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EDITOR'S LETTER

Coffee Time



Whether you decide to expand and add features and attractions to your farm shop very much depends on the sort of shop you want to be. One of the first additions considered by many owners is a coffee shop or a restaurant, but not everyone wants to add such facilities to their offer. Doing this, they argue, can change the nature of the business and deflect it from its original purpose. Rather than being a shop for people who fill their baskets with home-reared meat and homegrown or field-fresh vegetables, a shop with a café can become a place where people come for a cup of coffee and easy amusement on a dull Sunday afternoon. It's another step away from what was first intended: the selling of the farm's meat, fruit and vegetables direct to the customer. However, the other, and perhaps prevailing, view is that cafés and restaurants are welcomed by customers in need of refreshment and can offer them a chance to sample the food on sale in the shop, too. Cafés can use up foods that are passing their best and provide valuable extra revenue streams that many cafe converts would not now be without. They can encourage users to spend money in the shop. In this issue, owners of farm shops who have made it work reveal how they did it and offer advice for retailers thinking of adding similar facilities to their business.

> "Cafés can provide valuable extra revenue streams"

Cheese features largely in this extended issue, and we have plenty of useful ideas for making Christmas cheeseboards work for you. We take a look at how many retailers are offering fantastic UK-made alternatives in place of Continental cheeses. Our Regional Focus is on East Anglia, once known as the bread basket of England but now offering so much more for the world of speciality food. Plus, it's time for Speciality & Fine Food Fair, lunch! and Welcome Italia, so we have a full preview of these important events in the independent fine food calendar.

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

TASTE THE BEST OF SCOTLAND

Retail buyers and fine food distributors are invited to attend Showcasing Scotland, taking place from 6th-9th October at Gleneagles.

The event, held by Scotland Food & Drink, will allow buyers to meet food and drink producers from across Scotland and learn more about the high quality businesses which help give Scotland its reputation as a Land of Food and Drink.

James Withers, chief executive of Scotland Food & Drink said, "With provenance becoming of increasing importance to consumers, I'd encourage buyers to register for the opportunity to meet a wide range of relevant Scottish food and drink producers as well as learning more about what our industry has to offer."

INTRODUCING FOOD INNOVATION WALES

The three food centres of Wales have re-launched as Food Innovation Wales, creator of new products and facilitator of access to new markets.

Research undertaken by the centres has found that 73% of food companies in Wales do not export, while 78% stated they were not operating at full capacity.

Rebecca Evans AM, deputy minister for food and farming said, "The Welsh Government's aspirations of growing sales in the food and drink sector by 30% to £7 billion by the year 2020 is certainly an ambitious one. However, Food Innovation Wales's role as an incubator for increased product innovation and efficiency in the industry is core to providing a strong platform for future growth."





Sunday Trading Laws: How Will They Affect You?

The Government has given the mayors and councils of major towns and cities the power to relax Sunday trading regulations.

The law previously stated that shops over 280 square metres could only be open for six hours a day, while smaller retailers were allowed to be remain open all day.

With some supermarkets now to be given the go-ahead to trade for longer periods on Sundays, some fear smaller independents will suffer from lessened footfall and sales.

Historically, some small independent retailers have used Sunday as a point of differentiation between themselves and supermarkets by offering consumers a place to shop once the multiples have closed.

Here, the managing director of a Norfolk-based deli, a spokesperson from the British Retail Consortium and the chief executive of the Association of Convenience Stores share their views.



Mark Kacary, managing director of The Norfolk Deli

It is highly unlikely that this update will affect small retailers like us. Sunday is the day when we open for the least number of hours (10am–4pm) and that is unlikely to change. Whilst this can be seen as a threat to independents, we believe that this is only more likely to be a threat to the independents which try to fill the gap left open by the Sunday trading laws etc – small shops which sell the same products as the main supermarkets offer, but which tend to be open and remain open at a time when the supermarkets are typically closed. Longer hours on a Sunday could take away one of their key advantages (other than possibly being just on the corner of the high street).

Shops like ours will only be affected if the supermarkets decide to become centres of local artisan foods, where every Tesco will be dramatically different to the other because each store manager would have the authority and ability to buy all of their stock from local producers. However, this is unlikely to happen. It would cost a major supermarket too much, so the differentiator a shop like ours has and will fight to maintain will be to champion the small local producer, to find the very best in high end, quality products, and to stand out as being the place to go when you feel that even somewhere like Waitrose is unable to source the type of cheese you want in the condition you want it in.



Bryan Johnston, BRC spokesperson

Plans to devolve powers on Sunday trading law to elected metro mayors and/or local authorities mark a very significant change, one that needs to be carefully thought through if the impact on local communities, their shops and their staff is to be fully understood.

The government should now conduct an impact assessment to help better inform whether or not businesses and communities stand to benefit from any changes.

The broad diversity of the UK retail industry means that any potential benefit of extending hours on a Sunday to a retailer would only be experienced on a case-by-case basis with each business weighting up what best suits their customers and their business model. Just as no two places are the same, no two stores are alike. That's why effective consultation with business and the community is crucial if shops and shoppers are to get the clarity and certainty they need.

If these powers were to be devolved then what matters is getting the decision-making process right from the beginning. For instance, the local authority would want to have consulted retailers and other local stakeholders from an early stage.

We will engage fully in the consultation process as it moves forward, working closely with our members to understand how this devolved approach would affect them.



James Lowman, chief executive of ACS

Giving local authorities the responsibility for setting Sunday trading hours will lead to inconsistency and confusion for businesses and shoppers. In areas where large stores' trading hours are extended, we will simply see the same amount of trade spread over more hours and shifting from small stores to large stores, as was the case when the laws were suspended for the 2012 London Olympics, when overall retail sales actually fell.

Existing Sunday trading laws are a popular compromise that balance the needs of consumers, shopworkers, small stores and families. Over three-quarters of people like the laws as they are, and fewer than one in ten people want to see longer Sunday opening hours. The short period of time that small stores are open while large stores are shut is a crucial advantage for convenience stores, most of which are owned by small businesses. Liberalising Sunday trading hours would make some small stores unviable.

> “Over three-quarters of people like the laws as they are, and fewer than one in ten people want to see longer Sunday opening hours”



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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



THE YELLOW BIRD OPENS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

A Michelin-trained chef and his wife have opened a deli in Kimbolton, Cambridgeshire, which offers freshly made deli foods, local produce, a picnic service and a monthly supper club.

The site combines a deli counter which contains homemade pies and quiches made using artisan cheeses including local Blue Bayden, Chillington and Taleggio, small cakes, homemade eclairs and custard tarts. Ambient items include snack bars from The Primal Pantry, beverages from Fentimans and Fever Tree, and teas from Teapigs.

The Yellow Bird also offers a breakfast and lunch café menu, including ketchups, barbecue sauces, pestos, hummus and meat made and roasted on-site. Organic fruit and vegetables are sold at The Yellow Bird, and local suppliers include brewers and producers of honey and oil.

Aidy Coveney, co-owner of The Yellow Bird said, "Our ethos is to use simple yet top quality ingredients in our menu, as well as the produce we sell, combined with the kind of service that will make customers want to return again and again. It's intensely hard work but not many people can say that they're trying to live their dream.

"The other day, we sent out pulled pork sandwiches that contained meat from a pig that was reared free-range and slaughtered within a three minute walk of the deli; the bones were used in a stock that were used to sauté it in, and the coleslaw was homemade with all organic ingredients, as was the barbecue sauce. Every part of that sentence makes us very proud!"

APLEY EXTENDS BUTCHERY OFFERING

Apley Farm Shop, housed in a converted barn on the Apley Estate in Shropshire, is now offering its customers a wider variety of butchery options.

The retailer now holds whole carcasses on-site, with its butchers preparing more cuts of meat using traditional and full butchery skills than before.

The new set-up allows for more room for the estate's own beef and lamb produced by its tenant farmers, and for pork provided by a local farmer.

The shop now offers local venison, pheasant, partridge, pork, lamb, beef and chicken, and turkey and goose at Christmas.

Harriet Hamilton of Apley Farm Shop said, "The more our butchers prepare on-site, the better. We can now more precisely meet our customer needs by providing them with almost any cut they require.

"This update has allowed us to choose our own in-house butcher and have more control over what's offered and how it's marketed. Quality control has increased as has our buying power – ie our ability to select the carcasses we need very precisely."





FENWICK NEWCASTLE EXPANDS FOOD HALL

Fenwick has announced refurbishment plans for the Food Hall of its flagship Newcastle site.

Two years in the planning, the project will offer exciting experiences including a Seafood & Oyster Bar, Mediterranean restaurant, Thai street food concept and Cafe & Patisserie. Fenwick Newcastle's popular Wine Shop is being revamped and will now link to a stylish wine and charcuterie bar.

The store's retail offering will also be refreshed to feature a new speciality chocolatier, an artisan bakery, boutique coffee roasters and a fresh juice bar, as well as a fish and seafood counter, and meat and game specialists.

The first phase of the project is due to be completed by mid-September, and the renovation as a whole will be complete by mid-October.

The project has been realised by London-based, award-winning interior design and branding consultancy CADA Design, which has previously worked with Harrods, Fortnum & Mason, Dean & Deluca and Charbonnel et Walker.

Rhys McKinnell, head of food and catering at Fenwick Newcastle said, "Before we embarked on this project we consulted widely with our customers to discover what they wanted to find in a modern Food Hall. With this exciting development we believe we will deliver what they expected – a world class dining and retail experience."



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JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES

"Partridges' top 5"

Last month I wrote about the effect of the weather on sales, and so far it seems like this summer is maintaining the recent mini trend of relatively benign weather. So good news, hopefully, for speciality food shops around the country. But how does this translate in terms of sales in the shop? To be honest, I do not spend as much time as I should looking at the individual sales data produced by the tills. Apart from the overall sales figures on a daily, weekly or quarterly basis, the individual sales from each department are often overlooked.

So what do we actually sell at Partridges by department and how does this compare to delis elsewhere?

1) Grocery – 25%
This sounds quite boring – or should I say unsurprising – but for us, grocery includes all the staples such as eggs, teas, coffees, soft drinks, biscuits, olive oils, jams and honeys etc, which no local deli can do without. Soft drinks in all their shapes and sizes are an increasing part of this, especially, of course, in summer. It is good to see so many innovative new drinks coming through like cold pressed coffee and fruit juices, health drinks and flavoured drinks. We have not had much luck with non-alcoholic cocktails, which at one time we thought would become quite big as in other countries. Like most delis, we also sell a lot of oils. This section also includes our hampers.

2) The Deli Counter – 12%
The heart of the shop in so many ways. Cheese, charcuterie and smoked salmon are still the big hitters. Pies, quiches and salads too, of course, and dare I say that caviar plays a small but important part of a Chelsea deli. We still get asked for foie gras but stopped selling it a few years ago.

3) The Wine Department – 11%
This is an area that really differentiates us from the multiple retailers. Brands are not so prevalent, and our wine buyer, Francois Ginther, is rightly proud of so many of the great discoveries he has made with smaller producers. The wine department does well partly due to our late closing time (10pm).

4) Dairy Products – 9%
Milk is why this area performs so well, aided and abetted by butters, margarines and yoghurts. I always feel it is reassuring when a shop has reasonable milk sales. It seems to be serving a purpose in the local community by selling such a basic product alongside all the other more speciality lines.

5) The Coffee Shop – 8.5%
This keeps growing year on year – in fact, faster than any other department. So much so that it's difficult for us to keep up with it. It started out as a sideline, and despite the fact that it presents a number of management problems on a regular basis, it is gaining significant importance with respect to profitability.

DIARY DATES

September

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

10th
GLOBAL CHEESE AWARDS
Frome, Somerset
globalcheeseawards.com

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

GLEE
NEC, Birmingham
gleebirmingham.com

16th
SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR IRELAND
Citywest, Dublin
foodhospitality.ie

24th–25th
LUNCH!
Business Design Centre, London
lunchshow.co.uk

25th–27th
WELCOME ITALIA
The Royal Horticultural Halls, London
welcome-italia.co.uk

October

10th–14th
ANUGA
Cologne
anuga.com



Blakemore Launches Online Ordering

Blakemore Fine Foods, the West Midlands-based distributor of British food and drink, has launched an online ordering site and reduced lead times on orders.

The new online ordering site will allow customers to order from the distributor's Best of British range of food and drink, which offers over 3,500 lines. Each item in the range is displayed with images and full product descriptions, and website users can search for products by producer name, category and locality.

Changes have also been made to the business's distribution service, reducing delivery times by 24 hours so retailers can order ambient, chilled and frozen ranges on a day-one-for-day-three basis.

Caoire Blakemore, commercial director at Blakemore Fine Foods said, "Reducing our delivery lead time has taken months of careful planning and consultation, but we are confident that this initiative will greatly improve our service for customers as they will be able to predict their order requirements far more accurately and Blakemore Fine Foods will be able to respond much faster to their requirements.

"Our new online ordering platform will considerably simplify the ordering process for our customers, offering them quick and easy access to our full range of fine foods 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The new system will benefit our producers too, raising the profile of their products and making them more visible and accessible to customers."

"Both the new online ordering system and reduced delivery lead times will help improve efficiencies, better serve customers and producers and enable us to carry on growing our business."

The new ordering site can be found here:
blakemorefinefoods.co.uk





FARMA: "The chancellor's decision has made many of our members wince"



Michael Mack of FARMA shares the co-operative's take on the treasury's latest legislation.

We have had a few days to contemplate the impact of the first Conservative budget for 19 years, and the decision by the chancellor to increase business costs for food, retail and hospitality businesses has made many of our members wince.

A new national living wage will be introduced of £9 per hour for people aged 25 and older by 2020. It will start at £7.20 per hour in April 2016, an 11% rise from the £6.70 National Minimum Wage in October 2015.

Sally Jackson, chair of FARMA and owner of Pink Pig Farm Shop in Lincolnshire said, "The rise in the minimum wage combined with the employers' pension contributions coming in to play, for us, next year will inevitably result in us weeding out the staff that are not our highest performers. My worry is that this move will result in more unemployment for the lowest paid and least educated. We will undoubtedly become a more commercial businesses, but at what cost?"

The Office for Budget Responsibility suggests that it will have a small impact on jobs – about 60,000. However, many businesses will be reviewing their staffing strategies and remuneration packages to ensure that the staff they employee are the most able and productive.

The starting point to developing a staffing strategy is to understand the costs and value of the staff. Last year FARMA launched their farm shop benchmarking programme, enabling members to compare performance in key areas such as staffing costs. The data captured has been helping businesses to identify areas where staffing costs are high and times of the year were cost needs to be better managed. Data is currently being collected for the second year of analysis, and over time we will be able to see the impact of these legislative changes on business performance, while also coaching the businesses through a period of business improvement.

John Sinclair of Craigie's Farm Shop in Edinburgh said, "The upside to legislation like this is that everyone will have to comply, so perhaps it will weed out the inefficient businesses and allow more room for the good operators to flourish. Scottish farmers are currently feeling the pain as legislation is not consistent across the country. The abolition of the English Wages Board has seen Scottish farmers having to compete on an uneven playing field as they battle with the Scottish Wages Board.

"Within our business, we have been discussing for the last couple of years how we could get ourselves up to being a 'Living Wage company'. We see this as a real opportunity to get our engaged staff onto a decent wage. Yes, there will be casualties along the way, as we will no longer be able to afford to keep staff just because they are nice people. I am confident that this piece of legislation will help build better teams which will in turn deliver better hospitality businesses, in turn attracting new talent.

"It is perhaps unfortunate that this has come at the same time that businesses are having to deal with auto enrolment, so if I could send one request to the Chancellor of the Exchequer it would be: have a look at the VAT rate, and give small business a bit of a helping hand through this period of change."







CHARLES CAMPION

"Do local rules apply?"

Year on year, our ongoing obsession with "local" foods is tested to the limit. The idea that responsible foodies should shop locally, and in tune with the seasons, is a good one, but rules are there to be broken. It's all got very complicated, and that's before you find out that our borders are shrinking. The climate is changing and farmers are finding they can grow many of the crops that once only came from mellow locations on the Continent.

In a recent piece I rather unwisely suggested that "when it comes to charcuterie you don't immediately think of Shropshire," only to receive a couple of rather cross notes from Shropshire charcutiers. The landscape of food and drink is changing. Now you can get a huge selection of decent chorizo and salamis which are not only made with high welfare pork, but British through and through.

This year the warmer weather has coincided with some fruit farmers cashing in on a brave decision to plant more stone fruit some years ago. At Bardesly Farms, Staplehurst, Kent they have seen a bumper crop of apricots. Not nuggety little fruit but 200 tons of large, rosy-blushed, juicy apricots. This fruit farm already works with the big supermarkets and British apricots have already been sighted in Tesco. Meanwhile, other fruit farmers have also had some success growing exotica like British kiwi fruit – there's a mixed parentage if ever there was one.

At Huggits Farm near Tenterden, Kent, they are already selling jars of British olives under their 'Olio of Oxney' brand, and this year the crop is shaping up well.

For a long while quinoa has been a bit of a puzzle – one of the main difficulties being how to pronounce the word ("keen wah" apparently). But this grain, which comes from a member of the goosefoot plant and whose true home is in the Andes, turns out to be perfectly happy guesting in East Anglia, where The British Quinoa Company has been increasing the crop year on year.

Just when you think that planting exotica in the balmy south east of England is all very well, spare a thought for food writer Christopher Trotter. Three years ago Trotter planted some vines in Fife in the hope of creating Scotland's first commercial vineyard – Chateau Largo. Despite using early ripening grape varieties like Solaris and Siegerrebe, his first cuvee wasn't a success. The wine was oxidised and he described it with a remarkably honest: "not great". Many a French vineyard could learn from this honest appraisal.

Whether we like it or not – and generally we do like a tad more sun – climate change and all manner of other changes are upon us, and the list of what we consider to be local and "our" foods is changing fast. Dish up a platter of charcuterie with a quinoa salad dressed with British olive oil, follow it with a luscious British apricot and, if you must, a glass of Scottish wine. Quite suddenly it seems that the sky is the limit and we can now eat foreign specialities with British provenance. Let's raise a glass to shrinking borders.



Buckley & Beale Launches British and Irish Range

Buckley & Beale, Gloucestershire-based distributor of gourmet foods, will be launching its new range of British and Irish foods at Speciality & Fine Food Fair in September.

Following a rigorous selection process, Buckley & Beale has put together a wide range of products covering each category sourced from the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Seven of these producers will be working alongside the distributor at its stall at the show – Blueberry Brothers, Ditty's, Suki Tea, The Tomato Stall, Eboni ac Eifori, Mara Seaweed, and Mrs Bennett's.

Adrian Beale, sales and marketing director of Buckley & Beale said, "By working much closer with our suppliers, we can ensure we are offering you high quality seasonal and year-round foods, with reliable fulfilment of orders – often at a lower price.

"Having owned a speciality food store ourselves, we understand the challenges faced on a daily basis. It's for this reason we have no minimum order, and we clearly label the products in our brochure and on our website for Gluten Free; Organic; Vegan; Nut Free; and Kosher, so you can easily find and order the products you want.

"We even show you what's 'In Stock', so when you order from that section you are guaranteed to receive your order in its entirety. We also keep samples of our entire range, so if you're holding a tasting event then let us know and we'll be happy to help.

"We also publish a regular email newsletter containing interviews with producers, seasonal recipes, offers, and expert advice on sales topics such as how to sample effectively, ensuring you maximise your time and effort."







ANTHONY AND SUE JOHNS ARE PRESENTED WITH THE RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD AT FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW 2015

EXHIBITORS GEAR UP FOR TOP SHOWS

Farm Shop & Deli Show 2016 and Food & Drink Expo 2016 open at the NEC in April, but entries for Farm Shop & Deli Awards are open now

The popular Farm Shop & Deli Awards, which recognise the highest standards in the UK's independent, artisan retail market, are now open for entries. The awards are organised in conjunction with founding partner Olives et Al. Chaired by the food and drink writer and broadcaster Nigel Barden, the judges look for those outlets which offer the highest levels of service, product knowledge, initiative, innovation and community involvement.

Farm Shop & Deli Awards offer entrants the chance to win by category or region, and the overall winner will walk off with the ultimate accolade, Retailer of the Year. This honour was awarded to Johns of Instow and Appledore in 2015 and Ardross Farm Shop in 2014. Even if an entrant doesn't win in its category, it is still possible for this entry to be a Regional Winner and vice-versa. The first stage of the judging process shortlists finalists for each category based on criteria including consumer feedback, business statistics, sustainability, people, training, involvement, products, suppliers and innovation. Consumers can vote online at the Awards website. Consumer voting ends on Saturday, 31st October, 2015. Following this, mystery visits will be made to all of the short-listed entrants throughout December, 2015.

Categories open to entrants are Baker, Butcher, Cheesemonger, Delicatessen, Farm Shop, Fishmonger, Food Hall, Greengrocer, Group, Market, Online Business and Village Store/Local Shop. Regions to be judged are East Anglia, Midlands, North East, North West, Northern Ireland, Scotland,

> "It's a good day out. You can see what's going on in the market and get new ideas"
>
> **CATHRYN EPTON, SAINSBURYS VISITOR TO FOOD & DRINK EXPO 2014**



EXPERTS IN ACTION AT THE BRAINFOOD FACTORY

> "There are some very focused, driven and talented food retailers in Britain, who deserve to be nourished and encouraged. It's marvellous that these awards can bring them to much wider attention. The British food and drink offer has never been better, as richly illustrated by the Farm Shop & Deli Awards"
>
> **NIGEL BARDEN, CHAIR OF JUDGES**

18th–20th April sees NEC Birmingham hosting four important shows organised by William Reed: Farm Shop & Deli Show, Food & Drink Expo, Foodex and National Convenience Show



South East, South West and Wales.

Finalists will be announced on Friday 5th February 2016 on the Farm Shop & Deli Awards website farmshopanddelishow.co.uk/awards. Category Winners, Regional Winners and the overall winner, the Retailer of the Year, will be announced at Farm Shop & Deli Show, NEC Birmingham, on Tuesday, 19th April, 2016.

The awards are an increasingly important aspect of the Farm Shop & Deli Show, which is the fastest-growing food and drink event in the UK. Last year's show featured 400 exhibitors, while visitor numbers were 40% up on 2014. Often cited as the independent food retailer's favourite show, Farm Shop & Deli Show has been attracting decision makers from farm shops, delicatessen, garden centres and speciality food halls since 2011. Also drawn to this conveniently-located event are the owners of artisan food outlets, online businesses, coffee shops and cafés, butcheries and bakeries.

Live Events

Farm Shop & Deli Show has a full schedule of events designed to offer focused advice and entertainment, too. Farm Shop & Deli Live is a theatre arena offering a packed programme of demonstrations, masterclasses, interactive debates and tastings, while Dragons' Pantry evaluates pitches from entrepreneurs with new product ideas. Great New Ideas is just that: visitors to the show are invited to vote for this year's most promising new products or services. Best New Idea of 2015 was awarded to Foraging Fox's Beetroot Ketchup.

Entries for the 2016 Awards must be completed online on www.farmshopanddelishow.co.uk/awards Closing date for entries is 17 September, 2015.

For more information on exhibiting and visiting visit farmshopanddelishow.co.uk and foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk

FOOD & DRINK EXPO 2016


PACKED AISLES AT FOOD & DRINK EXPO

Co-located with Farm Shop & Deli Show, Food & Drink Expo is Britain's largest food and drink trade event in 2016. Launched in 1994, demand for participation is exceptionally strong this year, with 60% of the available floorplan already sold. Among leading brands already booked to exhibit are Fentimans, Pidy, Food and Drink Wales, Delicioso, Erlenbacher, Lee Kum Kee and Petit Forester. Food & Drink Expo, which expects 700 suppliers and brands, offers visitors the opportunity to meet buyers and decision-makers from the UK grocery, wholesale, foodservice, manufacturing and speciality retail sector. The show attracts buyers representing both small and large wholesale and grocery operations from across the UK. In 2014, 31% of Food & Drink Expo visitors were key foodservice buyers from independent cafés, coffee shops, cost sector caterers, large restaurants and hotel chains. 18% of visitors were from the speciality sector, while 25% were from manufacturing.



Live Events

Exhibitors are invited to submit their most creative notions to Great New Idea and the winner is crowned Best New Idea at the end of the show. The Brain Food Factory seminar theatre offers masterclasses, interviews, panel debates and product demonstrations from some of the industry's key names. Market trends, research and issues affecting visitors' businesses are all explored here.

WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT

- Touch and taste hundreds of exciting new products
- Take advantage of exclusive show offers & discounts
- Gather valuable market info
- Identify trends
- Gain free business advice
- Build networks
- Forge strategic partnerships
- See free demonstrations and attend debates
- Network with associates
- Negotiate face-to-face and get tailored advice



GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL

"Feeding change into the metre"

Time's a wonderful thing. Constantly ticking away. The meter is always running. Like most businesses we've been through some changes over the years, none more so than in the last year, and the pace is ever quickening. There is an old English proverb that says, "Change is as good as a rest" – suggesting that you can get as much good from changing the work you do as from having a rest. Really? Surely the mantra is, "Change is the only constant."

I googled 'Managing Change' and got 398,000,000 pages, which is rather more than I bargained for. Conversely, the French have a slightly different view: "plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose" or "the more things change, the more things stay the same." Well, that's just being bloody-minded and typically French. And before you accuse me of being anti-French, I am, in fact, 1/8 French.

Now, Buddhists know a thing or two about change: in around 500 B.C. Hindu Prince Gautama Siddharta, founder of Buddhism, said, "Everything changes, nothing remains without change." So it seems best to think about change and how it affects us and our businesses.

Now, with all the books and web pages devoted to the subject, what can I add to the whole debate? Well, I'm not entirely sure, apart from giving you something to think about when faced with change so that you might try and approach it with a potentially different mindset. However, there's no way I can cover 398m Google pages in the five minutes it'll take you to read this so, to give some context, I thought I'd look at Births and Deaths. Fun, eh?

I found this: during the next five minutes, across the world, 1225 people will be born and 550 will die. Net gain: 675. In another 24 hours from the moment you read this, there will be 194,400 more people on the planet than there are now. In a week an extra 1.5 million, and this time next year an extra 71 million.

So what? Well, we mainly fall into two camps: optimists or pessimists, glass half full or glass half empty types, so some of you'll read that with dismay and some'll read it with hope. Most will probably be completely ambivalent (if, indeed, you're still reading). Some of you may also be realists. Personally, I'm an optimistically pessimistic realist so I'm perfectly aware my glass is now half empty but, as I've enjoyed the first half, I want another so I'm constantly looking to get it filled up again. That means I spend a lot of time looking for potential glass-filling opportunities, which brings me back to Births and Deaths...

With all those extra mouths on the planet, what an opportunity for us all – an ever-growing customer base for the goods we create, source and supply. How will you change to cope?



Meet the Makers Returns to Selfridges

Selfridges' Meet the Makers has returned to the store – from now until 31st October, the retailer will be showcasing 12 new undiscovered food and drink artisans.

During the campaign, consumers will be invited to discover the Makers' creations and stories in the store's Foodhall, restaurants and online. The Foodhall will play host to events including food tastings and cooking demonstrations, and the winning 'maker' – to be chosen by public vote – will receive a six month mentoring programme from the team at Selfridges, covering marketing and PR, branding, packaging and product development.

This year's makers are Newton & Pott, Ban Poitin, Beri Da, Eat Chic, Canesmith & Co, The Marshmallowist, Cheeky Food Co, Brock & Morten, Grubworkz, Mons Cheeses, Might Bee, Moral Fibre and The Chocolatier.

Nathan Herrmann, Selfridges food and restaurants director said, "We have invested the last six months searching for the next 'makers' for 2015, we hosted a number of meet the buyer sessions to narrow down and discover the new artisan talent we are celebrating this season.

"We were genuinely surprised by the passion and hard work these small brands have put into their products and we are proud to support them with the Meet the Makers platform in store. Our customers are always looking for the next big thing and we feel we have certainly achieved this with our final selection."





The Evolution of Ordering Stock

Shopping online is no longer the preserve of consumer shoppers, Cotswold Fayre has discovered — instead, buyers within the fine food industry are rapidly catching up with the trend.

A survey conducted by the distributor showed that six years ago 48 per cent of their customers didn't even visit their web page let alone place orders for stock, but now 70 per cent are regularly visiting the site.

Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of Cotswold Fayre said, "We have continued to invest heavily to ensure that our web shop keeps up with mainstream trends. The latest change was integrating the site with our main system so customers see 'live stock' online.

"Since the relaunch of the web-shop we have seen a huge increase in orders being placed online. In fact, the number of online orders we receive is now 25% of total orders every week, in comparison to 5% last year."

Alessandro Asara, store manager at Eat 17 and customer of Cotswold Fayre said, "I have been ordering from the Cotswold Fayre web shop for four months, and have moved completely away from placing telephone or email orders.

"The new site is easy to navigate and most importantly it saves a lot of time. Being able to see the products absolutely eliminates the possibility of me ordering the wrong product and the 'live stock' element means I do not have to wait for a member of staff to let me know what is in stock."

Seismic Change in Selling Food is Essential, says NFU

The UK's farming unions have told Government, the EU and the food industry that a sizeable change in the way food is sold is needed in order to avoid dire consequences for the farming industry and rural economy.

The four union presidents of the National Farmers Union, NFU Scotland, NFU Cymru and Ulster Farmers Union together with FFA, TFA, CLA and NFYFC, have issued a joint statement to retailers, processors and Government requesting that the warning signs that farming is in a state of emergency not be ignored.

Retailers: "Stop devaluing fresh British food like milk purely to get customers through the door. Start demonstrating right now how you are ensuring that ALL the food you are selling comes from a farm which has been paid a fair price. The British public has said time and time again that they want British food. Unless farmers' returns are sustainable and you promote British food and label it properly the future of our supply is at risk. If you can't demonstrate what you are doing for all food then we look to you to commit to changing."

Government: "We would urge farm ministers across the UK to meet urgently. They need to admit that something has gone fundamentally wrong in the supply chain and take remedial action. In general, voluntary codes are not delivering their intended purpose.

"Government also needs to urgently ensure that rules are put in place regarding labelling so it is clear which products are imported and which are British."

Tracklememts Revamps Range

The Wiltshire-based producer has created a new look for its range in order to better tell the story of its products to consumers.

The decision follows consumer research which the business carried out to find out what people thought of the Tracklements brand, how they buy and use condiments, and why they make the purchase decisions they do.

Tracklements found that consumers enjoyed its products and recognised their quality and innovation, but new purchasers were unable to gather from the branding what it was like as a business.



In order to get the message across that Tracklements products are made by hand in small batches, the company chose to rebrand the entire range with help from design company Big Fish.

The new look incorporates hand drawn illustrations and numbers to reflect the individual characters of each product in the range, and to demonstrate the size and versatility of the Tracklements offer – with the ultimate aim of encouraging consumers to be more adventurous, resulting in higher sales for retailers.

The new jars will be sent out at the beginning of September, and free point of sale will communicate the changeover to consumers.

Guy Tullberg, Tracklements MD says "We feel the redesign beautifully reflects Tracklements heritage whilst brilliantly portraying our future. These unique, characterful labels really echo the quality and distinctiveness of the products inside the jars."

Wow, a lot has been happening here at Sarunds HQ. We've been scouring the globe bringing you some new and exciting products, making sure our lorries get through operation stack, getting festive with pallet upon pallet of Christmas stock arriving into our warehouse and, believe it or not, beavering away finding products for our Easter, (yes Easter), brochures.

We're not at the Speciality Show this year simply because we've made a conscious effort to be proactive and get out and participate in smaller, more regional shows rather than expect you to just come to us. While the logistics has increased ten-fold, it's been really interesting seeing you all.

Here's a few highlights from our new general assortment that we think you'll love

BRAND NEW WEBSITE WWW.SARUNDS.CO.UK

Leonidas

The most prestigious Belgian chocolate brand have chosen us to launch a much sought after bar range, never before available in the general marketplace. You'll have a point of difference like no other, these will really excite your chocolate aficionados…



Confiserie Adam

Hidden in a fruity white chocolate shell, lined with luscious dark chocolate is a burst of real fruit that tangles your taste buds, simply delicious. Surely you can count it as one of your five a day?



Cachet

Longer standing customers will have fond memories of the Cachet range and, good news, it's back! It has come a long way since we last offered their products. The bars are stunning, come in almost every variety your customers might want and the chocolate speaks for itself. Fruity, flavoured, filled and origin bars as well as some chocolate selections, a style to suit every outlet.



Belinda Clark Mallows

Mallows with a twist. This product is so 'on trend' if it were human it would have a beard, tattoos and skinny jeans! The packaging is stunning, has great shelf appeal and most importantly, tastes amazing.



La Nouba

A brand new range for the UK. Some really eye catching packaging for this no added sugar range to match the great taste. No added sugar customers often get a short shrift on taste and variety but La Nouba have a range for all your customers (non) sweet tooth needs. An extensive range of bars, wafers, waffles, jams, and our personal favourites, mallows mean your no added sugar section can once again be the draw it deserves to be.





Belvas

Belvas are a truly ethical company – in 2011 they were awarded the Greenest European Micro Business. In everything they do they to strive to provide organic and Fairtrade products that are high in taste and stringently ethical. Their range has now extended to include organic, Fairtrade, non-alcoholic and gluten free so this range will satisfy the most discerning of customer. Make Belvas a staple of your 'free from' range without scrimping on quality.

Special Offer

Place an order for any lines from these ranges during September and mention 'SFF' to receive a 5% discount on them.

Call 01258 450200

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THE INTERVIEW

Tim Rowcliffe, chairman of an eponymous cheese empire and advocate of 'rolling with the punches', talks passion, positivity and promise

I hated Rowcliffe's when I worked here as a schoolboy, but when I returned later in life I fell in love with it and have been here ever since. When I left school I became a journalist – I worked as a reporter on a local evening newspaper for seven years, but became disenchanted with the profession when the National Union of Journalists became quite militant with the provincial press. That didn't sit right with me, so I moved to London and went freelance. At the time, my father, Anthony Rowcliffe, had been running his business for around 10 years and was getting to the stage where he was considering moving on and selling it. I decided that before he did, I would give it a go and see what I thought of it. Through this job, my father has given me a grounding in what cheese is all about and how to sell it; I'm lucky to work with such a wonderful product.

Rowcliffe's has always believed in buying the best possible example of every product, whatever it might be, and selling it at the right price. We don't trade on cheap prices – never have done, never will do. My father set the business up as a Continental cheese importer so originally it wasn't involved in British cheese; when we began to move in that direction we decided to apply the same values, and started by talking to people like Jamie Montgomery, Keens and Appleby's on the basis that they were the sorts of businesses we wanted to work with. The heart of our business lies in the very top end of quality cheese.

I believe that British cheese is the best in the world and that it's important our cheesemakers are supported, ultimately for the good of the British public. Randolph Hodgson, founder of The Specialist Cheesemakers' Association and Neals Yard Dairy, and I grew up in the cheese business together and hold a similar view. Getting involved with The Specialist Cheesemakers' Association seemed like a logical move for me – although I'm not a maker, I have spent a lot of time championing British cheese.

Personally, I'm steeped in tradition. I'm very much a basics guy – I love all the decent Farmhouse Cheddars, Appleby's Cheshire, Kirkham's Lancashire... All the classics! I'm also a big fan of Cornish Yarg and Wigmore. The cornerstone British cheeses, basically. Having said that, Rowcliffe's is very open-minded; I think anyone starting off in cheesemaking is pushing at an open door when they start talking to us. We help guide cheesemakers through their difficult early days and understand that they're going to struggle to make consistently excellent cheeses straight off the bat, so are happy to support them. We've just launched Baron Bigod Brie, a raw milk Brie from Suffolk which is a beautiful, well-made product, but it does come and go at the moment because it's early days for them. I love getting involved with something from the beginning – that way we can assist the cheesemaker to get somewhere very respectable.

