abc specialityfoodmagazine.com

January 2016 £3.25

SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS

TASTE DIRECT ★ 2016 ★

Free Samples at the click of a button

More information on pages 24 & 25

tastedirect2016.com

SELLING

JOHN LEWIS BUYER: HOW TO SELL CHOCOLATE

P.10



INTERVIEW

PAUL HARGREAVES: MAKING IT WORK

P.15



INSIGHT

LIZ TRUSS: YEAR OF BRITISH FOOD

P.6



In this issue

2 Update
Industry news

8 Prime Cuts
James George of Turner & George

10 Sweet Talk
How to sell Chocolate

12 Product News
Essential stock

14 Retail School
Making windows work

15 The Interview
Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre

17 Opinion
Views from the cheese experts

18 Cheese Uncut
Dairy dispatches

20 Selling The Best of British
Getting more from territorials

22 Rethink and Refit
Refurbishing your business

24 Taste Direct
Sample the best fine foods

26 Farm Shop Focus
Marsh Green Farm Shop

26 Make Sampling Work For You
Adrian Beale of Buckley & Beale advises

30 Market Report: Free-From
A growing sector

32 Regional Focus: Scotland
Introducing Scottish food

35 Meet the Buyer
The Scottish Deli

EDITOR'S LETTER

Viva La Resolution



Hello and welcome to what I hope will be a happy and prosperous 2016. After the seasonal surge of the last few weeks, you might be thinking about making some New Year's Resolutions. I'm not talking about eating less (you eat for professional reasons) or cutting out the booze (same applies, of course). What I mean are the ones you can make that will improve your performance over the next 12 months. You might, for instance, resolve to put your store straight during the slow month of January. We've a feature in this issue which will help you to adjust or completely renovate your look. Is your retail area as bright and welcoming as can be? Does it flow as easily as it might? How many little jobs have you put off for so long that you no longer notice them? A fresh pair of eyes will tell you. New Year is also the time to think about your new stock. You might resolve to look extra closely at last year's sales and ditch these slow-sellers in favour of the new and original products you'll discover if you resolve to make this year the one where you finally attend one of the big food shows. You might resolve to review the standard of service your customers are receiving. Can you honestly say that yours is the standard that has people recommending your business purely on the service they received? If not, resolve to improve your staff training. Are your staff as knowledgeable and approachable as they might be? Is there a weak link in your staff chain which needs to be fixed? And how about resolving to run extra tastings and promotions? Why not schedule some you haven't tried? You could try Valentines Day, Easter, spring, autumn and summer promotions. You might also think about increasing your level of customer involvement with more tastings and regular cheese and wine evenings. Whatever you resolve to do, I hope you will find the help and advice you need in this year's Speciality Food.

> "How to improve your business? A fresh pair of eyes will tell you"

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

HARVEY & BROCKLESS LAUNCHES WINTER COLLECTION

Fine food and drink distributor Harvey & Brockless has released a new collection featuring just-launched cheeses from European producers.

The collection showcases three new British cheeses – White Lake's Sheep Rustler, Baron Bigod by Fen Farm Dairy, and Rollright from King Stone Dairy.

Also new to the range are two cheeses from French cheesemaker and affineur Gaugry: Chablis and Epoissse.

The selection also now includes two Alpine cheeses – Terroir's Mont D'or; encircled in spruce bark and infused with a pine flavour; and Reblochon from Fermier Paccard, an indulgent cheese made using milk from the farm's own animals.

TOP DRAWER OPENS FOOD EMPORIUM

Top Drawer, the home and lifestyle event taking place at Olympia London 17th–19th January, will this year host its first Food Emporium.

Speciality and fine foods from over 50 artisans, producers and brands will be available to try, from drinks and confectionery to baked goods and gifts.

Ian Rudge, development director said, "With more and more delis, farm shops and specialty food outlets increasingly selling food gifts, it seems the perfect time to present an impeccably curated selection of fabulous food brands to our retail community."





New Year, New Resolutions

A new year equals a new start for many, not just in terms of weight loss goals and plans for overall wellbeing, but in terms of business growth, too. Trimming the fat and working towards a leaner physique isn't just for the dieters – it's at this time of year that ideas of refreshing stock, site and staff are rife.

