentage of the named fruit – over 10% of the strawberry bars are real strawberries, while the mixed berry has cranberries, blackcurrants and blackberry juice."

Equally as key to Davina is the "family" she's built at Get Fruity: "if I take a day off or go on holiday, I feel like I'm still here anyway, as I can genuinely trust the people I've surrounded myself with." Also highly prized are the professional relationships she grew during her time in the corporate world, and has nurtured since: "I've been really lucky to have continued my relationships with the suppliers who I worked with during my days at Del Monte – building good relationships, and treating people with respect, will pay dividends."

The future's looking bright for Get Fruity. With a new contract from Waitrose seeing the bars' reach stretch across the UK, and new products in the pipeline, the only way is up for this brand – not least due to the valuable industry knowledge Davina gleaned for her time in the corporate world. "Working for such big companies in my past has given me amazing experience, and has formed me into a very driven, ambitious, passionate person," Davina says.

"Having your own company is ten times more exhilarating than working for a big brand, and it leads you to understand a great base of subjects – from recipe development to freight sizes and export. It's often very adrenalin-fuelled, and a lot more flexible but intense. There's nothing to hide behind, and I now have a huge respect for people in our industry who have set up their own businesses. This is such a great community to work in – everyone's very supportive, and it's an honour to work alongside professionals who are so passionate about what they do."









Ian Byatt draws custom to his semi-rural Moorhouse Farm Shop with farm-produced food and family-friendly events



"We are a proper farm shop," asserts Ian Byatt of Moorhouse Farm Shop in Northumberland, "as opposed to a lot of places that call themselves a farm shop." In Ian's opinion, a farm shop needs a farm and it's the family farm that supplies much of the produce for this particular farm shop. "Meat is our main product and that's what most people come for, initially," Ian says. "Our beef, pork and lamb is what we are known for and accounts for over 50% of our turnover. Apart from the poultry, all of the meat that we sell comes off our own farm."

Location is crucial to the success of a business such as this, Ian says. "We are ten miles north of Newcastle, just south of Morpeth and less than a minute off the A1." Northumberland is not a particularly heavily populated county, he says, "but we are not out in the sticks and close enough to residential areas." The farm shop has its origins in the farmers markets "which started up in this area around 15 or 16 years ago," Ian says. "We were actively involved in setting most of these up in the local area."

Moorhouse Farm Shop opened "three years after we started doing the farmers markets," Ian says. Although Ian's training was in agriculture, he had recently returned from 14 years overseas to start anew in Northumberland, where Victoria "had been up here tending one of the farms which her father owned." At that time, Ian says, "farms were losing money hand over fist." Opening a farm shop seemed a logical enterprise.

"We probably did it slightly differently from a lot of people, in that the farm shop business is not actually on the farm, which is about four miles away. We did this partly because this gave us the opportunity to do what we wanted to do, but also because it meant that we wouldn't have any impact on the rest of the farming businesses. My father eats, sleeps, drinks and breathes farming and we didn't want the busy, working farm to be substantially impacted by the presence of the public."

The choice of site was an unusual one. "We bought an old mushroom farm," Ian says. "It's only about five and a half acres, but the location was reasonably good and we were already doing farmers markets in the general area. Because of this, people knew who we were. They knew the brand and they knew what we were about. This meant that when we did start up the farm shop, we already had customers around who would be interested to come and have a look."

> "We were already doing farmers markets in the area. Because of this, people knew who we were. They knew the brand and what we were about."

Business plans

In Ian's experience, opening a business like this is largely a matter of common sense. "Like a lot of things," he says, "you can research and research until the cows come home and you can have as many different business plans and projections as you like based on different scenarios. But ultimately, you just have to do it and see if it works." Keeping investment to a sensible level and "not borrowing huge amounts of money" was crucial, he says. "This was our money we were investing. We had a sum of money available to invest in the shop and that was the budget that we tried to stick to. We did a lot of the physical work converting the buildings ourselves, because like most people who go into farming, we are quite practical. The buildings that were on the site are not pretty stone buildings but they converted into what we needed for a shop and a coffee shop. We kept the cost to a minimum by buying a lot of second-hand kit. Some places seem happy to spend half a million quid and go for it big time, but they've got deeper pockets than me."

It can be revealing to learn what a farm shop owner might do differently if he started over again. "With hindsight," Ian says, "I would probably spend a little more on infrastructure and making the place prettier. This is something we have had to do over the course of 13 years, during which time we've reinvested and bought new equipment, new counters, better





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display units and better refrigeration. I don't like spending money unless I absolutely have to; you can get sucked into buying a lot of expensive, flashy equipment which doesn't necessarily make you any more sales. That said, the shop's appearance is important and it's more important now than it was when we started, because expectations are higher."

Good idea

Ian had been long been "heavily involved" with FARMA, "so the first two or three years we were there we were going to their conferences and looking at other farm shops," he says. "This gave us a good idea of what other people were doing." Also helpful in those early days "was speaking to lots of people to see what they had done. I would recommend speaking to as many people as you can, and outside your own area, so there is no conflict of interest. Most people will be happy to show you around and tell you what's what. I try and share as much as I can, because I think it is important to bring people on.

"When we launched, there were people who had started up 25 years before in a stall at the farm gate then moved into the garage at the side of the house. But by then, things had moved on, and people already had higher expectations. This meant that if we were to attract people, we had to go in at a certain size, with the coffee shop and everything else. I guess that if we were to do it again from scratch, we would have to go in bigger and better again. The customer is getting more sophisticated and is much less inclined to accept rough and ready."

The main part of Ian's stock is the produce of the farm and it is very much the shop's focus. "Our branding says 'home grown and home made,' and that's what we try to achieve as much as we can. After that, it's getting in as much local as we can. We have worked out that somewhere between 75% and 80%



of what we sell in terms of value comes from within 45–50 miles of the site. Local produce is our point of differentiation. It gives people a reason for coming. It has to be right, though. If it's no good, we will tell the producer." Local products selling particularly well at Moorhouse Farm Shop, he says, are "eggs, milk, cheese, bread, ice cream and preserves." Some of the shop's dry goods, he says, "we get from some of the national suppliers that most delis and farm shops would use."

Among other strong sellers at the shop are homemade cakes, which sell well in both farm and coffeeshop and logs. "Not a foodstuff," Ian says, "but we have piles outside the shop which we sell at a lower price than the local garages, so people come to buy their logs and while they are here, they will come into the shop and buy something else. It's an introduction to the place."

Among the advice Ian acquired when setting up, was to "open the coffee shop at the same time as the shop." This he was told, "would create a destination and a reason for people to come." The coffee shop now accounts for 28% –30% of the business's turnover. In order to create other reasons for people to come, he expanded the outside eating area and installed a children's area with animals that he borrows from the farm. There is also a covered area "with ride-on tractors and things like that. It's not sophisticated, but it can bring in slightly younger families at weekends. It's free, as well." In the coffee shop, Ian says, "we do a proper menu, so you can have hot meals or more snacky things. Most of the food is made on the premises.

Moorhouse hosts a variety of events "designed to bring people in and also held as a goodwill thing," Ian says. "We have two or three hog roasts a year, which work very well for us. There's a local singer or a band to create atmosphere and we have a couple of suppliers there too. We offer lamb feeding at Easter time, so the kids can come and bottle feed all the lambs. Our non-spooky Halloween event with a meat roast is popular and we also do tasting and supplier days." Events can be double-edged swords, though: "you can spend a absolute raft of money but end up making less than you might on a normal day, because you you have shelled out a lot of money in putting on the event. Also, some of your regulars don't come because they know it's going to be busy and they know it will be quieter the weekend before the event and the weekend after."