The key to success in cheese is consistency – it changes from day to day and month to month, and has to be made meticulously and methodically. Some of the cheeses made in the UK today match anything you can buy on the Continent, but when I started out in the business over two decades ago I never thought I'd be able to say that. These days, you can put together an outstanding cheese board using only British-made cheeses, without the need for any from France or Italy because we've got it covered. There's no really good cheese made abroad which we haven't got an equally-delicious parallel for.

Because there's so much of it sold in this country, there's almost a predominant temptation to create something along the lines of a Cheddar. There are some great cheeses out there which are not called Cheddar but made to the same principles, and they will always find it tough to compete in the Cheddar arena. My recommendation to cheesemakers is to try something new. 15 or so years ago there was a massive emergence of additive cheeses in the UK – those with cranberry, or garlic and chive – and that changed the face of British cheese dramatically. We're a lot further down the road than we were a decade or so ago, what with UK-made Bries and Camemberts – look at Tunworth, for example. It's consistently exceedingly good, far better than any French Camembert I currently have in my warehouse.

I'm frightened that the future will bring more of the same in British cheese. I believe it's best to err on the side of innovation, as the makers of Cornish Yarg have done. Although, if truth be told, if someone had come to me before I had tried it and said they were going to wrap a cheese in nettles and call it the name of the creator back to front, I would have replied, "very nice... you're on your own, mate"! However, we were first to market it and it launched at IFE to great success. The simple reason being that it wasn't a gimmick, it was just an inventive idea which produced great results. That said, perhaps I'm not the guy with the crystal ball who can predict the future anyway, as I certainly wouldn't have backed Yarg if I hadn't have tasted it first!

> "There's no really good cheese made abroad which Britain hasn't got an equally-delicious parallel for"

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

THE SPECIALIST CHEESEMAKERS ASSOCIATION

I became chairman at a point when it was not in an enviable position, but thankfully we now have an Association which is not only robust in terms of its financial abilities, but is a terrific club for cheesemakers. It does great things, both technically and in terms of forwarding and developing really great cheeses

WHAT'S NEXT

It worries me that we're going to carry on down the same route we're on now (and succeeding brilliantly in): Continental-style cheeses. What I'd like to see is some Alpine-type cheeses – there are massive amounts of Gruyère and Comté sold in the UK, so it would be great to see a British take on them

MONEY MATTERS

As a company we're more or less recession-proof as people have decided that, in the name of saving a few pounds, instead of going out for a meal they'll treat themselves to a good cheese and bottle of wine at home. At the top end of the market, I'm not aware of any casualties – I don't think the recession had a big impact on our (tiny) sector. If you asked Dairy Crest or another industry behemoth they would probably have a very different answer!

MAKING IT WORK

There are two distinct types of people in this industry: those who see it as a lifestyle choice and an opportunity to kick back and enjoy a gearing down in their lives, and those who ingrain the job into their blood in order to make a really good fist of it. I don't think anyone could honestly say that you could viably take shortcuts in the fine food business. You have to prove absolute dedication and 24/7 attention to detail, so the former type of professional tends to not get very far. This is extremely rewarding but very hard work – it's not to be treated as a step away from the hurly burly of the city.

I don't want anyone working for me who's not happy and not enjoying themselves. You have to have fun in business; I must be getting that message across pretty well as people seem to stay with me for a long time! I get a huge amount of satisfaction from what I do. One of the biggest kicks I get is when I open up a new account with a deli or cheese shop, and another is when I get to flex my sales muscles. I was having coffee in a local café the other day when the local butcher came in. In the five minutes he was there I managed to sell him Clonakilty black and white pudding – I can't stop selling!

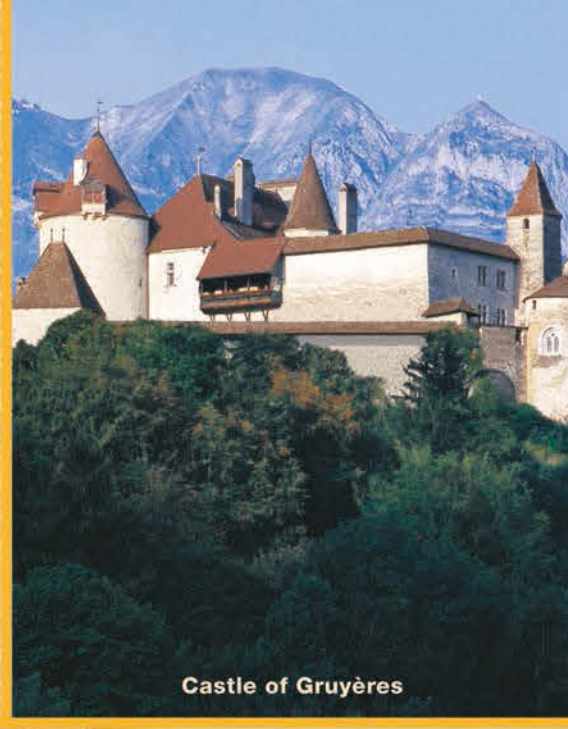
I'm delighted to say that my youngest daughter has joined the business, and I'm very much looking forward to helping her through the next three or four years, as my father did with me, in the hope that the third generation will continue to have as much fun with the business as I've had. Sometimes I wish I was 10 or 15 years younger as the business has so much to offer and is going from strength to strength. The future's looking very rosy! Rowcliffe's is a lovely business and I'm lucky to work with a great team of people.

You've got to learn to not take it all so seriously. There are going to be times when things go disastrously wrong as food is a very complicated commodity, but you've got to roll with the punches. The fine food and drink world has changed a lot since I've been in it – these days, everything's so serious. When something goes wrong, so long as it's not life threatening and won't drag your whole business down, accept it and carry on. You learn a lot more when things go wrong than when everything's going right, so forge ahead with a smile!

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*AOP = PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) – must be traditionally and entirely prepared and produced within the region, thus acquiring the unique properties of Gruyère AOP cheese, to bear the name Le Gruyère AOP.



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www.switzerland-cheese.com

An up-to-date look at the confectionery and chocolate industry



Creme d'Or Expands Happy Jackson Range

East Yorkshire-based confectionery supplier Creme d'Or has added biscuits to its Happy Jackson range, which launched earlier this year.

The new item in the collection, 'Woo-Hoo Biscuit Party!', is a tube of shortbread in distinctive, fun packaging with bright colours and witty phrases.

The current Happy Jackson range includes sharing bags of gummy sweets with quirky messages such as 'Jelly Baby Disco – watch them groove! YEAH!', boxes of chocolate covered mallows – 'Squidgy Chocolate HUGS!', chocolate bars and chocolate gift cards complete with posting bag for sending a caramel chocolate bar with fudge and mallow pieces to wish someone 'A Great Big HAPPY Birthday!'

David Watkins, managing director of Creme d'Or said, ''These delicious biscuits will be ideal for gifting – assuming customers can bear to part with them!'

Visitors to the Speciality & Fine Food Fair can view the entire Happy Jackson range at the Creme d'Or stand (3120).

cremedor.co.uk

UK's First Premium Honeycomb Bars



Mighty Fine Honeycomb have launched Britain's first luxury honeycomb bars, made using real honey and covered in a layer of chocolate.

The bars are available in four varieties: Milk Chocolate, Peanut Butter, Salted Caramel and Dark Chocolate.

The company donates 5 per cent of its profits to Friends of the Honeybee, a British Beekeepers Association campaign to build a better future for Britain's honeybees.

Kit Tomlinson, co-founder said, ''The Mighty Fine brand is all about quality, taste and innovation, and our Honeycomb Bars are truly unique on the market, offering a new opportunity to tap into the increasing demand for high quality artisanal sweet snacks and treats.''

Madécasse Launches New "Fair for Life" Bar

Bean-to-bar chocolate business Madécasse has added a Milk Chocolate Toasted Coconut bar to its range.

The bar has been handmade in Madagascar using organic heirloom cocoa varieties, and contains pieces of toasted Madagascan coconut.

The bar contains no artificial ingredients, additives or preservatives, and joins the rest of Madécasse's range: Salted Almond, Espresso Bean, Dark Chocolate Toasted Coconut and Sea Salt & Nibs.

Brett Beach, co-founder of Madécasse said, ''We're delighted to be extending our exciting range of ''Fair for Life'' bars. The new Milk Chocolate Toasted Coconut bar has a rich and tropical flavour and after the continued success of our Dark Chocolate Toasted Coconut line, we're positive it will become a favourite with consumers.''



First Healthy Milk Chocolate

MilQ, a bar of milk chocolate, has recently joined the range of bars from iQ Superfood Chocolate.

The award-winning iQ chocolate has been tipped as the only 'healthy' chocolate on the market, thanks to its validated health benefits and natural superfood credentials which have been approved by an expert in EU Food and Health legislation.

The range, created using quality ingredients, gentle processing and extensive research, now consists of milk chocolate, dark chocolate, cocoa nib, peppermint and various fruit flavoured bars.

Jane Shandley, co-founder and client services director said, ''We're really proud to be bringing never been done before chocolate bars to healthy chocolate lovers like us. We set out to create truly feel-good, delicious, guilt-free chocolate, and our new MilQ bar brings a new dimension to our range and provides a boost to the health benefits our bars have become renowned for.''

Choc on Choc Enters Sharing Market



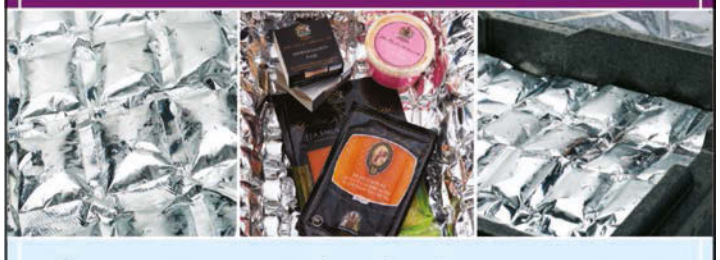
Artisan chocolate producer Choc on Choc has launched a new retail range: sharing packs of Chocolate Buttons.

Best known for its gifting items, the producer is now moving into sharing bags which are available via Cotswold Fayre and Foods of Europe.

The Chocolate Buttons line is available in four flavours: Milk Chocolate, Salted Caramel, Chocolate Orange and Raspberry Ripple.

Flo Broughton, founder of Choc on Choc said, ''The launch of the sharing packs is an exciting new direction for Choc on Choc. They are helping the business diversify and will provide the brand with product that taps into the booming premium sharing category, offering an exciting proposition for retailers looking to provide consumers with British-produced chocolate.

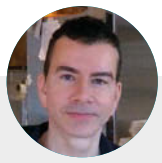
''Like all of Choc on Choc's products, they feature our signature offering of delicious British chocolate made into beautifully intricate designs. We believe that we have an exciting and unique offering and anticipate huge demand for the product.''

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PRIME CUTS

Derek Ferguson of Brentford's Hammond's talks us through the making of a successful butchers



Although in many ways we are a traditional butchers, we are always looking at new opportunities to expand our range of offerings and share it with as wide an audience as possible. We use social media quite extensively to reach as many existing and potential new customers as possible and also run a series of events in the shop which we try to make relevant to the local community. So, for example, we ran a Shetland tasting evening to celebrate the publication of local author Marian Armitage's cookbook, A Taste of Shetland; we brought down lamb, oatcakes, butter, beer, chutneys and a fiddle player from the Islands! Closer to home, we've also had an English sparkling wine event, an evening of English cheeses and a tasting event for our handmade St George sausages to celebrate St George's Day! We get to know all our suppliers personally and visit as many of them as possible so we really understand how the food is produced – transparency is vital to both us and our customers.

Provenance is of the utmost importance. We source the best products from the finest independent producers from across the UK and beyond. For example, our beef and lamb comes from Mey Selections in the Highlands, which was launched by Price Charles to foster close connections between farmers and consumers, our pork is from Suffolk's Blythburgh pigs, and Fosse Meadow Farm in Lutterworth supplies us with chickens (they came first in The Independent newspaper's taste test against other top producers). We also make our own sausages (16 varieties) and burgers on-site from only the best ingredients.

As a business, we are not scared to try new things. We have just taken our first delivery of 100% Wagyu beef from Scotland. It was the passionate ambition of husband and wife team Mohsin Altajir and Martine Chapman to produce the best beef in the world, so in 2011 they brought some of the most famous Wagyu beef sires over to their estate farm in Pershire with its rich and fertile grassland, and founded the Highland Wagyu company. As a result, we are able to introduce our customers to a new – although not inexpensive! – experience.

We provide only the best produce on the delicatessen side of the business, too, with an emphasis on produce from the UK. Our cheese counter includes a fantastic Tunworth which was Supreme Champion at the British Cheese Awards 2013, and an Isle of Wight Blue which won a Gold Medal at the World Cheese Awards. We stock sparkling wine from the Henners Estate in East Sussex and Rock Rose gin from the Dunnet Bay distillery in Caithness.

> "We believe in bringing provenance, quality, great service and new gastronomic opportunities to our customers"

Although we don't pretend to be a one-stop-shop like a supermarket, we do like to offer a targeted convenience. So we offer a fantastic range of sauces, marinades, seasonings and seasonal, local vegetables which are a natural accompaniment to our meat and poultry and a range. We've built up a good client list, and use email and social media to alert them to any promotions and seasonal meat offerings.

If you're new to setting up a butchery counter, ensure that your space can accommodate an entirely separate counter, butchers blocks, chillers and equipment. Remember, with a butchers/deli combination you will be selling raw meat alongside cooked products so it's vital that each space is treated as a separate entity with clear demarcations and barriers (where necessary) between each space. Let your local Environmental Health Officer know what you are planning to do while you are drawing up the plans so that they can advise. They can then make any recommendations on layout, materials, equipment and hygiene protocols, and alert you to any areas of potential concern. It's then less likely that there will be any nasty surprises after the fact.

Focus on quality and provenance, and know your product inside out. Research your potential suppliers – question them on the maturation process, wastage, shrinkage, how often they deliver, minimum orders and any 'hidden costs' such as delivery charges. Visit as many of the farms as possible and take photographs and request marketing material. A couple of well-appointed images in your shop is great shorthand in illustrating a real connection between your business and the farm as an organic or free-range source, particularly if your butcher is included in any of the shots!

Margins are tight so, if possible, make your own sausages, burger and marinades. We marinade our chicken and sell it with potatoes and vegetables as ready meals. Recipe ideas, cooking instructions and really knowledgeable butchers are also vital. Remember, it's about making cooking with meat as easy and accessible for your customers as possible.

When it comes to staffing, communication and training are key. Ensure your staff are given plenty of knowledge so they can offer great customer service. Our staff are all given barista training, wine training and cheese training. Ensure that training is ongoing and that staff on the deli side can upsell the butchers' produce and that the butchers have a good knowledge deli offerings. Make sure that all cleaning schedules, HACCP information, risk assessments, and the staff handbook are not only read and understood but that in an easily accessible place for reference, and that you have rigorous rules and risk assessments in place to cover all eventualities.





AHDB SEASONAL SPECIALS



The AHDB Beef & Lamb trade marketing team works to help improve the effectiveness of businesses throughout the supply chain, focusing on the key areas of new product development, marketing and promotion. Here, Mike Richardson, independent retail sector manager for the organisation, highlights some of the latest new product development initiatives which have added variety and profit opportunity to beef and lamb ranges.

Much of the development work we undertake at AHDB Beef & Lamb is focused on maximising the value of the carcase. We do this by developing different butchery techniques across the carcase to produce a range of added value beef and lamb cuts. As well as adding variety and interest to existing ranges, alternative beef and lamb cuts present farm shops with a wealth of profit opportunities.



BARBECUE BEEF FAJITAS WITH CHILLI BEANS

Thin Cuts

Our latest new product range is a collection of thin cut beef steaks. The Thin Cuts range provides customers with an everyday, versatile, value-for-money meal solution that is not only quick and simple to cook, but also a pleasure to eat. The thin cut steaks can be used as part of a wide range of meal solutions in dishes such as fajitas, stir-fries and sandwiches.

It is important to get the butchery right for thin cut steaks in order to create a consistent quality product. The steaks must be fully denuded, with all fat and gristle removed, and cut to a thickness of no more than 5mm.

Mini Roasts

Market research is showing a decline in sales of larger roasting joints. To help farm shops innovate their roast ranges, we developed The Carvery collection of beef and lamb mini roasting joints, which are targeted at the dining-for-two market and smaller families who do not want a traditional large roasting joint. The mini roasts are easy to prepare, require a reduced cooking time and are versatile enough to be used as part of a variety of meal solutions on any day of the week.

Adding interest and variety to ranges is a fantastic way to encourage repeat custom, and it is just as important to offer beef and lamb of consistent quality. Sourcing beef and lamb through our Quality Standard Mark (QSM) Scheme enables farm shops to confidently share guarantees on eating quality and consistency, such as succulence and tenderness, alongside assurances on animal welfare and provenance.



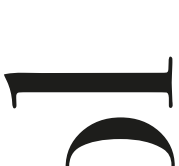
LAMB MINI ROAST: RUMP PORTION (BONELESS) CODE: LEG L030

@qsm_beeflamb
QSMBeefandLamb

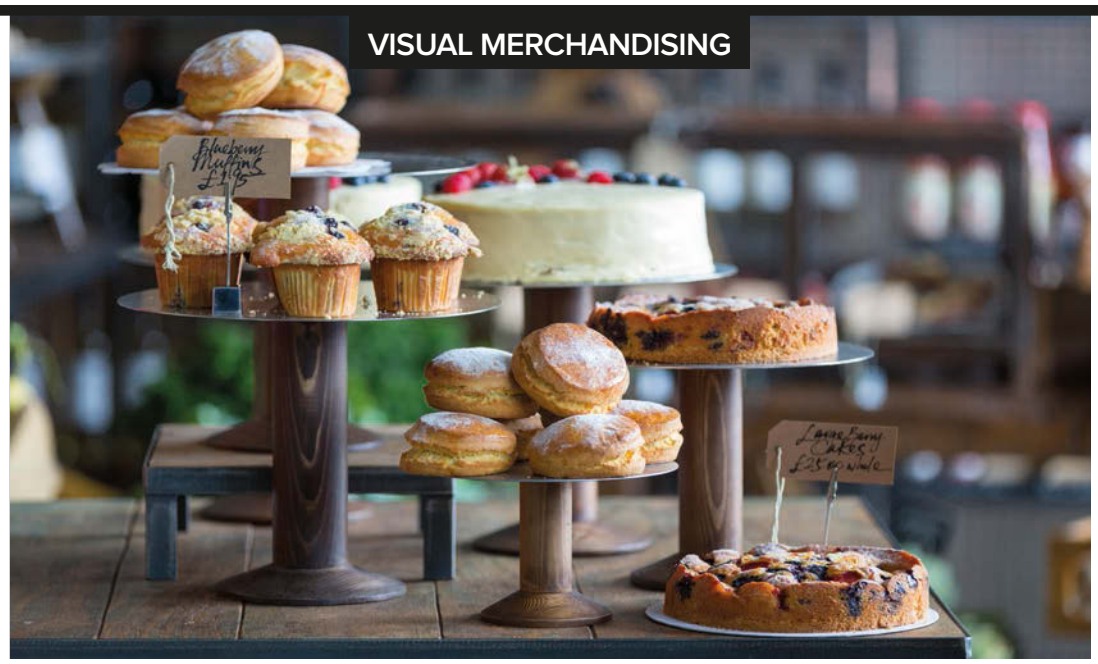
To find out more about our new product development initiatives, cutting specifications, marketing and merchandising support and for details about our QSM Scheme, visit qsmbeefandlamb.co.uk

AHDB Beef & Lamb is the organisation for beef and lamb levy payers in England and is a division of the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)

Retail School



Get your tills ringing with help from Eve Reid, visual retail specialist at Metamorphosis



The term 'merchandising' is used to describe any activity that contributes to the sale of products to the consumer, while 'visual merchandising' is the art of promoting sales through effective product placement.

In the days of 'are you being served', visual merchandising was known as 'display'. Due to extensive research into customer behaviour and buying patterns, 'display' (the art of making a store look pretty) has evolved into something much more powerful. It now combines the creative art of display with customer insight and commercial know-how, to attract, engage and motivate the customer to make a purchase.
If it doesn't sell, it is not visual merchandising!

It impacts not only upon specific product displays, but also upon the whole customer experience to ensure that each and every product is presented with impact and authority.

There's increasing competition within the retail sector both on the high street and online. With store concepts getting ever more innovative (i.e. new retail models, unique concept stores and amazing pop-ups), our customers' expectations are on the rise. Today's consumers are looking for a fabulous experience, and to provide that experience retailers need to excel in visual merchandising.

Good salesmanship alone will no longer cut it – 76% of UK shoppers never speak to a sales assistant when shopping. As consumers, we are increasingly being taught to shop for ourselves and rely on product displays to guide our purchases.

Understanding customer behaviour

In order to be able to sell products effectively, we need to remember that we are human first and shoppers second. Even as consumers, our actions are governed by our natural behaviours. What makes us feel comfortable, what we find attractive, how we navigate and how we take in information are all elements that play a huge part in how we shop.

Retailers have to be aware that there are behaviours which will be specific to their own customers. This is something that you can only discover by having keen powers of observation and by noticing particular shopping patterns.

The power of impulse

As independent retailers, we need not only to be making it easy for customers to find what they are looking for, but in order to be commercial we need to inspire them to buy products on impulse.

While it can be difficult to persuade planned purchasers to deviate from their primary purpose (any hard selling can often backfire and loose potential customers) this shows how powerful visual merchandising can be.

If 50% of retail purchases are unplanned there is a big opportunity to generate impulse sales through the use of visual merchandising.

This is where visual merchandising really comes into play, combining commercial savvy with creativity in order to actively 'push' these products.

Seasonal displays

Seasonal displays are high impact displays used to 'push' seasonal products within your windows and key focal point fixtures in high footfall areas of the sales floor.

Seasonal window displays should be fabulous, full of drama and theatre, and designed to tempt and inspire the customer. You may want to use seasonal messages and props to build upon your display.

Within the store you can create seasonal vignettes or cross merchandised displays in key focal point areas that allow customers to instantly recognise the seasonal products.

Cross merchandising

Cross merchandising is when you pull products together within a lifestyle setting or theme to enable customers to visualise the products in an aspirational sense.

It's great for mid-floor seasonal or themed displays positioned at the entrance to the store or department, as it allows you to pull together different products (sometimes from different areas of the store) under a common theme or story.

> "Remember: I will only buy what I feel I need; unless you show me something I can't live without"

WORKSHOPS 2015-16

Metamorphosis's Retail School workshops take place at WBC's London headquarters. Book a date at theretailschool.co.uk

9th September 2015
COMMERCIAL SKILLS: Bringing finance to the forefront of your mind

23th September 2015
DESIGNING A STORE THAT WORKS: Space planning your retail store

7th October 2015
WINNING WINDOWS: Taking your windows to the next level

21st October 2015
GETTING SOCIAL: Tweeting, poking and posting for pounds

11th November 2015
DRESSING FOR SUCCESS: The art of visual merchandising

10th February 2016
DEVELOPING A VISION OF GREATNESS: Time out to decide where you really want to go

24th February 2016
COMMERCIAL SKILLS: Bringing finance to the forefront of your mind

9th March 2016
GETTING SOCIAL: Tweeting, poking and posting for pounds

30th March 2016
WINNING WINDOWS: Taking your windows to the next level

20th April 2016
SILENT SELLING: The art of visual merchandising

Hero-ing a product

'Hero-ing a product' is a way of actively 'pushing' a new product line or building customer awareness of an existing unknown product by creating a display dedicated to telling the story of that single element.

The featured element becomes the hero of the display, so all graphics and props are designed to emphasise its features and benefits and tell the story of the product.

You need to clearly communicate to your customers what the offer or product is, what it does and most importantly, how it will benefit them.



[wbc]

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BAGS FOR LIFE





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STORE SIGNAGE & TICKETING

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

Ten Acre Expands Offering



The premium snack brand has extended its range to include sharing bags and four new flavours.

As well as two new hand-cooked crisp flavours: Pastrami in the Rye and When the Pepper Crack'd, and two new premium popcorn flavours: Lucia Popperley's Cappuccino and Cousin Penelope's Strawberry & Cream, Ten Acre is launching 135g sharing bags of all 10 flavours to cater for fans of its 40g bags.

In line with the "Free From Plus" credentials of the rest of the British-made range, the new flavours are gluten, dairy and MSG-free, as well as vegan, halal and kosher.

Ten Acre was recently awarded multiple Great Taste Awards after entering the competition for the first time this year: Ambrose Popperley's Wasabi Popcorn won two stars, while Aunty Winifred's Sweet & Salty Popcorn, The Day Sweet & Sour Became Friends crisps and When Hickory Got BBQ'd crisps collected one star each.

The brand will be on Stand 1311 at Speciality & Fine Food Fair.

Tony Goodman, CEO at Yumsh Snacks said, "Packed with flavour and personality, Ten Acre is the perfect choice for retailers looking for great tasting, premium quality snacks that will stand out on their shelves.

"We are passionate about flavour innovation at Ten Acre House. This is reflected in our four new varieties of popcorn and crisps. Unique and quirky, they are also gluten, dairy and MSG free as well as vegan, halal and kosher. Our customers have also been asking for more, and so we will now be launching 135g sharing bags of Ten Acre crisps. This was an important next step for us as the Big Night In market continues to grow.

"These additions all further enhance our offering to both retailers, who need only stock one brand – and consumers looking for sensibly priced premium snacks which taste amazing. To top it all off, we were thrilled to have scooped a total of four winners from our first entry into the prestigious Great Taste Awards."

tenacrecrisps.co.uk



New Tg Green Teas Launch in the UK

Inspired by ancient wellness traditions in the Middle Kingdom and designed in Britain, a new range of hot and iced green tea blends has launched in the UK.

Designed to take consumers back to where the tea culture started more than 4,000 years ago, Tg Green Teas are available in three varieties; Green Tea, Green Tea with Ginger & Lemon, and Green Tea with Jujube & Osmanthus – two of which have recently won gold Great Taste Awards.

In each box, 15 pyramid bags are hand-packed into resealable non-transparent stand-up pouches that help to keep this green tea at its best.

Sophia Nadur, co-founder said, "Our mission is to get more Britons enjoying green tea every day. We travelled to an organic tea plantation near the mystical Dao Ren peak in Eastern China for a special green tea packed full of goodness but with a delicate, slightly fruity taste tea drinkers will love.

"The delicious fruit and botanical inclusions – some borrowed, some new – have all been used for centuries for good health and vitality. Drinkup to a smart and sassy range."

drinktg.com



Keen Expands Nut Butter Range

Keen Nutrition, a Northern Irish producer of nut butters and spreads, has launched four new products for Autumn.

The brand's range will now include Almond Chai, Brazil Coconut with Dark Chocolate, Almond Pecan & Maple and Cashew Maple Toasted Praline as well the as the original flavours of Almond Vanilla, Almond Chocolate, Hazelnut Cinnamon, Macadamia White Chocolate and Maple Pecan.

All products in the range are produced using only natural ingredients and no added sugar, salt or oil, and are produced, jarred and labelled by hand.

Aimee Beimers, founder of Keen Nutrition said, "The fact that we do everything by hand and don't use any unnatural or unhealthy ingredients means a much better-tasting spread. When we say that we sell Almond Vanilla butter, that is



what we sell. We don't use vanilla extract, we use vanilla pods.

"The new range for autumn is the outcome of discussions with retailers and existing customers on different flavours. We are operating in a fast moving sector which demands new taste experiences and we invest a considerable amount of time and other resources on developing new products on a regular basis."



Wild at Heart Unveils Wild Garlic Pesto

Wild at Heart, a Kent-based producer of pestos, jellies and preserves has added a new Wild Garlic Pesto to its range.

Made using freshly-picked wild garlic leaves, ground cashew nuts, lemon juice, rapeseed oil, a vegetarian hard cheese and salt, this pesto works well stirred into pasta, as an accompaniment to fish and served with canapes.

Caro Wilson, co-founder of Wild at Heart said, "We have achieved a breakthrough to making the most of wild garlic's distinctive flavour. Gone are the lingering harsh notes!"
wildatheartfoods.co

Meridian Sea Releases Seaweed Tartar With Lemon Confit

Seaweed Tartar with Lemon Confit has been added to the Bord Bord range of seaweed tartars supplied by Meridian Sea.

The product comes fresh chilled in a colourful 110g jar, and is also available in 1kg tubs for decanting over the deli counter and for restaurant use.

Seaweed Tartar with Lemon Confit is 100 per cent vegetarian, with all ingredients certified organic. Fresh seaweed (sea lettuce, dulse, wakame and sea spaghetti) is marinated and seasoned with extra virgin olive oil, lemon confit, cider vinegar, onions and salt, making a fully vegetarian and organic accompaniment to fish and canapes.

Nigel Vogwill, MD of Meridian Sea



said, "In October Meridian Sea will be launching a tasting/promotion pack, including free samples of the seaweed tartar along with recipe sheets and tasting spoons. Retailers can also buy four cases (6 x 110g jars) with a 15 per cent discount and get another six jars free of charge."
meridian-sea.com

Jaz & Jul's Boosts Single-origin Sales

Award-winning independent drinking chocolate producer Jaz & Jul's has launched a new retail range of Origin chocolate drinks.

The range of three dark hot chocolates – Madagascar (61 per cent), Brazil (70 per cent) and Peru (75 per cent) – is made using cacao from different regions to produce distinctive flavours.

The new range is produced in London using organic dark chocolate which has been ethically-sourced from small producers.

Juliet Sampson, co-founder said, "From the very beginning we've always wanted to provide not only the most indulgent hot chocolate, but also know the full journey of the cocoa beans so customers can trust the quality and ethics of the products.



"All the farmers working with our small producers are paid above fair-trade standards, with the chocolate delivered to the UK as directly as possible."

Jasmine Kershaw, co-founder said, "We've had a fantastic response to our Origin mixtures by independent coffee shops who are keen to offer their customers an extraordinary dark hot chocolate, so we are delighted to now introduce our new retail range for chocolate purists to enjoy at home too!"
jazandjuls.co.uk

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PREVIEW: **lunch!**

Make a date with lunch! 2015

lunch! – the multi-award winning trade event for the UK's £6.9bn food-to-go market, is back for 2015 with its biggest edition yet.

Returning to the Business Design Centre in London on 24th–25th September, this year's lunch! will feature an unprecedented 350 exhibiting companies (a 25% increase for 2015) showcasing everything from fresh ingredients, coffee, cakes and pastries to artisan breads, gourmet oils, juices and smoothies, plus all the latest specialist equipment, packaging, disposables and catering technology.

They'll be joined by over 6,500 key buyers and decision makers from many of the country's biggest food-to-go operators, including multiples, contract caterers, wholesalers, distributors, delis, food halls, cafés, coffee shops and sandwich shops.

What's new for 2015?

The show's new area on the Upper Feature Level at the Business Design Centre will be home to the Innovation Challenge Showcase, new Artisan Ingredients Village, and new Menu Innovation Theatre (sponsored by Magrini). It will host the popular live finals of the annual British Smoothie Championships (also sponsored by Magrini), the Innovation Challenge Live (where participating exhibitors pitch their new product ideas and innovations to a panel of industry judges), the Café Life Awards' heats, and an exciting new series of coffee, tea, juice and sandwich master classes. Over 60 companies will also be exhibiting in this new area, including New York Bakery Co, Euro Food Brands, James White Drinks, Yoplait UK, Gino Gelato, Goodness Brands, George Skoulikas, TM Electronics, Two Chicks, Food Stories, Stript Snacks, Scott Farms International, Savvy Foods, White Rabbit Pizza, Emily Fruit Crisps, Eden Bakery and Pullins Bakers.



Country Choice, Foster Refrigerator, Tetley, Twinings, Lucozade Ribena Suntory, The Exploding Bakery, Candy Kittens, Water Within (Antrim Hills), Mallow & Marsh, Blue Cap Coffee, and TAPPED organic birch water are just some of the other new companies preparing to make their lunch! debut.

Lincoln & York, Walkers Shortbread, Oli & Zoe's Food Co, Joe & Seph's Gourmet Popcorn, Devonvale Bakery and 'unch Brand, Pulsin', Pidy, Tg Green Teas, Marston Foods, Tanpopo Japanese Food, Beliès – Pietercil Group, Proper Pudding, Cakesmiths, Tideford Organic Foods, Tri-Star Packaging, Planglow, Packnwood UK, Roller Grill UK, WMF United Kingdom and The IMC Group are all preparing to introduce new launches at the show.

Meanwhile, returning exhibitors include Salty Dog Brands, Tyrrells Potato Chips, Cawston Press, Coca Cola, Whitworths – Healthier Snacking, Southover Foods Co, Lick Frozen Yoghurt, Farsan, Mom's Fabulous Foods, Timmy's Pies, Kavis, Little Cherry, Klikin UK, Taylors of Harrogate, UCC Coffee and Unilever (Tea Fusion).

For further information and to register free in advance, visit lunchshow.co.uk (and quote priority code SP3 where prompted).

WORKING lunch! THEATRE HIGHLIGHTS

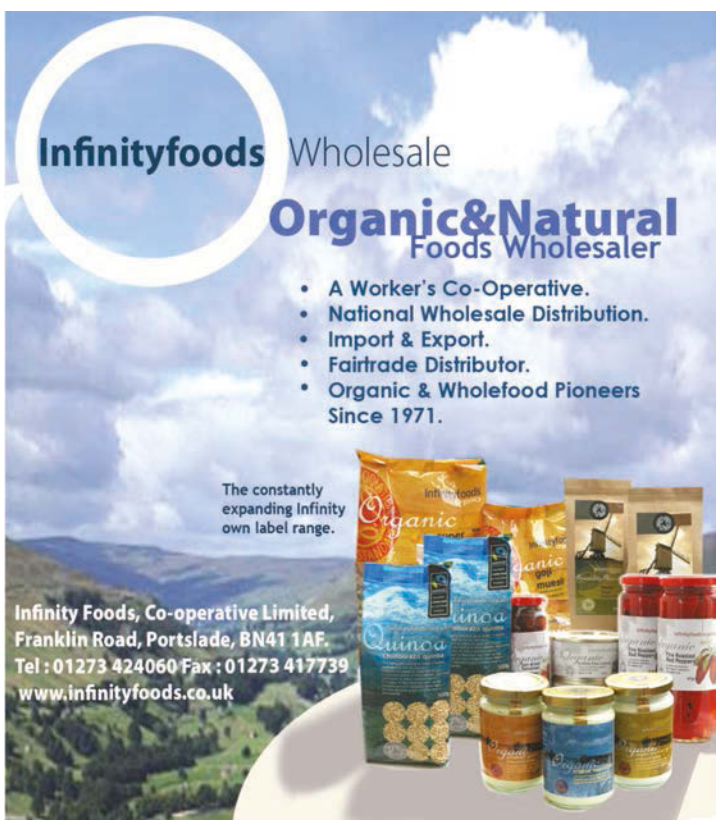
The Working lunch! Theatre is renowned for attracting a host of high-profile brands and industry leaders, and this year is certainly no exception. The confirmed line-up includes industry insights from Horizons and The NPD Group, plus exclusive sessions from:

Guy Meakin – trading manager for food on the move at Marks & Spencer
Helen Higgins – food ambassador at EAT.
Paul Ettinger – development director at Caffé Nero
Roger Whiteside – CEO of Greggs (Q&A)
Sandy Anderson – senior buyer, food at Elior

IN DETAIL

WHERE: Business Design Centre, Islington, London
WHEN: Thursday & Friday, 24–25 September
WEBSITE: lunchshow.co.uk
TWITTER: @lunchexhibition #lunch15

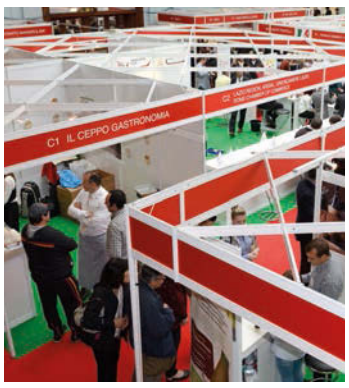
> "With food-to-go going from strength to strength, it is great to be able to come to a show with this at its core. I would recommend anyone involved in this sector to make a date with lunch! 2015"
>
> **RED KITCHING, CATEGORY BUYING MANAGER AT ARAMARK**





PREVIEW: WELCOME ITALIA 2015

This ear's Welcome Italia show promises to bring together even more Italian producers with British retailers and consumers



Would you like the chance to indulge yourself in a unique experience full of Italian aromas and flavours at an event which brings together quality, passion and sustainability? Are you interested in meeting Italian suppliers and producers at a dedicated trade and B2B day?