We've spoken to two bastions of the speciality food industry to find out about their resolutions for the coming year, both professional and personal, and for a taste of exciting times to come.



Edward Berry, Ludlow Food Centre

Our primary business objectives for 2016 are to continue building on the incredible successes that we achieved over the course of the past year. Winning the Golden Fork 'Shop of Year' Award in September was a real personal highlight not just of 2015 but of the four years that I've spent at Ludlow Food Centre.

There are a number of sizeable changes planned. For starters, my replacement will be taking over the reins. I'm confident that my successor will do a great job overseeing the plans for the New Year, as well as introducing their own changes, I'm sure.

As always, at this time of year, each department is busy considering new product developments; their innovative streak always keeps our trophy cabinet topped up. As a resolution for everyone in the business, I think this is something we should celebrate more. There is a wonderful team spirit at Ludlow Food Centre and by sharing each other's successes this convivial atmosphere can only be improved – it's something that customers respond to as well. Happy staff, happy customers – what more could you want?

For our newly recruited apprentices, it will be their first full year at the Food Centre. They are already off to a flying start. Their enthusiasm for the food and drink sector is fantastic – and on a personal level it is very rewarding to have played a part in developing the next generation of artisan makers. To see them become more accomplished in their new roles is very gratifying, so I look forward to seeing them all progress.

We'll also continue to showcase seasonal produce, our handmade products made on-site and the food and drink from our fabulous local suppliers – our calendar of tastings' is already looking very full!

Certain areas of the business will be expanding, such as our retail presence in Ludlow town centre. It's a key focus for 2016 to really spread the word about what makes the Food Centre so different and to encourage new customers to come and see the quality of what we have to offer.



Duncan Hider, Hider Foods

2015 has been a busy year for Hider Foods and the fine food family, as well as my own family growing at home. The 25% growth in order volumes has brought with it some challenges. A very busy year in terms of orders and cases handled, but we don't necessarily feel it has been up to our normal standards (we have high expectations!). At home with two toddlers, I've certainly been receiving my orders from them too, with a 25% increase in party invitations, and trips to the park bringing their own different challenges!

If I could summarise my resolutions for 2016, they would be reflection and health. With improved reflection I think we can all be more productive in the right areas of our days. I'm certainly guilty of not prioritising this, often filling my day (or having it filled!) from sunset to sunrise with either family or work-related activities. I love my work and I love my family, so I don't intend spending less time on either of my passions, but I do intend spending the time more productively through ongoing reflection.

2016 will be the year I reflect on what we are doing and how well we are doing, and, more importantly, what we could improve on. In terms of health, ultimately I would love to keep kicking a football around or having a game of tennis with them for many years to come, I've recently celebrated reaching the age of 40 (the same year as the company reached 50 years) so I need to prioritise my own health and fitness regime for 2016 to make this happen! Cycling and tennis are my two main routes to fitness, I'm not designed for a gym and I much prefer the great outdoors, whether that's walking in the North Yorkshire Moors or cycling across the impressive Humber bridge. We are fortunate to be in a part of the country close to such amazing coastline, national parks and cycle tracks along the river Humber.

On reflection I can combine all my thoughts for 2016: here's to a reflective bike ride, towing the toddlers in their buggy over the Humber bridge cycle path, while thinking through how we can create an even better experience for our valued customers.

> "2016 will be the year I reflect on what we are doing and how well we are doing, and, more importantly, what we could improve on"





JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES

"Resolutions of a shopkeeper"

The time for new year's resolutions is upon us again. Having discussed the subject already with a random selection of suppliers, customers and market traders, it is very good to note that there is a general air of optimism in circulation. Let's hope nothing will alter this. So as a shopkeeper in 2016, here are my own personal and commercial resolutions based on a heartfelt desire to make improvements.

Please note that this is, of course, the abridged version!