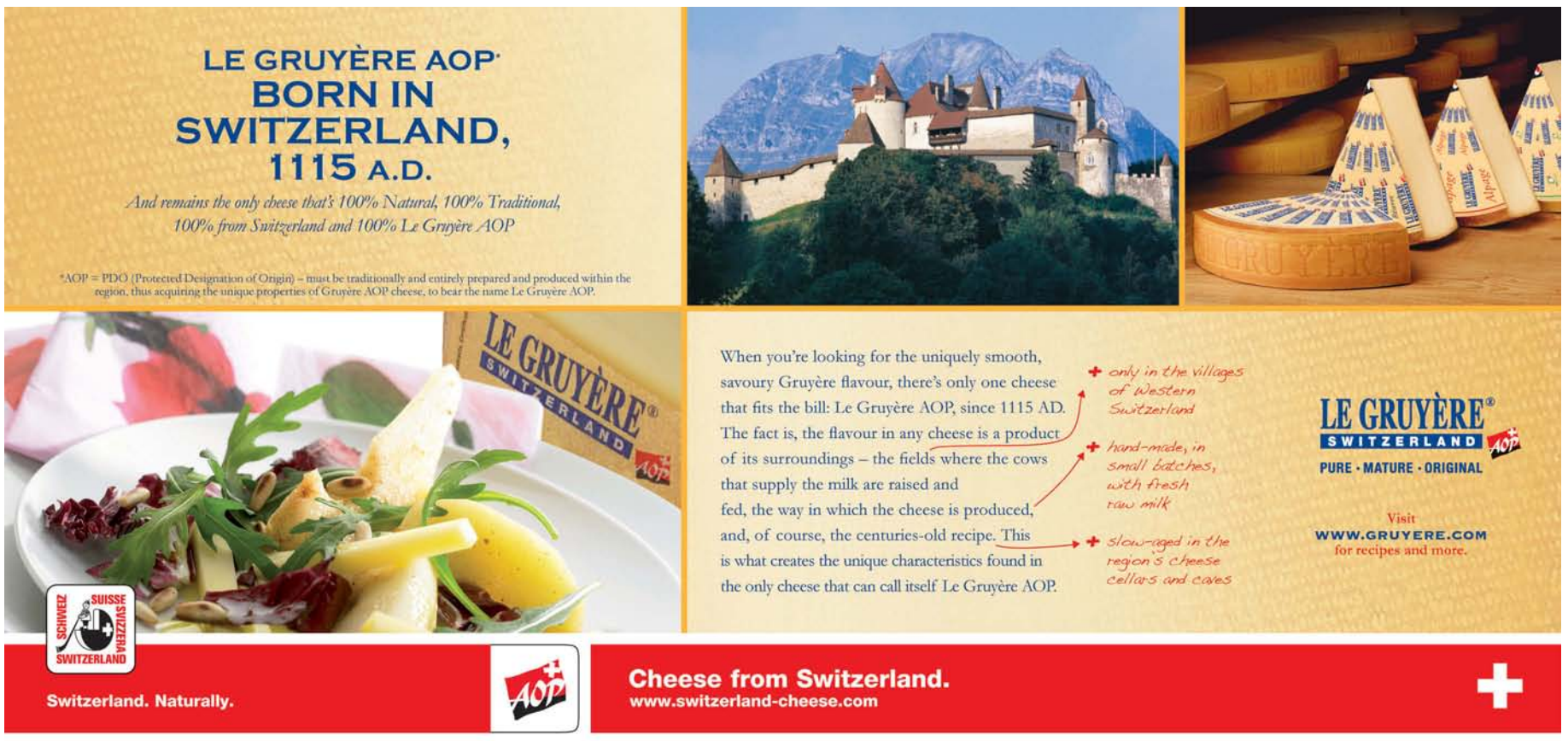
FAR LEFT: GOOD USE OF OUTSIDE AREAS AT MOORHOUSE

LEFT: THE COFFEE SHOP SERVES A FULL MENU

BELOW: HOME-REARED MEATS ACCOUNT FOR 50% OF TURNOVER

In Ian's experience, the secret to running a farm shop successfully is to "cover a lot of the bases yourselves. Some of the bigger places have 70–80 staff and have HR teams and marketing people. We have 20 staff including part-timers. Victoria does all the books and I do everything else. I do a lot of the maintenance and all the social media and manage the website, too. We have a shop manager who looks after day to day ordering." Prospective owners of farm shops should first of all ensure that their location has easy access and "enough people within a certain radius to give you a core of customers. Some farm shops are much quieter in the winter because they are very much based on serving a summer holiday crowd. We try to achieve a stable turnover all year round, apart from Christmas, of course."

> "I don't like spending money unless I absolutely have to. You can get sucked into buying a lot of expensive, flashy equipment which doesn't necessarily make you more sales"



A TALE OF TWO DELIS

Deserved winner of the 2015 Farm Shop & Deli Awards Retailer of the Year is Johns of Instow, a double deli in North Devon

Punching the air, Anthony and Sue Johns picked up the Retailer of the Year Award at this year's Farm Shop & Deli awards. A little exuberance was understandable in the circumstances, given the calibre of the independent retailers that Johns of Instow had to surpass. Johns is an unusual operation. For starters, it's actually two shops, at Instow and Appledore, and these are situated on either side of North Devon's River Torridge. But Anthony Johns can probably explain it more succinctly: "It's a delicatessen, but also a traditional grocery store with a little beach kiosk on the seafront," he tells Speciality Food. "We specialise in home produce and other top quality artisan supplies. You can actually see one store from the other, just across the estuary."



A DISPLAY TO TEMPT CUSTOMERS AT JOHN'S OF INSTOW



ANTHONY AND SUE JOHNS PICK UP THE RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD AT FARM SHOP & DELI 2015

Anthony and Sue are the fourth generation of Johns to run a shop in Instow. "The original Instow store was started by my great grandmother in the 1940s. Appledore opened seven years ago as a deli and post office, and three years ago we expanded and took on the building next door, where we moved our grocery operation and turned the original building into a cafe." Despite having two stores which are geographically quite close, the shops do not compete against each other, Anthony says. Although connected by a ferry service, customers naturally choose their nearest shop. There are differences between them too, Anthony points out. "Appledore has a cafe," he says, "but Instow doesn't yet. The shop at Instow has a butchery, while a local butcher serves the Appledore one." The customer base is very similar, he says, comprising mainly of locals, holiday makers and the second home-owners.

The locations of both shops offer reasons to visit beyond the arresting array of often locally-sourced foods offered by both shops. Each will recommend the other to its customers. "Instow has a beach which actually overlooks Appledore, which itself is a historic fishing village with lots of bright colours and cottages in quirky lanes," Sue says, "so at one shop we can say if you pop over to Appledore you can enjoy our cafe and in Instow, we've got the beach hut and you can go crabbing on the pier. Each shop can recommend the other not only in terms of business but also in terms of location. We can give visitors ideas for great days out, which also raises the profile of North Devon, which is something else we like to do."

Among the high quality goods carried by Johns of Instow is cheese, and being situated in the West Country, choices are solidly local. "We tend to carry about 40 cheeses, predominantly from the West Country and Devon," Anthony says. "We like to think we offer a full selection from our area of softs, blues and Cheddars etc." Among the cheeses in the Johns counter are Devon Blue, Cornish Gouda and examples by Sharpham and Ticklemore. Some West Country cheese producers are well known to the couple, "especially those who are right on our doorstep," Sue says. "You build up relationships with them. Being where we are, farmhouse cheese is huge." Other dairy products are important here too. "We sell hand crafted butter cream made by a small farm, which is absolutely fantastic," Sue says. "We do cream teas to eat here, and also takeaways. We use an award-winning strawberry jam that really has got a whopping amount of strawberries in it. We have that in mini jars as well as store-sized jars. The ingredients for our cream teas, including scones and clotted cream, are also sold separately in the shop."