Then Welcome Italia, the official event for the promotion of Italian culinary tradition and tourism, is the show for you. At Welcome Italia buyers looking for new, quality food and drink in the run-up to Christmas will have the opportunity to meet over 60 exhibitors from all over Italy and taste the many regional specialities on offer.

The trade day opens with the Italian Hospitality Awards, which recognises those establishments which have stood out in promoting the image of the Italian restaurant outside Italy, ones which guarantee a high standard of Italian hospitality as well as exquisite Italian gastronomic culture.

Buyers will be invited to attend cookery shows run by Academia Barilla, and hosted by famous chefs such as Francesco Mazzei, Guglielmo Arnulfo and Danilo Cortellini. Buyers can also attend seminars about the culture of healthy food.

This renowned trade fair, which is mainly dedicated to trade specialists who are keen to meet new businesses, also extends a big welcome to all food lovers who wish to discover and explore the best of Italian food and beverages. At this show, the excellence of Italian cuisine meets Italian culinary tourism under one roof.

The first day of the fair (25th September) will be a trade-only day, while the remaining days (26th-27th September) will be open for direct sales to consumers. Last year's show was a great success, attracting more than 300 selected buyers and 3,000 visitors. It was a great opportunity for trade specialists from various distribution channels, such as HORECA, delicatessen, and leading food retailers, to meet over 60 exhibitors from all over Italy, taste the many regional specialities, and identify new products to be introduced to the UK market.

This year's Welcome Italia is certain to be an even bigger success thanks to the patronage of Expo Milano 2015 and the official sponsorship from famous Italian and worldwide brands such as Barilla UK, Fiat Motor Village Marylebone, Alessi, Electrolux, Federazione Italiana Chef UK (F.I.C.), Ferrarelle and Zafferano.

HOW TO REGISTER & TICKET PRICES

With some of the best Italian cheeses, extra virgin olive oils, pastries, wines, liqueurs and so much more on show, Welcome Italia is an event which buyers really cannot afford to miss. A visit on the trade-only day, Friday 25th September is a must.
Register now for your complimentary trade ticket at **welcome-italia.co.uk**.

IN DETAIL

WELCOME ITALIA 2015
WHERE: Royal Horticultural Halls, The Lindley Hall, Elverton Street, London SW1P 2QW
WHEN: TRADE DAY: Friday 25th September 1pm - 5.30pm
CONSUMER DAYS: Saturday 26th 10.30am - 7pm, Sunday 27th September 10.00 am - 5pm.
WEBSITE: welcome-italia.co.uk
CONTACT: 020 7495 8191
EMAIL: lrizza@italchamind.org.uk
fdellafiore@italchamind.org.uk
BY CAR: Elverton St is located just north of Vincent Square, Victoria
BY RAIL/UNDERGROUND: Victoria; Victoria and Pimlico

WHAT'S NEW AT WELCOME ITALIA 2015



Barilla
Barilla is the world's leading pasta producer, making around one million tonnes a year and exporting to over 100 countries. Barilla is an official sponsor of Welcome Italia and its chefs will perform cooking shows on the trade-only day (25th September).



Chamber of Commerce of Perugia
Several companies from Perugia will present the most typical and traditional products of their region, and promote culinary and sustainable tourism in their territory. The main products presented by these companies are chocolate, honey, beer, cereals, and, of course, wine.

Il Rovere
This company specialises in the production of packaging, baskets and gift boxes. Il Rovere provides stylish and robust packaging in gold/silver foil, which ensures the integrity of the gift during delivery and boxes are hand-sewn, using exclusive fabrics, lined with velvet and decorated with fine ribbons and elegant floral hangings.

Polenghi
Polenghi has built a reputation for itself as the 'lemon specialist'. This modern, innovative and technologically-advanced company is committed to continuous developments and improving quality across a wide range of products.



Valbona
This long-established, Veneto-based food company will be presenting a wide range of typical Italian sauces, pestos and patés in brine, oil, vinegar, sweet and sour and oil free variants. As Valbona's slogan proclaims, the company is committed to preserving fresh Italian food and to using only the finest raw materials.



La Casa del Tartufo
La Casa del Tartufo selects only high-quality truffles, which are gathered with care, attention and respect for the environment. Show visitors will have the chance to taste this savoury and delicate food in many delicious varieties, from fresh truffles to sauces and also in dressings.



ONLINE SIDELINE

Selling through your own online shop can be a lucrative sideline, says Jerome Smail

Over the last two decades, e-commerce has revolutionised every area of the retail industry. You can buy just about anything online – including, of course, all kinds of speciality food and drink.

There are many advantages to selling online – the most obvious being the potential to reach a much larger number of customers. But although benefits are clear, the unique challenges and complexities of food and beverage e-commerce can seem prohibitive to small, independent operators. But many have successfully expanded their business through online trade. So what can be learnt from their example?







ONLINE EXPERTS

Julia Medforth and James Staal offer their advice to specialist food shops looking to sell online.

What's the most important advice you could give to a small food business looking to expand into online trade?

Julia Medforth: Don't try and do everything yourself. Speak to an expert and take advice on setting up the retail website.

Justin Staal: Do your research – the internet can be an intimidating place at first, but it also opens up a number of great opportunities. You'll probably need the help of an expert to get you going, so make sure you take in all the advice they offer.

What are the biggest pitfalls to avoid?

Julia Medforth: Disappointing a customer by not communicating adequately about your product. Be clear about size, packaging and content. Try to avoid misleading food photography – think about what you are showing coming as part of a package.

Justin Staal: Not being contactable. If a customer has a query about a product, they want a reply that day – not three days later. It's all about building up a trust online – as long as you're as active and helpful as possible, customers will be happy to come back and shop with you.

What needs to be in place before you can start selling online?

Julia Medforth: An online payment scheme, like PayPal. Again, talk to an expert for advice on this. PayPal is very popular though.

Justin Staal: You'll need to have a plan of the kind of image you want your website to portray. This can be done through the colour scheme, the images you use and how you're going to market yourself. It's good to do your research on your competitors too.

What are the important aspects to consider as far as customer service is concerned?

Julia Medforth: Clear, prompt delivery dates (ideally next day) and well-packaged products. We sell fruit liqueurs and spirits, so packaging is key.

Justin Staal: Keeping the customer updated. Due to the nature of our business, we want to give our customers the freshest product possible and that often means dispatching up to six days after the order. As long as you let the customer know at the time of their order, they're more than likely going to be fine with it.

What's the best way to promote the online side of the business?

Julia Medforth: We use Facebook and Twitter, and work with a great food PR agency who help to promote this too.

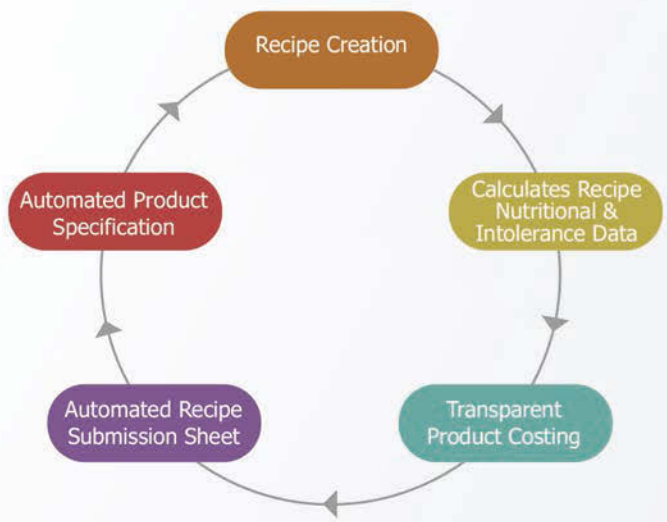
Justin Staal: Social media, definitely. It's basically free advertising, and it's a great way to keep in touch with clients. Make sure you use it properly though – your online presence represents you as a brand.



Sauce up your product launch process

TECHNICAL PURCHASING INVENTORY OPERATIONS SALES ACCOUNTS

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- Real time nutritional and intolerance calculations
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"Very few ERP systems are designed to automate and simplify the Technical and New Product Development departments."

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THE RIGHT SYSTEM

Giles Henschel: "don't keep everything in-house"

Olives Et Al was launched in 1992 when Annie and Giles Henschel began producing marinated olives using recipes inspired by their travels through the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa. They started the online business nine years later, offering the olives, nuts, sauces, snacks, dressings and gifts which remain the core of their internet sales today.

"Data collection and the retention of customers has been a major challenge," says Giles. "We've limited customer information to the essentials and make sure we regularly clean up our database to get rid of dead wood. It's also important to find the right system for your e-commerce – we've embraced Magento.

"The fast pace of digital marketing has necessitated working closely with the right agency to stay ahead of the game. It's a mistake to try and keep everything in-house – we learnt early on the importance of outsourcing our server and data storage to a professional supplier."

So what are the logistics and equipment necessary to run a successful online business? Olives Et Al has a warehouse with a dedicated team working exclusively on mail order and online sales. This includes packing products ready for collection by FedEx.

"The online side of the business takes up around 30-40% of our time," Giles says, "but there are tremendous advantages, including helping our trade during slow months. Our internet presence has meant the brand awareness has extended well beyond our heartland in the South West of the UK. It gives us a regular point of communication with our customers and allows them great flexibility when ordering."



ADDED FUNCTIONALITY

Angus Ferguson: "meticulous planning"

Demijohn was founded ten years ago by Angus Ferguson and his wife Frances, who wanted to set up the world's first liquid deli. The first e-commerce operation was set up in November 2004, mainly as a result of strong customer demand. Various website upgrades over the years resulted in strong sales growth. However, by late 2012, increasing online competition and software developments meant greater investment was going to be needed to continue the online sales growth. Finally, in April 2013, after over a year of planning and development, the Demijohn website was transformed into a more sophisticated e-commerce site.

In the liquid delis, customers are encouraged to taste before buying, which inevitably leads to them learning about the products. This is obviously not possible for online sales, so detailed tasting notes are provided. "Meticulous planning and development work were needed to successfully create the site. It is crucial to choose the right web development company who can work with you throughout a project and is also prepared to support you in the longer term to resolve issues."

Commenting on the resources necessary in offering an online service, Angus says, "Only the most basic of equipment is needed for processing small volumes of mail order, so there is no need to rush out and buy expensive items until you are up and running and understand what you really need. Most companies will have a computer and printer that can be used for labelling boxes, and a tape gun can be bought for pennies."

Fresh thinking

One of the biggest challenges in selling food online is getting the orders to the customers in tiptop condition. There are packaging products that allow the optimum temperature to be maintained during transit. One such innovation is the Sorba Freeze refrigerant gel pad.

Sorba Freeze (sorba-freeze.com) managing director Colin Brown explained: "The refrigerant pads give the producer the confidence that the temperature they have the food packed at will be almost the same temperature when it arrives at the customer. So it gives them the reassurance there won't be much of a temperature uplift in the 24 or possibly 48 hours that it takes to get it from the producer to the end user. "Used in conjunction with other packaging, the use of Sorba Freeze refrigerant pads means there shouldn't be more than one or two degrees of an uplift over a period of 24 to 36 hours."



Is your business safe and SALSA?

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SALSA has become the food safety certification scheme of choice for small and micro-sized food and drink businesses in the UK. SALSA provides producers – and their buyers – with the confidence and assurance that all appropriate food safety and legality systems are in place in their business.

The only membership-based scheme of its kind, SALSA offers a strong, integrated support structure to help small producers gain approval to supply the UK's buying community.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Open to food and drink producers based in the UK
- Businesses must be producing or packing a product in the UK
- Businesses must operate from a dedicated commercial kitchen or unit
- Available to small and micro- sized businesses
- Wide range of membership resources and guidance materials
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Large UK buyers including ASDA, Waitrose, Elior, Sainsburys, Ocado and organisations such as the NHS have already welcomed SALSA and are part of our growing list of over 700 buyers. With over 800 of its current 1100 members already with approval, SALSA is designed to be both achievable and affordable offering different packages to suit the needs of members.

'Our SALSA mentor's advice was invaluable; he provided clear, concise advice and help that was entirely appropriate for our type of business.'
Andre Dang, Manfood, Herts

'The food labelling workshop was very well structured with good handouts and information on the regulations. Trainers were outstanding and very informative - I feel much more confident about labelling.'
Haide Malik, Plamil Foods, Kent

NEW for 2015! Launched on 30th June, the SALSA *plus* Beer audit has been developed to support the growing sector of small and micro-breweries. This unique audit is already proving a popular option with existing and new members who have just come aboard.

'SALSA plus Beer has made our business operations more efficient and effective, giving customers confidence in the quality and consistency of our product.'
Lesley Foulkes, Langham Brewery, Sussex



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THE GREAT **SUGAR** DEBATE

Low sugar, no sugar, sugar alternatives... The food and drink world is rife with contention about the white stuff, as Daisy Phillipson discovers

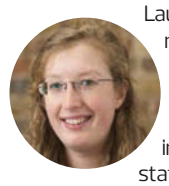
It's been difficult to ignore the media bombardment surrounding sugar over the last year. "Sugar as the new tobacco", "consume no more than 12 teaspoons per day" and "sugar is ruining our health" have been just some of the headlines to support the ongoing campaign.

While this issue has been open to discussion for many years, in 2014 a media storm cloud big enough to grab the attention of nearly half of UK consumers resulted in a plea from medical associations and governmental bodies to tax the sweetener by 20% in a bid to reduce consumption.

Yet has this coverage inspired change? While it has been recommended by the World Health Organisation that adults cut their sugar intake to just 10% of their total energy intake, have these statistics affected public spending?

Despite the increasing trepidation over sugar and related health issues, UK sales have remained relatively flat. In 2009 the UK population purchased 8.5 billion litres of soft drinks (including carbonates, juice and bottled water). In 2014 these figures were up to 8.7 billion. In terms of confectionery, value sales have also increased. The findings of 'Confectionery', a recent study from Key Note, showed that while sugar has replaced saturated fats as the key health concern in the UK, total value sales of confectionery rose by 2.1% last year. These statistics hardly support the mood implied from the great debate, begging the questions: what affect has it had, and how does this relate to the premium food market?

Artisan vs. mainstream



Lauren Bandy, senior nutrition analyst at Euromonitor International, provided insight into the research, stating that while there has not been a mass of consumers switching from full sugar to low calorie consumption overall, there are specific sectors that are perhaps being favoured as a result of the sugar debate.

Certainly there seems to be an opinion that artisanal products contain less sugar than the mainstream alternatives. "If you take something like chocolate, for example, dark chocolate is where the more premium products are doing quite well. Dark chocolate sales in the UK are now the strongest of all types of chocolate. I think part of the reason is because we are generally seeing a trend towards more high end products. When consumers are buying chocolate they are looking for indulgence regardless if it has contains sugar or not, although dark chocolate actually contains a lot less sugar than milk chocolate. I think that dark chocolate and artisanal



products are going to continue to do well, as they have that healthier edge,'' says Lauren. In this case, the sugar debate could inadvertently push confectionery and drink consumers into the arms of artisanal manufacturers due to the products having a healthier image.

Going natural



Despite sugar becoming a major topic of discussion in 2014, people remain very wary of artificial sweeteners. According to Emma Clifford, senior food analyst at Mintel, half of the British population is concerned about artificial sweeteners in food and non-alcoholic drinks, while 44% see these ingredients as being bad for them.

''Our study found that over a third of consumers would like to see more food products that use naturally-sourced sweeteners such as stevia,'' says Emma, ''and 55% of people deem products that are high in natural sugars to still be healthy. The conversation about the dangers that eating too much sugar can pose to health rolled on in the media throughout 2014, making many people more vigilant about this ingredient in their diet.'' 'Naturalness' appears to have become almost synonymous with good health and elicits trust from consumers, while people tend to be cautious of anything artificial.

Davina Whiteoak, founder of Get Fruity, suggests that low sugar or naturally sweetened products like Get Fruity bars have had a positive increase in production and supply because of the high demand for this type of snacks.

''Consumers tend to trust premium products because of the naturalness of the ingredients. The sugar debate has forced consumers to think about what they are putting into their bodies. People are confused by artificial sweeteners, which initiated a move towards a more natural way of eating. Our products, for example, are sweetened only by real fruit and fruit juices,'' says Davina.

In general, speciality and fine food manufacturers tend to use not only natural sugars but natural ingredients in their products, meaning the consumer may begin to trust these items more than their mainstream counterparts.

''In terms of fine food retailers, in general, products that use natural ingredients such as agave syrup, monk fruit and stevia are on the rise,'' says Lauren from Euromonitor.

Other natural sugar replacements that have been around for years have seen a sudden increase in demand, and ingredients such as monk fruit and maltitol have recently gained appeal. For example, Bruce Cost Ginger Ale has been updated and sweetened with a combination of pure cane sugar and monk fruit. Another example is Koochikoo's no sugar cookies, which are sweetened with monk fruit. Artisan du Chocolat has innovated with truffles containing maltitol as its main source of sweetness. The list goes on.

Simply stevia

Certainly it seems this trend is being gaining momentum, and the debate seems to have pushed some replacements into the mainstream. Last year Coca Cola launched Coca Cola Life, a carbonated drink containing 30% less sugar and sweetened with stevia. In the same year, Wrigley rolled out its first ever stevia-sweetened product, Extra Professional Mints, which contain stevia rebaundiana.

According to Lauren at Euromonitor, while stevia has been around for a while, these releases have been influenced by the sugar debate. ''I don't know whether the decision was made by the bigger brands because of the sugar debate or because of the demand from consumers for lower sugar products, but either way it has had an influence. Something like stevia becomes much more widely accepted when these big brands start using it,'' she added.

Last year saw a wide range of stevia-sweetened products in the speciality food market. Few could shy away from the launches, with Balance creating a range of chocolate products sweetened with stevia extract and maltitol, Cavalier releasing chocolate containing stevia as its only sweetener, and Lily's stevia-sweetened chocolate also contributing to the offer.

Fad or fact?

The question is, are these natural replacements a sturdy replacement for traditional sugar in the fine food market, and will consumers continue to demand low-sugar products as the debate goes on?



Not everyone agrees that ingredients such as stevia and maltitol are the future of sugary premium products. Gabriel David, founder and managing director of Luscombe Drinks, explains that the real evil is derived from high fructose corn syrup which can be found in cheaper products. According to Gabriel, in general premium products are lower in sugar and as an example, Luscombe drinks have considerably less cane sugar than most.



The public's attitude is largely swaying away from artificial sweeteners, something which has been occurring in the fine food market for years. Pev Manners, managing director at Belvoir Fruit Farms, explains that, ''sugar is a natural product, which is easily digested and very pleasant. I just think people should exercise moderation and not consume too much, in food or in drink. Belvoir Fruit Farms is aware that some consumers are looking for less sugar, and so we introduced a 'Light' premium adult drink with the Belvoir Elderflower Pressé Light, which uses no artificial sweetener and has 30% less sugar.''

Here to stay

Synonymously, the general mood in the market is that artificial sweeteners carry little consumer confidence, particularly in the fine food industry. Euromonitor predicts that ''clean label'' ingredients will continue to grow in prominence, and that ''natural'' is a key trend driving speciality ingredients.

Retailers who have invested in products with natural sweeteners should stick to their guns. There are exciting times ahead, with the use of stevia in food and drink alone forecasted by Leatherhead Food Research to jump to $275 million USD by 2017.

So, is Lauren from Euromonitor optimistic about the future of natural sweeteners? ''People will continue looking for healthier and more natural alternatives, in particular speciality food retailers who cater to a niche group of customers. These alternatives have been around for a long time, and they will continue to grow as the debate carries on.''

GUILT AISLES

Late 2013 saw the launch of a campaign called June Free Checkouts, aimed to force supermarkets to eliminate selling sweets at the tills and curb customers making unhealthy impulse buys.

Tesco and Lidl initiated the movement in 2014, replacing sweets and chocolate with healthier choices. But is this change being made in speciality food retailers? Could we soon be seeing locally-grown apples instead of artisan truffles at the till?

While there has been no nationwide announcement of such a movement, Lauren at Euromonitor says, ''Speciality retailers have a ot more healthier food products in general, and in some cases this has already been happening. Overall I think this is a good step forward. I think that speciality food shops should consider doing something similar, and that this is certainly something that could happen in the near future.''

FROM THE RETAILER...

Lady Hamilton, marketing manager at Apley Farm Shop, Shropshire

Do you think that the sugar debate has done a favour for artisan food?
I think it has in a way. I also think it's reaching the people who don't need it most. The people who are going to be buying lower sugar premium products and getting the right messages are the ones who can afford to and want to buy artisan foods, which is why we are working with local associations to promote healthy eating to our surrounding areas.

Have you seen a shift in sales since the sugar debate began?
I haven't seen a change in our sales since the sugar debate began; I think the people that come to our shop are already looking for healthier foods. What is interesting, though, is that in our play barn I tried to sell dried fruit and nuts in place of the sweets as we were seeing a slight decline in sales. However, they just didn't sell so we have gone back to sweets.

Do you think independents could learn from supermarkets' checkout 'guilt aisles'?
I would say we are already doing that. The bottom line is economics and whether products sell. I think that farm shops always have less space than the supermarkets, and I would say that a few might have already been forming 'guilt aisles' due to the small size of their shop.



HOW TO ADD A **CAFÉ OR RESTAURANT** SUCCESSFULY

Thinking of improving your premises with a café or restaurant? Read this before you do.



CLEAR SIGNAGE SELLS FOOD

One of the first considerations for many people setting up a deli or a farm shop (or thinking about extending same) is whether or not to include a café or restaurant. It's an attractive idea. We live in an age saturated by coffee, and installing a good coffee machine might help you to tap into that culture. A café helps your business become something of a destination, a place where people can sit down and refresh themselves before browsing your shelves and perhaps buying the ingredients of the food they have just eaten. It can allow you to make use of outside areas and offer alfresco dining as an attraction. Cafés and retail sides work hand-in-hand, too. Cafés should be pointing out that their ingredients are readily available in the shop, while the shop should be making customers aware that the food they see upon the shelves can be tasted in the café.

They can make money from food in the shop that is approaching its use-by date. Cafés also encourage people to stay longer, but whether this is always a good thing is a moot point. Not everyone who lingers longer spends more money. It should be borne in mind too that not everyone thinks that installing a café or restaurant is a good idea.

Nikki Storarr runs Ardross Farm Shop in Fife, winner of the Farm Shop & Deli Retailer of the Year award in 2014. It's an attractive business in an attractive location, just the place, you might think, which would feature a café or restaurant. But for the present at least, Ardross sees this as a distraction from its main purpose. "From what I have heard," Nikki says, "if you add a café to your shop, it changes the profile and spend of your customers. Many of our friends who have added cafés have seen their average spend go down and sales of gift products increase. I've heard you seem to lose your everyday shoppers and attract more 'ladies who lunch'. Overall, however, I think that turnover does increase, but sales move in a different direction. I guess it really depends on what you want from your business. We very much need to sell the products we produce on the farm, and for that we need people who do their everyday shopping with us. We don't have a café and this is purely what I've picked up from friends in the business!" Alison Parks of Low Sizergh farm shop in Cumbria says


ALLOW SPACE FOR MOVEMENT

that when it comes to deciding whether or not to put in a refreshment area, "it's hard to generalise. It's very much dependent on your location and your customer base. Having some insight into the meaning and value of that is essential."

These factors and matters of staffing increase and rotas are all aspects to be given your consideration if you are weighing up the pros and cons of adding a café yourself. If you have decided that this is indeed the way you want to go, then people who are already running cafés successfully have plenty of advice for you. Katie Taylor is the proprietor of the award-winning Drewton's Farm Shop in East Yorkshire. "If you are thinking in terms of setting up a café or restaurant," Katie says, "have a good look around



at what others are doing, and the systems they have in place. See how big their menu is, what prices they are charging, and how many staff are in place. Judge the quality of the offering and service, and shop around for the necessary equipment. Take the advice of the EHO and employ the right people! You need to consider your target audience and whether this requires table service or self-service – overheads are considerably different!" Once this is established, it's time to think menus, ones which will suit the sort of customers you attract. The menu should be created, Katie says, only after "negotiating with suppliers and looking at the costings and the margins you feel are appropriate, not forgetting that VAT is likely to be included too!" Another consideration, she says, will be deciding on the crockery "for the presentation you require, whilst taking into account kitchen space and chef time/overheads."

The Creamery Café at Apley Farm Shop serves "hot and cold drinks, cakes and snacks all day," Lady Harriet Hamilton says. "Lunch is very good value, high quality, and very well presented – more what you'd expect in a restaurant than a café. Afternoon teas are served, and in the courtyard we barbecue using our own beef from the Apley Estate and other meat from local suppliers. In summer we have summer drinks menus and in winter, there is the opportunity for breakfasts and teas with Santa. Great coffee is vital."

"Do your research," says Tom Newey, operations director of Cobbs Farm Shop and Kitchen in Berkshire. "What else exists locally? Is it working for them, and if so, what are the winning ingredients? Or are people locally crying out for something else? Do some research. You can do a lot worse than be directed by your customer! Once you know what you want, you need to be confident in your budgets and projections. Don't even think about starting on a project (or promising your loyal customers a brand new café!) before you have looked at all the costs associated with getting it set up and establishing the business."

Gauge the competition, says Lady Harriet Hamilton, whose Creamery Café, which opened in 2011, provides refreshment for visitors to the farm shop on the Apley Estate in Shropshire. "How much competition is there, how far away is it, and are they already offering what you are thinking of? Are their products and prices similar to those in your plan? Find out into which socio-economic groups does your local population fall and if they want what you're proposing. At Apley, the café provides another reason to come to the site."


UTILISE OUTSIDE SPACE

> "Don't even think about starting on a project or promising your loyal customers a brand new café before you have looked at all the costs associated with getting it set up and establishing the business"

Essential equipment

Certain outlays and investments will be unavoidable. Under the heading of essential equipment, Katie Taylor says, will be a "fully equipped kitchen to suit the menu offering, with commercial ovens for speed of service. It is advisable to work with the EHO (Environmental Health Officer) when setting out a kitchen and café, to ensure correct flow to meet food safety and health and safety requirements and legislations. A commercial oven would appear to be an indulgence, but is definitely a worthy investment when catering for large numbers and to speed up processes."

In Tom Newey's opinion, the sort of equipment you buy "really will depend on the depth of offer you choose to have, but for a basic café, you'll need a decent coffee machine with the right coffee. Get this wrong at your peril. It's best to take professional advice here, and your choice of model will come down to many factors. There are pros and cons to owning coffee machines outright or going for a lease options with a coffee bean supplier, which again will depend on your unique situation. You'll need a decent set, plus spare, of matching crockery (unless you're going for that vintage cobbled together look). You'll need display space and stands for cakes and other sweets, and decent menus and/or menu boards that have been thought through and well written. If you're just looking to do light lunches, then you can probably get away with not much more kit than some serviceable commercial fridges, plenty of worktop space for prep, a soup urn, panini grill and commercial microwave (microwaves don't have to be dirty words and can perform really useful functions during a busy service period). You don't necessarily need to spend mortgage amounts on a state of the art kitchen, but that will depend on the complexity of your menu and offer. A fully fitted commercial kitchen with extraction will require significant investment." A luxury, he says, would be "a pass-through dishwasher. They are costly and tend to have a habit of breaking down frequently, but are well worth acquiring."

There is, as you might imagine, a certain amount of red tape to deal with and hoops to jump through. "You will typically need A3 planning consent for the area you intend to operate a café out of," says Tom. "Sometimes, and usually depending on the size, this can be avoided by arguing that the café is incidental to the main operation of the shop business. If in doubt, take professional advice or speak to your local planning department. Sadly, with the generally rural nature of our businesses, planning can cause enormous heartache and shouldn't be underestimated." In order to estimate what special training is required, your staff "need to understand your vision of how you see the café operating," Tom says. "There are a variety of ways to operate the business, but whatever method you employ needs to be clearly communicated to all staff members. You should have a few dress rehearsals prior to a formal opening with staff, friends and anyone else you can find. The chefs (if relevant) should take time to cook off the entire menu. Turn this into a fun evening where waiting staff can enjoy the food coming out and start to build some passion into the dishes. They will be your salespeople!"

Planning consent

"Planning consent is dependent on factors such as your buildings and location," says Katie. "Extraction is required for commercial kitchens, and efficient utility supplies must be put in place with fire safety aspects taken into account. Working with the EHO, you will be advised to follow strict guidelines and employ and train staff to certain qualifications, including yourself as the owner. For example, you would be required to have Food Safety in Catering, Health & Safety in the Workplace, First Aid, HACCP and Alcohol Licensing for the premises and the individual, if necessary. You would have to be fully trained and aware of any allergens in each dish on the menu."

A well-designed layout which draws people from the retail area and allows them to circulate freely in the café area is to be desired. When it comes to the layout, Katie says, "every building and space is different, so I can only speak from my own experience. Sensibly-sized tables and chairs should be considered for utilising the available space, correct lighting to create the right atmosphere and ambience, and clear signage should be in place, both to direct customers to the café and also,






DINERS CAN BE SHOP CUSTOMERS TOO

to the toilets.'' And fire exits, of course. According to Tom, ''it's important to ensure a sensible commercial use of the space, in terms efficient layout of tables to ensure maximum covers, and also to avoid a feeling of customers being on top of one another. Waiters and waitresses need easy access to all parts of the room as well as good visibility from the servery area to all covers. If you're thinking of evening dining, then having dimmers on the lights is a worthwhile investment. Signage should be in pre-agreed positions, not random, and also well-maintained. There is nothing worse than a tatty-looking chalk-board or poorly laminated poster!''

It is often said that one of the advantages of having a cafe on site is the prevention of food wastage. ''When there's a café as part of a food retail shop, there is no excuse for wastage!'' Katie says. ''The chefs are capable of utilising all ingredients and can make anything from soups, pies and stews to ingredients which are passing their best. It doesn't take much imagination! Promoting your own in-house baked products, own butchers meat and products from local producers on the menu is a way of cross-selling between departments. Correctly trained staff will talk to the customers and promote the links between the two and customers can see the producer names when reading the dishes on the menu. If the menu isn't so detailed then you could include a list of your producers, showcasing where the foods and drink are coming from.''

Additional spend

But for others, such as Tom Newey, the idea that a café can prevent food wastage on a turnover-affecting scale is ''a bit of a myth. There is no mistaking the benefit of having the café on hand to try to ''upcycle'' short dated foods or product that is going-over. In reality, this can prove tricky, especially when asking the chef to come up with something when presented with a melon, four tomatoes and a jacket potato. Wastage can be largely used up, but there is no magic wand that will ever see wastage at zero per cent, sadly,or not that I've yet found!'' Making farm shop and cafe work in harmony, Tom says, ''is all about using both areas to play off one another. If you have an in-house produced range of products, then of course you'd be stupid not to try and feature them on any menu in the café. These can be highlighted in both areas at point of sale, which again just reinforces that message to the customer. We always ensure customers have to enter and leave the café through the shop, hoping to grab that additional spend on the way out.''

In Katie's opinion, the most important things to get right when setting up a refreshment area are: ''delivering good, efficient customer service, quality produce, interesting and creative dishes, and following the practices and procedures required. Studying the trends and sales via an EPOS system, and changing the menu to suit the season and seasonal produce available.'' For Tom, the three most crucial aspects a café owner must get right, he says, are ''customer service, customer service and customer service!''

Another consideration is offering foods with strong provenance. ''For us,'' Katie says, ''it is very important as our ethos is all about local, traceability and supporting our local producers, growers and farmers. We need to support them to keep artisan traditions going, to keep local families in business. We do not have the buying power of the supermarkets but their interests lie with volume and not necessarily supporting British, let alone local.

People are more aware of what they are eating and where their foods are coming from, and learning that it is not necessary to be importing so many foods and drinks which we have on our doorstep.'' Tom Newey agrees. ''For farm shops, this should be part of their overall site ethos and, where possible, provenance should be reinforced throughout the menu. You have to also be realistic commercially and find the balance between profit and vanity.''

Staff costs

Running a cafe or restaurant is not a piece of cake. ''Cafés are not easy beasts to crack,'' says Tom, ''and no-one should be fooled by thinking it's an easy road to take. Good preparation is key, but also a willingness to adapt if after you open you find customers wanting for things that you've missed. You will inevitably find yourself suffering from seasonal spikes and dips in the business, and with that, pressures on cash flow as well as staffing. Your team is vital and trying to keep some continuity and consistency is well worthwhile but also incredibly difficult, with many staff tending to be younger and others who see it as a fill-in job rather than a career. Staff costs will also be one of your biggest challenges and inevitably, running a daytime only operation (without high-value meals or huge alcohol sales) does mean staff costs as a percentage of sales tend to be higher than in other food service businesses. That's not to say it can't work, but this is an area that needs constant management. Margins also need close attention, and weekly stock takes will help identify and resolve any issues before it' too late.''

Tom has been a recent convert to the importance of offering good coffee. ''My catering ops manager and I disagreed on this initially, but I have since been convinced by his arguments that good quality coffee is important to success of the wider offer. My personal feeling is that whilst I (now) agree it is vital to the offer's success, I also believe people think they know more about coffee than they perhaps do and we can get a little caught up weighing one artisan roaster up against another.''

As a parting thought, Tom offers this advice: ''do your research thoroughly and be absolute confident in your numbers before finding out too late. It could be a costly exercise otherwise.''

MOST POPULAR MENU ITEMS

Drewton's
Yorkshire breakfast, handmade steak pie with vegetables, afternoon tea, club sandwich

Cobbs Farm Shop and Kitchen
Hungerford: beer battered fish & chips.
Other sites: 'Porky Platter'





MEET THE BUYER

A new cheese shop on the Essex border offers a new experience for customers of Leigh's Fine Cheeses and Pies



It opened in March this year, but The Cheese Barn at Baythorne Hall on the Essex/Suffolk border rests on a solid foundation of cheese knowledge and 20 years of cheese-selling experience. That's how long owner Leigh Doy has been selling cheese, either from Essex-based shops or in farmers and general markets in the South Eastern Counties. His latest venture, a cheese-based deli which complements the company's ongoing presence in markets, forms part of a development which, Leigh says, is set to become a foodie destination.

The Cheese Barn is located at Baythorne End and is starting to enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the wine shop and cookery school already on-site in converted farm buildings. A long driveway funnels traffic from the A1017 Cambridge road towards easy parking and the shop itself, which was converted from an old barn. The refurbishment of the barn offers the look of "an old-fashioned Victorian shop." and features "a long flint wall, a stone floor and exposed beams." Pine shelves and straw a complete the artisanal effect.