- How to improve customer service in so many small ways by the miracle cure of common sense.
- How to embrace new ideas without saying "we tried this in 1997 and it was a disaster".
- How to be enthusiastic about products but not raise unreasonable expectations with suppliers. Ditto ideas from staff and customer requests!
- How to listen as much as possible and how not to worry too much – which is of no help at all.
- How to listen to customers in particular but remember that you can never completely satisfy some.
- How to accept public criticism without going into a meltdown or completely ignoring it.
- How to know when to completely ignore something.
- How to manage time more efficiently without thinking of how much time has been wasted in the past.
- How to remember that things are not as bad as you fear nor as good as you hope.
- How to roll with the punches and keep a sense of humour which will prove to be your best friend.
- How to keep up with the next big trend but remember that a trend is not a tradition.
- How to acknowledge that gut feelings may have served you well in the past but they can often be wrong.
- How to never forget that to balance the income with the expenditure is what it is all about, apart from one thing.
- How to never forget that that one thing is to treat people fairly no matter what (even time wasters)– they will never forget how your business made them feel. This is probably the most important thing on the list!

Finally, how to remember two other things in particular:

That no matter how difficult it is working in the speciality food world in 2016, the experiences that you share, the relationships that you build and the lessons that you learn will prove to be a rewarding and enriching life experience. When the time comes to look back on it you will almost certainly feel that you made a great career choice (and enjoyed a lot of food and wine).

And.... The only thing that works is work.

Happy 2016.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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

REVAMP FOR VAUXHALL'S DELICIAS DELICATESSEN

Atlantico UK, a leading Portuguese importer and distributor in the UK, has refurbished one of its four London delicatessens.

The Vauxhall site opened on 280 Wandsworth Road in SW8 in 2001 to supply the Portuguese community in Vauxhall and Stockwell. Since then, the store has evolved to sell high quality products from Portugal and Brazil.

The revamped store will sell popular items including cured meats, cheeses, fortified and sweet wines, and ambient items including dried fruit and condiments.

Ivo Afonso of Atlantico said, "A major refurbishment and expansion has now been completed and we are proud to announce the reopening of a brand new store which will cater for the local community, as well as the forthcoming urban development in neighbouring Nine Elms and Battersea.

"Delicias Vauxhall will surprise you for the outstanding quality of the Portuguese and Brazilian food products, and will soon become a meeting point for all of those eager to discover the delicacies from both countries."



CHATSWORTH RENOVATES FARM SHOP AND CAFÉ

Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop has recently completed the final phase of its 2015 renovation works, which included installing new self-service fridges and freezers in the butchery and delicatessen.

A proud purveyor of fine beef, lamb, pork, game and fresh fish, the retailer sources its produce from dedicated farmers and producers in the local area. Since opening in 1977, Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop has maintained an ethos of sourcing primarily from the Chatsworth estate, secondly from the estate's tenant farmers, thirdly from Derbyshire producers, and then, wherever possible, from finest quality suppliers within the UK.

Andre Birkett, head of Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop said, "The improvements have given the farm shop the opportunity to introduce some great butchery pick-up lines, freshly prepared by our skilled butchers, and a new fresh and frozen game range.

"The delicatessen area has been transformed, with our talented chefs introducing delicious new savoury products and our bakers creating a fantastic chilled range of pastries, cakes and fresh desserts, which bring a new mouthwatering feature to the counter. We are delighted to have a new chilled antipasti and olive bar, which is proving hugely popular."





GEORGE MEWES COMES TO EDINBURGH

Glasgow-based cheesemonger George Mewes has opened a shop in Edinburgh, in order to explore the city's food scene and expand its wholesale customer base in Edinburgh.

The new site has a more bespoke finish which will be replicated in the Glasgow shop when it is refurbished in the future, including a state of the art refrigeration system which cascades cold air down from ceiling-mounted units to keep the cheese moist and in top condition, a deep slate counter with space for scales, cutting boards, wax paper dispenser and till to avoid staff turning their backs on customers while serving, and untreated spruce shelving to display whole truckles of cheese and accompaniments.

George Mewes, owner said, "Because this is the second shop I was able to learn from the process from opening in Glasgow, which allowed me to tailor the new shop design from learning from my experience to create a shop that was more user friendly for both our staff and for the customers.

"Since we opened in Glasgow over five years ago we have been constantly refining and fine tuning the products we sell so we can offer our customers the best quality cheese and accompaniments that you can find anywhere in the UK, so when opening in Edinburgh it was simply a case of mirroring what products we stock in Glasgow to Edinburgh.