AN EFFECTIVE, FORMAL DISPLAY ON THREE LEVELS

Real passion

The Johns are particularly proud of their charcuterie. "We deal with Deli Farm Charcuterie near Bude. It's all free- range, and I think they have a great product. It's lovely to see the UK now championing the sort of items which used to be only Italian or Spanish. To be honest, we don't even bother stocking these anymore, because everybody wants the local version. Stocking local is integral to the success of these stores, Anthony says. " I don't think the business would be here, at least in its current format, if it wasn't for the amount of local produce we sell." Sue says that stocking local foods is








EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE AND A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

important for a number of reasons. "We are at the heart of two village communities. We have got a real passion for local produce and we have a lot of small producers around us who don't have anywhere to sell their products unless to people like us, who are willing to stock something that you can't find on a supermarket shelf.

"When we started, we decided we would try to be the first to have new producs in store. In this way, we would be unique so that it entices customers to come along and try that new product. We do tasting events so they can meet the producer and put a face to the product. We also hold pop-up evenings in our cafe where local producers come in and prepare their product in our deli kitchen, and this broadens the local food and drink experience for the North Devon community and those visiting the area. In the last five years, Johns has tried very hard to be a destination for people but also to provide an experience, both for the people who want to buy everything under one roof and those that want the finer things in life that they can't get anywhere else."

"We're very much about the local and the artisan," Anthony says, "but we are also a traditional grocery business. You can come in and buy a bottle of wine on offer for a fiver. We're not just a high end farm shop. As Nigel Barden said at the Farm Shop & Deli awards, you can come in here and buy a tin of pet food as well, which is something we are very proud of. We appeal to the local market as well." The shop at Instow has, of course, changed much over its 70 years of trading. "Now," Sue says, "it's much more about the broader food and drink experience. While we have a wide array of local producers, we also have to go further afield to get some artisan products. To do this, we go to trade shows such as Farm Shop & Deli, and this is a development which we have had to build into our business plan." Sourcing further afield," Sue says, "broadens our range for our customers. Take gluten-free pork pies, as an example. No-one in this area makes them, but there is a small family business in Yorkshire which does make these."

Much of the food available at Johns is made on-site. "We make quiches, a lot of cakes, pates, baguettes and salads." The shop has installed a new kitchen area," John says, "where we will start to make a lot more home-made produce. It has become a huge draw for us." With the waterfront only yards away, it's no surprise to learn that seafood is sold at the shops. "A lot of smoked fish," John says, "and some crab." Very popular at the cafe is the all-day breakfast, which is made using locally-produced bacon and sausages and served seven days a week. Also selling well are freshly-made baguettes and sharing platters which give visitors the chance to try several specialities at once.

Pop-up evenings

Only 400 metres from the shop at Instow is the beach hut, which is branded in Johns colours and instantly recognisable as a member of the John's family. "It's like a mini Johns of Instow," Anthony says. He's right, too. This tardis-like affair offers a lot more than its size suggests. As well as selling locally-made ice-cream, the booth offers beach lovers pork pies and freshly-made brownies, hot coffee from a machine, and the chance to order baguettes and other items from the nearby shop. A business like this, Anthony says, "needs revenue streams that are all year round rather than seasonal." The pop-up evenings are one example and another is the newly-launched online shop. "One of the great changes in retail," Sue says, "is that you can't wait for the customer to come to you anymore. You have to get yourself out to the customer and you have to do that in a multiple-stranded way. We go to the farmer markets, provide welcome hampers for holiday makers and have a click and collect service where you can order and pay online, then have the items delivered to your chosen address or collect them at the store. We also keep a good selection of wines, including very good examples sourced from local vineyards and we also provide a catering service."

Johns of Instow has a comprehensive presence on social media, using Facebook, Twitter and an emailed monthly newsletter which drives people to the website in place of traditional local advertising. While this has proven an effective method of keeping up the profile of the Johns brand, the company achieves a similar objective by ensuring the Johns brand is seen at local farmers markets and agricultural shows and by involving itself in local events, such as sponsoring the Appledore Regatta and the food festival at Barnstaple.

It has been a big year for Anthony and Sue and their staff of 40. The Farm Shop & Deli Retailer of the Year award has brought them a glut of publicity and boosted the name of this double deli beyond the banks of the Torridge. By the time this is printed, there will have been a celebration in honour of the efforts of all, not forgetting the customers of



WEST COUNTRY CHEESES FEATURE STRONGLY IN THE CHEESE COUNTER


WINE CAN OFFER SURPRISING VALUE

> "As Nigel Barden said at the Farm Shop & Deli Awards, you can come in here and buy your tin of pet food, which is something we are very proud of. We appeal to the local market."



PREPARING CHRISTMAS

With just a few months to go until the big day, now's the time to really get going on your festive preparation

Yes, it's that time already. The time to start ordering for Christmas has arrived – but there's no need to panic, as we've gathered expertise from across the industry to help your festive season run as smoothly as possible. We've spoken to a retailer, a distributor and a producer to glean their advice on how to avoid panic later on in the year; all valuable insights, we're sure you'll agree.

You've heard it before a thousand times, but it's need-to-know stuff – effective planning is key to an efficient festive season. In previous issues we've discussed the value of looking back on the Christmas just gone the following January; with the highs and lows still fresh in your memory, and overzealously-stocked items still cluttering your shelves, this is the best time to reflect on what went well and what could have been done better. Were any items surprising runaway successes, selling out nearly as soon as they hit the shop floor? Equally, is there a standard Christmas product which has been slowly but surely falling in popularity?

By now you should have a good idea of what you'd like to stock this Christmas, shaped by the sales of last year and any trends you've spotted which you're particularly excited about. For example, will you be offering a sizeable free-from range this year? Gluten-free Christmas pudding and mince pies could go down very well, if the recent boom in free-from is anything to go by. Equally, low or no-sugar items could turn out to be big sellers, fuelled by the boosted health-consciousness of consumers.

When it comes to Christmas classics, there are a number of items you can order in now – ambients such as cranberry sauce, festive confectionery and snacks can be stashed away ready to be put on display nearer the time, whereas dairy items and meats, needless to say, need to be bought as close as possible to the big day to keep them at their best. That's not to say there's no preparation to be done here, though – whether you're using a local supplier or one from further afield, get your order in as soon as possible to avoid joining the hordes in a state of last-minute panic.





FROM THE RETAILER...

Hayley Roberts, Bodnant Welsh Food's farm shop supervisor

What are the first preparations you make for Christmas, and when?
We begin in February by visiting the Spring Food Fair held at the NEC in Birmingham to see what products are going to be popular or in fashion during the coming Christmas. Around the same time, my staff and I start to have meetings to talk about Christmas and what we could possibly do better this time. In June we start to put in the first orders with our suppliers for our latest Christmas stock.

Come August, what preparations will you have carried out?
By then we will have finalised the details of the 'food to order' service we offer at the shop, which gives our customers the opportunity to place early orders for products from Bodnant's own deli and butchery departments. All those orders will be ready by August. Also by August we'll have organised everything for our All Wrapped Up packages, which contain everything people need for Christmas such as turkey, stuffing, chipolatas, cranberry sauce and bread sauce.

What will you be starting to order in come July/August?
That's the time when we get in touch with our smaller suppliers to give them the heads-up about what we'll be ordering for Christmas and the sort of quantities we'll be needing from them. The products we're talking about here are Christmas chutneys, jams and marmalades. Last year, for instance, we sold about 125 jars of chutney from one supplier, so this year we'll let him know we'll probably be wanting a few more from him.

Why these items in particular?
The products we get from our small, specialist suppliers are some of our most popular but they need to have plenty of notice of what we'll be needing from them, so they can organise their own production schedules.