Visitors are greeted by the sights and smells of "over 150 cheeses, not just in the counter but on the back wall, too. We have many unusual cheeses that you just don't see in this country," Leigh says. The shop's British cheeses include Sparkenhoe Red Leicester, Keens and Montgomery's Cheddars, and some "unusual artisan farmhouse cheeses." A recent addition is Wodehill's range of fresh and semi-soft cheeses from Bedfordshire.

The company (Leigh's Fine Cheeses and Pies) is strong on Continental cheeses and stocks a large variety of Italian, Lithuanian, Croatian, French, Dutch, Belgian, and Spanish cheeses. "One of our best sellers is a Dutch truffle cheese, and we have customers coming to our markets specifically for that. Paski Sir from Croatia is a fantastic cheese." When it comes to Eastern European cheeses, Leigh says, "a lot of people are unaware of just how many amazing cheeses come from those countries."

"There is a huge difference between what sells well in the market and what sells well in the shop. In the shop, it's the really unusual cheeses that people are looking for. They see us as a cheese shop who can supply something different." There is, Leigh says, "a very much more sophisticated market at the shop."

Different flavours

Maturing cheese is an important aspect of The Cheese Barn's activities. "When you mature cheese, you change its character, so it becomes a different cheese. You can improve the taste of the cheese or change it so that it is no longer recognisable as a particular cheese. There are different stages



at which you can choose to sell your matured cheese." These, he says, offer different flavours from the same product. "We have had a cooling system put in which keeps the room at the right temperature."

Leigh has seen customers' tastes in cheese changing over the years. Customers, he says, "have moved away from the processed, mass-produced cheeses, though there is still an element of this, and are rediscovering the sorts of cheeses which would have been available years ago. When they taste a proper farmhouse-rinded Cheddar and compare that to a block Cheddar, they realise just how different it can really be."

Provenance, of course, is now a concern for some customers. "The easiest way of communicating that is to say that the dairies making these cheeses are very passionate about what they do, and therefore they are producing it to the highest standards. We don't always go into that much detail, but you do get the odd customer who does want to know exactly how that cheese is produced, and we can answer that question." Another way in which information is imparted is through clear labelling of the cheeses. "All our cheeses are labelled," Leigh says, "firstly with the name and the cost. We then include a small tasting note and the flag of the country of origin. If people just want British cheeses, they can then instantly finds what they want. Underneath that, we state whether it is cow's milk, vegetarian rennet, pasteurised etc. Our labels are simple to read and give the customer all the information they may need."

Complementing the Cheese Barn's cheese offering is a wide range of charcuterie. "Charcuterie has always been part of our business, along with the pies." The shop also sells a small selection of olives, chutneys and "unusual crackers." High-quality pasta is imported from Italy. However, Leigh says, "90% of our turnover is cheese."

Leigh has been in food since leaving school. In 1999, the family opened three delis specialising in cheese in Maldon, Essex, Chelmsford and Braintree. The artisan cheese revolution of the 1990s "pushed us in the direction of seeking out really unusual cheeses." Leigh's Fine Cheeses and Pies then began to develop business in farmers markets and then general markets such as that at Bury St Edmunds. "It's very difficult to take an income from a shop that you can survive on, certainly in the early days. If you have other strings to your bow, such as our market business, then it gets easier."

To sell cheese successfully, Leigh says, "you've got to be able to answer customers' questions. You also need an interesting environment for them to walk into. You need a large variety of cheeses of all types, and you must engage with the customers and make them feel like they don't have to spend a lot. Some customers can go a little too high on their spend and that can make them feel uncomfortable."





HOW TO MAKE IT IN THE DEN

Want to crack the fine food and drink business? Here's how



Jane Milton has nearly 30 years of experience within the British food and drink market, from product development to connecting business with the people who will help them realise their potential.

WHAT ARE THE CORNERSTONES TO A SUCCESSFUL FOOD AND DRINK BUSINESS?
It's key to listen to your customer, both your immediate customer who you sell to and the end consumer – if you supply what they want you will always be successful. Stay ahead of trends.

In the food industry things can change quickly – ingredients can lose favour or swiftly become very much in demand. Have a clear plan for the business but be flexible if other opportunities present themselves. Strong accounting procedures – it is imperative to have a good idea of costs and cash flow at all times. A good business structure so that as you grow, you can bring in more people with clearly defined roles.

WHAT ARE THE THREE MAIN PITFALLS TO AVOID WHEN STARTING OUT IN THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY?
Recognize what you know and where the gaps in your knowledge are, and budget to bring in expertise. Do not produce anything until you have firm orders in the pipeline, otherwise your product is just losing shelf life while you set things up, and be sure your product meets a genuine need and has a unique proposition, and won't just end up competing on price with established products.

WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING A SUCCESS OF A BUSINESS, WHAT STEPS SHOULD PRODUCERS TAKE ONCE THEY'VE SECURED INVESTMENT?
Do all your research thoroughly and be objective about all you see. Don't be afraid to change your mind about the direction your business should take if better opportunities present themselves or if this one looks like it is not going to be as lucrative as you first thought.

Prioritise your opportunities – whichever are likely to give you the best returns, go for them first. People often pick the easiest not the best to start with. Also, don't give up your day job until you have an established income stream. To build your business you will have to make sacrifices, and initially one of those is likely to be working two jobs while you get things started.

ANY PACKAGING TIPS?
If you are aiming at retail, then products with shelf stand-out which are clear about how you use them and are in packaging which is convenient for the end user are key. If, for instance, your product is an ingredient, then several clear serving suggestions on the front of pack and a link to a website with lots more ideas/recipes on the back will give consumers confidence. Ideally you want to get more than one product listed – a range of three or four will give you more shelf presence.

MARKETING ADVICE?
Start with your branding – make sure it stands out, that it's easy to say and spell the name (important for online searches), and that you can protect your intellectual property and won't be infringing on anybody else. Ensure you can get the accompanying domain names, too.

Social media is a really good way to build brand awareness and connect with consumers and press. Have a clear strategy and stick to it, engage with others rather than just shouting about what you are doing, and behave as if you are meeting people face to face. If you are looking for the press to help promote a launch, you need to be thinking 4–5 months ahead as that is how far ahead monthly magazines work, with weekly magazines and colour supplements usually working a month or so ahead.

HOW CAN INDIES SUPPORT FLEDGLING FOOD AND DRINK BUSINESSES?
I think many already do. Garden centres also offer opportunities for small food businesses to build a good relationship that works well for all concerned. There is a better match here in terms of the size of the two businesses and the sales systems they have, so it is often easier for small producers to have partnerships like this than with larger retailers.

Stores are sometimes able to let producers carry out their own sampling.

AND HOW CAN THEY THEMSELVES MAKE A PROFIT?
Building a reputation for always having new things in-store and being ahead of the crowd is great for independent stores.

Margins from small producers with new products should be just as lucrative as others.

> "When Theodore Roosevelt said, 'Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty' he could easily have been talking about the food industry"

> "Keep it short and punchy and make sure you load the first five minutes with the best you've got. You're in charge. You make the rules"



One of the best-known businesswomen in the UK with a string of successful brands under her belt, Deborah Meaden is perhaps most recognised as an investor on Dragons' Den.

WHAT PUTS YOU OFF AN INVESTMENT?
I can be a pretty bold investor, provided I can buy into both the product and the investees. What can really turn me away from making an investment is a lack of understanding of the market and clarity on the opportunity – if you don't know why consumers would want your products then you don't know they will! bit.

With authenticity so high up my tick list when it comes to investing, the opposite applies as to why I would not invest. I do not like claims which cannot be substantiated and are made just because they sound clever and on-trend, and when I'm in *Dragons' Den* much of my questioning is about to trying to get behind some of the bold claims highly enthusiastic entrepreneurs often make.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A FOOD AND DRINK BUSINESS?
When I consider investment in food or drink I am of course looking for taste and quality, but also relevance to current and forward food and drink trends.

Food is very much like the fashion industry in that the consumer is always looking for something new and exciting to be part of... even if that new and exciting thing is buying into something traditional and perhaps forgotten. I think the consumer's food mood tells us much about the state of mind of the nation as a whole.

Ethics and authenticity are also very important to me in all business, but particularly in an industry where your product will actually be consumed by your customer. Gone are the days when marketeers were able to just make wild claims – honesty and authenticity are key.

ANY PRESENTATION TIPS?
When making a presentation, be honest, know your stuff and present it in your own way. I don't want to see the slickest pitch in the world, I want to understand the business and the people behind it. I am acutely aware that over-rehearsed slick presentations can mask the reality. Rehearse out loud and use your own words and phrases, and if you keep stumbling at the same point, change that bit.

Keep it short and punchy and make sure you pack the best you've got into the first five minutes – you will start losing your audience at around 15 minutes, so use those early minutes well.

DOES PERSONALITY PLAY A PART IN PRESENTATIONS?
Your audience is forming opinions on many things and, of course, having a confident, outgoing personality sets you in good stead to win them over, but personality is only part of the picture.

Relying too much on personality and not enough on substance will drive investors away.

I am not looking for a friend to go down the pub with, I am looking for someone to invest in – someone who I can trust to run their business well and be able to deliver the results we set out to achieve.

WHAT SUPPORT DO SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES RECEIVE POST-DRAGONS' DEN?
In short, the support they need! Each business is individual and has very different needs. Some are baby businesses on the start of their journey and will need a lot of time and attention, while others are fully grown with sophisticated management teams who simply need strategic advice – and cash, of course!

I tend to work with industry experts specific to that investment, who often become the first line of contact for an investee, with my involvement being brought in when needed or relevant. I do not claim to be the expert in any industry, but I know about business and the mechanics of growing success. Having been there and done it myself, I have a good nose!

When Jonny and Annie of Spoon came into Dragons' Den to pitch their granola business it was clear they had vision and business skills, they just really needed the contacts which Peter and I were able to provide. In terms of running the business, they have pretty much run with it.

Yee Kwan Ice Cream, on the other hand, had a superb product but it needed to hone its vast range of flavours and focus on its clean ingredients, so Jane Milton has been working closely with them. The result is a superb range of creamy, authentic and adventurous ice cream. I have tasted the results (far too much, in fact) and it is delicious!

Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts



JULIET HARBUTT

"Cheese@BRA – a cheese-lover's rite of passage"

Big ones, small ones, some as big as your head and much, much bigger, and more cheese than most people will ever see in a lifetime. Piled high and precariously balanced on hundreds of stalls groaning under their weight. Misshapen, knobbly, multicoloured and mould-encrusted cheeses emitting a heady pungent aroma, each one telling a unique and individual story of the history of the area, the culture of the people and the origin of the animal from which they are made. A trip to Cheese, held every two years in Bra, Northern Piedmont, should be part of the rite of passage for anyone involved in the world of cheese. For it is here that you will experience cheese as you have never done before and taste cheeses you will never see anywhere outside the village where they are made, and you get to talk (or wave your hands around and grin enthusiastically) to those who make them. In 2013 there were around 190 stands of which around 50 were not Italian.

For four days, the hilltop town of Bra, home of Slow Food who created and have organised the event since 1998, is completely taken over by cheese, cheesemakers and over 250,000 visitors from around the world. Everyone and everything is caught up in the chaos, excitement and adventure, from the huge elegant arched piazza to the cobbled streets, the schools and even the churches.

Like all Slow Food events, Cheese brings together the joy of eating and sharing good food with an awareness of our responsibility towards the issues of animal welfare, sustainable management of landscapes, maintaining bio-diversity and respect for the whole supply chain. It also brings together those who take the raw ingredients and with passion and experience create the extraordinary diversity and complexity of flavours and aromas that makes each cheese unique.

Beneath the elegant arches of Corso Garibaldi are long counters displaying hundreds of cheeses and wines from around the world. You buy a load of tickets then spend hours trying to decide which combination of cheeses and wines you want to try. Unable to make my mind up, this year I decided to help them set it up and work with the huge team of volunteers, making sure I taste as many of the cheeses as possible!

Taste workshops are an unmissable part of cheese, where you get to learn about some of the most remarkable cheese in the world from the producers, affineurs and leading experts with excellent, simultaneous translations.

If you fancy a career change or have children looking for a career in food, check out the University of Gastronomic Science – I've been there as a guest lecturer (they called me Professor!) and it was amazing! In Pollenzo, very near Bra, it focuses on the organic relationships between food and cultures. More than 2,000 students have taken courses at UNISG since it opened in 2004, in gastronomy, food culture and heritage, food journalism, farming methods, Italian food preparation and marketing. If I was younger and had the time...



GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S

"Horizon Scanning"

Life would be so much easier if we knew exactly where the shopper, the market and the trends in food were headed. Offices full of highly paid marketeers and researchers scan the horizon and try to forecast where cheese will be in the next five years, and with so many factors now affecting the new generation of shopper, it seems many of our classic sectors are being challenged by change.

Cheddar has already changed substantially, with sweeter tastes, crunchier types, cave-aged and vintage-style taking the lead, eclipsing the traditional West Country cheesemakers' predominance in the artisan Cheddar category, especially in the high flow retail outlets. The strong, robust, raw taste of Farmhouse Cheddar has become more localised, or more suited to an older generation. I rarely find well-heeled youths buying into those tastes. Some makers have responded with more modern styles and appear to be holding their position, whilst others believe the tide will turn in their favour. I believe that for some, the next five years will see the current trend moving forward, with packaging and convenience the major drivers for growth.

For years the local favourites of Lancashire, Cheshire, Gloucester and Leicester held their own, especially in their home areas. But lacking national and regional distribution in major retail outlets has seen types like Cheshire lose traction, and makers like Applebys and Bournes plough a lone furrow in holding up traditional Cheshire making. Wensleydale is perhaps the exception, where Wensleydale Dairy has managed to premiumise the product and deliver a Yorkshire PDO on the back of a renowned Kit Calvert brand. Red Leicester, aside from Sparkenhoe, has become an orphan county brand, but Belton's Red Fox and Clawson's products have both tried to bring the market value up with some encouraging success. Lancashire stands alone as a hotbed of localism, with a gaggle of long-established makers hanging in there – Dewlay, Singletons, Sandhams, Butlers and Supreme Champion cheesemaker Greenfield sit among others – but in truth, a closer look at what they sell shows that Lancashire too is under pressure to grow outside the county.

Stilton is called the king of cheese, and even this monarch has pretenders snapping at its heels. Years of seeing its value dumbed down at its Christmas high water mark have almost turned it into Grandad's cheese, and advanced a commoditised disconnect with its public during the 50 other weeks of the year. Those who have kept the brand value high have probably been the most consistent in both quality and sales, allowing some limited investment in NPD. Businesses like Colston Bassett and Cropwell Bishop have a significantly high export market, which has partially protected them from the main impact of Britain's market issues. Modernity of this classic is needed in the UK marketplace; usage and relevance to the modern shopper is surely its big five year challenge.

This fragmentation of a thousand types will inhibit total growth, as no one beyond the established major brands can invest to grow the total market, and it's not clear if the shopper will be fascinated by this kaleidoscope of flavours or ultimately bored with it. I can see this demonstrating high day and holiday market trends, with a limited number of classic flavours holding the market for the majority of the year, supported by a few guest flavours.

The natural inclination of most shoppers is to protect the planet as best they can, as study after study shows. The dairy trade sometimes has difficulty getting over the message of organic. What those studies also show is that the commitment comes at an affordable price. As an old cynic, I've observed that we save the planet when we can afford it.





JUSTIN TUNSTALL OF TOWN MILL CHEESEMONGER

"Train staff and they leave; but even worse – don't train them and they stay "

My wife is a physiotherapist (good call, eh?) and is obliged to demonstrate 'continuing professional development' in order to renew her accreditation. I imagine that it's a handy way of ensuring that medical practitioners wean themselves off reliance on leeches and bloodletting, in order to embrace innovation and the fruits of the latest research.

There's no such obligation for a cheesemonger. I threw myself into the acquisition of cheese knowledge when I opened my shop, signing up for some great education, both with Juliet Harbutt and with the Guild of Fine Food. Having experienced the benefits myself, nowadays I put all our staff through an external one-day course, knowing that it not only gives them the wherewithal with which to deal with customers, but also motivates them.

It's now over six years since I attended formal courses myself, and this year I decided to refresh, renew and deepen my own training. In the intervening years I've learned a lot from fellow judges at awards, talking to cheesemakers and other retailers, and reading – a lot. Nonetheless, I'm only too aware of my own shortcomings and decided to see what I could learn without breaking the bank.

My first tutorial of the year was at the British Cheese Awards. The morning after the awards dinner (!), a dozen surprisingly alert cheesemakers paired up to talk delegates through six categories of cheese. A thought for the future: I would have loved the opportunity to taste my way through the New Cheese category – Britain's cheese makers always seem to be up to something innovative, and it's helpful to know what customers might have heard about and be looking for in the months ahead.

More recently I travelled halfway up the country to Shropshire for the inaugural course of The Guild of Cheese Graders. Founded by Bruce Macdonald, one of the big names in creamery cheese grading, it offered a variety of sessions over two days. Particularly interesting was the time we spent looking at the use of the ever-growing number of descriptors applied to cheeses – turns out, they mean different things to different people.

What did I get from my three days out of the shop and investment of a few hundred quid? In a nutshell, I got my mojo back – I have increased confidence in my ability to assess cheese, and also a renewed enthusiasm that has blown away any jaded feelings about my wares.

British Cheese Named World's Best at Nantwich



Greenfields Dairy's Farmhouse Traditional Crumbly Lancashire cheese has been named Supreme Champion at the International Cheese Awards in Nantwich.

The bright, smooth cheese was awarded the title after internationally-respected experts judged all of the 4,600 entries during yesterday's Trade Day.

Stephen Procter of Greenfields Dairy Products Ltd said, "The haul of silverware has arrived back in Lancashire after our Greenfields Crumbly Lancashire Cheese was crowned the Supreme Champion winning the National Westminster Cup, as well as Best UK Cheeses, The Haughmond Trophy champion farmhouse/traditional hard pressed territorial cheese, The Farmhouse Cheesemakers Trophy – Lancashire, and the Ted Hassall Memorial Trophy for the champion farmhouse/traditional cheese – five trophies in all!

"We are a small, family-run cheesemakers based in Goosnargh near Preston and we have been exhibiting cheese at Nantwich for over 40 years. We have won many other first prizes and trophies in previous years, but this is the first time we have ever won The Supreme Championship. The cheese show entries seem to increase year on year and this year there were 4,611 entries from 31 countries worldwide, so we are obviously very proud of our achievement."

Other winners include:
Best English Farmhouse/ Traditional Cheddar:
Joseph Heler

Whole Blue Stilton:
Long Clawson Dairy Ltd

Goats Milk Cheese, Hard Pressed:
Northumberland Cheese Company

Traditional Mozzarella:
Laverstoke Park

Semi-soft Cheese:
Bath Soft Cheese

A full list of winners can be found at internationalcheeseawards.co.uk

New Scottish Dairy Brand Unveiled

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, has revealed a new brand to help consumers identify Scottish dairy products.

Consumers were introduced to the new brand at the Royal Highland Show, where the First Minister was joined by Richard Lochhead, Rural Affairs Secretary.

The brand has been designed to increase the profile Scottish dairy in the premium sector at home and overseas, and is part of the Scottish Government's plans to boost the dairy industry following a difficult period for farmers.

The brand, developed by the Scottish Dairy Growth Board, headed up by Paul Grant, chairman of jam company Mackays, will be added to dairy products including butter and cheese.

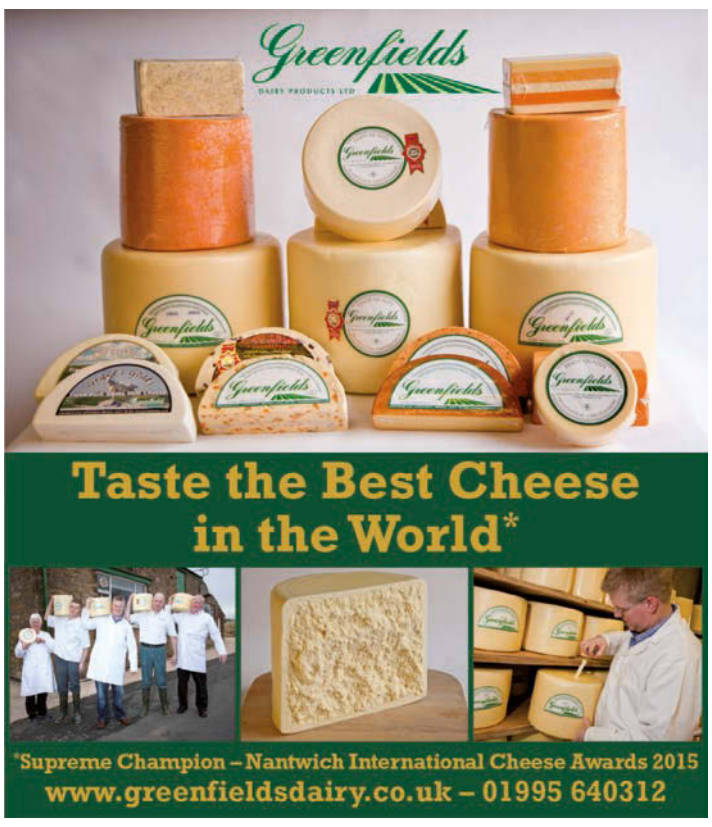
Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister said, "As one of the greatest agricultural showcases in the world, it is fitting that this new Scottish dairy trademark has been unveiled at the Royal Highland Show.

"Scottish food and drink exports are booming – valued at more than £5.1 billion last year. "I want to put the spotlight firmly on our fantastic produce for retailers in Scotland and buyers from around the globe. This new brand will help consumers support Scottish producers and help in marketing our excellent produce abroad.

"The dairy sector has had a difficult time and I want to assure farmers that we are doing everything we can to help them, and I hope our newly established Scottish Dairy Brand will play a part in that."

Richard Lochhead, Rural Affairs Secretary said, "The dairy sector is vitally important to Scotland and the Scottish Dairy Brand is all about added value – it highlights there is so much more to the sector than just milk alone.

"The dairy sector's future is of real importance to Scotland – that is why I am calling for country of origin labelling to be made mandatory at EU level, with the flexibility to use labels such as 'Made in Scotland'."







Quicke's Unveils New Look

450 year old Devon cheesemaker Quickes has revamped its branding in order to share its story with consumers.

The new look was initiated by Tom Chatfield, sales and marketing manager at Quickes', who wanted to illustrate the Quicke family's farming heritage and build a story around the making of the brand's cheese.

Cornwall-based creative agency A-Side Studio were used to develop the new brand, which incorporates a woodcut panorama by artist Joe McLaren. The design depicts the landscape around Home Farm, including the cows, goats and ewes which provide the milk for cheesemaking, swallows, a barn owl and the Quicke's beast used on the brand's original graphic logo in 1973.

The branding will be used across Quicke's prepacked range, with each item in a different colour for ease of on-shelf identification. The labels clearly display the age of each cheese, and offer a peel-and-reveal tab to offer further information about the cheese.

The woodcut print is also used across marketing literature, signage and aprons.

Tom Chatfield, sales and marketing manager at Quicke's said, "The brand update maintains elements that have formed part of Quicke's identity for the past 40 years. We felt that there was a strong legacy that we didn't feel appropriate to discard entirely. The creative route we chose to progress, retains certain familiar elements, whilst still introducing a more contemporary, progressive look and feel.

Food marketing is becoming increasingly sophisticated – so it's essential for speciality and artisan businesses to take this aspect seriously. Quicke's is in a really healthy position; we have strong UK sales, the export market is growing and we consistently produce award winning cheese. With all these positive drivers, it seemed the perfect opportunity to review how we present ourselves and make a long term investment in the Quicke's brand for the future."

Mary Quicke, managing director at Quicke's said,"The branding process has been a fascinating journey, it has made us all consider what is that we do and what that actually means. In my opinion 'what we do' at Quicke's is very special – it has real value. Cheese is commonly perceived as a commodity item – but there is nothing FMCG about a handmade cheese that's been aged for two years!

"I am inextricably linked to the land and our herd; my family have farmed this beautiful patch of Devon for 15 generations, so it is satisfying to see these aspects borne out in the new designs."



Juliet Harbutt Leaves British Cheese Awards

Founder of the British Cheese Awards, Juliet Harbutt has transferred the ownership of the Awards to the Royal Bath & West Show after two years of working in partnership.

Juliet Harbutt founded the Awards in 1994 – 22 years ago – and has developed them to be the most highly recognised awards for British cheese, with the aim of promoting the quality of Britain's cheese industry by embracing both producers and retailers.

Juliet Harbutt said, "I have loved running the Awards, watching the cheese industry expand and meeting the cheesemakers, retailers and wholesalers over the last 22 years, and shall miss being a part of an event that has played a significant role in raising the profile of British cheese. However, I will now have time to build on those relationships, write the next edition of the British Cheese Directory and spend time on some very exciting new projects."

Godminster Celebrates 15 Years of Cheesemaking



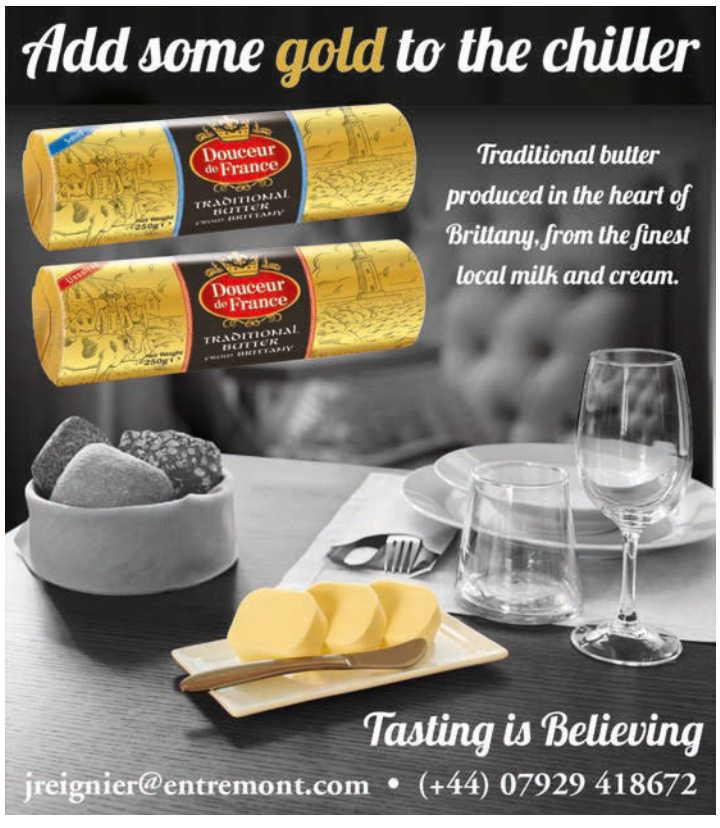
Godminster is celebrating 15 years of its inaugural Vintage Organic Cheddar.

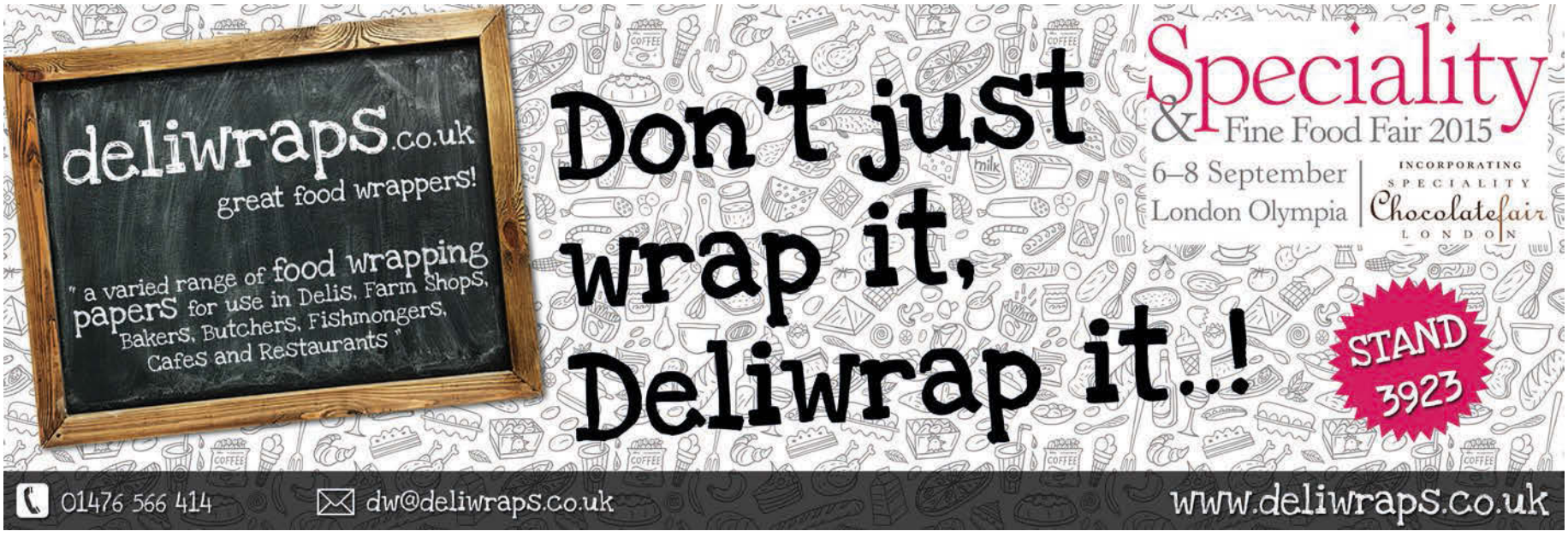
In line with the celebrations, the cheesemaker is offering free samples to all new retailers, wholesalers and traders.

Richard Hollingbery, owner of Godminster said, "We are delighted to have celebrated our 15th birthday this July. When we first created our Vintage Organic Cheddar, we knew we had something special and very different from other British cheeses.

"We have worked very hard over the years to keep the highest taste and quality standards and it has paid off. We have built up a substantial family of Godminster fans who are very loyal. We have great partnerships in our work with traders and wholesalers and a thriving business online.

"The future looks good."





FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Artisanal British cheeses are on the up, but can they escape the shadow of their European counterparts? Anna Blewett investigates



Chase statistics from the cheese industry in search of a clearer picture and you enter a world of baffling distinctions and caveats. Branded Cheddar spend is down 5.5% year-on-year, says Kantar Worldpanel. Production of short-life territorials are up 33.1% on last year says Defra. The Retail Price Index for cheese decreased 3.42% in the 12 months to May says the Office For National Statistics. Navigating this quagmire of industry facts and figures one might never alight on a story emerging from the Twitter feeds, blog posts and, more importantly, sales transactions of cheese sellers: that artisan cheeses are continuing their trajectory into the hearts of mainstream culture.

The unstoppable 'craft'

"Cheese is fashionable, no doubt," says Ann-Marie Dyas, who founded The Fine Cheese Company in Bath more than 20 years ago. "It's a real hipster product. It's all there: great stories, a real connection between land, animal and maker. The perfect topic for social media." If 'artisan' has become a byword for quality on the alternative fringes of food and drink, its ripples are reverberating more than ever before. But while the media buzz and lifestyle froth around craft beer, 'real bread' and proper coffee has undoubtedly brought a host of trendy Johnny-come-latelies to the slow food movement, the beginnings go way back. "A lot of our cheesemakers are pioneers in their own field and have persevered, even when times were tough," says Sian Oliver-Gay of the Specialist Cheesemakers Association. "After the war we lost a lot of the artisan cheesemakers, but just recently there's been a revival. People want something a bit special and local; suddenly what our members are doing doesn't look so wacky."

"There's no better time to be an artisan British cheesemaker," agrees Sarah Hampton of Brock Hall Farm Dairy, whose herd of Pure Saanen goats are the starting point for cheeses served by Michelin-starred chefs Glynn Purnell and Tom Kitchin. "These days people are alive to the notion of small production and greater diversity in the types of cheeses available, especially if those cheeses have a story behind them, as ours do. Heritage, provenance, ethical values; I've not met a customer who hasn't been interested and enthused by these value-added issues. Not only do they 'buy into' the brand but they loyally and passionately support it. Take the 'Local to Ludlow' Farmers Market I attend every month: customers turn up at my stall every single month in the depths of winter to come out and buy our cheeses. It's thrilling and humbling to witness their enthusiasm."

Among the retailers responding to this grass roots movement are Andy Swinscoe, whose Courtyard Dairy near Settle, North Yorkshire, has recently cut its selection of French cheeses from 30% of total stock to just ten percent to make way for home-grown alternatives. "One factor is the quality of British cheeses, which has really improved," explains Andy. "When we opened up I didn't think we had a good enough British Brie to put on the counter, but within the last two years Baron Bigod (a raw milk cheese from Fen Farm Dairy in Bungay) has got good enough that we can replace it. The other reason is consumers coming in our shop are looking for things that are British-made. They know we're making good cheeses; it's not just about Cheddar. I purely deal with the artisan products and that's what's really starting to flourish. If you look at block Cheddar the figures might be pretty static, but the interesting small producers are on the up, no doubt about it. The increase in the market as a whole might be negligible, but in artisan, there's definitely a resurgence."









Hitting the high street

The multiples have been cashing in on consumers' hunger for artisanal cheeses for several years; by 2009 M&S carried more than 100 British-made cheeses and is indeed showing support for native 'cover versions' of iconic European cheeses with recent listings for the Feta-like Yorkshire Fettle and a Sussex-made Halloumi. Laverstoke Park's Buffalo Brie debuted on Waitrose shelves back in December.

In fact, the extent to which our British-made cheeses defer to the conventions of European cheese-making is an interesting point. Whilst few British producers overtly signal their style with the Continental terminology we all understand (Brock Hall Farm's Capra Nouveau, Fresco Angelico and Dutch Mistress among them), most benefit from the vocabulary of their French, Italian or Spanish rivals. "Your average consumer knows Cheddar, and they know Gorgonzola," points out Andy, "but beyond that it's helpful to signpost the style of a cheese so they know what to expect. So we wouldn't say Baron Bigod is a Brie de Meaux copy, we would say it's made in that style and been evolved into something different. It's a benchmark for the customer and helps us communicate with them. If a customer loves Munster they should try St. James. Those names have such an established reputation it's good to use them as a benchmark."

Selling overseas

Of course, what every red-blooded Brit craves is international recognition of the huge strides made by our native cheeses. Decades of dominance may have given France bragging rights when it comes to artisanal food and drink, but surely it's time the credit was shared? Well, most recent figures from HMRC show a massive 11,557 tonnes of British-made cheese was exported in April this year, nearly ten percent up on the same period in 2014. In fact, overseas sales notched up between January to April this year were up 17.3% on the previous year, with total Cheddar exports rising 65% and territorial cheeses in general up 36.6%.

Of course, territorials still lag behind way behind the mighty Cheddar, a picture which may be slow to change. "The French have the 'lingua franca' of cheese," says Ann Marie Dyas, who exports to over 20 countries worldwide. "From Jakata to Japan people know their Époisses, Tomme de Savoie and Reblochon, not just Brie and Camembert. But if you ask anyone what they know about British cheese, even today, they say Cheddar and Stilton. Those are the two pillars all export businesses are built on and probably account for 70% of what goes overseas."

Indeed, HMRC reports Cheddar exports to non-EU countries rose by 65% year-on-year. But Ann-Marie knows better than most that recipes beyond this West Country classic can be a tough sell. "We work hard to promote artisan cheeses of other styles as well, but it's a more difficult job as those cheeses not known," she points out. "Having sampled at shows and meetings around the world, I'd say we Brits have our own distinct tastes: we adore acidic crumblies – Wensleydale, Cheshires, Lancashires. That takes getting used to for Europeans because they don't tend to have cheeses in that tradition. Americans are more receptive.

"Also, French cheese is very price-competitive; it's hard to sell the British version when our cheeses are twice the price. Trading in sterling is a nightmare at the moment; it means adding probably another 15% on top. It's a worthwhile endeavour, but the reality is that the French still dominate."