When do you first put Christmas items out on display?
Towards the end of September we start to put out products that have a longer shelf-life, like Christmas puddings, Turkish delight, marzipan fruits and chocolate – basically, small items that also make ideal gifts. We also start to display the range of Christmas decorations we have. By September, preparations will be well in hand for our highly popular Christmas fair, which runs in the courtyard at Bodnant from mid-November until mid-December.

What are the first festive items to sell, and when?
In the weeks immediately leading up to Christmas we start to sell things like crackers, Turkish delight, marzipan fruits and Christmas pasta. Last year we had in some special pasta, which really flew off the shelves. It was in Christmassy shapes like stars, trees and candles and people just went crazy for it. We also start to sell our non-alcoholic punch, which can also be added to mulled wine. Last year that was also very popular and we sold over 100 bottles of it.

What foods would you reserve for much closer to Christmas?
Products that obviously have a short shelf-life such as our special cheeses like baby Stiltons and a type of Camembert called Mont D'or, which is only available towards the back end of the year. People can order them in advance but we don't have them in the shop until about a week before Christmas so they're nice and fresh. In addition, the butchery counter will have Christmas birds – turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens – special cuts of beef and pork, sausages, bacon and the pre-packed All Wrapped Up items.

What are the benefits of thorough planning and early preparation?
When everything has been planned well in advance, when you eventually put it into action you get better sales and have a much better performance. With all the planning we've done this year we hope to have an even better year than Christmas 2014.

Are you doing anything differently this year?
Our Christmas fair is going to be bigger and better than ever and we're all really looking forward to it. It helps to get everyone into the Christmas spirit. I don't want to give too much away at the moment as it's still in the planning stage, but we'll definitely be having chestnuts roasting on the barbecue out in the courtyard to give a real smell of Christmas.

What were the big sellers last year?
Bodnant's own mince pies were definitely our best-sellers, they're baked fresh every day in our own bakery and are packed with fruit. Apart from the traditional pastry we also do them with a Viennese pastry topping. Also very popular were the cheeses made here at Bodnant such as our Extra Mature Aberwen. Last year we sold out of Turkish delight, which is made from a traditional recipe in Istanbul, and we're expecting it to go down well again this year.









FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR...

With Paul Hargreaves, MD of Cotswold Fayre

In your experience, what Christmas preparations are retailers making in July/August?
Generally by the summer holiday season, most of the larger retailers have finished placing their Christmas orders and are concentrating on their summer sales and holidays (both theirs and covering staff who are away). In a spare moment, if they have one during a busy summer, they may start giving thought to how the Christmas displays will be merchandised throughout the store when the stock arrives in September, October or November.

What Christmas products do you sell at this time of year?
We sell in our whole range to retailers from early May through to September. Some retailers, generally garden centres, like stock at the end of August or beginning of September. This year we have a much higher percentage of products available in early September, including Halloween, of course.



What are your big sellers at Christmas, and at what point in the process do retailers start buying these?
The big sellers are what you would expect: tins of biscuits, products for making mulled wine or indeed mulled wine itself, mince pies, and gifts of all shapes and sizes. Last year we had a large range of gifts for men which sold very well indeed, including a two litre bottle of beer. Food gifts are a growing part of the retail scene at Christmas and we are in a good position to benefit from this. We generally find that gifts that don't have Christmas themes on them sell well as they de-risk the process for retailers, so they can maintain good displays. This year we expect kits to be big and have everything from mushroom-growing kits to bacon-curing kits.

Are there Christmas trends products which are losing popularity?
Good question! Christmas puddings seem to be harder to sell than they used to be as the supermarkets sell reasonable puddings for ridiculously low prices. Some of the old favourites like marzipan fruits and marron glaces are now really only bought by the older generation, with younger people generally not purchasing these.

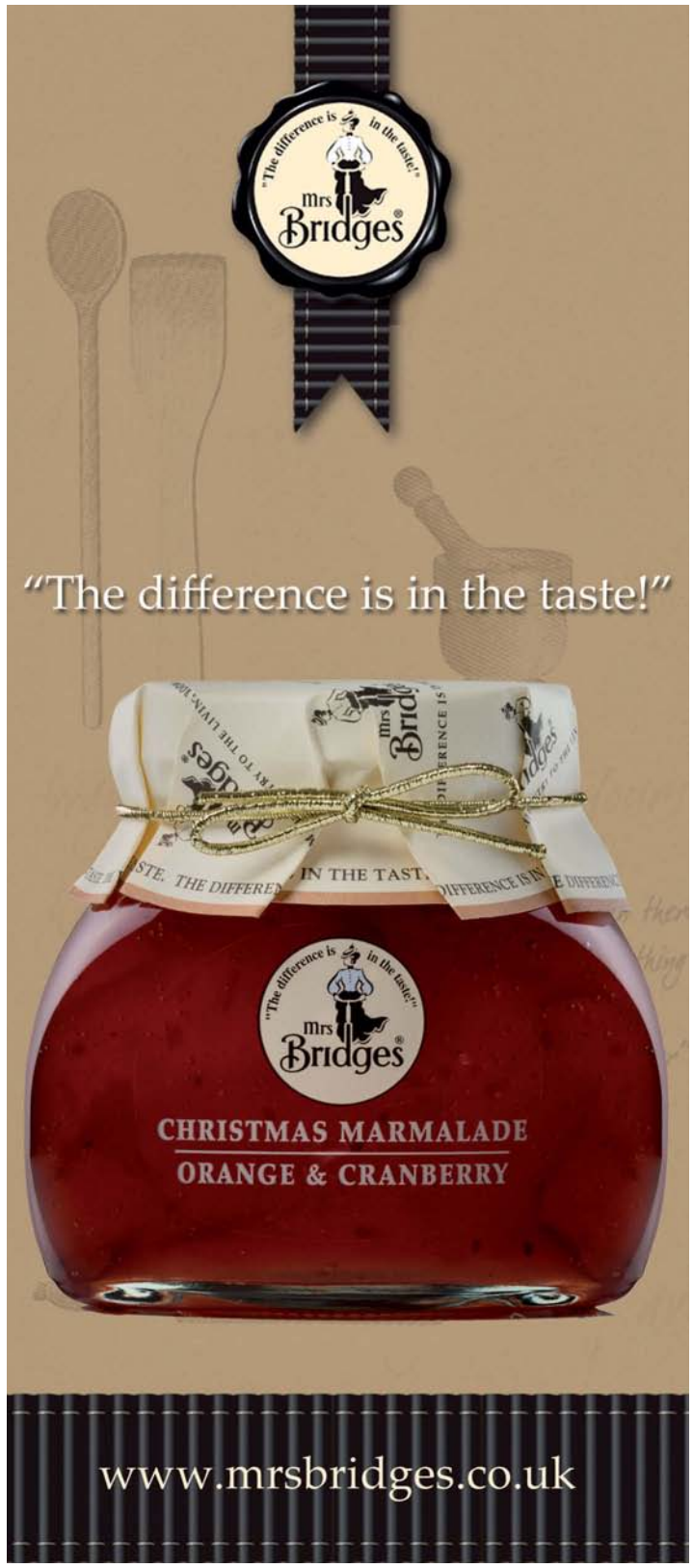
Do you have any advice for retailers wanting to stand out this Christmas?
Stock different products than you had last year. Yes, of course, you need the tried and tested products that work every year, but be adventurous and have lots of products you have never seen before. Many of your customers come and do some Christmas shopping year after year and they want to buy different presents than they did the year before.

Do you have any tips for boosting festive sales?
On the products that you know will sell well as gifts, buy big and merchandise big. Large displays imply success and make consumers think, "We better buy this as it is obviously very popular." Within two weeks of Christmas, hopefully you have sold many of your gifts, leaving a few for the last minute shoppers. At this point put in large displays of brandy butter, cranberry sauce, goose fat and even Christmas Crackers!









STOCK CHECK



TRACKLEMENTS CHRISTMAS CHUTNEY

A best-seller during the festive season, this rich, spiced fruit chutney is a must-have for the cold-cuts table; handmade with the best, natural ingredients, as with all of Tracklements' award-winning range.

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FUDGE KITCHEN SHARING TRIO

Chocolate Fruit & Nut, Sea Salted Caramel and Vanilla Rainbow. A wonderfully different alternative to that jaded old box of chocolates.

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FROM THE PRODUCER...



Gary Johnston, sales and marketing director of Cottage Delight

"It's no secret that every year the need to entice customers into your store becomes more challenging as independent retailers compete with the convenience of the big retailers and online shopping. This is why it's becoming intrinsically more important to plan well ahead for the festive period, considering not only the products you'll stock, but how you will display those products in a way that's both impactful and visually stimulating for the consumer.

"We're all aware that visual merchandising, if done correctly, supports sales by communicating to consumers the latest trends, assists them in making a buying decision, and creating an exciting environment within the store to enhance the customer experience. With that in mind, it's little wonder we should be spending more time planning it to ensure we see our festive sales increase.

"Cottage Delight's territory managers work closely with store owners as they identify proven sellers and develop new and innovative ways to communicate great promotions tailored around those products. As part of this, we are starting to see more and more retailers move away from over-filling their shop floors with back-to-back product, instead choosing to position key sellers to create theatre in-store. This encourages a lot of sales, and we support this with free point of sale material for all of our retailers to assist them in getting the most out of such displays."



Sarah Williams, product manager

"A successful Christmas stems from good planning. Cottage Delight's Christmas range launched in May and we've already received positive orders. The advantage of early ordering is clearly peace of mind that the best-selling Christmas products demanded by consumers will be on the shelves in good time to meet demand, whilst leaving a little breathing space to sit back and replenish hamper products, gift packs and more essential items in November and December.

"In terms of which products to order, our territory managers are highly experienced in advising stores of the must-stock items that we know sell well each year – such as festive beers and cider, unique continental Christmas treats and luxury hot sauces. The benefit for retailers is that these sought-after products are also available as larger gift items, or as part of luxury hampers for the customer who hasn't the time to prepare their own ahead of the Christmas rush. Sitting festive favourites alongside their gift counterparts means retailers have a great opportunity to upsell to customers, ensuring that their Christmas trading period is a successful one."







MEET THE PRODUCER

Elspeth Biltoft of Rosebud Preserves blends a love of natural ingredients with respect for the environment in which they're grown

You'll find the Rosebud Preserves range of jams, jellies, pickles and chutneys on the shelves of independent food retailers all over the country – anywhere in fact, but in a supermarket. It may come as a surprise, then, to discover that this successful producer of around 60 popular products is based in stone-built barns nestled in the rolling Yorkshire Dales. The founder of Rosebud Preserves is its owner, Elspeth Biltoft, who is keen to produce her products as naturally as possible, and to do that in harmony with her natural surroundings. "This is our 26th year of trading," Elspeth tells Speciality Food, "and I think our competitors are only now catching up with what was so important to me from the start." Elspeth's preserves use simple, genuinely good ingredients which let the fruit shine through, she says. What she doesn't use are "additives, preservatives, acidity regulators or gelling agents".

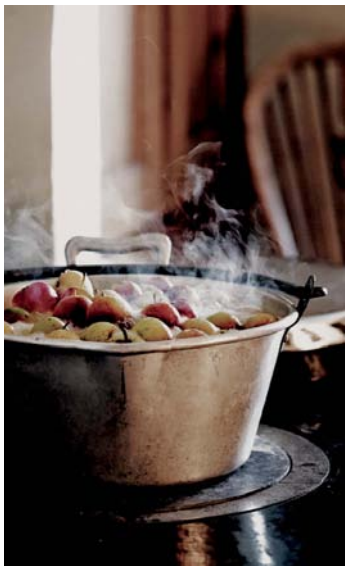
The recipes are made on a larger scale, she says, "but are the same as you would use in your own home. We don't even use pectin, which I have nothing against, but I think allowing the natural pectins to do their work with the addition of unrefined sugars is something that differentiates us from the competition. We use only golden granulated sugar in the jams, jellies and marmalades, and light muscovado for 95% of the chutneys. This produces natural sets and naturally finished products. I'm very much about high quantities of ingredients in the jams but also the set and the finishes. What I aim for is a micro-biologically safe product with a naturally-created soft set. Our jams are noted for their high fruit content. The Strawberry jam, for example, contains 81g per 100g, which is very high.

Great inspiration

Although some local ingredients are sourced in the wild, others are selected from high-quality sources







all over the country and, in the case of the marmalades, beyond these shores. That said, this product range is very much rooted in the Yorkshire countryside in which Elspeth spent her childhood and with which she has a great affinity. "I was brought up in Swaledale. in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales," Elspeth says. "My dad, who was a great inspiration for me, had a small plot behind our tiny cottage and an allotment where he grew all the vegetables and some fruit trees. Mum made everything, including a few jams, a Seville marmalade, piccalilli and cucumber pickle. I started to make products when I was 14 or 15 and although I made some of the things my mum made, I wanted to work with wild produce and gathered crab apples and rowan to make jellies."

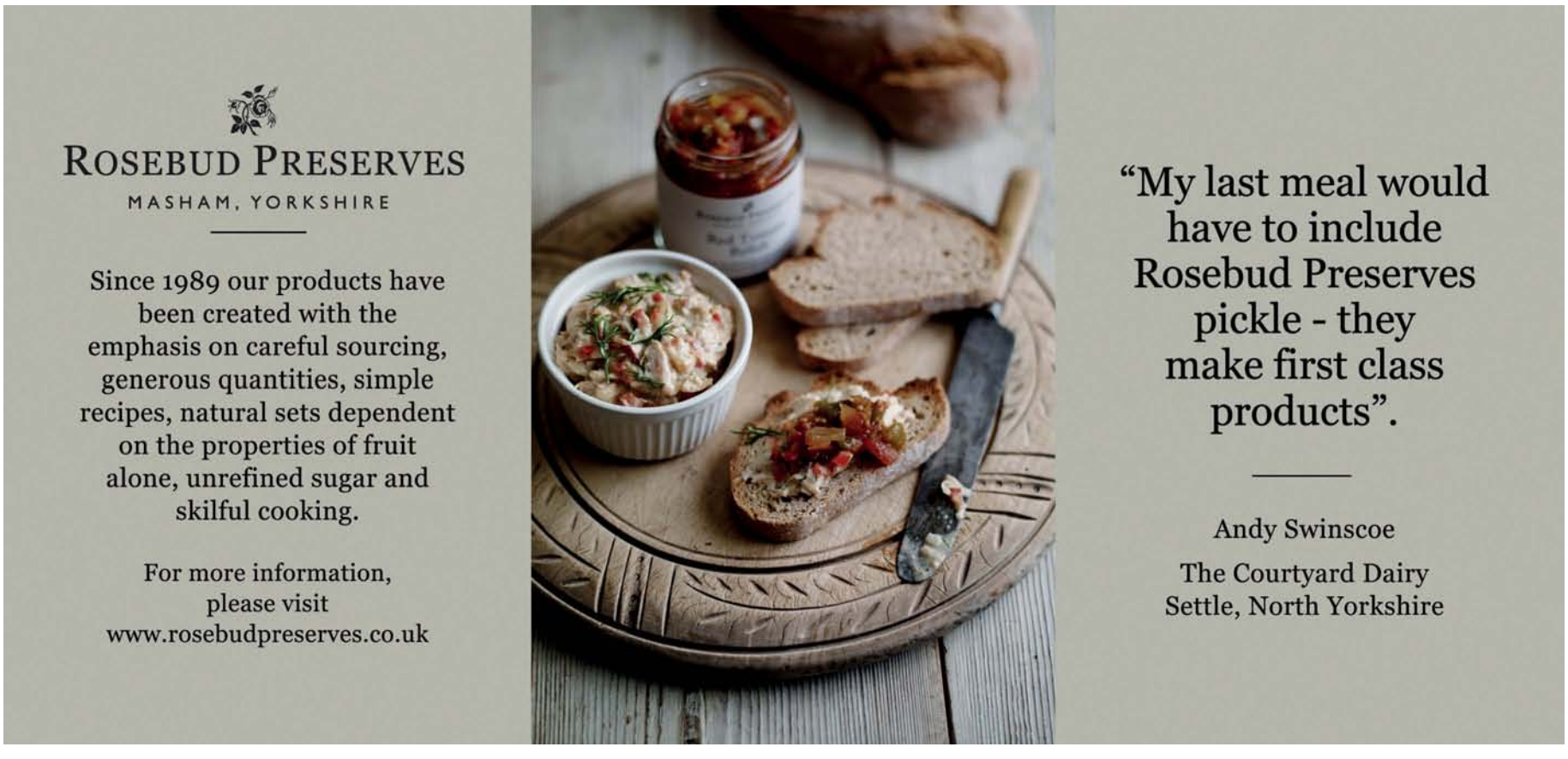
Elspeth's interest in the natural environment not only informs her sourcing decisions ("I don't want to rob the countryside or wildlife of too much wild product," she says) but has encouraged her to become involved with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. "This is tremendously important," she says, "bumblebees, along with other pollenators are vital if we are to continue to enjoy the huge diversity of foods currently available to us."