But if the rest of the world lags behind on recognising our cheese-making brilliance, Ann-Marie has seen encouraging signs of change. "I don't think it's a coincidence that the biggest food awards in the world, the SOFIs on New York (awarded by America's Specialty Food Association), has shortlisted British cheeses two years running. They get literally tens of thousands of entries from around the world, so I think that's significant." The Camembert-like Tunworth, shortlisted in 2015, and rind-washed goat's cheese Rachel, recognised in 2014, are certainly great flag-bearers for British cheesemaking, but for Ann-Marie they're just the latest in a long line of world-beating products. "I think renaissance has been going on for 25 years," says Ann-Marie. "There's a real energy and interest right now, I agree that's true but it's not started in the last five minutes. It's been snowballing for a long time."

Telling the story

"The most significant factor about our cheese and our ethos is that we are small and we care," says Sarah Hampton. "When you have the opportunity to explain to customers face-to-face, at a food festival or market, everything becomes clear." For Andy Swinscoe, retelling the cheesemakers' story is the best part of his job, and is made all the easier by the proximity of his suppliers. "We buy 90% of our British cheeses direct from the dairy," he explains. "Working with a French affineur means the quality is fantastic, but with the British cheeses I can have a direct relationship with the farmers, visit them and get exactly what I want. Speaking to the cheesemaker, hearing what's happening on the farm: that's the part we really enjoy. There are really good wholesalers out there who pass that information on but we like to do it ourselves. That's what makes the difference."



> "These days people are alive to the notion of small production and greater diversity in the types of cheeses available, especially if those cheeses have a story behind them"



A NEW BRITISH CLASSIC

Belton has been making award-winning cheese in Shropshire since the early eighteen hundreds and this tradition continues with the creation of Red Fox, the modern British classic which is proving to be a runaway success

Once in a while a cheese comes along which makes the industry sit up and take note. Belton Farm's Red Fox is such a cheese. Made to a unique recipe using carefully selected cultures, this new Red Leicester-style has already attained the status of modern British classic. Matured over a minimum of 16 months. Red Fox is russet in colour and offers an intense and complex blend of distinctive sweet and savoury flavours. With a rugged mouthfeel and a hint of crunch, this handmade cheese has been well-received by retailers and consumers who welcome its modern take on a traditional classic.

Why Red Fox?

The Red Fox brand name was the natural choice for this delicious cheese as a Red Fox weather vane has stood aloft over Belton Farm since 1815, keeping a watchful eye over the farm. A special cheese deserves special packaging, and careful thought has been given to the imagery used on the product's label. The iconic Belton tree anchors the fox to the farm and also represents Belton's environmental and sustainable credentials, while the twilight sky suggests the cheese as an after-dinner cheeseboard treat. When the sun goes down, the Red Fox comes out!

Red Fox Roadshow

Promotion for Red Fox has been dynamic and successful. As the star of the Red Fox Roadshow, Red Fox has been touring the country encouraging trade and public to taste test the cheese and discover for themselves what this much talked-about cheese is all about. The Red Fox Roadshow's next outing will be in November at the BBC Good Food Show, which is within the World Cheese Market. Why not pop along and try Red Fox for yourself?

The cheese has already earned itself a whole host of well-deserved awards which include Gold Medals at both the International Cheese Awards and the British Cheese Awards, a considerable achievement. Isn't it time you found out why this flavoursome cheese has attracted top honours and a faithful following?

"The modern British classic with a cunningly unexpected crunch"

MAKING CHEESEBOARDS WORK FOR YOU

Christmas heeseboards encourage customers to buy more cheese and to experiment

A well-presented cheeseboard featuring a carefully thought-out selection of familiar and not so familiar cheeses, along with accompaniments such as artisan biscuits and fresh fruit, is a popular finish to a dinner party or special lunch. For this reason, the demand for cheeseboards and cheeses to fill them always peaks in the run-up to Christmas. It's an invaluable device for the retailer, too: nothing sells a variety of cheeses all at once more conveniently than a cheeseboard. Not only does the cheeseboard encourage people to buy more cheeses, but it introduces a lot of people to cheeses they might not have tried before. Also, the cheeseboard makes an original and personal gift idea.

We talked to a handful of notable cheesesellers and asked them how important a sales tool the cheeseboard is for them and how they use it to its best advantage.



Juliet Harbutt. cheese consultant

"The cheeseboard is an integral part of most people's idea of a traditional Christmas," says Juliet Harbut, British Cheese Awards founder. "It's often the only time of year that people look outside the supermarket for their cheeses, so it is the perfect opportunity to show customers what makes you special and worth visiting more regularly." To capture the imagination of these new customers, Juliet says, cheesesellers should "show them what independent retailers do best – quality, diversity, artisan and stories, anecdotes and tasting notes for your cheeses. A cheese menu for your Christmas range with recommended wines, ports and accompaniments should gain you a customer for life not just for Christmas!" Cheese can be brought out all over the holiday, Juliet says, so "encourage customers to buy a combination of small whole cheeses and wedges so they can be mixed and matched over the Christmas period, and make the cheeseboard look like it's a whole new selection, rather than dragging out half mangled, misshapen wedges of cheese."

When it comes to choosing traditional and alternative cheeseboard inclusions, Juliet says, "with over 750 British cheeses made with cow, goat, ewe and even buffalo milk, you are spoilt for choice." However, she adds, "there is also an increasing number of cheeses from Eastern Europe that deserve attention, plus some lesser-known cheeses of Spain and Portugal. All of these need some tasting notes so people can sound like experts when they get home!"





Andy Swinscoe, The Courtyard Dairy

"People enjoy a treat at this time of year," says Andy Swinscoe of the Courtyard Dairy, "and like to buy a few extra special and different cheeses for their cheeseboard. Most people take a nice balanced cheeseboard from us – a bit of blue, a hard and a soft cheese, as well as a few more unusual cheeses such as the amazing Summer Field, which is a sweet and nutty Gruyère-style cheese, made-by-hand in North Yorkshire by adults with learning disabilities."







> The revival of farm-made unpasteurised cheese has brought changes to the cheeseboard. Gone are the days of relying solely on Cheddar and Stilton

The cheeseboard is a chance to display your wares, often not only to the customer buying it but also to his guests, who may be prospective customers. This means that the quality of the offering on the cheeseboard must be high. "As we take quality very seriously," Andy says, "we only do traditional handmade cheeses and they are all cut fresh and wrapped in paper." A lot of cheesesellers we talked to said that pre-planning is an important aspect of successful cheeseboard selling. "We take pre-orders for delivery from September," Andy says, "but we actually only cut and pack the cheeses 10 days before the event. This means we have a busy time – but are able to offer better quality cheese!"

Andy agrees that gifting is an important part of cheeseboard appeal. "A lot of our cheeseboards get sent across the UK as gifts," he says, "so we promote the idea of the cheeseboard as a gift, offering a range of pre-set selections so people can try something different, from strong and smelly to blue, and from hard to tangy!"

For Andy, an ideal traditional cheeseboard would have as its base a tangy Cheddar ("Hafod – handmade by the Holden Family and made with Ayrshire milk – is simply fabulous") and a soft cheese. Baron Bigod, he says, is "Britain's alternative to Brie de Meaux. It's been going for two years and gives the best rustic French Bries a run for their money. "When it comes to a blue, Andy opts for "a Stilton, though I go for a twist on that with Stichelton, which is made with unpasteurised milk." Being a Northern cheese shop, he says, "there would also have to be a crumbly, Wensleydale, a Cheshire or the like to have with the Christmas cake. My choice is Kirkham's Lancashire, which is an outstanding cheese. My wife is from Lancashire, so I'd get shot if I didn't take that home to the family..."

Not everyone wants the traditional cheeseboard, and some cheese buyers use it as an ideal opportunity for sampling more unusual and lesser-known cheeses. "We do quite a lot of cheeses that are a little different," Andy says. "The upsurge in traditional farmhouse cheesemaking has meant we have been privileged to stock some new and very exciting cheeses in the last few years."

The revival of farm-made unpasteurised cheese has brought changes to the cheeseboard, Andy says. "Gone are the days of relying solely on Cheddar and Stilton to make up a cheeseboard, even though there are now more farmhouse Cheddar makers than there has been for a long time. Many of these are outstanding, from modern creations such as Hafod, Barwheys, Winterdale Shaw, Lincolnshire Poacher and Dale End, to the West Country classics such as Montgomery's, Westcombe

COURTYARD DAIRY

Five original cheeseboard inclusions

Killeen It's made by Dutch women who settled on an Irish goat farm. At the Courtyard Dairy, we age this cheese until it is a year old, when the taste is floral, toffee-like and smooth.

Anster An alternative for those who like crumbly, fresh cheeses such as Cheshire and Caerphilly, Anster is a zesty, clean and fresh cheese made by a small family farm in Fife.

St James Made by hand on a small sheep farm in Cumbria, St James offers rich, hammy and powerful flavours. This cheese is made with sheep's milk and then washed to bring out complex unique flavours.

Old Winchester This family farm in Hampshire crossed a Cheddar recipe with Gouda methodology, and came up with something fabulous. Aged for two years, it is crystalline, smoky and has a powerful tang.

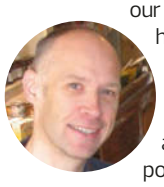
Young Buck A rich blue made on a small scale and with unpasteurised milk by Michael Thomson, who has has created a fabulous alternative blue. Once you've tasted it you might not go back!



and Keens. Each one is different, and really captures a flavour of the farm it's made on. Our ethos has always been to champion and support the few remaining independent farmhouse cheesemakers in Britain. People have also become more adventurous with their tastes – the diversity of goats cheeses available has increased and they are now a staple for many cheeseboards, as are different blues, sheep's milks and washed rind cheeses such as Stinking Bishop.

Dave Greenman, Arch House Deli

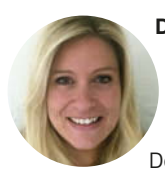
In Bristol, Dave Greenman of the Arch House Deli lays great stress on forward planning. "The Christmas cheeseboard is a significant part of our festive turnover," he says. "It also brings in a lot of footfall, which often leads to other purchases." Preparing the cheese ahead of time pays dividends for Dave. "We normally cut our cheese to order," he says, "however at Christmas, we also focus on pre-orders, and pre-cut and price our more popular cheeses to enable a quicker turnaround on the cheese counter. Planning the amount of cheese and ensuring we have sufficient storage is a significant part of the challenge at Christmas. Taking Christmas cheeseboard pre-orders has become vital to the way we sell cheese at Christmas. We start taking





pre-orders for Christmas cheese from late November. The benefit to the customer is that we can guarantee that they will get the cheese they require, and also it avoids them having to join a lengthy queue at Christmas."

At Christmas, Dave says, "People are very traditional and tend to go for a soft, a blue and a Cheddar. We're generally asked for our recommendations and go with our favourites of Brie de Meaux, Colston Basset Stilton and a Montgomery Cheddar." For his own, personal cheeseboard, Dave chooses "Vacherin Mont d'Or, a 24 month old Gruyère, Stichelton and Gres Des Vosges." Last Christmas, he says, "Delice des Cremiers and Epoisses were very popular French cheeses. Also popular was Smoked Cheddar Gorge Cheddar, and I can see this as popular again this year."



Deborah Bradfield, Godminster

Cheeseboards are all about tradition and variety, says Deborah Bradfield, head of sales and marketing at Godminster. "A cheeseboard keeps people at the table after dinner and there's generally something for everyone, from the unadventurous to the cheese aficionados. Buying a good cheese selection is easy these days, Deborah says. "There are now over 700 British cheese types, from Cornish Yarg to Colston Bassett and White Nancy, to Godminster Brie."

Cheeseboards can help the retailer to simplify the buying process for the customer, she says.

Opinions about exactly what should be included on a traditional cheeseboard are many and various, Deborah says. "A rule of thumb appears to be six (ideally British artisan) cheeses. A third of these should be hard cheeses, as it's often the most popular type and Cheddars are familiar. You'll then want something creamy, such as Brie or Goddess, a soft goats cheese like White Nancy, and just one blue, as strong flavours are not always to everyone's liking.

Some people prefer to assemble a more offbeat cheeseboard and introduce dinner table guests to cheeses they may not have encountered before. What cheeses would Deborah suggest in this respect? "Defining a type of cheese as offbeat depends on the people choosing and eating the cheese," says Deborah. "For Cheddar lovers, British Bries and goats cheese can be offbeat. Cornish Yarg, Colston Bassett and Godminster Oak Smoked Cheddar are all fabulous tasting cheeses that would benefit from greater exposure.



Caroline Bell, Shepherd's Purse

"When folk are busy, and especially at Christmas time when we all suffer from decision fatigue," says cheesemaker Caroline Bell of Shepherd's Purse, "customers will welcome help curating their cheeseboard. By creating some well thought-out Christmas cheeseboard selections, you'll save your customers time and you'll have the opportunity to impress and showcase your offerings. A range of options following the "good", "better", "best" model will help your customers and give you the option to add accompaniments and accessories, including the boards themselves!"

"We have a lovely hand-crafted cheeseboard made from Yorkshire fallen ash which was engraved for our 25th anniversary last year. We take this over to the farmhouse for Christmas day, and on it we will definitely have Yorkshire Blue, Harrogate Blue, Bluemin White, (actually it's likely that we'll have one of each of our cheeses!) then we'll have a Kit Calvert Wensleydale and a Swaledale Sheeps Cheese. Then, what we like to do is set ourselves the task of finding something a little different, so we'll be on the hunt this Christmas too!"

Debbie Leviseur, Bodnant Dairy

At Bodnant Dairy, dairy sales and marketing executive Debbie Leviseur stresses the possibility of selling a variety of cheese and its gifting possibilities. "A carefully pre-selected cheeseboard can be a boon for the busy Christmas food shopper," she says. "Stores that have them available early should see an increase in sales, because the cheeseboard is an easy purchase and a good start to the gathering-in of Christmas goodies." Debbie adds that like a lot of early Christmas food purchases,

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cheeseboards are sometimes consumed early, meaning that repeat purchases are quite possible. Bodnant advises that to create the perfect cheeseboard, "look for a range of contrasting flavours and textures. As well as the cheese itself, think about accompaniments such as nuts, fruits, chutneys, crackers or bread. Conventional wisdom states that bread is a better partner for cheese than crackers, as its neutral taste and texture allows the cheese to shine."



George Paul, Bradburys

"The idea of a cheeseboard to try new tastes and types is highly valuable as the consumer becomes much more adventurous, less cost conscious and more indulgent at this season," says George Paul, owner of Bradbury's. " On the positive side, taking people to a choice of premium well-selected and complementary cheese has substantial benefits, and many of the independents can create this on an almost à la carte basis. Unfortunately, the word Christmas cheeseboard is often synonymous with commodity-boxed, price driven, quality lacking, bland and uninspiring retail selections that hit price points, creating no real legacy benefits for either the retailer or the consumer."

Trading up in size and quality is now very fashionable, from distinctive Cheddar and Red Leicester through the best Blue Stiltons, and quality Continental offerings."

A good cheeseboard should appeal to everyone, George says. "there probably should be six, although five is manageable. This creates choice and colour. Cheddar must surely be a staple, and currently I would choose the 18 month Vintage Isle of Man together with the Belton Red Fox Red Leicester, adding to this a Brie de Meaux, preferably Rouzaire but Donge is also good. My blue contribution would be Stilton, Colston Bassett if I can find it or Cropwell Bishop, and for contrast, I would add a mini goat log and complete with the Shirevale White Stilton Mango and Ginger as a sweet offering." For a more unusual cheeseboard, George suggests "Badoz Vacherin Mont D'or the squidgy Gorgonzola dolce or torta. Goat Gouda has impressed me recently, and classic favourites like Old Amsterdam are always welcome, or for those with a nose, Epoisses or even the starkly sharp Picos blue."

The entry level is usually based around Cheddar and Wensleydale styles and most of the varieties with additive content. The newest entrant here is the Truckle Brothers brand, and the Great Cheese Company brand, designed to offer great value and quality, and mainly based around Shirevale White Stilton The additive world offers a huge variety of flavours, many with Christmas themes such as mulled wine, whisky and candied fruits.



Justin Tunstall, Town Mill Cheesemonger

For Justin Tunstall of Town Mill Cheesemonger, a cheeseboard signifies the end to a one-off meal, and consists of "perhaps four to six cheeses that complement one another. Many of our serious shoppers buy cheese for the week or ten days that they're having away from work." Holidaymakers use it as a chance, he adds, to "satisfy whims for special cheeses and family favourites."

Although Justin has offered suggestions such as one for "a Dorset themed quartet," he's found that "an unpacked version of our Christmas hamper selections work well." His own idea of an idea cheeseboard selection would comprise of "a punchy blue (Colston Bassett Stilton, Stichelton, Blue Vinny, Barkham or Royal Bassett Blue), a good hard cheese (Montgomery or Cave Aged Cheddar), Quicke's Goat Cheddar or Fosse Way Fleece, something soft (Elmhirst, Cremet or Sharpham would be my West Country choices) and for a contrast, perhaps a washed-rind such as Keltic Gold, Ogleshield, Rachel Francis."

ACCOMPANIMENTS:



Courtyard Dairy: Something just to offset the richness the classics – grapes, crisp apples and quince paste (Spanish membrillio); Rosebud Preserves have just developed a fantastic British version. As a cheese purist, I opt for a neutral cracker (water, or a plainer oatcake), and often prefer crisp bread with softer cheeses. Our cheeses taste so good by themselves I don't want to overpower the flavour!

Arch House Deli: Alcohol wise, although port is very popular, we love a desert wine with our blue and smellier cheeses and recommend Elysium Black Muscat and Elysium Orange Muscat. Chutney-wise, we always go for Kitchen Gardens Fig and Plum as its sweetness works well with a variety of cheeses. We're big fans of The Fine Cheese company's crackers and tend to favour the plainer flavours (charcoal, water crackers) as we like the focus to be on the taste of the cheese.

Godminster: Celery and frozen grapes are a real palate cleanser. Making a return is a rich fruit cake (especially around Christmas) or other seed/fig based cake/bread like Zelten (from Germany). A good sweet/sour chutney is a must and still not guaranteed to make an appearance.

Bodnant Welsh Food: Wine and red onion marmalade, digestive crackers and water biscuits.

Town Mill Cheesemonger: Hillside Foods do a lovely range of concentrated fruit accompaniments. Their Bramley Apple is my favourite, I'd also offer our own Onion Marmalade, made for us by From Dorset With Love. As for crackers, Peter's Yard crispbreads or Hillside's new variety pack should satisfy all.

Juliet Harbutt: I like fresh fruit as it balances out the richness of the cheese. There are chutneys made specifically for every type of cheese. Fruit cheeses are increasingly popular, which are good with dried fruit and nuts.







FARM SHOP FOCUS

On the leafy fringes of the Lake District, Low Sizergh Farm Shop has found a recipe for success

Good signage can be a farm shop's best friend. The prominent signs for the farm shop at Low Sizergh Barn are easily seen by locals and tourists driving the four miles to and from Kendal, on the edge of the Lake District. "We rebranded last year," says Alison Parks, the farm shop's managing director. "The road is a really vital source of customers for us, and having clearly visible road signs was a change I needed to make."

It's been an effective improvement as "over 150,000 visitors" every year now visit this attractive, stone-built, late 17th century converted barn. The business is run by Alison and her parents, who started it up in 1991 "on a working family dairy farm, specialising in food from the farm and also from Cumbria and beyond." The farm, which is "of a decent size for the area," specialises in lamb, and eggs and sends "over a million litres to a local dairy for processing." Being on a working farm and so close to the Lakes, the setting for Low Sizergh Barn is quite unique, Alison says, "and the farm shop itself "has been very sympathetically renovated." The downstairs area features "the original shippens where the cows were milked from the 1690s."

Also making this a special place, Alison says, "is the quality of the products. Cumbria has some fantastic food producers and we are very lucky to be part of a network of producers and suppliers. We are a kind of shop window for a lot of smaller local producers, with some of whom we have very close relationships. We've worked with some of these producers for many many years." In this respect and others, Alison feels that the farm shop is now "very much a part of the community."

The farm shop had sprung out of the family's earlier pick-your-own strawberry business, Alison says. Running the PYO site had made it clear to the Parks that people visiting the farm wanted more than just strawberries. There was a considerable demand for tea and ice cream, she says, and also, toilets were a necessity for families. It was clear that there existed the potential to sell more than strawberries. The inspiration to open a farm shop (at a time when these were still thin on the ground) came from Alison's brother, who had been studying at an agricultural college in Bedfordshire and had seen "quite a few down there. He imported this idea from the South, based on what he had seen."

Impeccable timing

In those early days, "there wasn't much infrastructure, but that grew gradually. At that point we had a strawberry shed in the corner of the field with weighing scales and it was a very agricultural construction. The barn (where the shop is now) was full of all those extremely useful items which farmers never want to throw away, because they will prove essential in the future."



"WE HAD SOLD FROM THE FARM GATE BUT THIS WAS A VERY DIFFERENT PROPOSITION"

While her parents had long been farmers and her brother also was now involved, Alison spent 12 years away from the farm, but in the end she "couldn't wait to get back to Cumbria." Setting up the farm shop was a process not without its obstacles. But as with so many other things, she says, "you don't have to look very hard to find obstacles. The trick is to find your way over and through them. We are tenant farmers and obtaining permission and the right kind of backing from the landlord were essential. We wouldn't have done it had we not had that." Since opening the farm shop, the Parks have extended and improved the business, making "a significant upgrade to the interior, space-wise." With impeccable timing, she adds, the builders left at the end of 2008, just as the queues were forming at Northern Rock."

Opening a substantial farm shop was fresh territory for the family. "My parents were immensely entrepreneurial, they had no experience in bricks and mortar retailing," Alison says. "We had sold from the farm gate but this was a very different proposition." Help came from within the wider community of farm shop owners. "Because the farm shop world is so supportive of each other (or at least, it was back then), people were very





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helpful with their time and my parents visited a number of farm shops around the country. This gave them a good idea of the level that they wanted to start out at.'' Among the decisions they made about their new enterprise was that it should be an ''interesting retail environment rather than a basic come and buy place. Being interesting was important. We knew that we would have to offer a little bit more than a food shop and decided to put in a tea room the following year.'' Alison knew that the farm shop would succeed, she says, when, after some two or three years, ''the bank manager smiled at me!''

Pride of place in the shop's displays, Alison says, is given to the cheesecounter. ''We're a dairy farm. My brother runs the herd and his son is now working on the farm as well, and together they look after our 170 cows.'' The cheese counter has recently been given a personal touch by the inclusion of three cheeses made from the dairy farm's milk by Chris Sandham, a third generation local cheesemaker who is ''based just north of Preston. He makes three Lancashire cheeses, but being made with our milk, they are very specific to us.'' Best-selling cheese on the counter is ''our own Kendal Creamy,'' Alison says.


DOWNSTAIRS FEATURES THE ORIGINAL SHIPPENS WHERE COWS WERE MILKED IN THE 1690S

Cheese tradition

As is the case with many good artisan cheeses, the taste of these cheeses will vary depending on the season. ''When the cows are inside in winter eating silage, the taste of these single-source cheeses is different from when the cows are outside grazing,'' she says. The cheese counter offers ''about 70 cheeses in all,'' Alison says. ''We try to stock local and neighbouring counties, and mainly, these are from Lancashire, Northumberland and Yorkshire. We have just started stocking Doddingtons from across in Northumberland, which is very good. We stock a couple of cheesemakers who produce in Cumbria itself and then we also stock cheeses from other parts of the country and a few Europeans as well.'' A local company takes milk from the farm for its ice cream, which is made in nearby Windermere.

The farm shop does not feature a butchery. ''We are a dairy farm so all our meat comes from local farms and estates and is pre-packed.'' The farm shop is very clearly sectioned. ''Fruit and vegetables are placed prominently opposite the entrance,'' she says, adding that ''because of the heavy rainfall this region enjoys, it's quite hard to get hold of Cumbrian-grown vegetables, but nearby Lancashire is quite good for them.'' Alison says that the family has had ''a few brave attempts'' at producing vegetables , but the main vegetable-growing on the farm is done under cover by a social enterprise called Growing Well. This, Alison says, is part of their charitable activities which are aimed at helping people who are recovering from mental illness.

''We do a tremendous amount of home baking,'' Alison says. ''Baking has been very successful for us. We bake upstairs in the same kitchen which services the tea room, where we also pack and label. The fare we bake and sell is very traditional and just what you would expect a farm shop to be offering:, sausage rolls, pies, ready meals based on traditional home cooking recipes and lots of cakes, simple sponge cakes in particular. Our apple pie and chocolate cake are very popular.''

Local products sell well at Low Sizergh Barn. ''We promote local specialities,'' Alison says. ''We are close to the Lyth Valley which is a damson growing area. We grow damsons in our three orchards and sell these and damson products from very enterprising people who make everything from damson ketchup to damson wine and damson gin.'' When it comes to stocking generally, decisions about what to buy in are made on grounds of ''taste and quality'', Alison says. ''If it doesn't have those, it doesn't pass the test. We are quite rigorous in our selection process.''

The farm shop also features a farm trail, which is just under two miles long and allows visitors to ''get a sense of what farming is all about.'' Inviting people to connect with the countryside and understand where their food comes from is an important aspect of life at Low Sizergh Barn, it seems. ''One of the important things that we are about is inviting people onto the farm so they can get close up to the hens, the sheep and the cows. We are not an open farm, but we very much want people to see what happens on a working farm.''

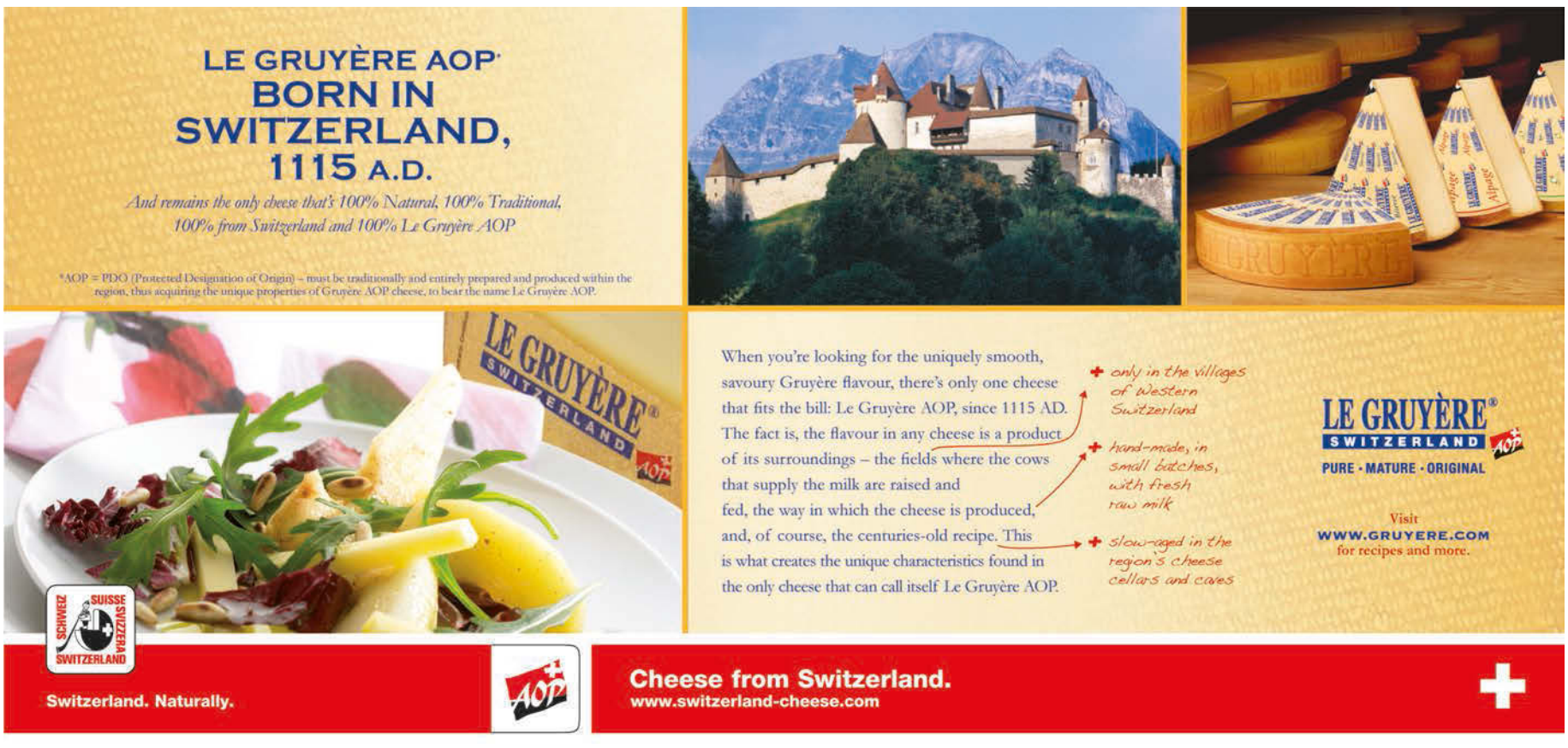

PRIDE OF PLACE GOES TO THE CHEESECOUNTER


THE FARMSHOP RESIDES IN A CONVERTED 17TH CENTURY BARN

> “When it comes to stocking, decisions about what to buy in are made on grounds of taste and quality. If it doesn't have those, it doesn't pass the test”

The most important factors contributing to the successful running of a farm shop, Alison says, are ''product, people and passion and, of course, staff and customers. Staff are absolutely integral to your success.'' Quality is essential. ''Quality is a word that has almost become devalued, but I think everyone knows what good quality is.'' How you handle yourself in a recession can also be important. ''What we concentrated on during the recession was doing more of what we are good at,'' Alison says, ''increasing our baking lines and the production from our kitchen.''

The rewards of running a farm shop like this can outweigh the hard work. ''I couldn't have a better working environment,'' Alison says. ''I am surrounded by products that I am completely enthusiastic about and some fabulous people, so I feel I am very lucky.''



SELFRIDGES&Co RETAILER OF REPUTE

Nathan Herrmann, food and restaurants director at Selfridges flagship Oxford Street store, talks us through the past, present and future of its famous Foodhall





Meet the director

I started working at Selfridges two years ago this year as the food and restaurants director; I oversee the foodhalls and restaurants across all three of our stores. It's a very exciting place to work, as nothing stays the same. Selfridges has had a very long history with food, as you can see from what we've done over the years. This started with Gordon Selfridge, founder of Selfridges, and can be seen now – the store is constantly evolving and we always aim to surprise, amaze and amuse our customers from the phenomenal success of personalised Nutella to introducing the finest butchers in London to our store. You never know what's around the corner.



Changing tastes

Consumer tastes have certainly changed in recent years – from having a very sweet palate a few years ago, people are now looking for lighter ways to satisfy their tastes. Consumers are becoming a lot more adventurous – whereas before they were comfortable with certain brands and tended to stick with them, they're now seeking out small, more artisanal producers. Britons love food, and we've gone from a being nation which was quite conservative in our tastes to one which is willing to try anything and everything.

Changing tastes is as much a matter of opening consumer eyes to something as following their lead when they ask for something. If you're an innovator, it's you presenting the trend to consumers. It may be that whatever the product is goes down very well, then becomes a huge success over time. On the other side of the coin are customers asking along a similar theme as each other, then we consider how we can innovate from that point.

To an extent we like to drive trends and what the consumer wants, but at the end of the day we're dictated to by the consumers' palates. For example, we were ahead of the popcorn trend, but now that consumers have really taken hold of that, we've played around with it and created things like Christmas dinner flavoured popcorn and Christmas pudding with brandy butter-flavoured popcorn. It's all about listening to the consumer then creating a Selfridges' own twist on what they want.

Health is still a massive trend, and that will continue. We're seeing the food industry branching off into different types of water, a move away from the original coconut water and moving to Birch or Maple, and innovative nut butters, which neatly combine comforting food with health credentials. The trend for coffee is going to grow and grow, with people increasingly wanting to grind their own beans. Our Brass Rail restaurant has recently had a refurbishment along with a menu update – we now have an excellent coffee offer in partnership with Origin coffee. We see this as having a big part to play in the Brass Rail offer. Along with new product development, our heritage is important; Brass Rail is one of longest-standing restaurant offerings at Selfridges, and it's about to celebrate its 50th birthday so we thought it was time to update the menu whilst maintaining its British credentials.

Spreading the word

We tend to run themed promotions – we like to be trendsetters, and we've run really great fun ones, like Welcome to Mexico which was a really lively theme, bringing Mexican chefs to London for the first time and offering authentic Mexican products, and Meet the Makers, for which all the windows are food-themed and customers get to meet the people who have created an exciting new product. That's how we drive promotions, rather than Buy One Get One Free-style deals.







With our Meet the Maker events, hero producers get a feature table or space for their range, then we ask them to come in and do tastings and demonstrations showing how to make something with the product. We like to bring promotions to life, not just through product but through activity in the food hall. 2015's Meet the Makers is about the tiny producers who create incredible products in their kitchens, so they aren't quite mass producers yet. Telling the story of the maker is the most important thing – by having them on the shop floor we are giving them an incredible platform to introduce their products, the staff become loyal to the product, and the consumers enjoy the theatre and the opportunity to meet the person who made the food and drink they love. Events give products an added dimension – it's easy to let things sit on the shelf, but engagement with customers is key so every month we carry out a wine and spirit tasting. We held a rum tasting event recently, where the World Rum Ambassador was educating our customers. It gives consumers a reason to come to the store; in their eyes, it offers added value for money. To spread the word, we have posters in-store, send out newsletter and make the most of our relationship with the media, but social media is incredibly important.

Indie vs multiple

We know that supermarkets have an advantage on price point – they can buy in such bulk that independents simply can't compete with them on that. Supermarkets have been very aggressive in how they retail, so much so that they've really changed the way that people shop – it's been interesting to watch this, particularly in the alcoholic drinks category.

The big plus point of being independent is that we can deal on a one-to-one basis with the small guys. It's part of our brand ethos – to support and nurture small brands. All of our own-label Selfridges Selection range has been created by small artisan producers at the top of their game. It adds credibility, whilst also supporting and nurturing talent.



> "I hope we inspire smaller independents to have courage in their convictions, to try new things and really hero the small guys"

Nut butters
Foraged produce
Honey
Tea
Asian foods
Luxury patisserie
Alcohol
Pickles

TRENDING NOW

Independents really hold their own when it comes to bringing innovation to the table, and the new, the small, the quirky things that people want to see and want to try. For producers, being stocked in independents rather than supermarkets gives prestige,

Weird and wonderful

The strangest thing on our shelves is a range of edible insects including chocolate-covered scorpions. We see a real spike when the *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!* is on, even for the caramelised giant ants. We also sell grasshopper salt and worm salt from Mexico – quite a classic ingredient in Mexican cocktails, but the grasshopper salt was a new one for me! Also interesting is Camel Milk chocolate, a first for the UK.



WHAT'S NEW

Almond butters and nut butters are key trends for us at the moment, as are luxury patisserie – we sell the exclusive Marc Pattiserie, which have been created by incredible chefs delivering epicurean excellence. One of the biggest off-beat and quirky elements to our food hall is the Chocolate Library – it has new things coming in all the time, so is refreshed every three months with new brands joining the old favourites. Coffee's another trend we've really seen spiking, especially cold brew recently.

Alcohol has also been huge so far this year... People were talking about how vermouth is going to be big this year, but we were on top of it six months before the hype started. We've launched two new vermouth brands into the UK in recent months. We now stock Cambridge Gin, which is incredible – they've launched a truffle gin which is just amazing and even the exclusive ANTY gin which was made for Noma in Copenhagen is now available to buy – it's made by distilling ants! We're constantly on the lookout for the new, the latest; it's not so much about what's trending now, but setting the trends for the future.

We have also started selling the UK's first packaged foraged produce. We have seen first class restaurants use foraged ingredients on their menu and it felt right to introduce our customers to a range that they can incorporate into their cooking at home. We try to make it accessible to all. In order to help customers on the journey, we are introducing recipe cards and a series of dinners in our Corner Restaurant to elevate this story.

We use anything and everything to predict trends, from sales information – it's a big clue when you see a jump in sales in a particular category – to looking around, talking to people and seeing what's happening in the bar and restaurant industry. For example, pickles are a currently a big trend in the bar scene, so I expect that to appear in food retail soon.

You can see what people are getting interested in by looking at Instagram and on blogs – as well as actually going out to other countries to see what's happening elsewhere. We visit the States quite regularly to see the lay of the land, as a lot of trends originate from there – they always have lots of interesting things on the go. Last time we went, I went into a lot of delis and spotted a number of products I was interested in stocking myself, so got in contact with the producers directly to see what we could do. Also, my gut plays a large part in the stocking decisions I make!





CHUTNEYS AND PICKLES STOCK UP NOW

Demand for chutneys and pickles increases as Christmas approaches. We talk to top producers and find out what is on offer



It's amazing how much drama a jar of chutney can create. Put out on taste, a good chutney will not only encourage sales of itself, but also of the food it's being paired with, whether that happens to be a Swedish flatbread, an English artisanal crumbly cheese or a local ham. It can also draw attention to your other chutneys and pickles, shelves of which are regular features of so many farm shops and delis. People expect to see well-stocked shelves of these items. Chutneys are as readily associated with farm shops as olive oils are with delicatessen.

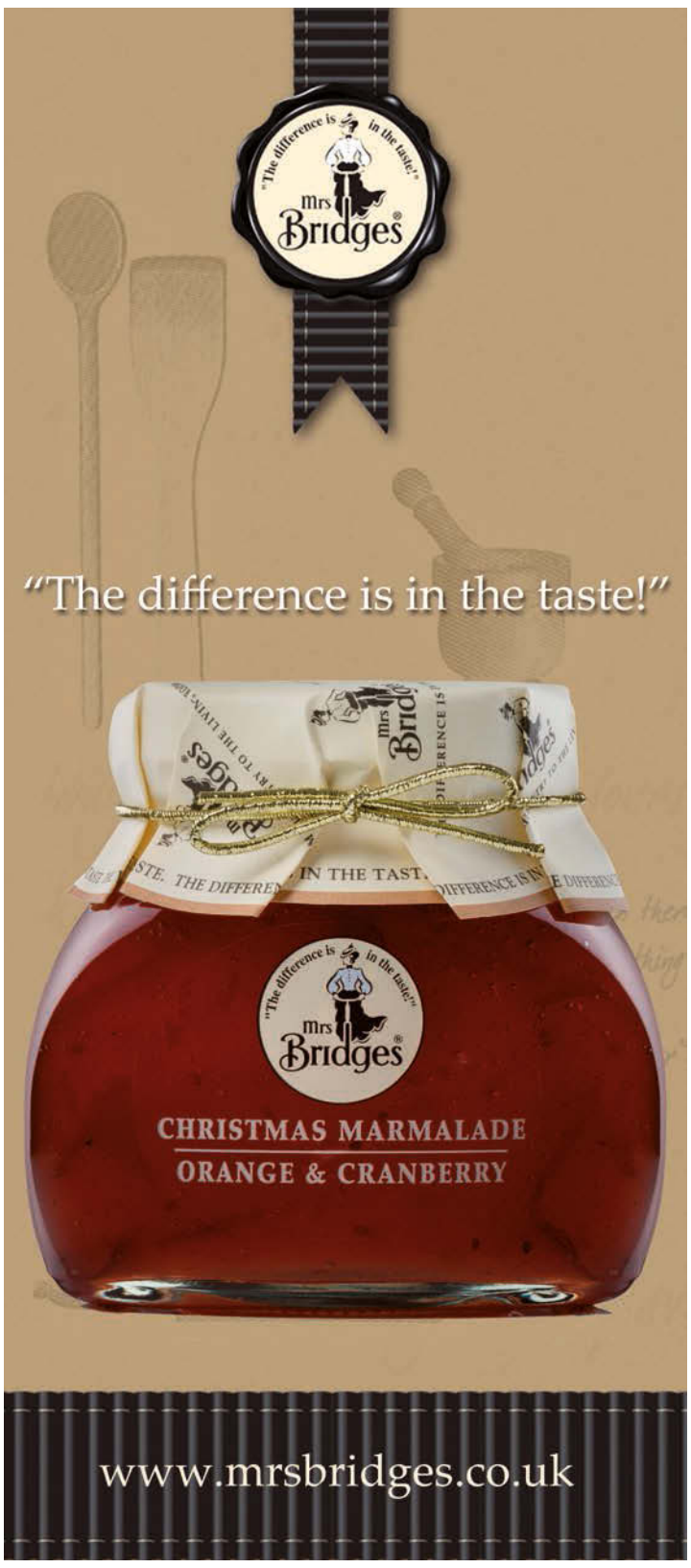
Customers who pop in for a particularly piquant chutney which isn't available in the local supermarket will spend on other items too. Pickles are unlikely to have quite the same draw, but like chutney, these useful products can be cross-sold with all kinds of cold meats and cheese and like chutney, they work well when put out on taste. Anyone selling cheese, Cheddar in particular, should be stocking a basic farmhouse pickle, and pickles for curry will always be in demand. The relatively small amount of shelf space they require means that both these commodities will top the ambient stocking list for a lot of retailers.

Innovative products

Tracklements is one of the most recognisable brands on the shelves of farm shops and delis and has achieved its deep market penetration, says Becky Vale, marketing director, "one customer at a time!" In fact, she says, "Tracklements has been making speciality condiments for over 45 years. We were the first manufacturer of wholegrain mustards in the UK and since 1970, have continued to introduce new and innovative products to the marketplace. We were also the first to make onion marmalade, for example."

The range of pickles and chutneys is a particularly broad one. "There are currently 58 products in the Tracklements range," Becky says, "including eight chutneys, four pickles and eight relishes (which we think fall somewhere between a pickle and a chutney). As well as the tried and tested favourites, we also experiment with new recipes every year with our limited edition products – these can be anything from a relish to a chutney to a ketchup. These provide interest at the fixture as well as a great way to see what new flavours people love." Strong sales can be expected for some products in the range as Christmas approaches. "Piccalilli and Christmas Chutney as well as Cranberry & Port and Fig Relish are all Christmas favourites," Becky says, "and this year we have some great gift tins and new Le Parfait jars to boost festive sales for retailers.

"Because chutneys are so versatile, we find that each of our eight flavours has a dedicated following. Some, like Apple & Cider Brandy, are perfect for dolloping on the side of the cheese plate whilst others, like our Apricot & Ginger are just as at home being served alongside a curry or stirred through couscous. Some are beautifully sweet, like Mango Chutney and others, like the Plum Chutney, are sharp and tart. On the whole, Tracklements follows the original precepts of chutney making and we have found our most popular and successful best sellers are the most traditional and versatile flavours. Despite such wide market reach, these products







> “Chutneys are as readily associated with farm shops as olive oils are with delicatessen”

are still handmade, Becky says, "in small batches in exactly the same way that home cooks have been making them for decades. We use the same open pans that we've been using for 45 years and only ingredients that you'd find in your own kitchen."

Consumer interest

Another familiar name on the shelves of farm shops and delis is the Hawkshead Relish Company, which is based in the Lake District village of the same name. They've become well-known, says sales and marketing manager Kate Nicholson, because "the consumer looks to independent speciality food retailers for the very best in food, both in variety and quality. Hawkshead Relish has always been consistent in producing a truly handmade range which never compromises on distinction, as well as leading in innovative taste trends that maintain consumer interest."

Christmas is a time when retailers really need to be pushing their preserves, she says. "Chutneys and pickles have the ability to transform a meal; of course, there are the traditional favourites which are almost compulsory on the festive table, but providing an array of contrasting preserves ensures the leftovers become inspired and enjoyable." The company offers retailers a wide choice. "Our total range comprises of over 100 sweet and savoury preserves," Kate says, "with 30 of those chutneys and pickles. Each is a very individual creation, with flavour combinations that suit various foods and menus, from beef, cheese and chicken to lamb to fish. Over the seasonal period we sell a multitude of festive creations; however, our Christmas Chutney is the outstanding favourite. I like to describe it as Christmas in a jar, as it encompasses what you would expect of rich festive flavours. Fresh apricots and colourful cranberries are combined with sensational spices, which make it perfect with turkey, pâté and cheese."



All Hawkshead products are "handmade with fresh ingredients," says Kate. "from the preparation through to cooking in open pans, our hands-on approach ensures every tiny detail of the process is observed by us." Among Hawkshead's more innovative products is the Bloody Mary Chutney, launched in 2014. Ingredients for Hawkshead products, she says, are sourced from trusted producers. "We have a long and established relationship with local suppliers who have a absolute regard for the quality we demand from the array of ingredients we use, ensuring our products maintain their consistent high standing."

In the run-up to Christmas, Kate says, retailers can expect certain varieties to perform well. "Our festive favourites are Christmas Chutney, Boxing Day Chutney and the delicious Michaelmas Relish, which is also perfect as a party dip and extremely colourful in canapés. Of course, our Cranberry Sauce is a must but equally, Fig & Cinnamon Chutney provides seasonal warmth to Continental meats and cheeses as do the Pickled Damsons."

SAUCY CHUTNEY & PICKLES

Stokes sauces are a notable presence on the shelves of independent food retailers, and Stokes' chutney and pickle range benefits from the acceptance of the Stokes name in farm shops and delis, and also, says Charlotte Nicholson, marketing and PR executive, "by using the finest ingredients and not cutting corners in production." Pickles are made, she adds, using the most traditional methods.

Stokes produces nine varieties of pickles and chutneys, Charlotte says, and the best-sellers just now are "Red Onion Marmalade, Sticky Pickle, Chilli Jam, Fig Relish and Beetroot Relish." These sell sell "really well in the run-up to Christmas. Of course, it goes without saying our classics such as Tomato Ketchup, Bloody Mary Ketchup & Brown Sauce all sell really well too."

Good merchandising

Cottage Delight produces 22 varieties of chutney and pickle products. The company pours much energy into "continual investment in new product development," says Sarah Williams, product manager. Strong displays will boost sales, she says. "We're great believers in the power of good merchandising, and by placing products together in-store to create eye catching displays, you can really drive brand





CHRISTMAS

STOCK CHECK — 2015 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



HAWKSHEAD RELISH PORK PIE PICKLE
Gluten-free, nut-free and vegetarian, this pickle is made with ripe tomatoes, peppers and crunchy baby silverskin onions,
hawksheadrelish.com



STOKES STICKY PICKLE
Made with crunchy garden vegetables, black treacle and blended spices, Stokes Sticky Pickle is a perfect pickle; use with creme fraiche for a pre-dinner dip, too.
stokessauces.co.uk



TRACKLEMENTS ORIGINAL ONION MARMALADE
Enriched by redcurrant juice which makes it a marvellous accompaniment for pâtés, terrines and cheese.
tracklements.co.uk



WELSH BREAKFAST MARMALADE
Welsh Speciality Foods' The Great Taste of Wales range includes handmade chutneys and preserves with a high fruit content.
welshspecialityfoods.co.uk



GRANNY'S SECRET AYVAR SPREAD
Made to an ancient Balkan recipe, where best quality red peppers are fire roasted, then slow cooked with only little salt and oil.
grannyssecret.co.uk



TIPTREE RED ONION CHUTNEY
New from Tiptree – the rich taste of sweet caramelised red onions (48%) is perfect for burgers, barbecued sausages or stirred into beef gravy.
tiptree.com



ROSEBUD PRESERVES GREAT YORKSHIRE PICKLE
A dark, rich British pantry classic, prepared with traditional garden vegetables and Black Sheep Ale.
rosebudpreserves.co.uk



THE BAY TREE GARLIC PICKLE
A delicious pickle to serve with curries or as an appetiser to serve with poppadoms or naan.
thebaytree.co.uk



OUSE VALLEY CHEESEBOARD CHUTNEY
Cheeseboard Chutney has a fresh fruity flavour with fragrant spices, making it the perfect companion for cheese.
ousevalleyfoods.com



CHAZWINKLES BEETROOT
The delicious Chazwinkle's Beetroot can be used to create a meal, as a party nibble or as a traditional condiment.
chazwinkles.co.uk

awareness and sales. The brightly coloured jars of our Festive Chutney really liven up a retail space at Christmas, and our new hamper-sized mop tops add colour and variety to any hamper creation."

Christmas is the ideal time to push chutneys and pickles, Sarah says, adding "both chutneys and pickles are ideal hamper items that sell extremely well year-on-year. Seasonal ingredients such as spiced cranberry and blackberry, mandarin, dates, brandy and orange work extremely well.

For Christmas 2015, Cottage Delight has introduced gift products featuring our most popular chutney and pickle flavours – we have created packs for all pockets and types of consumers whilst including the flavours that sell really well."

"Traditional varieties such as Caramelised Onion Chutney and Sweet Apple Chutney are currently best-sellers and our new Caramelised Red Onion Chutney is also performing well. These chutneys are very versatile; they work well with cheeseboards, cold meats, tarts and quiches, and appeal to a variety of tastes. Traditional flavours always sell well and those that work well with a variety of cheeses are always popular – Old English Chutney with Cider, Caramelised Onion Chutney and Sweet Apple Chutney



are great sellers for us at Christmas. "Our Chutney for Strong Cheese, Sweet Garlic Pickle and Poppadom Chutney are by far our most unusual flavours but the majority of our chutneys and pickles are innovative in that they blend ingredients that you wouldn't usually put together. Within our Chutney for Strong Cheese product for example, we have blended fig, lemon and balsamic vinegar to create a unique rich flavour that works well with both cheese and cold meats. Our single gift orcio jars make an ideal gift and we expect Cheese Board Chutney, Festive Chutney, Christmas Pickle and Ploughman's Piccalilli to sell really well thanks to their brightly coloured mop tops which also include serving suggestions."

The range is one which works year-round, Sarah says. "Our chutneys work brilliantly as a store cupboard staple too as they're a handy ingredient for creating delicious recipes including tarts and tray bakes and they make a wonderful glaze for ribs and pork chops."

> "Both chutneys and pickles are ideal hamper items that sell extremely well year-on-year"



MEET THE PRODUCER

A truly British heritage is at the heart of artisan food producer, PINK'S

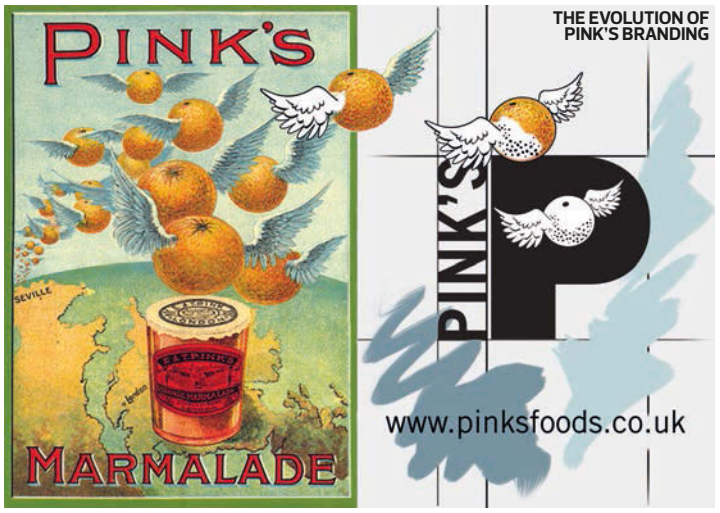


Britishness is a card frequently dealt by producers in the fine food industry, but few can lay claim to a heritage as illustrious as Fiona Pink, reviver of her family's iconic artisan food brand.

Fiona explains, "PINK'S was a small family business. My great grandfather, Thomas Pink took over the helm in the late 1880s, and within five years he was a dominant food producer of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The company's ethos was to make foods which were pure and untainted; in the 1880s there were no food laws, so in order to make an extra shilling, food manufacturers contaminated food with substances such as chalk to extend flour, or borax to prolong the shelf life of meat."

British ingredients were key to the success of the company, which promoted the benefits of locally-sourced produce long before the current zeitgeist came to fruition (over a century, in fact). "All of the fruit PINK'S used was from Britain," says Fiona, "apart from the oranges for PINK'S Marmalade which they sourced from Seville." This connection with the Continent proved to be the inspiration for the brand's much-loved poster from 1890, which sees "winged oranges flying into Britain from Seville".





PINK'S was sold just after the First World War, but not before the business's unit in Bermondsey was sizeable enough to produce 8,000 tonnes of jam and marmalade a year, and gain a contract to provide plum jam for the war's British troops – "it was large even by today's standards," says Fiona.

Understandably, Fiona feels a familial connection to the company: "I was raised with the history of PINK'S and have various artefacts at home – photographs and ship's bells among many others – and had always wanted to recreate the business. I loved the original 'Orange with Wings' poster, and this was my inspiration for the PINK'S logo we use today.

"Moving to the isle of Wight from London with my children, I decided the time was right to revive PINK'S. The market for jams and marmalades was very competitive, so I decided to go down a different route – I started with chilli jellies and chutneys, then added a range of eight different types of pesto including Smoked Tomato Pesto, Rocket & Lemon and Watercress & Wasabi Pesto.

Adventurous consumers and retailers alike will appreciate Fiona's pro-home cooking ethos, a reaction to the current "plethora of cooking programmes which, surprisingly, are not curbing the boom in ready-made food sales." PINK'S offers recipe cards to its British and European customers and stockists: "I think people are interested in eating more healthily on a regular basis, but sometimes they're home late and tired after work, and it's too complicated and time-consuming to make something from scratch. Additionally, people are often nervous of entertaining, so I wanted to introduce a range of jarred products which customers can use to jazz up simple foods – and for PINK's to be a brand that customers know they can rely on. Our pestos are fabulous for quick suppers or lunches, and delicious when paired with chicken, fish, meat, pasta and bread."



It's not only PINK'S history which sets it apart from other food producers in the same field, as Fiona explains. "All of our products are made by hand and are truly vegetarian – for our pestos we use a vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese which is made in Sussex, plus citrus pectin for our jellies and agar for our chutneys." The company's dedication to quality doesn't stop there: "We don't use any dried ingredients, which is why our products have such tremendous flavour and aroma," says Fiona. "We grow and smoke our own tomatoes and peppers here on the island and use the high quality rapeseed oil from Hampshire's Cold Pressed Oil Company rather than a cheaper blended one, and have our own production unit on the Isle of Wight. All the ingredients we use are very high quality, and this is reflected in the taste" – no wonder PINK'S has won 15 food awards in four years.

The future is looking rosy for PINK's – new launches are scheduled for January 2016, and a presence at Speciality & Fine Food Fair (at Cotswold Fayre's stand) in September offers retailers a great opportunity to find out more about this one-of-a-kind company and taste its products for themselves. A blend of British ingredients, foodie inspiration and a history to be proud of, PINK'S is bringing a truly unique (and delicious) offering to the fine food table.





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fiona@pinksfoods.co.uk
WWW.PINKSFOODS.CO.UK

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HOW TO SELL: FESTIVE BAKES

Festive staples Christmas puddings and fruit cakes play a key role in your winter stock



Christmas cakes and puddings may be a divisive dessert around the dinner table on the big day, but there's no denying that they're must-stock products during the festive season. Whether you go down the traditional route or shake things up a bit by trying something new is up to you, but we would err on the side of compromise – while your store may be proud of its traditional leanings, a lighter (possibly even fruit-less) cake or pudding could go down a treat for those consumers who usually steer well clear of the heavy conventional sort.

If you've considered creating an own-brand range of cakes and puddings but not known where to turn for advice, you're in luck. Ludlow Food Centre has made a name for itself in the local area for creating delicious classic festive cakes and puddings on-site, and bakery manager Hazel Webb shares her advice below.

With all the talk about tradition, it can be difficult to forget the value of looking a bit further afield for your festive baked products. Panettone, for example, makes for a tasty Italian alternative to Christmas cake, as well as a socially acceptable Christmas Day breakfast. German stollen, too, is a popular choice. This isn't a stocking decision to take lightly, however – as both items are available cheaply in some supermarkets, take care to choose one which will set you apart from the crowd.

Lynne Mallinson of Country Puddings knows a thing or two about what consumers want when it comes to puds, especially when the festive season rolls around. "Christmas is a time for families to get together, and traditions and heritage play a key part in the whole Christmas experience," she says. "Our Luxury Christmas Pudding is a slight adaption of my grandma's recipe, and knowing that her recipe is enjoyed by so many gives us great pleasure." Tweaking the traditional seems to be the way forward for Lynne: "Variations of the classics seem to have become popular lately, as companies experiment with flavours and textures. I'd like to think that classics triumph at the end of the day."



Bruce Langlands, director of food at Harrods, offers an insight into the legendary retailer's festive stocking list

Do your customers opt for tradition or trend at Christmas?
Our range typically appeals to both. Our traditional offer of Christmas puddings always includes an element of us leading trends with ingredients and packaging formats, e.g. plum melting middle Christmas pudding which combines traditional ingredients in a contemporary format.

Christmas puddings and fruit cakes – do you sell many?
We sell the equivalent of over four double decker buses in weight for puddings and cakes. Our Christmas puddings are award-winning, and our fruit cake recipe has improved this year with the addition of Courvoisier VSOP.

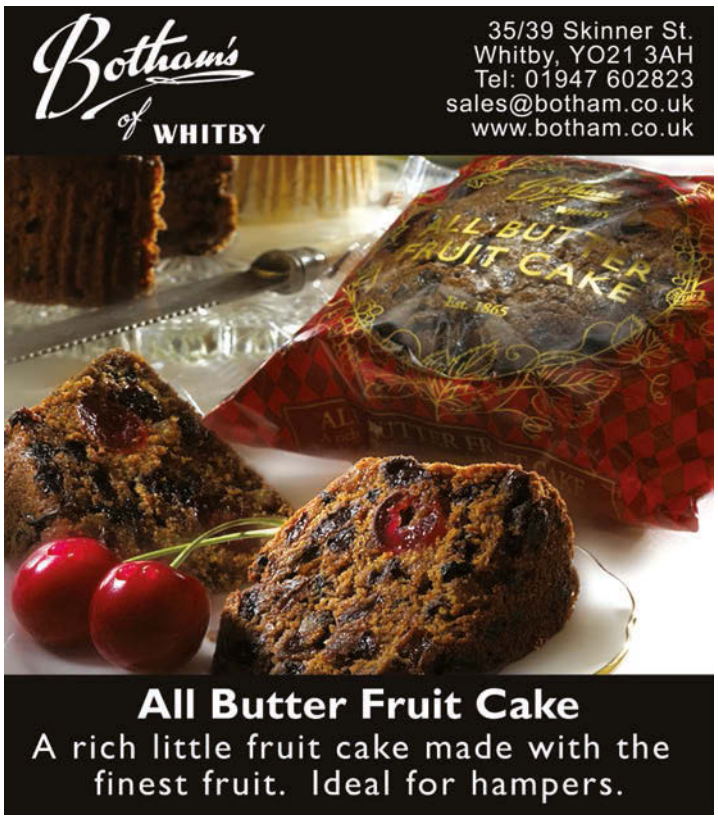
What varieties do you sell, and which are the most popular?
This year we are excited to offer a marrons glacés and macadamia pudding wreath full of juicy vine fruits and hand-finished with toppings of marrons glacé. We will also offer our award-winning Decadent pudding and Classic pudding alongside a non-alcoholic version, all of which are made to traditional family recipes.

Plus, an exuberant plum pudding in a ceramic bowl will also be offered this year.

What fruit cake and Christmas pudding brands do you sell?
For the festive season we will have Cartright & Butler's traditional iced Christmas cake as well as puddings from Carved Angel.

Do you sell own-brand fruit cakes/Christmas puddings?
A significant number of customers return each year as they want something that is special, exclusive and made using only the finest ingredients. Our puddings are so popular that we sell them all year round.

> "A significant number of customers return each year as they want something that is special, exclusive and made using only the finest ingredients"





> “Harrods has seen a move towards more luxury ingredients with great provenance. As a result, we use specific varieties of fruits in our puddings, e.g., victoria plums, vostizza currants and Chilean flame raisin”





Hazel Webb, bakery manager at Ludlow Food Centre shares the thinking behind the retailer's strong-selling own-branded Christmas cakes and puddings

We produce our own Ludlow Food Centre Christmas Puddings, available in 230g (£3.99), 450g (£6.99) and 1.3kg (£13.99). The bakery team also makes a 7'' traditional Christmas cake decorated with a twist of dried fruit including candied orange, dried cranberries and a cinnamon stick which retails at £29.99. We also make small finger slices decorated with our homemade marzipan and icing.

Many people do not have the time or inclination to bake their own Christmas cakes and puddings, as they are very time-consuming to make. Our traditional fruit cakes are usually matured for two months and are regularly fed with brandy for a truly authentic taste.

Our Christmas pudding is a combination of two family recipes. My grandmother Connie taught me to cook and it's partly her own invention mixed with one of our other bakers, Brenda's recipe. Most people are looking for traditional flavours at Christmas, although we do have plans to experiment with some alternative recipes in future.



Our Christmas range is always displayed in a prime location at the front of the food hall. This works very well as last year we sold over 20,000 mince pies. There are also hamper options that contain our Christmas cakes and puddings. In terms of special offers there is usually a three for £10 promotion on the small Christmas puddings.

The Christmas range is an essential part of the business. We continue to see increased demand year on year – we sold out last year and that was after increasing production by an additional 10%. We start preparing the cakes and puddings in August, then by December we have someone working an eight hour shift purely dedicated to making Ludlow Food Centre mince pies.

> “When making an own-brand cake or pudding, you need to start with a good recipe and adapt according to your personal taste. It's all about experimenting and collaborating on recipes to get the best possible result”

STOCK CHECK



CARTMEL STICKY FIGGY PUDDING

A pud packed with moist figs, gooey deliciousness with hints of Christmas spice, citrus and chocolate, it's certainly a special treat.

cartmelvillageshop.co.uk



COLE'S SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE CHRISTMAS PUDDING

A Classic Christmas pudding but with an added traditional lucky sixpence to bring the finder wealth and good luck in the year to come.

colestrad.co.uk



LOTTIE SHAW'S SERIOUSLY GOOD RICH FRUIT CAKE

Lovingly made from a traditional recipe handed down three generations and using the finest fruits, soaked and plumped overnight in Yorkshire dark stout for that sticky richness.

lottieshaws.co.uk



THE BAY TREE APRICOT & GINGER CAKE

An ideal sweet treat for anyone that likes their cake a little lighter. This recipe incorporates juicy apricots and the deliciously warming spice of ginger – the perfect pairing.

thebaytree.co.uk



CHIOSTRO DI SARONNO

Made in the city of Saronno, this contemporary packaged Pannetone is made from a traditional Italian recipe using the best ingredients.

empirebespokefoods.com



NYAKERS GINGERSNAPS

Produced in Sweden, these high quality gingersnaps are a great gift for Christmas. They are made using old family recipes where taste and quality are the most important features.

bespoke-foods.co.uk





DRINKS FOR CHRISTMAS

At Christmas, customers will want a matching wine or spirit for their fine food purchase – or an artisanal soft drink

There are two very obvious peaks in drinks sales for the independent food retailer. Summer is one, when warm weather promotes demand for refreshing, thirst-quenching soft drinks, lighter beers, white wines and roses, preferably ones which have a spark of originality and aren't available at the local supermarket. Demand for drinks at Christmas is very much broader and, as with anything else, it's important that you gauge demand and stock wisely. You need to give the impression of plenty, and be able to fulfil sudden spikes in demand without finding yourself left with egg on your face or eggnog in your stockroom come the twelfth day of Christmas. But at least alcohol keeps! It goes without saying that Christmas is a time of great conviviality, and if you have a license to sell alcohol, now is your time to get your money's worth out of it.

The traditional stalwarts of the Christmas alcohol market have long been Port for the Stilton and brandy for the Christmas pudding, but times have moved on and all sorts of alcohol can do well for you, if you know your customers and their tastes. That's a big ask, so perhaps you will want to play a little safer. A small but well-chosen selection of moderately-priced red and white wines, along with a couple of special and higher-priced examples of each, can adequately serve the needs of the smaller establishment. Your wine merchant or supplier will be happy to advise. Cabernet Sauvignon, Rioja and Sauvignon Blancs are generally safe bets with a wide audience, but you will better be able to gauge the tastes of your customers. The period from just before Christmas through to the New Year is crammed with celebrations, of course, so offering some form of bubbly, whether that is Champagne, Cava or Prosecco, can satisfy the needs of the party-goers and throwers. Port is still linked in a lot of people's minds with Stilton, but other blues may serve as well, if not better, and it really is worth carrying out pairing tests before you recommend a cheese to accompany a port.



Obviously, your choice of wine, port and bubblies will take into account taste, price and the ability of the product to promote itself as something offering your shop another point of difference. A little story to add to its price card will do no harm. With pubs declining in number or specialising in food rather than drink, more people are staying home to do their celebrating. With this in mind, it makes sense to have in stock a good selection of beers. These can pair as well as wine or whisky with many cheeses and are a great accompaniment to light meals.



Whisky is a specialised subject and if you don't know your Islays from your Speysides, perhaps best left alone. That said, it has made long strides from its traditional image and new whiskies with non-traditional names such as The Peat Monster from Compass Box are aimed at attracting a wider market. There has, perhaps, never been a better time for bottled ales. Breweries and micro-breweries abound, and seem to be delighting in outdoing each other in offering a huge range of varieties. Whether your taste is for chocolate ales or wheat beers, you will find what you want. It's usually easy to add a selection of good beers from your locality, too. There is also a growing demand for well-hopped craft beers, whose distinctive flavours are building a strong and loyal following.

Soft drinks

There are plenty of soft drinks available this Christmas which offer the sort of warm or red berry flavours people associate with Christmastime. Some of these cordials and soft drinks can pack a punch, too. Gran Stead's Ginger Co provides a range of products which seem ideal for people who for one reason or another, forego the demon drink at Christmas. The company offers retailers a small but highly select choice. The current line comprises of Mellow Ginger, Fiery Ginger (which contains reduced sugar), Still Lemonade, Lemonade with Zing, Blackcurrant with Zing and, new for 2015, Spiced Ginger Punch.



"Gran Stead's Mellow Ginger is our best-seller," says Chris Knox, Gran Stead's managing director, "but Fiery Ginger, launched in 2011, is catching up. While all the drinks are free from artificial preservatives, flavourings and sweeteners, Gran Stead's Fiery Reduced Sugar Ginger Drink further taps into increasing consumer demand for lower calorie soft drinks, with 40% less sugar and no artificial sweeteners; we're finding people are really keen to reduce their sugar intake while not compromising on flavour. And, of course, we have high hopes for our brand new drink, the Spiced Ginger Punch."

The drinks are made by hand, making them a good fit with





independent food retailers. "All the drinks are made by the two of us, Rosemary and I," Chris says, "in small batches of 750 litres. We're based in a converted dairy on a farm in Sussex. Each bottle is handled at every stage, but as the operation has grown from the days of making 20 litres in a bucket, we have gradually incorporated some automation. We now have the luxury of a mixing tank, a mechanised capper and a labelling machine, but apart from that, it's a very hands-on process which you can see by the video on our website. We now produce in excess of 100,000 bottles a year."

The secret of the drinks' appeal lies in the fact that quality has always been prioritised. "Since the days when my parents made Gran Stead's Mellow Ginger in their domestic kitchen," Chris says, "the quality and flavour of the product has been at the heart of brand loyalty. It's significant that my parents loved the original ginger drink so much they bought the company. Rosemary and I now make six drinks and the flavours are unique – there's nothing like them. They are full-bodied and big on taste and appeal to all ages. For those avoiding alcohol they are perfect, but they also make excellent mixers and cocktail bases, so you can't go wrong. Also, since the re-brand, the bottles look very distinctive and we find many customers buy them as gifts. We believe awards are important, too, and over the years have amassed quite a collection – they help by giving that extra seal of approval and can increase consumer confidence if they haven't actually tried the product before."

Artisanal drinks

A key player in the soft drinks market for many independent retailers is Luscombe Drinks, the Devon-based producers of juices, lemonades, crushes, ginger beers and now, cider.



As winter approaches, says managing director Gabriel David, "it's cold and miserable, dank and dark. People shop for things that will warm them, and cheer them up." Not surprisingly, he says, "the warming effects of fresh ginger and the festive aspect to bubblies and Champagne replacements become particularly attractive to drinks buyers at Christmas."

This is an ideal time for pushing artisanal soft drinks, he says, not only because there are increased opportunities for food matching. Retailers should realise, he says, "that soft drinks are not simply a summer offer (e.g, cokes, sodas and homemade lemonades). Good soft drinks often take the place of a glass of wine or a bottle of beer."



Your stock of soft drinks should be as wide and varied as a good wine list, Gabriel says. "Consider that 30% of adults don't drink alcohol. If you can show them that you value them, by sourcing and offering them something like a Luscombe that readily competes with its traditional alcoholic cousins, they will appreciate the effort. In the main, supermarkets cannot make that offer, and this is where the independents can lead."

Luscombe currently offers 23 varieties in its range. "Four of these," Gabriel says, "have a fresh root ginger base (Hot Ginger Beer, Cool Ginger Beer, Passionate Ginger Beer and Apple with Fresh Root Ginger). Luscombe also has a further five varieties which could be matched against Champagne as a celebratory drink, these being Elderflower Bubbly, Damascene Rose Bubbly, Raspberry Crush and our Madagascan Vanilla)."

The range lends itself well to pairing with food, especially at Christmas, Gabriel says. "Ginger goes well with other spicy Christmas flavours, while Cranberry has the acidity needed for the rich meals associated with Christmas. If seafood is on the menu, Luscombe St Clements pairs very well, especially with smoked fish. The subtle Blueberry Crush goes very well with cured meats, dried hams and the like." Although Luscombe's business "is no longer seasonal," Gabriel says, "we have very strong sales at Christmas and well into January. The consumer believes there is better than mediocre and they ask for it all year round."

> "With pubs declining in number or specialising in food rather than drink, more people are staying home to do their celebrating. With this in mind, it makes sense to have in stock a good selection of beers"

STOCK CHECK

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE • 2015 •



BROCKMANS GIN
This 40% ABV super-premium gin made in England brims with botanicals including coriander, juniper, blueberries, blackberries and Valencian orange peel.
brockmansgin.com



BELVOIR SPICED GINGER PUNCH
Made with cooked fresh ginger for a satisfyingly fiery bite, this punch is mingled with orange and lemon juices, plus real exotic spices.
belvoirfruitfarms.co.uk



ADNAMS SINGLE MALT VODKA
Adnams Single Malt East Coast Vodka has a soft, creamy elegance, nougat and glace cherry aromas, and a refreshing zing.
adnams.co.uk



GRAN STEADS SPICED GINGER PUNCH
Gran Steads' new aromatic drink delivers a punchy hit of warming ginger delight and is a sure-fire hit with adults and children alike.
gransteadsginger.co.uk



LUSCOMBE PASSIONATE GINGER BEER
Fresh root ginger is milled at Luscombe, steeped, then pressed and blended with passion fruit juice to create this innovative drink.
luscombe.co.uk



FOLKINGTON'S PURE TOMATO JUICE
Made with tomatoes from Northern Spain, this is the perfect antidote to Christmas indulgence – and makes a perfect Boxing Day Bloody Mary.
www.folkingtons.com



MEET THE PRODUCER

On-trend packaging and handmade biscuits are giving Shortbread House of Edinburgh an edge in the shortbread market









When a high quality product meets cutting edge packaging, the results can be explosive, as Rupert Laing and the Shortbread House team have discovered. Rupert reports that Shortbread House of Edinburgh has seen sales rise by over 50% this financial year. Following the launch of the shortbread in bright, on-trend packaging in August 2014, his job has "been all about staying on top of that increase."