Many of Rosebud Preserves' ingredients, such as rhubarb, herbs, beetroot, onions, honey, elderflower and the wild-picked crab apple and rowan, are sourced in Yorkshire and last year, the company celebrated its 25th anniversary in collaboration with Ampleforth Abbey, whose cider, brandy and Belgian beer have found their way into some of the Rosebud range. Other fine ingredients are sourced from quality growers all over the country. "We get Bramley apples from Kent, which we peel and core into jams and chutneys,and damsons from the South Lakes and Evesham, Worcestershire. We get our greengages from Cambridgeshire, organic green tomatoes from Lancashire and quince from Essex. Our Norfolk-grown pickled onions are peeled in Sheffield, in one of the very few places that still do this."

Rosebud Preserves has come a long way since its launch in 1989, and now has 13 full time and six part time employees. Its range is much expanded from the one Elspeth started out with, among whose products were "marmalade, strawberry and raspberry jam, cucumber pickle and the wild products." Since then, Elspeth says, "we have added preserves such as Hot Apple Chutney ("launched in 1989-90, when we were beginning to enjoy hot things") and some innovative new lines such as Bramley Apple & Liquorice, which was commissioned by London's Café Royale, and the ever-popular Sweet Onion Marmalade and Red Tomato & Chilli Jam, which were the results of Elspeth's work with a consultant for Liberty of London. One of Rosebud Preserves' most popular products is Gooseberry& Elderflower jam. "I pick wild elderflower from the surrounding hedgerows in June to create a delightful combination of fruit and flower," Elspeth says.

Recently, production at Rosebud Preserves was moved up a gear with the employment of a fully-trained chef. "I was in the kitchen supervising until just two years ago," Elspeth says. "John's arrival has been a real eye-opener and, while we stay loyal to our core products, innovation has come very much to the fore. People do love new and interesting products." Elspeth and Rosebud Preserves also work closely with cheesemongers such as Neals Yard Dairy, developing new products to accompany their excellent cheeses.

It's the policy of Rosebud Preserves to not sell to the multiples, although, Elspeth adds, "we have recently presented to Booths because we think they are a good fit." For farm shops and delis, Elspeth says, "we can offer something that isn't in the supermarkets. Our products are not cheap, because there is a lot of handwork involved and we are using unrefined sugars and generous quantities of ingredients. This, however, can be an advantage in the independent sector, she says, as it offers "a different price point which many retailers welcome on the shelve of their shops."



NEW DIRECTIONS IN FISH



Fish and fish products can be footfall finders, but what's the solution for retailers who don't want a fish counter?



Not every deli or farm shop wants, can afford or has space for a fish counter. Like a butchery, this is a specialised sector requiring knowledgable staff and a dedicated serving area. But the taste for fish and seafood appears to be growing as people become aware of the food as a healthy alternative to red meat, and one that can be packed with vitamins and Omega 3. Regular food shop chillers aren't really geared for storing fresh fish, and retailers who want to satisfy their customers' taste for fish and prevent them looking to satisfy it at the nearest supermarket are turning increasingly to the expanding range of often innovative fish products now being made available from established fish producers.

Particularly well suited for sale in delis and farm shops, says Gerald Fletcher, owner of East Lincs Seafood, are his salmon and crab products. The company produces a varied range of seafood, from lobster and brown shrimps to fresh fish and meal products such as Breaded Smoked Haddock Florentine. Best sellers for East Lincs Seafood just now, he says, are salmon and prawns, which "people are now throwing on their barbecues." This Boston-based, family-run firm was established in 1987, and sources high quality, sustainable fish from established suppliers, which it offers to the public, and also wholesales at competitive prices.

Big Fish Brand is a good example of a producer which has identified a niche in the independent retail market and tailored a product to fit it. Its range of marinaded fish is vibrantly packaged and is available, says commercial director John Grey, in a handy "freezer to table format." Retailers will find this an attractive range, he says, for a number of reasons. "The product is easy to use, there's no waste, it's high in Omega 3 and it's healthy." The range places the company, John says, "at the cutting edge" of the independent seafood sector.

Selecting the flavours to work as marinades was, he says, a long process. "The reason we chose those flavours, and what is key to us, is that the product needed to taste of the advertised flavour, but without overpowering the flavour profile of the fish. We feel that each one of these marinades offers something different and still complements the salmon. We wanted to make sure that we covered a number of different flavour profiles for different palates. As the adage goes, "one man's meat (or fish in this instance) is another man's poison." The sticky maple is a big American flavour and is BBQ inspired, so it's great for the summer. The Piri Piri is spicy and has a bit of a kick, whilst the Eastern Thai is aromatic, with a spicy edge."

Marinated fish

Innovation in this market is "extremely important" John says, "because you need to have a logical point of difference. This is key, and we hope that the public recognise this. We want Big Fish to be an easily recognisable brand which will stand out in the freezers of the independent sector – farm shops and delis have complimented us on the design of the packaging and like the way it looks." The products, he says, are particularly well-suited for sale in farm shops and delis because of their "pack size, shelf life, their great presence in the freezer and the flexibility that we offer on ordering. It's a great margin generator."

The Big Fish Brand of marinated fish was launched in May 2014 "and we now have 95 independents and farm shops stocking our brand throughout the UK," John says. "People can also now buy our products from Ocado and we are in the final stages of setting up an e-commerce store."

The Big Fish brand is owned by JCS, a processor with 100 years of experience. This means, John says, "we understand fish, we understand the market and we understand processing. We bring all of that together to produce an exceptional product by using the experience, traditional skills and modern technology employed by JCS Fish."

Retailers looking for a quality fish product with a long shelf life may like to consider stocking tinned fish from an established producer such as Chancerelle, whose Connétable and Charles Basset lines are now being distributed in the UK by Empire Bespoke Foods. Located in Brittany, with over 160 years of expertise in canning fish, Chancerelle is the oldest sardine cannery still in operation. The family-run company maintains high quality standards by having every fish gutted by hand to maintain its flavour, and hand packing its products. Chancerelle produces the Connétable brand, which offers canned sardines, mackerel and tuna and also Charles Basset, which, says Alexandra Locke, brand manager, "produces some of the finest tuna in the world, which is rich in essential fatty acid and Omega 3."