The newly-repackaged line of tins, canisters and boxes features a modern thistle design behind strong, vibrant colours. If these tins don't have the appearance of traditional shortbread tins, then that's all part of the Laing family's plan to gradually break shortbread free from its tartan straightjacket.

Shortbread is in high demand at Christmas, he says, not only as a seasonal luxury but as a gifting item too. While Shortbread House of Edinburgh does "do some Christmas packaging, we don't focus on that exclusively," Rupert says. "This way, it's not completely pigeon-holed." While conceding that Christmas will always be shortbread's finest hour, Rupert would like to see perceptions of the biscuit change and the new packaging has gone a long way towards widening the appeal beyond that of a seasonal gifting item. The new-look tins are designed to appeal more to young buyers, perhaps, than the traditional shortbread consumer. "Shortbread is increasingly being seen as a gift that you can give at any time of year," Rupert says.

While the tins for the seven flavour-strong shortbread range are sleek and contemporary, the packaging for the Sporting range of Bites and the Mini Sweet Oatie Biscuits employs an engaging humour, the Bites going for caricatures of Scottish sportsmen playing with the biscuits, while the Sweet Oaties adopt a graphic of a sheep and shepherd. "We've come up with some really fun and exciting designs and the reaction from retailers has been incredible," Rupert says. "For the first time, and with the help of Cotswold Fayre, we have started making inroads into the wider UK market." Both the stylish and the humorous packaging have been notably successful. "Sales have rocketed ever since we introduced the new packaging," Rupert says. "It's been a constant battle to keep up with that. It helps that the bright colours are attractive to buyers in the summer as well."

But never mind the new packaging, it's the product itself which is the really important thing, Rupert emphasises. "The quality of the ingredients is a big thing for us, particularly the butter," he says. "We always try to make sure that the quality of every ingredient is as good as we can possibly get. We are very particular about the butter and the flour is made from locally-sourced wheat. That's the key for us in producing a really good biscuit."

The family firm, which is run by Anthony and Fiona Laing, (assisted by Rupert, his brother Christopher and sister, Rebecca), has as its motto, 'shortbread without shortcuts'. "Although we've now got very slick packaging," Rupert says, "when it comes to actually producing the shortbread, we make sure we don't compromise or change what we do at all. So all of our biscuits in this range are individually cut by hand. We still cut all the finger biscuits with a knife to ensure we are getting the unique taste, texture and quality that you wouldn't get if you made it with machines. The process is like making them at home; we don't take any shortcuts with the baking of the biscuits."

Being cut by hand, Rupert says, "produces a very different texture of biscuit than you would get if it was pressed through a machine. You get a really rich biscuit with a nice crispness to it as well. This is why our biscuits have the unique taste and texture which has earned them 55 Great Taste Awards. Being always made to order, the biscuits are as fresh as possible. The products are given a shelf-life of just three to six months, which is long enough to last the season but short enough to ensure that the consumer always buys a product that is fresh."

The best seller is the Original Recipe Shortbread, which outsells the other varieties by "at least two to one," Rupert says, "although the Stem Ginger Chocolate & Orange and chocolate chip are close behind. The Handmade Mini Shortbread Biscuits with Sicilian Lemon are very popular too." The company also does well with its Dundee and Whisky Cakes and Scottish Oaties. The redesigned packaging has been an unqualified success. "Ever since we introduced it, sales have been soaring," Rupert says. "We could never have predicted it would create such a sensation."



PREVIEW: SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR 2015

The curtain is poised to rise at the theatre of fine food and drink, with the auditorium packed with the very best the speciality sector has to offer



After a record breaking year in 2014, Speciality & Fine Food Fair is back for 2015 – this time in a bigger venue and with more exhibitors than ever before. The doors open at Olympia National, London in September – with more than 12,000 buyers and industry professionals expected to pour through the doors.

Thousands of fine, and artisan, food and drink products will be showcased at the three day Fair – a must-attend trade event for the speciality sector. The foodie extravaganza is the place to discover new businesses, new products and new trends for retailers, hospitality providers and foodservice operators. At the heart of the event returns Speciality Chocolate Fair – a celebration of all things chocolate and the UK's largest showcase of luxury and gourmet chocolate.

Save the Date – Sept 6th, 7th and 8th

From start-ups to established brands, the speciality food and drink sector continues to thrive and lead the way. Olympia National will bring together a whole spectrum of new, unique and exciting products – from food on the go, snacks, soft drinks, condiments, meats, confectionery, bakery – as well as many teas and barista products. Show visitors can also be confident that their shelves or menus feature some of the finest and most exciting produce, by being the first to see the winners of those much coveted gold stars from the Great Taste Awards 2015.



IN DETAIL

SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR
WHEN: 6th, 7th, 8th Sept 2015
WHERE: Olympia National, London W14 8UX
TWITTER: Speciality_Food, SpecialityChoc
WEBSITE: specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk

> "Each year, Speciality & Fine Food Fair goes from strength to strength - which just goes to show how important the event is to the food and drink sector. This year, we have vastly increased our floor space, the number of exhibitors and of course the opportunities for buyers to discover a whole host of new artisan foods"
>
> **SORAYA GADELRAB, EVENT DIRECTOR**

Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2015
6–8 September | London Olympia | Incorporating Speciality Chocolatefair London
Cotswold Fayre Pavilion #CFPAVILION
1703 | 1803 | 1903 | 2003 | 2103

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Contact us: 03452 606060 | sales@cotswold-fayre.co.uk | www.cotswold-fayre.co.uk

YOUNG * FOOD & DRINK * ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR 2015



JOIN US FOR THE FINAL
12:15 - 13:00
MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER
SMALL BUSINESS FORUM



Speciality & Fine Food Fair: a food buyer's paradise

For 16 years, Speciality & Fine Food Fair has been a bustling, colourful marketplace – a hive of opportunity for both buyers and exhibitors. For buyers, it is the place to discover new artisan brands, and a place to be inspired by the vast array of products on show and the people that produce them. For exhibitors, it is the place to showcase, be discovered and build their brand! It is also about celebrating the heritage, innovation, passion and quality of fine food and drink. The Fair will bring together an incredible line-up of businesses of all shapes and sizes, from established brands such as Pipers Crisps, Teapigs, Warner Edwards, Sheppy's Cider, Belvoir Fruit Farms, and Cotswold Fayre to the very new – Freida's Pantry, JADU Tea, Cocofina, Your Tonic, Circle Cider, Champion & Reeves, Sibberi, The Little Herb Farm and The Live Coffee Company.



Where old meets new

More than 750 producers from across the UK and overseas are attending the show – more exhibitors than ever before. A stampede of start-up and relatively new food and drink producers signed up for this year's Fair and the popular Small Producers Village quickly sold out. Amongst the first time exhibitors that can be found in the village are Maynard's Farm, KOLD Cocktails, Morso Food, PACK'D, The Art of Curry, Green Lady, Miss Millar's Marvellous Marshmallows and Harry Brand. Elsewhere in the hall, food and drink producers with years of experience, remain faithful to the show, returning year after year.

#Trending

So what's new? The sector is witnessing a number of exciting and innovative new trends. Dominating the line-up are products made of, or incorporating, coconut – water, flour, oil and even snacks. Cocofina (Stand 1252) has created a range of luxury products including coconut flour, coconut sugar, coconut flakes and a coconut oil sachet which can be used for salad dressings and even conditioning hair! Cheeky Food Company (Stand V100) will be showcasing their range of savoury sprinkles including coconut.

Water is also enjoying something of a renaissance – thanks to the arrival of birch, maple and coconut waters – and experts are predicting that it is an area which will continue to grow. Exhibiting this year are several producers of water using birch sap. Astera Natural (Stand 3750) are launching Treevitalise, a natural, organic, undiluted and unsweetened birch tree sap and Sibberi (Stand 4822), have produced a new natural unsweetened birch water. Your Tonic (Stand V20) has created Buddha Water – sparkling pure organic birch sap in six flavours.

The free-from market has doubled in size in just five years in the UK to reach £365million, and it is expected to increase again by 50 per cent by 2019.

New product development and increased demand from those with food allergies as well as those who are opting for free from products as a lifestyle choice, is helping to fuel the boom.

SWEET VIRTUES

Stand:3161

Sweet Virtues is an innovative, health conscious food brand launching a fabulous new range of delicious products at Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2015; including flavoured 'halo' thins in Himalayan Pink Salt, Yerba Mate and Lemon and White Tea and Peppermint. For chocolate lovers – Superfood Drinking Chocolate, Chocolate Superfood Nut Butter and a range of super food powders.

sweetvirtues.co.uk



THE BIG CHEESE MAKING KIT

Stand: 1511A

A twist on to the current craze for baking at home, The Big Cheese Making Kit is designed for first-time cheese makers to use at home. This pack makes 40 batches of eight different varieties of cheese and comes complete with cheese moulds, herbs, spices and a recipe book. The Speciality & Fine Food Fair will see the launch of a Limited Edition range of the classic kit, which includes a Labneh cheese recipe in each pack. Ingredients for the kits are vegetarian, gluten-free and sourced organically where possible.

bigcheesemakingkit.com



> I am hoping to see new and innovative products. These areas do well for us and innovation in food is something that really grabs the customer's attention. Provenance, quality of product and a unique product is key for us. We also specialise in food gifting and, as a growing category, this is really important to us - so we will be looking for any brands with great gift ideas for the holiday season
>
> **ADRIAN BOSWELL, SELFRIDGES FOOD HALL CHEESE & DELI BUYER**





A helping hand

In a UK first, six new, ambitious food and drink businesses will be discovered – and invested in – at Speciality & Fine Food Fair. Presented by The Grocery Accelerator (Stands 3245 and 3350), the selected businesses stand to share an investment pot of £360,000 and a place on a break-through business accelerator programme. Previous winners from the programme launched in the spring include Rutland Charcuterie Company Ltd – the creators of premium quality British charcuterie products from Rutland, and Arctic Power Berries – the producers of 100 per cent pure and natural berry powders for sprinkling on porridge, cereals or smoothies.

Twelve new businesses will battle it out over the first two days of the Fair for a place on the unique six month coaching and mentoring programme. The winners will be announced at the Fair on September 8th.

Paddy Willis, co-founder of Plum Baby and one of The Grocery Accelerators said,"Speciality & Fine Food Fair is the show to be seen at if you are a young and innovative new food and drink business. It is a place to find inspiration and meet others on the same journey. We are delighted that our next six winners will make their pitches at the Fair – a show which launches, and celebrates, innovative and exciting new businesses."

CARPE NUX

Stand: V36

Carpe Nux offers a premium assortment of luxury sweet and savoury nuts. A delicious, sumptuous treat that also pairs well with beverages. The brand will showcase four exquisite flavours at Speciality & Fine Food Fair – handmade in England in small batches using only natural ingredients; Zesty Cashews, Fiery Macadamias, Soy-Glazed Walnuts, and Rum-Spiced Pecans.

carpenux.co.uk



MORSO

Stand: V49

Morso Food is a brand new business, showcasing a range of ready-to-finish risottos. The range is gluten-free and available in three flavours: Risotto with Mushrooms – containing fresh Portobello mushrooms, garlic, rosemary and red wine; Risotto with Pancetta & Fennel – combining fresh fennel, fennel seeds and rosemary; and Risotto with Prawns & Leeks – pairing tiger prawns with chilli and tarragon.

morsofood.com





EDWARD BERRY

Managing Director, Ludlow Food Centre

Why do you visit Speciality & Fine Food Fair?

In my experience of attending the show over the past few years, Speciality & Fine Food Fair is an opportunity to discover new gems. At Ludlow Food Centre, we are keen to support new business ventures and this is, undoubtedly, the best place to find the new brands that are serious about establishing themselves in the speciality market. Last year's exhibition had a real vibrancy, in terms of content, quality and quantity. There was a great deal to see and the Small Producer Village was particularly lively. In my opinion, it's a wonderful way to reinvigorate one's enthusiasm, even the most experienced buyer is sure to find inspiration from an array of over 750 suppliers.

What do you want to see this year?

One of the joys of SFFF is that you never quite know what you're going to find. Yes, there are elements that you can anticipate and others that you expect to see, but it's the unknown that brings me back.

Have you noticed any food trends?

As well as attending trade shows such as SFFF, we also receive product samples from prospective suppliers through the post. One area that we have seen develop rapidly is foods that tick the Free From box. Snacks and chocolates are another two categories that seem to be popular, with new brands appearing all the time. The other trend that I expect to see is the rise of quality convenience foods.

> "This show highlights unique artisan producers and products – all under one roof. It is like a small village where everyone meets and greets. It means that if you are looking for something special this is the place to be"
>
> **STEVE WALPOLE, CHEF CONSULTANT**



FINE FOOD LIVE



STEVE WALPOLE:
Host
Steve Walpole has been passionate about food and cooking since he started a Saturday job in a local restaurant at the age of fifteen! He went on to gain a whole host of college qualifications, diplomas and awards including Awards of Excellence winner in 2000, Parade de Chefs medals, Roux scholarship finalist and advanced culinary arts diplomas in both kitchen and larder work and pastry work. Now Steve heads up Steve Walpole Ltd with a wealth of experience and knowledge under his belt as a food consultant and freelance chef.



STEVEN BENNETT:
'Keeping It Seasonal and Local'
Steven learnt his trade growing up as a baker and butcher's son in Louth in Lincolnshire. He went on to gain experience in some of the region's top eateries including award-winning and Michelin-starred restaurants, and now runs multi award-winning bistro The Comfy Duck. He also runs hotel and hospitality consultancy Perfect Palate Solutions Ltd – The Lincolnshire Chef, bringing fine dining and award winning catering to private dining rooms, corporate events and weddings in and around Lincolnshire. Steven will be whipping up dishes using local, seasonal produce that's grown within a ten-mile radius of The Comfy Duck.



HULYA ERDAL:
The Turkish Food Scene Making Its Mark
From marketing to catering, Hulya has immersed herself in the world of food for more than twenty years. As a professionally trained chef, her roots and expertise in the Eastern Mediterranean kitchen has won her awards and cooking competitions. Now Hulya's passion is teaching others the love of food and promoting her belief that 'anyone can cook' with highly motivated, fun and exciting classes around London and the UK, as well as through her magazine writing and TV appearances.

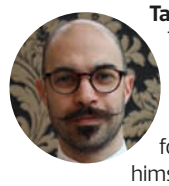


MARK GREENAWAY:
Grouse, Smoked Pearl Barley Risotto, Lavender Crumble
Mark Greenaway received nationwide acclaim following the opening of his eponymous restaurant in Edinburgh in February 2011. In 2012 it was the only restaurant in Scotland to be newly awarded three AA rosettes for outstanding cuisine, and is now named one of the top 100 restaurants in the UK by Restaurant Magazine and Square Meal. With a passion for Scottish ingredients, Mark uses only the very best local, seasonal produce, transforming them with modern techniques.





RACHEL DAVIES:
Sharing Experiences Through Food
Rachel will be cooking examples of the food and drink that she makes with her students – the menu will include a colourful autumn slaw with sesame and white miso dressing, and a kaffirinha to quench your thirst. After graduating in Cuisine and Patisserie from Le Cordon Bleu, Rachel went on to work with some of London's most inspiring chefs, and in 2010 started Rachel's Kitchen as a way to share her passion for great food using quality ingredients.



TONY RODD:
Tastes of Summer
Tony Rodd was a finalist in this year's MasterChef and forged a name for himself with his desserts and chocolate work. Since finishing the show, Tony has been setting up a private catering business cooking dinner parties for clients in their home. Tony is currently working on a book of recipes aimed at the amateur cook who wants to create beautiful desserts.



JANE PARKINSON:
Wines For Delis, Not Supermarkets
Jane Parkinson is an award-winning journalist, author and broadcaster. Winner of the International Wine & Spirit Competition Communicator of the Year 2014, she is a wine expert on BBC1's Saturday Kitchen Live, author of Wine & Food and contributor to the recently-released 30-Second Wine. Jane is the wine columnist for several UK magazines and judges in international competitions.

MORE THAN A SHOW

As well as a showcase of fine artisan brands, Speciality & Fine Food Fair is an experience. There will be a line-up of top chefs in Fine Food Live, all of whom will be participating in live cookery demonstrations. A place to keep up to speed with flavour trends and learn about the latest cooking techniques. The presenters include Mark Greenaway, chef patron at Restaurant Mark Greenaway; Hulya Erdal, chef consultant of Made by the Chef, and Steven Bennett, executive head chef at The Lincolnshire Chef and The Comfy Duck, while the host is Steve Walpole, chef consultant and freelance chef.

> "It will give chefs and owners the scope to broaden their menus, be more open to allergen free cooking, understand food from a particular region of the world, and embrace the current street food scene"
>
> **HULYA ERDAL**







SMALL BUSINESS FORUM



NATASHA CORRETT: 'Creating A Tribe'

Honestly Healthy CEO Natasha Corrett is a self-taught gourmet vegetarian chef, entrepreneur and author of three best-selling cookbooks. Honestly Healthy started in Natasha's kitchen in 2010, when she was cooking over 50 meals a day and then personally delivering them in her car to offices around London. The company grew organically, and through word of mouth she was invited to present her food to Harrods, Selfridges and Harvey Nichols to launch the brand.



JOHN STAPLETON: Five Things Everyone Should Know About Building a Strong Consumer Brand

John Stapleton is a results-focused entrepreneur, business leader, CEO and non-executive director with over 25 years' experience in creating and building consumer brands in the FMCG sector in both the UK and the USA. A founder of three successful start-ups, John is an expert at developing new and innovative consumer-focused products and categories and has wide-ranging experience in operational management and strategic leadership roles.



ALEX AND KITTY SHEPHERD: 'Testing the Market — a Start-ups Guide to Launching Your Food Business

Sisters Alex and Kitty Shepherd have helped over 150 start-ups launch their business dream through Startisans — Partridges' scheme to help start ups and artisans in the food business launch themselves in London. In 2011, Kitty helped found the Startisans Scheme, which provides start ups and artisans in the food business with a physical platform in great central London locations, as well as providing mentoring and support throughout the process. This was the first of its kind and Kitty helped push the new-wave of start ups in London, especially in areas not traditionally associated with the movement.



EMMA MACDONALD: How to Navigate Business Growth – An Honest Insight

When trained chef Emma Macdonald set up The Bay Tree Food Company from her mother's kitchen table twenty years ago, little did she envisage her homemade range of chutneys and preserves making such a lasting impression. Throughout the years, Emma's role has remained distinctly hands on — she continues to take the lead role in recipe development and oversees production and the ongoing expansion of the business. Having swollen from a modest list of eight original products to almost 200 lines today – the ethos that The Bay Tree Food Company was founded on, remains the same.



EXPERT ADVICE

This year's Small Business Forum will feature a series of talks giving practical advice on increasing consumer loyalty and ensuring a company has longevity. Speakers include Natasha Corrett, CEO Honestly Healthy Ltd; Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of Cotswold Fayre and John Stapleton, co-founder New Covent Garden Soup Co and Little Dish.

The forum will also see talks on making a success of a start-up business by Startisans founders Alex and Kitty Shepherd, an honest insight into business growth from The Bay Tree Food Company's Emma Macdonald, and advice on building and engaging with customers through equity funding through crowdfunding.

There will also be a Business Mentoring Centre where industry experts will be on hand to give free one-to-one advice.







SPECIALITY CHOCOLATE LIVE



WILL TORRENT:
Host
Award-winning consultant pastry chef and chocolatier to Waitrose and other top brands, Will is also the author of two bestselling books – Patisserie At Home and Chocolate At Home – and is currently writing his third, due for release March 2016. Will has worked with chefs such as Heston Blumenthal and Jamie Oliver, and is an ambassador for Cacao Barry.



MARC DEMARQUETTE:
Chocolate – Beyond the Traditions
Marc was introduced to good quality fine chocolate at a very early age, when his French grandmother would treat him to the finest chocolates made by Gaston Lenôtre when she visited him in London. As well as freshly hand-making his fine chocolates for sale through his online boutique, Marc was commissioned by Fortnum & Mason within just one year to be the only permanently named and featured chocolatier within the store.



MATTHIEU DE GOTTAL:
Creating Whisky and Water Ganache
Chocolate has always been at the heart of Matthieu de Gottal's life. Born in Belgium, renowned chocolatier Matthieu had his first experience baking with cocoa at the age of four. Over the years he has refined his skill and is now one of the UK's top artisan chocolate producers. Matthieu's world-class truffles are hand crafted in his Nailsworth "laboratoire".



PETER SIDWELL:
Modern Baking and Cooking for Today's Customers
Peter enjoys re-writing the rulebook for local produce, reinventing British recipes that are centred around a fantastic ingredient. Peter's enthusiasm and passion for simply good food is demonstrated in his TV work, restaurant, cookery school, Simply Good Food app, books and magazine features.
Peter is right in the mix of British food as he continues to push the boundaries of cooking and baking.



> "I love the extraordinary flavours within chocolate. With chocolate you can grasp feelings that you can't with any other food – pure ecstasy! I love chocolate's unforgivingness, its complexity and need for love and respect"
>
> MATTHIEU DE GOTTAL





THE BEATING HEART OF CHOCOLATE

Right at the heart of Speciality & Fine Food Fair is Speciality Chocolate Fair, a 'show within a show' which celebrates all that is chocolatey. It will feature its own live theatre – Speciality Chocolate Live – which will be hosted by author, pastry chef consultant and chocolate ambassador, Will Torrent.

The presenters in Speciality Chocolate Live include Marc Demarquette – Master Chocolatier at Demarquette Fine Chocolates, and The Chocolate Man, Willie Harcourt-Cooze from Willie's Cacao. Supported by the Academy of Chocolate, there will also be Rising Star sessions showcasing new and inspiring talent.

Amongst the producers in Speciality Chocolate Fair will be specialist single origin chocolatier Amelia Rope (Stand 3130), Sweet Virtues (Stand 3161) which produces truffles with superfoods, and Morse Toad (Stand 3160), creators of personalised chocolate messages. The Raw Chocolate Company – as seen on Dragon's Den – will be showcasing the latest additions to their range on (Stand 3410).







YOUNG FOOD & DRINK ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

COTSWOLD FAYRE
-EST 1999-

Th ee young entrepreneurs go head to head at Speciality & Fine Food Fair

After months of selection, the three finalists of Young Food and Drink Entrepreneur of the Year, the start-up support scheme run by fine food distributor Cotswold Fayre, have been announced.

The three contestants, Jonathan Church of Melt and Co., Joseph Devereux-Kelly of Cool Coffee and Jerome Jacob of PHROOTI, presented their unique business ventures to a panel of industry experts and were selected to go through to the final of the initiative. The panel included Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of Cotswold Fayre; Ashton Marriott, marketing manager of Cotswold Fayre; Jane Milton, food industry expert; Holly Shackleton, deputy editor of Speciality Food Magazine and Nigel Chandler, manager of Garsons Farm Shop in Esher, Surrey.

Paul Hargreaves says, "As a key player in the fine food industry, we believe it is incredibly important to support young entrepreneurs into the industry. This is why we set up the scheme three years ago.

"The winning entrant will receive not just monetary support but also sound business advice to help face the difficult and often unexpected challenges of setting up a new business."

The three finalists will go on to present their products to an audience at Speciality & Fine Food Fair in September 2015, where spectators will be invited to vote for the young entrepreneur that they are most impressed by. Each of the finalists will present from 12:45pm on Monday September 7th in the Small Business Forum.

Attendees can pick up a voting card from the finalists' presentations and place them in the ballot box at the Small Business Forum.

The final winner will be announced and presented with a cheque for £1,000 to help grow their company. On top of the monetary support, the winner will receive monthly mentoring sessions with Paul and his management team, who have a wealth of experience in the industry. In addition to this support, the winner will have access to design support from Cotswold Fayre's marketing manager, Ashton Marriott. Paul Hargreaves says, "We were incredibly impressed by the standard of this year's applicants and it was incredibly difficult to whittle the initial shortlist down to these three finalists. We are really looking forward to working with one of these new and exciting businesses."



JONATHAN CHURCH,
Melt and Co.

Jonathan, 23, was educated at the Royal Grammar School in Guildford and the University of Bristol, graduating in July 2014 with a First-class honours degree in Management. Following a recent family holiday to North America, he was intrigued by the growing community of artisan ice pop makers in the USA. Inspired by the use of fresh ingredients and the unique flavour combinations of these frozen pops, Jonathan decided to introduce a similar frozen product to this country.

Jonathan says, "Melt and Co was established to introduce customers to a world of new frozen tastes and flavour sensations. We have developed a range of quirky and unusual flavoured ice lollies and ice cream sticks, which we like to refer to as gourmet frozen desserts (on a stick)."





JEROME JACOB,
PHROOTI

Jerome, 24 years old, graduated from University of Sheffield in 2012 with a 2.1 BA Hons in English Language & Sociology. After working in advertising for two and a half years, he quit his job in 2014 to start his own business, PHROOTI.

PHROOTI aims to reinvent fruit tea by using real fruit to create a range of real fruit infusions. Jerome says, "After a lot of investigation, I found that most fruit teas contain about one per cent fruit. At PHROOTI, our products are made up of 95–97 per cent real fruit and natural flavourings to make a delicious, healthy and fruity beverage."

The range currently consists of three flavours: Sour Cherries & Cranberries, Blackberries, Blackcurrants & Blueberries and Strawberries & Raspberries.





JOSEPH DEVEREUX-KELLY,
Cool Coffee

22 year old Joseph launched his business, Cool Coffee when he noticed a gap in the UK beverage market for cold brew coffee. Joseph's mission is to provide consumers with a cold coffee drink that can be enjoyed as much as a normal hot cup of coffee.

Joe says, "Cool Coffee is a completely consistent cold brew blend, made only with natural and fairtrade ingredients. By using widely appealing flavours we hope to transform the cold coffee beverage market."





> "As a key player in the fine food industry, we believe it is incredibly important to support young entrepreneurs into the industry. This is why we set up the scheme three years ago. The winning entrant will receive not just monetary support but also sound business advice to help face the difficult and often unexpected challenges of setting up a new business"
>
> **PAUL HARGREAVES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COTSWOLD FAYRE**



LOOK EAST

With a plethora of produce ripe for stocking, East Anglia offers a uniquely varied menu



With its endless skies, fields and seas, East Anglia is a rich source of some of the UK's finest foods. From iconic meats and internationally-renowned seafood to a burgeoning reputation for fine dairy products, it's no wonder the 'bread basket of England' is held in such high regard by people who appreciate good food and drink.

The region is home to fields of gold – rapeseed has long been a familiar sight on East Anglian horizons, even though it's only been in recent years that the oil has become a strong seller in the UK market – and its wild-growing hops are revered by brewers as prestigious as Southwold's Adnams.

Equally, East Anglia has become a centre of award-winning dairy produce. As well as being the home region of 2013's Great Taste Awards Supreme Champion Marybelle Dairy, producer of milks, creams and yoghurts, and Fen Farm Dairy's Baron Bigod, the UK's eastern counties have created cheese counter favourites Norfolk White Lady and Binham Blue.

When it comes to regional meat, Blythburgh pork immediately springs to mind – its quality and free-range credentials are recognised across Britain – but ignore its neighbours Suffolk Salami Co and the history-rich black ham at your peril. With a focus on quality and a pride in their provenance, these are products which, when their stories have been shared, will fly from your shelves.

It's not only land-based producers which reap the region's rewards; East Anglian seafood is held in high regard from coast to coast, its Cromer crab and Mersea Oysters attracting fans from far and wide, and Norfolk's samphire offering foodies a taste of the sea in restaurants and at home.

The region can boast a number of independent food and drink retailers of note – as well as well-known and respected farm shops such as Hollow Trees in Semer, Suffolk and Walsingham in Norfolk's Little Walsingham, food halls have a strong presence. The Food Hall located in Marks Tey, Essex and Suffolk Food Hall in Ipswich (among many others) have developed strong reputations across the UK – not least for their unrivalled stock of local food and drink.

Food festivals are also rife in East Anglia – from Essex's Festival of Food & Drink and its plethora of big-name food stars to Aldeburgh Food & Drink, an event with artisanal producers at its heart, the region's bounty is well-promoted through events across the six counties.

Read on to learn more about East Anglia's food and drink menu – from sparkling fruit juices to award-winning cheeses, this region's got it all.

> With a focus on quality and a pride in their provenance, these are products which, when their stories have been shared, will fly from your shelves

MARK DODDS OF ROYTHORNES LTD



Mark Dodds of Roythornes Ltd works with regional food businesses to build solid foundations for success.

"We work with several affiliate members on 'food professional' networking events. These include the Norfolk Food & Drink Networking Group, Kitchen Table Projects and the various food-based events organised by Roythornes Solicitors. ToA is specifically associated with the Grub Club Cambridge and their plans to grow their networking activities across the region.

"When we speak to food businesses in East Anglia they are all passionate about the region and what it adds to their products. With excellent transport links and a wealth of great ingredients on the doorstep it's no wonder there are some amazing and innovative producers.

"Our role is to help businesses plan for the future. They all have great ambitions, but sometimes we need to remind them about the all-important paperwork they need in place to take them there!

"You would find it hard to find a region that embraces the food sector with greater enthusiasm, and long may it last."

> The Eastern region has long been linked to the production of food, from the very early days of agricultural development to the entrepreneurial businesses of the twenty first century



EAST ANGLIA IS KNOWN FOR ITS RURAL AND FRUITFUL LANDSCAPES



Robert Tate of Suffolk-based Appetite Me, a food and drink consultancy firm, shares his views on the value of East Anglia – and how retailers can cash in



Why should East Anglian retailers promote their region?
East Anglia has some great food and drink producers across all the the six counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Hertfordshire which form the well-known 'hump'. To name a few: Alder Carr Farm in Needham Market, Calcott Hall in Brentwood, Elveden estate in Thetford – all producers of food as well as successful retailers. The region is packed with every category.

What items can they push in pursuit of this?
We have some great free-range pork products, the Red Poll Beef from Euston Estate is fantastic, great fish is caught on the Norfolk and Suffolk coasts via day boats, and the region is home to award-winning coffee roasters like Rob Butterworth of Butterworths & Son. Scarlett & Mustard makes award-winning sauces, dressings and curds, Brentwood Brewery in Brentwood has some great bottled and cask beers, and Giffords Hall Vineyards make superb English wines and liquors, making the most of the grapevines in the ideal sandy soil of East Anglia. I could go on, we have so much to choose from in the region.

How can Appetite Me help retailers make the most of their East Anglian location?
We produce demographic reports with recommendations on how clients can introduce innovative new offers and new categories into their food and drink businesses. We are the market leader in sourcing regional produce in East Anglia as we are nationwide. We can help you with food and drink retail offers, full farm shop set-ups, rural restaurant set-ups, gift shops, garden centre set-ups, play barn set-ups and much more – we offer strategy planning through documentation or a word journey! If you want increased footfall, turnover and profit we are happy to see you and discuss your needs.



RAPESEED OIL IS ONE OF EAST ANGLIA'S MOST VALUABLE EXPORTS

ROBERT GUNN OF TASTES OF ANGLIA



Set up some 23 years ago to support and promote the food and drink industry of the region, ToA is a not for profit, member-owned cooperative. I took over the day to day running of Tastes of Anglia in early 2014. The organisation had been in decline for some 5-6 years previously and almost went into liquidation in 2013. Having begun the process of recovery in 2014, ToA is now making strong, positive headway. New benefits are continuously being added and new members are joining every week, appreciating that we are stronger when working together to create a regional identity for our food and drink industry.

The core of our marketing activity is our website tastesofanglia.org.uk. This website went live at the end of February 2014 and regularly receives between 1-2,000 page views a day. Every member has a full page to promote their business and many tell us that the exposure they receive through this site, supported by our social media activity, is worth the membership subscription alone.

Last year our focus was on improving the benefits for the producers of the region. Examples of our achievements include:

- Successful introductions to retailers and distributors
- Successful introductions to export opportunities
- Successful introductions to branding, packaging and PR specialists
- Successful introductions to a range of media outlets to raise brand awareness and business profile
- Assistance in sourcing new production locations to aid business expansion
- Assistance in sourcing grant funding to support business growth
- Negotiated discounts for exhibitor stands at regional and national trade and consumer shows
- Provision of countrywide grant supported business courses
- The sale of surplus equipment and in one case, a complete business
- Answers and potential solutions supplied to the many questions and issues that arise in running a successful business

This work is ongoing. In March this year we launched our Food Tourism in the East of England initiative to promote our regional independent retailers, cookery schools, hospitality outlets, food workshops and festivals.

Our website has all the information any foodie family could need to enjoy a food based day out, long weekend or full holiday in the region. This part of the website is a work in progress and has been incredibly well received. We are now attracting enquiries and Twitter followers from overseas and elsewhere in the UK interested in visiting the region.

We also have growing links with regional and national media and trade publications where we introduce regional food businesses with a good story to tell. We also have regional radio connections and both ToA and our members often feature on food appreciation programmes.

> "We are now attracting enquiries and Twitter followers from overseas and elsewhere in the UK interested in visiting the region"







THE PICK OF EAST ANGLIAN FRUIT

Fruit and fruit products are an important part of the East Anglian food economy. Plenty of sunshine and good soil have made the region a notable producer of a wide range of fruit

East Anglia is known as the driest corner of England. Warm, relatively dry and temperate weather together with good soil and and growers with a long tradition of tending fruit plants mean that the region is centre of fruit growing and also of fruit product production. Apple orchards abound in East Anglia, and come September, their are trees heavy-laden with a huge variety of apple species many of which are ideal for sale by independent food retailers searching for varieties overlooked by the supermarkets. Pears make a strong showing here too, both well known varieties and the scarcer medlar. This is a landscape which seems to fruit unbidden; come late summer the brambles are thick with ripe blackberries and after the first frosts on late October and early November is when sloes are harvested. It's not only Norfolk which produces strawberries on a grand scale. Other East Anglian counties offer these as well as raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries and members of the currant family. Plums, quince and much other fruit grow well here too.

Fruit is traded to big wholesalers and retailers and also to general and farmers markets and of course, to farm shops and delis. There is often a surplus of good fruit here and mechanisms are in place to make good use of it. Not surprisingly, the region is a strong producer of fruit juice and cider, and is home to some international brands as well as numerous small-scale artisan producers. Fruit pies, compotes, purées, chutneys, preserves are all made in quantity in the region. At Tiptree in Essex, Wilkin & Sons has built a worldwide reputation on fruit products, and a huge amount of the fruit needed for the production of jams and conserves is grown on the 850 acres that makes up the Tiptree farms.

Pick Your Own farms have long been big in this huge and mainly flat area and the demand from pickers for better facilities than a shed and a pair of scales (see panel below) has been responsible for the birth of many a farm shop. PYOs have become valuable additions to other farm shops, the attractive prospect of a day out picking fruit helping many to become local destinations.

SPENCERS FRUIT FARM



Spencer's Fruit Farm on the Essex/Suffolk border is fairly typical of Pick Your Own operations in East Anglia, with one important difference. This PYO has stayed the course since it was launched by Paul Spencer's father in 1973. Since that time, Paul says, "we've seen five PYOs within a ten mile radius of us disappear." When Paul's father started up the business on "a bare field site in the 1970s, this was at the start of the PYO boom, Paul says. "During the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the growth of home freezing, PYO was considered a good thing to be into, and people were coming with large containers and buckets – it seemed to be a license to print money. A lot of people jumped on the bandwagon." Unfortunately for such investors, interest in PYO dropped off, Paul says, "but now in the last five or six years, it seems to be coming back again."