Available through Empire Bespoke Foods, Alexandra says, are Charles Basset white tuna in extra virgin olive oil (80g and 160g) and white Albacore Tuna in brine, both of which are MSC certified. The company also purveys "Connétable sardines in lemon and basil marinade, sardines in chilli sauce, sardines in sunflower oil, mackerel fillets marinated in lemon and basil, mackerel fillets in extra virgin olive oil, boneless and skinless Atlantic salmon in brine, white Albacore tuna in extra virgin olive oil, whole anchovies in extra virgin olive oil plus many more."

Premium product

The products are ideal for delis or farm shops, Alexandra says, because "they are a high quality and premium packaged item. They are produced by a well-known brand from France which has a wide selection of products. Charles Bassett fish is known to be of a higher quality than



other canned fish brands as it is still canned to the highest standard in France. The quality of the olive oil in the tuna is so high that it can be used as a base for salad dressing or pasta sauces, ensuring there is no waste and offering extra value for money to the fish-buying customers."

The company has accumulated an wealth of knowledge in matters of fish and fishing, and this, Alexandra says, "allows it to source the best supplies. Chancerelle's knowledge has been passed on down the generations and gives the company a unique expertise in combining artisanal production and modern processes." Customers will find it useful that innovative recipes are provided for many species of fish.

"Chancerelle is MSC certified and its range fish products is fully sustainable," Alexandra says. "Charles Basset Tuna is sourced from AAFA (American Albacore Fishing Association) and is caught using only pole and line method." She adds that the extra virgin olive oil in Charles Basset tuna "is carefully selected from only the top quality Spanish olive groves."

Empire Bespoke Foods has chosen this brand to distribute, she says, because it "is an authentic French cannery producing high quality and premium products that are ethically sourced." It's also relevant, she says, "that the company is registered MSC and AAFA. It has a strong brand recognition in France and is No3 in the canned fish market there." It may be of interest to customers to know that Chancerelle, which has 1550 employees of whom 80% are women, has been a family business for seven generations.



CONNETABLE ATLANTIC SALMON

Chapman's has been purveying quality fish products from its base in Grimsby for over 50 years and has its origins in the fishcakes which Mavis Chapman prepared for her husband. Now, her sons Kevin and Paul have taken this recipe to produce a traditional high-quality range of fishcakes. "Our fishcakes have been always the biggest seller," says Kevin Chapman, Chapman's Fishcakes 'owner. "Like all the products, they are prepared by hand, using only the finest ingredients."

Sales fluctuate throughout the year, he says, but "towards summer you can see sales growing daily." This, Kevin says, is because the product is "a light food which is ideal for warmer days." Customers in a hurry will appreciate the fact that the product is "also quick and easy to prepare." The fishcakes are mixed by hand, Kevin says. "That is important for texture and also so you can taste all the different elements. They are made the way you would make them at home."

Chapman's, which supplies "over 300 farm shops, butchers, delis and independents nationwide," also produces a "unique range of seafood dishes" which addresses the needs of the customer looking for innovative fish and seafood products and also those of people who like to cook a good fish meal with the minimum of fuss. Along with the eight varieties of fishcake, Kevin says, "we produce three flavours of fish Wellingtons (cod, salmon & smoked haddock), classic style fish pie and haddock bake, as well as an extensive range of plain fish fillets, fish in breadcrumbs, our best-selling luxury peeled prawns, whole tail scampi, king scallops, lemon sole goujons and our latest deluxe cod fillet fingers."

The company made the decision to diversify its production in 2008, when, Kevin says, "we started to approach local farm shops to gauge interest for stocking our frozen fishcake range. This was very successful, and before long the shops were asking if we made any other types of fish and seafood products. At this time we enlisted the help of a local development chef who put some ideas together for us. He came up with wellingtons, fish pie and haddock bakes.

We also have plans to introduce a new range of fish in sauce and an innovative new product, marinated salmon in two flavours (sweet chilli and garden mint)."


SWEET CHILLI SALMON FROM CHAPMANS

STOCK CHECK



BIG FISH BRAND SALMON FILLETS
The Eastern Thai variety is just one of the innovative new marinades being offered by the Big Fish Brand in vibrant packaging
bigfishbrand.co.uk



CHARLIE BIGHAM'S FISH PIE
Delicate cod, haddock and salmon in our traditional parsley sauce with creamy mashed potato and a crunchy Cheddar and breadcrumb topping.
bighams.com



CHAPMAN'S FISH CAKES
Handmade, traditional, gourmet fish cakes using the pick of the fish from local producers and the pick of the crop of Maris Piper potatoes from local growers.
chapmansfishcakes.co.uk



CONNETABLE SARDINES A L'ANCIENNNE
The best quality sardines immersed in olive oil are popular in their native France. Empre Bespoke Foods are importing them now.
empirebespokefoods.com



KING'S OSCIETRA CAVIAR
King's Oscietra Caviar which is sourced from a cold-water, outdoor farm in western Europe, has a mellow, nutty flavour that lingers on the palate.
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RITCHIE'S OF ROTHESAY SMOKED SALMON
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Words Last

the final word of fine food



The Black Truffle Deli, London NW3

Owner: Ben O'Toole **Opened:** March 2013

HOW'S BUSINESS?
Very good. It has gone a lot better than expected.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DELI?
It's a combination of retail shop and a 30 cover café-cum-coffee shop, with a large counter where we sell a lot of homemade soups, sandwiches, cakes and patisserie. We do a range of juices and smoothies too, as well as a brunch menu.

WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL?
We have got four chefs, three of whom have been Cordon Bleu-trained, so the level and quality of the products we create in-house is exceptionally high. The building is light and airy and the quality of fixtures and fittings is very high, which reflects the standard of product that we aim to sell.

HOW MANY STAFF?
We are just about to go over 15 and it's a mix of full and part-timers.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A DELI OWNER?
I used to work in the city, but took six months off and trained myself as a Cordon Bleu chef. I live in Belsize Park, which is a relatively prosperous area, and I saw a gap in the market for somebody to sell premium quality fine foods from smaller producers.

HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR LOCATION?
We are on a busy street full of mainly independent shops. It's a residential area with a few offices and several schools – we do quite well out of the school run.

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SPEND?
It's around £12.50 average per visit but that figure is distorted by the coffees we sell. Some people will come in and spend £2.50 on a coffee, while others will spend £100.

WHAT CHEESES DO YOU SELL?
Among our British cheeses are Montgomery's Cheddar, Colston Bassett and Berkswell. Strong-selling Continentals include Comté, Pecorino, Manchego and Parmigiana Reggiano.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP SELLING STOCK ITEMS?
We sell a lot of Brindisa hams and healthy lifestyle-related foods. Bounce Energy Balls, almond milk and coconut water are very popular. When we opened, we held back on stock because we wanted to get a good understanding of what customers wanted.

WHAT INFORMS YOUR STOCKING DECISIONS?
We like to use local or British but obviously, we don't want to close off avenues. I don't think there is a huge benefit from saying we are only going to stock British. Camembert producers are often closer to London than some British producers.

WHICH OF YOUR FOODS ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?
One of my favourite products that we stock is Abernethy butter from Northern Ireland. It's the real deal.

WHAT FOOD DO YOU PREPARE ON THE PREMISES?
We do four or five large salads every day, which we serve on a counter buffet-style. We make our own hummus and pâté, we do one or two soups every day, and we make a lot of cakes and macaroons, with lots of focus on dairy and gluten-free.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE CAFÉ?
Turnover is slightly weighted in favour of the cafe, which accounts for perhaps 55% or 60% of turnover.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE THE DELI?
We actually did very little promotion. Instead, we spent quite a lot making the place look very appealing for footfall. The next stage will be to increase our marketing.

HOW DO YOU SELECT AND RETAIN STAFF?
We have had quite a low turnover. Four members of staff have been here since the start. We retain them by delegating responsibility to them. Through natural selection, we now have a manager and a couple of assistant managers.

THREE THINGS DELI OWNERS SHOULD GET RIGHT?
1. Create value for the shelves. 2. Keep the staff happy. 3. Draw people in with a range of products they can't get elsewhere.

IF YOU STARTED OVER, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?
We would probably spend more money quicker, take more risks on the stock and employ more staff to get more things done quicker. By spending money, you get a return.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?
Scaling up a deli is complicated, but if we find the right site we can certainly do it. We could do something café-related, too. In this way, we are maximising skills we already have.



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Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2015

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SPECIALITY BITES

Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre offers his slant on issues affecting independent retail today



I make no apology this month for talking about what is an 'old chestnut' in speciality food circles. The subject remains at the top of conversations when people in our industry get together, and it is whether to stock perceived larger brands or even products available in the supermarkets (boo, hiss!) within your speciality food store.

Three pieces of recent correspondence sum up the issue. Firstly from a food hall in London: "Thank you for all your service and products over the past 8+ years, but we have decided to change what we are doing, and are going to source products directly from Europe that are exclusive to us in London. We love your products but we see them in other shops nearby, which you must be supplying, and don't want to be the same as them."

I completely understand where this buyer is coming from, and as they have two or three stores this strategy may work logistically for them. But does a shop full of brands that no-one has ever heard of work? It may well if the staff within the shop were super sales people and also had tastings every day, as I am sure the selection on offer would include very good products. However, foodie consumers, whilst always appreciating and trying new products and brands, generally spend more of their hard-earned cash on brands that are trusted and known within the speciality food sector, don't they?

Secondly, a conversation with the owner of a vegetable crisp brand who was bemoaning the fact that he hadn't been able to sell his products into his local farm shop, who were still stocking Tyrrells' veg crisps, despite them being available in most supermarkets, convenience stores and coffee chains throughout the land. This is against the grain of many farm shops, so presumably they have decided that they make more cash margin (not necessarily percentage margin) selling a dominant brand than a smaller brand?

> "The answer is balance. Have a mix of innovation and exclusivity but also brands consumers will recognise"

The third correspondence was from one of my regional account managers, in answer to my question to them all asking them about current market conditions i.e. which shops were doing well at present and which perhaps not so well. Her succinct answer was that the shops that were doing well in 2015 were those that were innovating and had the most positive response to the new brands she had shown them this year. The example she used was that of Foraging Fox's Beetroot Ketchup, and the response was chalk and cheese! The growing retailers were overwhelmingly positive – some had ordered 10 cases, made a display, done tastings and ordered another 10 cases the following week. The response from other retailers was less positive – "beetroot ketchup – who would ever buy that?" Of course, there are many other factors involved, but a lot of success has to do with people and their attitude. I guess we all know that anyway!

As in many scenarios, the answer is surely balance. Have a mix of innovation and exclusivity but also brands that consumers will recognise, and by this I don't necessarily mean supermarket brands.

Best Practice

Dai Chef, executive chef at Bodnant Welsh Food on his dream job



I grew up in Aberystwyth and came to Bodnant via a long and varied career in the food business, which began with gaining some vital experience in some of the largest hotels in London's West End. That led me by the age of 21 to be the youngest chef saucier at the world-famous Carlton Club in St James's. Later, I was proud to be founder member and captain of the Welsh Culinary Team. My career has also in included some real highlights, such as cooking for the great tenor Luciano Pavarotti when he came to perform at Llangollen International Eisteddfod in 1995, the festival where he first started his singing career. I have cooked for royalty, lords, prime ministers at Westminster, stately homes and grand European venues. I see my role at Bodnant as the culmination of a long personal mission to promote the merits of Welsh food; my daughter Megan, 10, cooks alongside me at demonstrations of Welsh produce. I started championing Welsh food 40 years ago, so being here at this centre of excellence for Welsh food is truly a dream job for me. In fact, it's a marriage made in culinary heaven.

I look after a team of 15 chefs and porters and usually get to work at around 9am, although it's often after 10pm before I get home to Colwyn Bay. Mornings are busy as my team start preparing food for the Hayloft restaurant and the tearooms. Later I'll pop down to our own bakery at Bodnant to talk through the bread, cake and pastry we need for that day or for larger events such as weddings or conferences. Several times a week I'll spend time with our butchery manager, Jason Fraser, talking through the order for our meat, which is all local. Next I'll meet up with champion grower Medwyn Williams to see what seasonal vegetables he's brought in, which often inspire my cooking. Another important person to consult with is Aled Rowlands about the dairy products we need and then it's over to the tearooms to see how things are going there. As I do lots of food demonstrations at Bodnant, I'll also consult with our wine cellar manager, Chris Kewin, about the wines he's selected to match the dishes. I also have regular meetings with our general manager, Rebecca Williams, and the restaurant manager, and there are also weekly meetings for all heads of department. I also set aside time to trial new dishes and to work with Bodnant's cookery school.The big lesson I have learned is that if you take care of your staff properly they will stay with you for years and years. You've got to look after them in many ways, including ensuring that they get the right sort of training, and if you do it right it leads to good payback from them later on. We have quite a large staff here at Bodnant and I think that applies to them all. It's vital to remember that without our staff, we'd be nothing.

DO

- Do always believe in what you can do and in your own abilities
- Do retain good contact with your clients. Get to know them on a meet and greet basis and speak to them as much as possible. Just talking to people is something that is so important but is often lost sight of, especially in these days when computers seem to control everything
- Do invest in your trade. The world of food is constantly changing and it's extremely important for people like me to keep abreast of latest developments and trends in the marketplace. With so much media interest in it, food is everything these days

DON'T

- Don't count the calories on your plate, count the colours instead. That's an old adage of mine, which means if you keep a good balance of colours – like green for vegetables and red for fruit like strawberries – in what you eat you'll live a much healthier and happier life without spending time on dieting hype
- Don't ever put yourself in a place where you lose contact with your customers or turn your back on them; they are the most important people of all
- Don't forget your life's journey – your progress through life, the people you meet along the way and the experience you gather – and never forget where you come from

> "I started championing Welsh food 40 years ago, so being here at this centre of excellence for Welsh food is truly a dream job for me"

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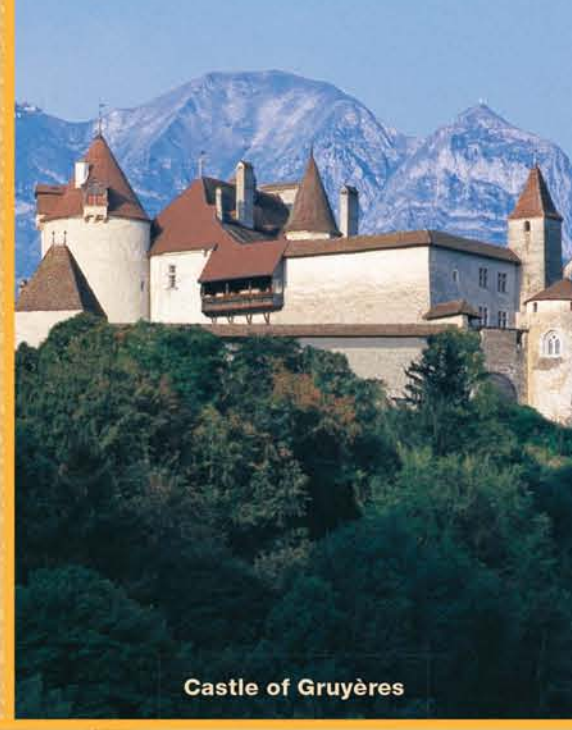
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