Good husbandry has been key to the continued success of this East Anglian PYO, which divides its acreage between "soft fruit, top fruit and asparagus." Especially popular pickings this summer are strawberries, raspberries and cherries. While there has been no great change in demand since the 1970s, growing techniques have moved on, Paul says. "Whereas in 1973, the strawberries were all grown in massive rows on the ground, and Wimbledon fortnight was the main strawberry picking season, with new varieties and techniques and using grow bags off the ground, we are picking often from May until October."

By the end of the 1980s, Paul says, "people wanted more than a shed in the corner of a field. They wanted to come and make a day of it, they wanted a coffee shop and everything else." This led to the building of Spencer's Farm Shop, which the Spencers ran for 15 years before franchising the operation. Hard by the farm shop, (which uses PYO fruit to produce a small amount of pies and jams) the relatively dry East Anglian climate and good quality soil produce, in addition to the strawberries, raspberries and cherries, blackberries, tayberries, loganberries, gooseberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, plums and a 20-strong range of traditional apple varieties."

The strawberry is king, though and Paul's main variety is the much maligned Elsanto. This fruit, Paul says, is much misunderstood. It receives poor press because of the the practise of supermarkets to pick while the fruit is unripe in order to lengthen shelf life. "If it is left on the plant to ripen properly," he says, "this is one of the best flavoured strawberries there is."







BREEDING BUSINESS: EAST ANGLIAN MEAT

East Anglia is world-renowned for its Newmarket Sausage and Norfolk Turkey, but can now add rare breed meats and high-quality charcuterie to its armoury

The meat industry is thriving in East Anglia, particularly in its artisan form. It is hard to say with certainty if the events of recent years have fuelled an increased interest in local, rare and artisan meats, but it does seem likely. You don't have to live in this dryish corner of England to have felt the effects of the horsemeat scandal, which rocked the meat industry almost three years ago. But in this region as in others, meat-eaters began to take a keen interest in exactly where their meat came from. Provenance was king. To a degree, local butchers benefited from the crisis.

As well as increasing the interest in provenance, the scandal did no harm to those businesses specialising in rare and native breeds, and in types of meat such as venison (farmed in Suffolk, for instance) which before had enjoyed a more specialised market. All these are alive and well in East Anglia. East Anglia is a great centre of pork production and perhaps not surprisingly, produces a considerable amounts of air-dried ham and chorizo. All this has been added to the meat production of an area already famous for its turkeys and its regional speciality, the Newmarket Sausage, which was awarded PGI status in 2012.

Selling excellent cuts of high-quality meat and local versions of Continental charcuterie are skilled butchers at various fine meat counters. Blythburgh Free Range Pork produces world-beating pork, while Suffolk Food Hall and The Food Company both feature standard-setting meat counters.

Royal-warranted Musks sell the original Newmarket sausage in the town of the same name, while up in Wells-next-the-Sea on the North Norfolk coast, East Anglian Regional Champion in the Farm Shop & Deli Awards this year is Arthur Howell, who provides beef, pork and lamb from Norfolk, sourced from farms with high standards of animal care.

THE ARTISAN BUTCHER



Ipswich-based The Artisan Butcher, aka Jamie Willows, discovered his passion for butchery at the age of 13. Learning his trade in high street butchers, he developed a passion for the subject but harboured an interest for reviving more traditional techniques. Further moves in Jamie's career, including working as head butcher at Jimmy's Farm, fuelled his passion for working with native, rare and traditional breeds and inspired him to develop the artisan skills of curing, smoking and charcuterie. Jamie leads a number of training courses for novice to experienced in Ipswich. He's also passionate about working with small producers, either creating new products in partnership or helping to shine the spotlight on their produce. Jamie supplies a number of delis, shops and restaurants with his produce and that of his hand-picked small producers, as well as supplying to the individual consumer at home. He has also recently opened his flagship butchery, The Rose House Butchery, in a 16th century stable block, in the heart of Ipswich.

"East Anglian meat is as special as the landscape that it's produced in," Jamie says, "from the rich sandy soil of the Brecklands, to the lush coastal grasses, the area produces some fantastic quality meat such as commercially-reared pigs, rare and native breeds like Red Poll cattle, Suffolk sheep and a host of rare breed pigs, including the large black and Gloucester Old Spot, Large White and Saddle Back. Poultry is also well served in the region, with fabulous chicken from Sutton Hoo and Breckland Larder, duck from Gressingham and quail from Norfolk." As examples of some "truly amazing meat products in East Anglia," Jamie suggests the "fresh meat such as Breckland boar, Soay and North Ronaldsay sheep meat and Mangalitsa pigs produced by Paul and Fiona from Breckand Larder. " Charcuterie making is alive and well in East Anglia, too. "Lane Farm and Marsh Pig are producing some great salami, chorizos and air dried meats," Jamie says.



"Over the last few years," Jamie says, "artisan butchery has seen a remarkable growth in interest. Customers are becoming more discerning and interested in the provenance and welfare of their meat. Being able to talk to their butcher about their purchase is giving customers the confidence they are looking for when buying meat. Knowing the whole story of the animal, from the farmer that bred the animal, to the local slaughterhouse, has of course really helped.

"I work with local farmers to produce the type of meat that my customers are looking for. It is important to have good and open communication with both farmers and suppliers; it's of vital importance that everyone in the supply chain is on the same page, and all pulling in the right direction to get the best finished product for the customer. This cooperation is essential to make sure that the farming process is sustainable and everyone is able to earn a fair living."





FIELDS OF GOLD

Grains and dairy may not spring immediately to mind when thinking of East Anglia, but the region can offer an impressive range of award-winning products







It's not for nothing that East Anglia is often referred to as the 'breadbasket of England'; its rolling fields of crops and cows have provided the food and drink market with a number of quality foods. From world-famous beer to award-winning yoghurt, the region has produced some corkers in its time – and that's before you even consider the mights that are Tiptree-based preserve manufacturer Wilkin & Sons and Suffolk's cider and vinegar-maker Aspall.

East Anglia may be best known for its soft fruit – more of which in our dedicated feature within this section – but its dairy offering is also gathering pace these days. "It may not be a particularly prominent sector, but dairy farming finds its home in the region's lush rivers, vales and salt marsh areas," explains Oliver Paul, co-director of Suffolk Food Hall. You may know Marybelle for their Natural Yoghurt's Great Taste Awards Supreme Champion 2013 title, and Suffolk-based Fen Farm Dairy for their cutting edge Baron Bigod, but lets not forget Mrs Temple's Copys Cloud and White Lady cheeses – all highly regarded in their field.

Meanwhile, advocates of quality beers can find hotspots in the region – Essex alone sees brews from Colchester, Maldon and Shalford, while the reputation of Southwold-based brewer (and now distiller) Adnams is spreading worldwide.





FROM THE RETAILER...

Aaron Linch, The Food Company, Marks Tey

WHAT EAST ANGLIAN PRODUCE DO YOU SELL?

We have a huge commitment to supplying produce from our region. As well as a wide range of products from local factory Wilkins and Sons based in Tiptree, we sell apple juice produced just 15 miles away in Assington, beers produced in Chappel, Colchester, Maldon and Braintree, local eggs, local meat including award-winning Blythburgh pork, chicken bred just over the border in Suffolk, cider from Aspalls in Suffolk, honey from a small local producer and a great range of flavoured rapeseed oils from just up the road.

DO THESE SELL WELL?

As much as our customers like to find the rare imported food we stock, they also love to shop local, and they are huge supporters of our local produce range. People are concerned about food miles – fair enough if the product has to be imported because it can't be sourced here, but if there is a local option available we try and stock it.

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS?

Our customers believe in supporting local artisan producers – we are always keen to help smaller producers to market and there is a feelgood factor attached to helping smaller concerns. In addition to this and the environmental concerns, there are health benefits too. Research has shown that having a daily dose of local honey can help relieve symptoms for pollen-allergy sufferers as honeybees gather pollen from the very plants which cause itchy eyes. A small daily dose of honey – and subsequently these pollens – may stimulate the immune system and reduce allergies. If this can be said for honey, why not for other crops grown locally?

TELL US ABOUT THE LOCAL BEERS YOU SELL

There has never been a better time to be a craft beer enthusiast in the UK. Craft and micro breweries are becoming big news, with around 15 new ventures opening every month in the UK, and we have some great ones in East Anglia. Here at The Food Company, we stock a wide range of ales and porters from Shalford, Maldon, and Colchester Breweries along with Bishop Nick in Braintree. Beer with character: popular ones include Red Diesel ('Not just for farmers!'), Brazilian (flavoured with vanilla bods and coffee beans), Maldon's Dark Horse, Shalford's Rotten End and the 1555 from Bishop Nick which comes with its very own history lesson. Colchester Brewery produces a unique beer each year called Grasshopper, made from local hedgerow hops picked in the wild by a team of volunteers over a weekend – you don't get more local than that. As all brewers know, a beer is only as good as the quality of its ingredients, and one of the best places in the UK for malt is Norfolk.

WHAT DOES EAST ANGLIA HAVE TO OFFER FOODIES – WHAT ARE ITS SPECIALITIES?

East Anglia has an amazing menu to tempt foodies with – we're blessed with fabulously fertile soil in which farmers are growing an increasingly exciting variety of crops. Over a quarter of the national crop area is in the East of England, with more and more farmers turning to organic methods. Farmers are also taking advantage of new food trends by diversifying into crops such as quinoa. Our coastline provides world-famous Mersea oysters and samphire grows in abundance (if you know where to look!).

> "East Anglia has an amazing menu to tempt foodies with – we're blessed with fabulously fertile soil in which farmers are growing an increasingly exciting variety of crops"

@specialityfood

MEET THE PRODUCER

Ross Taylor and Rod Garnham, directors of Corkers – one of the best-known brands of East Anglia – tells its story



Best friends Ross Taylor and Rod Garnham founded Corkers in 2010, diversifying the family farm from potatoes to hand-cooked crisps. Drawing on years of family experience and with their unique Naturalo potato, they set about creating the ultimate, non-greasy crisp with a natural crunch.

Ross Taylor, director says, "Our family have been farming potatoes since the 1800s, but it was actually on the ski slopes five years ago, alongside my best friend Rod, that the idea for Corkers was born.

"We haven't looked back since, securing listings everywhere from the National Trust to Waitrose, receiving a plethora of Great Taste Awards, the accolade of Potato Grower of the Year 2015 and we even have a couple of Guinness World Records to boot!

"For us, Corkers is a celebration of the quirks, tastes and traditions that make Britain so great."

The brand now sells seven bold and British flavours, each featuring top quality, all-natural ingredients and cooked in fresh sunflower oil: Sea Salt (the Corkers take on this classic is a Great Taste Gold Award Winner); Pork Sausage & English Mustard, which combines the delicious flavours of barbecued British bangers with a hint of Old English Mustard; Red Leicester & Caramelised Onion, a winning combination of slow roasted onion and rich creamy Red Leicester cheese; Sea Salt & Cider Vinegar, a mouthwatering snack made using the finest English cider which is sweet in taste with a hint of zest; Sweet Thai Chilli, a tantalising flavour with savoury flavours of chilli and herb; Sea Salt & Black Pepper, sure to warm your palate, these Gold Taste Award-winning crisps are made from sweet and hot peppers; and Duck & Hoisin Sauce, a partnership of two British greats, the Gressingham Duck and the Naturalo potato, both hailing from the Corkers family farm.

Corkers has recently launched a new variant, a vegetable crisp, and is now proud to be the second vegetable crisp manufacturer on UK soil. "Made with root vegetables unearthed from the rich soil of the fenlands for double enjoyment and naturally flavoured with flair, we are excited to be building on our existing range," says Rod Garnham, co-founder. The first new flavour is Mixed Vegetable (parsnip, beetroot, sweet potato and carrot) lightly dusted with a sprinkle of sea salt. Another two flavours are set to launch soon: Sweet Potato & Chilli and Parsnip, Honey & Black Pepper. "Watch this space!" Rod adds.

The fenland home of Corkers is largely to thank for the quality of the crisps, as Ross explains: "Here in the fenlands we have very rich, black, peaty soil. This land was originally oak forests, which was then flooded by the sea for millennia. The land was reclaimed from the sea during 1800s and has been farmed by us ever since. This process has left us with rich, dark bog oak peat. It's thanks to this that we have the most delicious Naturalo potatoes in the country, which are high quality and rich in taste and they make the most delicious crisps."

"For us, the most important thing is the integrity of our brand and business and we are extremely proud of our British Heritage and our farming roots."

The Corkers customer base reflects the variety of its range of flavours – not only are the bold packets a recognisable presence on the deli shelf, but they are stocked in prestigious UK landmarks, East Coast Trains and British Airways as well as a myriad of shops, farm shops and selected Waitrose, Co Op and Budgen stores, ensuring a wide audience across the UK.




CORKERS IS PROUD OF ITS BRITISH HERITAGE


THE NATURALO POTATOES USED FOR CORKERS CRISPS HAVE BEEN FARMED ON THE SITE SINCE THE 1800S

According to Ross, the business's philosophies are to "Use the finest produce that we have grown on our family farm, and to create the best seed to hand snack products in the country" – principles which have set the pair well on the road to success. No doubt the former was the inspiration behind the brand's well-known Guinness World Records – one for sending the first bag of crisps into space, the other for making the world's biggest bag of crisps – of which the duo are rightly proud.



What does the future hold for one of the region's best-loved brands? "Here at Corkers we want to make sure more and more people know who we are, we're excited for new stockists, new ventures and new products, all to be revealed!" says Ross.



ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS

Explore our pick of the hottest products on the East Anglian food and drink scene. From artisanal soft drinks to premium snacks, these are the items to stock now



Stokes Sauces

At Stokes we like our food simple, good and delicious so we make our sauces that way too.

This year we will be celebrating 10 years of creating the most delicious sauces you can buy in a jar, and the story of Stokes continues with more sauces than ever before but the same approach throughout – tasty sauces made with real food ingredients for food to savour.

Food made better. It's what we believe in. It's why we say it on every jar.

01394 462 150
info@stokessauces.co.uk
stokessauces.co.uk



Marriage's

Marriage's has been milling flour in Essex since 1824. Founded by twins William and Henry nearly 200 years ago, today the fifth and sixth generations of the Marriage family continue the milling tradition.

We source the best quality wheat, much from farmers within 30 miles of Chelmer Mills, including our own arable farms. Our flour is produced using a combination of traditional techniques we have trusted for generations and the best modern milling technology.

Marriage's home baking range has won more than 30 Great Taste Awards, and includes organic, speciality and traditional stoneground flours for making breads, cakes and pastry.

01245 354 455
floursales@marriagesmillers.co.uk
flour.co.uk



Corkers

After identifying the growth in the vegetable crisp market, Corkers Crisps has invested close to £2 million in their factory to allow production and NPD in the sector.

They are only the second manufacturer in the UK to produce vegetable crisps, but what really sets them apart is the fact they grow the carrots, beetroot and parsnips on their family farm using the wonderful fenland soil to add that extra quality and taste.

The first new flavour which has recently been launched is the Mixed Vegetable with a Hint of Sea Salt which consists of carrot, beetroot, parsnip and sweet potato.

Coming soon to the range will be Sweet Potato & Sweet Chilli and Parsnip, Black Pepper & Honey.

01353 699 000
info@corkercrisps.co.uk
corkerscrisps.co.uk



Musk's

Newmarket is home to Musk's, makers of the original Newmarket sausage since 1884.

With Royal Warrants attesting quality, Musk's have unmatched heritage and delicious flavour! These premium sausages, made with pork shoulder meat, secret seasoning, bread (not rusk) and natural casings have a unique succulence and perfect cooking performance.

Musk's award-winning Christmas Chipolatas (and Sausagemeat) combine the famous recipe with cranberries, chestnuts, lemon peel and festive spices to create a scrumptious chipolata full of the flavours of Christmas. Available from mid-November.

All varieties offered in mixed cases, retail packs or loose for chefs. Made to order, next-day delivery.

01638 662 626
office@musks.com
musks.com

Rendles Crumbles

Producer of delicious savoury biscuits, pâtés, loaf cakes, flapjacks, muffins, cookies and now truly British crumble bars, East Anglia-based Rendles UK are supporting fellow local producer Wilkin & Sons (Tiptree) with their latest gourmet snack-to-go range.

These sweet, comforting snacks are individually wrapped and available in four delicious flavours: Strawberry, Blackcurrant, Lemon and Orange.

Each flavour consists of a tasty pastry base with a generous layer of Tiptree fruit conserve, curd or marmalade, finished off with a light, buttery crumble topping.

Grab your slice of a great British pud!

01473 217 788
sales@rendlesuk.com
rendlesuk.com





Dhaniya

Dhaniya presents its authentic Indian Curry Pastes and Spice Rubs, created with passion using bespoke family-inspired recipes.

The Dhaniya branding is distinctly bold, modern, vibrant and fresh, giving it shelf presence and and reflecting the intensity of its flavours which capture the taste of homemade.

Dhaniya's five convenient pastes include Classic Curry, Spiced Korma, Jalfrezi, Fish Curry and Tandoori pastes, each forming the base of a sauce serving six. There are also five spice rubs: Bombay Potato, Tikka, Pomegranate, Fish and Lamb.

All the products are made in small batches using only the freshest ingredients and contain no artificial colours, additives or flavourings, and are all gluten-free and suitable for vegetarians.

07876336875
info@dhaniya.co.uk
dhaniya.co.uk

Castle Quail

What started as a hobby has now developed into a thriving family-run rural business in the Brecklands of Norfolk. Castle Quail have established a reputation as a reliable breeder and supplier of quail meat and eggs. Owing to the quality of the produce are the healthy and fulfilling lives the birds lead, the initial colony of five have been able to mature at their own pace to a current flock of several thousand, with space to fly at all ages.

The delightful eggs are now available to stock, so to join the rapidly growing list of stockists get in touch to find out more.

01760 444 256
www.castlequail.com
simon@castlequail.com



Norfolk Punch



Norfolk Punch is a healthy, non-alcoholic herbal drink containing no artificial ingredients or flavourings. The recipe comprises subtle infusions, decoctions and distillations of 30 herbs, berries and spices.

Although containing no alcohol, it has a remarkable ability to induce a feeling of cheerfulness and wellbeing.

It can be served chilled as a refreshing summer drink or hot in winter to relax, warm and cheer, and is an excellent alternative to wine for non-drinkers.

Still made to the original 13th century secret recipe, Norfolk Punch provides a variety of subtle and surprising tastes which combine to deliver a truly unique drinking experience.

0845 250 1254
info@norfolkpunch.com
norfolkpunch.com

Lakenham Creamery



For some truly stunning flavours you need look no further than the 24 gourmet Norfolk County fresh cream ice creams.

Based in Lakenham, Norwich, the company's roots go back to 1921 when the business was founded by Mr Christmas Aldous.

Today, alongside the traditional Aldous ice cream range sits the gourmet fresh cream Norfolk County range, and the Eileen's Diabetic range.

The marriage of a fresh cream base, traditional methods of production and the latest computer-controlled freezers gives Lakenham Creamery the edge in consistent high quality gourmet ice creams – as witnessed by another 4 Gold Great Taste awards in 2015.

01603 620 970
info@lakenhamcreamery.co.uk
lakenhamcreamery.co.uk





Fairfields Farm Crisps

Fairfields Farm Crisps are a family-owned and managed business based on the Essex/Suffolk borders.

Fairfields grow around 11 different varieties of specialist potatoes for fresh retail and foodservice outlets, as well as hand-cooking award-winning Fairfields Farm Crisps with a dedicated team on-site.

All potatoes are grown, stored, cooked and packed on the family farm.

Available in 20g, 40g and 150g bags.

01206 241613
sales@fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk
fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk



Munchy Seeds

Munchy Seeds, a small family-run business from Suffolk, continues, after 17 years, to have the highest profile of any UK's roasted, flavoured and coated seeds company in the market.

We take particular care to create delicious blends using premium quality seeds, which we gently roast with natural flavours/coatings – we offer nine nutritious flavours packed with vitamins, minerals, protein and energy.

There's not a squeak of cholesterol, gluten or anything artificial, and every blend is vegetarian-friendly.

Our bright and colourful packaging reflects our passion for making healthy eating fun. Plenty of in-store support available.

01728 833 004
nibble@munchyseeds.co.uk
munchyseeds.co.uk



Red Chilli Kitchen

Thao Ball recently launched Red Chilli Kitchen so others could taste some of the delicious recipes her mother made in her Vietnamese kitchen.

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

The indulgent jam is ideal to serve with cold meats and cheeses, while the curry paste and tomato marinade are great for turning Christmas leftovers into a stir fry or curry.

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

Hamish Johnston

A wholesaler of cheese to the retail and corporate trade, Hamish Johnston supplies over 300 cheeses to independents in Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire, Hertfordshire, Essex and South London.

Although best known for its selection of fine cheeses sourced from artisan producers and respected importers, the business also supplies a wide selection of other deli items including charcuterie, smoked salmon, olives, ambient, teas and coffees – all carefully chosen for their impressive quality.

East Anglian cheeses have proved themselves a very popular element of Hamish Johnston's offering, with Suffolk's Baron Bigod and Binham Blue from Norfolk particularly strong sellers.



01394 388 127
will@hamishjohnston.com
hamishjohnston.com



Salubrious Sauce Co

The first of our two new products, British Breakfast Sauce, originated from a lively conversation with family and friends over a Sunday morning fry up.

What we were looking for was a sauce that was more 'off piste' as we weren't always finding satisfaction with the usual saucy suspects.

We wanted to create a breakfast sauce with more punch, zip and zing and, when it comes to food, we love a challenge, so here it is – our fruity, smoky, woody, spicy, tangy sauce that complements and enhances that sausage, egg and bacon butty or the Full Monty.

01394 446 028
salubrioussauceco@gmail.com
salubrioussauceco.co.uk



Casa de l'Oli

Casa de l'Oli proudly presents its three incomparable mayonnaises.
A small family business based between Suffolk and Catalonia, we produce a range of extra virgin olive oils, but have now taken the humble olive into another sphere. We are bringing the first ever ambient black and green olive mayonnaises to the shelf – each jar of this unique product contains 20% olives, delivering a true flavour. The black is smooth and rich, deep coloured, piquant and creamy. In keeping with our sense of creativity, our third mayonnaise is a sumptuous smoked garlic, containing 46% of our gold award winning smoked garlic extra virgin olive oil. Packed with intense natural flavour, this is a delicious twist to the classic 'alioli'. All three mayonnaises are produced using only the finest ingredients and we have placed strong emphasis on high quality packaging. With an eight-month shelf life, these are ideal for delis, food halls and farm shops.

01394 420 306
simone@casadeloli.com
casadeloli.com

COTSWOLD FAYRE*

-EST 1999-

Sponsored by the speciality food wholesaler to the UK & Ireland
www.cotswoldfayre.co.uk

Words Last

the final word of fine food

Pistachio and Pickle, London, N1

Owners: Matt Kelly & Steven Cooper **Opened:** August 2011



HOW'S BUSINESS?
Great, but could always be better, like any business. We've been trading for nearly four years and we're just beginning to turn the corner. It's been our mission over the last 18 months to both reach out to new customers, beyond our immediate catchment, and also to give our existing customer base more of what they want.

DESCRIBE YOUR DELI
Our deli is located on a small row of shops in a residential part of Islington. It's housed in an old Edwardian building, and split on several levels – the ground floor and entrance is the deli, the lower ground floor the café seating area, and the customer garden is to the rear. This neatly separates the retail from the relaxed café area. We have a wall of retail shelving, and a long counter and refrigerated grab-and-go to serve prepared food from.

WHEN DID YOU OPEN THE SECOND SHOP?
We opened Pistachio & Pickle Dairy on the 31st October 2013. A deli customer, who is well-known, offered to invest in our opening a second site. We had always wanted an artisan cheese shop, so this seemed like the perfect opportunity.

WHAT MAKES PISTACHIO & PICKLE SPECIAL?
Many of our customers visit the deli every day, not just to buy their Monmouth Coffee and handmade breakfast, lunch or supper, but also to meet their friends and neighbours. We have created a community hub where people stop and chat. We remain unapologetic about not offering Wi-Fi or mobile or laptop charging facilities. We believe that ours is an important space that enables and promotes actual, face-to-face interaction. We also allow well-behaved dogs, a must in dog-saturated Islington.

HOW MANY STAFF?
Over the years we have tried several approaches to staffing as we've grown. At present we have five full time members of staff and one part-time student. We ourselves are very hands-on.

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?
Our customer base is varied, from young professionals to the retired yoga ladies who stop by after their class. Our location and our offering attracts an ABC1 demographic – our customers include lords, MPs, a handful of celebrities, artists, yummy mummies, lawyers, company directors, architects and designers, food bloggers and gastrophiles. We also have something of a following from the gay and lesbian community and trade-folk who like quality coffee and decent sarnies!

HOW DID YOU BECOME THE OWNERS OF A DELI?
Matt trained as a chef with the Conran Group and is former events manager at the Institute of Masters of Wine and Bibendum Wine Merchants. Steve is a former architect.

HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR LOCATION?
It has been a blessing and a curse. Liverpool Road is an arterial route to the commuter-heavy Angel Tube station – great to grab coffee customers in the morning but without the benefit of high street footfall or passing tourist trade.

WHAT CHEESES DO YOU SELL?
As we have our own specialist cheese shop a mere ten minute walk away, we keep a small selection of cheese at the deli, probably around 20, including Barbers 1833, Montgomery's Cheddar, Comte, Parmigiano Reggiano, Rachel, Gorwydd's Caerphilly, Cornish Yarg, Thomas Hoe Stevenson Red Leicester, Manchego, Sharpham Brie, Taleggio Santi, Mozzarella di Bufala, Wigmore, Rosary, Tunworth, Stinking Bishop, Colston Bassett Stilton, Barkham Blue, Burts Blue, and Roquefort.

THREE TOP-SELLING CHEESES?
Montgomery's Cheddar, Colston Bassett Stilton, Thomas Hoe Stevenson Red Leicester.

DO YOU STOCK MUCH BRITISH CHARCUTERIE?
Our counter is stocked partly by Cannon & Cannon and stocked mostly by Cobble Lane. We like to keep it British.

WHAT INFORMS YOUR STOCKING DECISIONS?
Our brand values: premium, provenance, product knowledge, personality and price-point. We have a core range which has been developed over time in concert with our customers' needs and their suggestions.

WHICH OF YOUR FOODS ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?
Matt is absolutely passionate about Hilltop Smokehouse. Crucially, they use the exquisite Blythburgh Free-Range Pork from Jimmy Butler. They supply us with our smoked, cooked and glazed ham (our absolute best-seller) butcher's sausage, our smoked bacon (a best-seller), and our pork pies. Steve is passionate about Rubies in the Rubble.

AND YOUR HANDMADE SUPPERS TO TAKE AWAY?
We used to close at 6pm, and realised there were a group of local residents that had never noticed us before as we were closed on their way home. So we employed a chef to cook supper fresh every day producing high quality dinners. We send out a menu each Monday morning and people plan their week's meals around us. It's a great success.

IF YOU STARTED OVER, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?
We'd have a fully integrated accounts system and one year's-worth of salaries and VAT, in the bank, as back up, from day one!



The Great British Breakfast

Let's be honest, it's only in recent years that we've been able to stand next to our continental neighbours with culinary heads held high. While the likes of Gordon have demonstrated what culinary excellence is, and the omnipresent Jamie has given us a great soundbite of pukkha British foodyism, we're still the new kid on the block on the world food stage.

So, before we get too carried away with our tasting menus, chefs' tables and street food festivals, perhaps we should take a look at getting some fundamentals in place – and what better place to start than one of our national culinary treasures: The Great British Breakfast. Unfortunately, this bastion of Britishness is subject to abuse in a way that would warrant incarceration were it to be applied to say, a croque monsieur in France. To draw a football analogy (it always helps): our national side has scraped through the qualifying stages of the tournament; for a moment we stand side-by-side of our international neighbours with mutual respect as anthems are played, equals to those haughty roman noses, Gallic showmen and Castillian artisans. And then the inevitable ignominy of defeat... the breakfast has arrived.

Okay, this may be a bit harsh, but you get my point. What's more, you may think that a Sunday morning of bacon, eggs and a mug of Yorkshire tea is no great shakes next to a languid evening under the olive groves tucking into a plate of homemade gnocchi and pesto and washing it down with a fine Chianti. But you'd be wrong, because I tell you now, the Great British Breakfast when cooked to perfection with the right quality of ingredients stands up to any great national dish.

This is where the speciality food business has a great deal to shout about, so let's shout from the rooftops then about a dish that, on one hand can be seen as everyday food for fuel, and yet with a few choice ingredients and sympathetic cooking can be as high on the gourmet scale as you wish it to be.





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SPECIALITY BITES

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

"To meet or not to meet" – that is the question I am asking this month. What has triggered this has been trawling through the 2,000 e-mails that have come into our potential new products mailbox over the last few months. Many of these suitors are representing new brands from the UK, many of which we know of anyway, but there is a huge avalanche of emails every week from speciality food companies from all over Europe. A common story is that they are in London next week and can meet up with our buyers to show us their wares. By the way, at least one a day is from an olive oil company – that's a lot of olive oil over a year!

Many of our existing suppliers too, particularly those large enough to employ account managers, are often asking for more meetings than our team have time for. All this started me thinking about meetings and how vital they should be in this modern era of Skype, emails and social media. Just consider how much money a year could be saved by using FaceTime rather than being stuck on the motorway network for hours, let alone the reduced cost to the environment. Many years ago, a potential new supplier came over 150 miles to see me without asking me about the essential parameters of working together. After 10 minutes I realised that he was expecting us to work on a wholesaler margin of 13%. Needless to say, the meeting was terminated and he faced an equally long drive home.



> "Fortunately, there are times for building relationships away from meetings – I look forward to 'chewing the fat' at Speciality & Fine Food Fair"

Generally, my view has always been that there is sometimes no substitute for face to face meetings with strategic partners, but I have also wasted many hours in useless meetings. I am a firm believer in relationships within business, but alternatives should be found for many of them otherwise we risk simply not being productive. For example, consider the introduction of the new products mentioned at the start. We need to see what the product looks like, if we like it we ask for samples to taste, if it tastes good we ask for prices, and if everything still looks good at that point we may have a meeting to work out whether we can work together. No need for a meeting until the last stage.

So what do we do with all those existing suppliers, some of whose sales people are sometimes trying to justify their existence by arranging many meetings? Ask yourself, can the agenda be completed on the phone or a conference call? If so, an alternative option may be best.

So, when we have decided the best use of time is to have a meeting, how do we make them effective? First of all, have clear written aims for the meeting and an agenda to help you keep the meeting on track. Sometimes the other party's timing for the meeting may be different to yours, so decide how long it should be at the outset. I think most meetings can be completed in 40 minutes. These tips can ensure everyone's time should be well used, and should help prevent us all being in the office after 7pm every day.

Best Practice

Bodnant's cheesemaker Aled Rowlands promotes the importance of hygiene

I started out in the dairy industry 28 years ago, working at a creamery not far from my home town of Morfa Nefyn on the Llyn Peninsula. I began as a milk deliveryman then moved onto the milk bottling side of the business. Over the years I gradually moved up from operator to supervisor, then department manager, and finally I became operations manager at South Caernarfon Creameries. I came to Bodnant Welsh Food in 2012 to set up and become manager of its new dairy. It was a concept that had been in the planning stage for some time, and my job was to put the mechanics of a working dairy in place. It was a bit of a difference for me coming from a factory background to a more hands-on, artisan style of doing things, but I've very much enjoyed the challenge.

My day starts early, around 6am, when we get the delivery of milk from our neighbour Arfon Jones at Tal-y-Cafn, who has a herd of 80 Friesian cows. The 1,500 litres of full fat milk are transferred to a holding tank, where I test it for quality. It's then pasteurised and moved to the cheese vat, where I add rennet and the cheese culture, depending on whether it's the Abergoch or Aberwen cheese we are making. It's set – turned and cut – in the vat until the curds form, which takes around an hour. Then it's scalded at 33°C for half an hour to stop the process, and we test it for acidity before breaking it up in the peg mill, then add salt. Making cheese is very dependent on time and temperature, and I carry a timer around with me constantly when we have a batch on the go.



The whey is drained off – it goes off to be used as fertiliser – and the curd is moved into 10k moulds. These are large tubs, lined with plastic, which are pressed to get the last of the whey out and to firm up the curd. Once the cheeses are pressed, I hand-wrap them in bandages and move them into the store room, where the natural moulds from the air do the job. I have to check and taste the cheeses as they mature over three to nine months.

I'll also be making ice cream or our butter, and packing up the cheeses, as we sell them wholesale to delis around the country, and talking to customers in our farm shop. There's always lots of cleaning to be done. Our equipment is stainless steel but has to be constantly cleaned, and we're very strict on hygiene regulations, so there's always paperwork to be completed. I also oversee the work and training of the dairy's five staff.

During my time running the Bodnant dairy I have learned that it takes time to develop your own brand and a market for it, especially when it comes to cheese, which is a very competitive sector of the UK food business with so many varieties of cheese and cheese producers. You have to allow time for proper development of your product and then not necessarily expect it to be an overnight hit with customers.

I've learned how to take the old, traditional style of producing dairy products and fit it into the stringent new hygiene regulations that every food producer now has to adhere to. For instance, the Cheshire cheese we make at Bodnant is based on a recipe that goes back about 300 years when there were no food safety regulations at all, and it was very much a case of the cheese going straight from the cowshed to the plate. Today, things couldn't be more different and hygiene is everything. It is something to which everyone at Bodnant, and not just the dairy, attaches the utmost importance.

DO

- Do always seek to achieve the highest quality in everything you produce
- Do always aim to ensure there is excellent presentation of everything that you sell
- Do constantly maintain the very highest levels of food production and serving

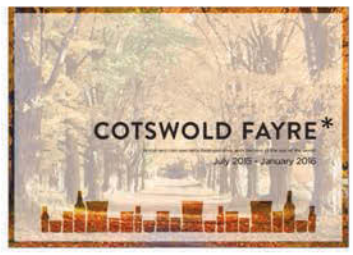
DON'T

- Don't ever forget to thoroughly clean all food production equipment. Cleaning won't wait for a few hours or even until tomorrow – it has to be done immediately after you have finished using something
- Don't compromise on the quality of raw materials that you use. That's something that is extremely important to everyone at Bodnant
- Don't ever place anything on the floor of a food preparation area, because the floor is the place where most potential contaminants lurk

> "I have learned that it takes time to develop your own brand and a market for it. You have to allow time for proper development of your product and not expect it to be an overnight hit with customers"

COTSWOLD FAYRE*

Our NEW all-year-round catalogue is available now!



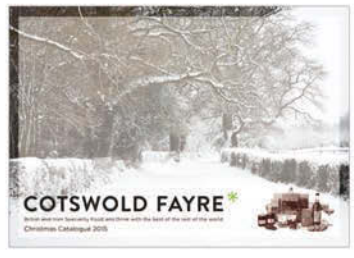
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Put your hands together for our award winning line up

Join us on Stand 1311 at Speciality & Fine Food Fair 6-8 September



The celebrations are in full flow at Ten Acre after bagging 4 Awards at the 2015 Great Taste Awards. We're so joyous about what the judges had to say about Ten Acre: *Wasabi Popcorn* "melt in your mouth and absolutely moreish" | *Sweet and Salty Popcorn* "light and fluffy" | *BBQ Hand Cooked Crisps* "warming flavour with a well-balanced heat" | *Sweet and Sour Hand Cooked Crisps* "certainly delivers". Now that's wonderful.

To discover more about Ten Acre call **+44 (0)161 794 7525** or email **info@yumshsnacks.com**

yumshsnacks.com @yumshsnacks /yumshsnacks

TEN ACRE®

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