"Of course, the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow are quite different, so moving forward we may find that the people of Edinburgh will have different tastes and preferences from our Glasgow customers. As we build a rapport and build strong relationships with our Edinburgh customers, we may find that we will need to make changes to our products to meet their needs."



FARMA Announces 2016 Conference



The annual FARMA conference is taking place 28th February–1st March in Chester's Queens Hotel.

The event will open with a three-way debate on customer loyalty and advice on how to create sticky customers, hosted by Philip Graves, author and retail psychologist, Jonathan Winchester of Shopper Anonymous and Nigel Bogle of Lakeland Computer Services, before Tim Bennett, chair of the Food Standards Agency, will answer questions directly from the floor – email your questions to info@farma.co.uk.

A butchery competition and showcase of the best practical butchers from farm shops across the UK will be taking place on 1st March, supported by AHDB Beef and Lamb. Michael Richardson, direct retail specialist of AHDB Beef and Lamb will be available to answer questions.

Also, four case studies will be showcased: Farndon Fields, The Store, Hartley and Darts.

Sally Jackson, chair of FARMA said, "Last year's conference was a huge success, everyone left feeling re-energised and brimming with ideas. The new intimate feel to the event mixed with professional chairmanship from the amazing Susie Emmett and standout speakers such as the Food Futurologist gave the FARMA committee lots to think about for the 2016 event.

"The 2016 event builds on the best parts. Susie is back in the chairman's role, the expert retailers discussion panel is back with four amazing shops in the hot seat including Darts and Farndon Fields, the retail tours heading out to businesses such as The Ice Cream Farm and Bodnant Welsh Food, the butchery competition is running, and we've added a few new exciting elements."

A 2015 attendee said, "This was our second year at the FARMA conference, and yet again we were blown away with how much relevant information was packed into three days; so much so that when I got home I slept all afternoon to rest my head. I cannot cover everything that we took from the conference."

Fairtrade Fortnight: How To Help

Running from 29th February to 13th March, Fairtrade Fortnight 2016 will bring together businesses, campaigners and shoppers to highlight the severe lack of food security for farmers.

Fairtrade works with 1.5 million farmers and workers in Africa, Asia and Central and Latin America, helping them earn a sustainable income in order to support their family, buy food, and invest in community, business and the environment.

Nilufar Verjee, public engagement director for the Fairtrade Foundation said, "When people are paid a fair price, they can have more control over their lives when times are hard, and worry less about how they will feed their families.

"Whether it's having the money to spend on food or being able to expand their farms to grow more food to eat, Fairtrade means many farmers and workers are able to do what we take for granted – put enough food on the table for the people they care about, all year round.

"Farming is the backbone of the world. It's simply wrong that whilst farmers work hard to produce what we eat so many of them should go hungry themselves.

"This Fairtrade Fortnight, make your breakfast count with Fairtrade – use the power of your shopping to help ensure food security for world's most vulnerable farmers and workers."

Businesses will have lots of opportunities to get involved, from holding a Fairtrade breakfast to tweeting about the campaign to partnership deals. For more information contact commercial@fairtrade.org.uk.

29 FEBRUARY – 13 MARCH 2016
FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
FAIRTRADE.ORG.UK/FORTNIGHT



GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL



"Wet or dry in January?"

How's Dry January going for you? Are you actively participating and not drinking or are you continuing to pour the amber nectar down your gullet saying "sod it" to the new prohibition? After the festive excess, are you one of the increasing advocates of eleven months of ever-increasing consumption followed by a precipitous full stop in January while you nurse the remnants of the New Year's Eve bash? Or are you a lone voice in the pub, gently fingering your tipple while the landlord tries to work out how he's going to pay the rent due to plummeting income?

Type 'dry January' into Google and before you even consider what to follow it up with you get 241,000,000 pages on the subject. Add in the word 'blog' and you're confronted by 34,900,000 pages, so clearly there is a lot of interest in all this giving up booze business. And business it is – you can get posters, stickers, wall charts, training packs, support packages, wristbands and even emergency phone lines to call if you think you're about to sip a Cinzano or sniff the hand sanitiser. Amazingly, Google has 169,000,000 pages of support material headed up by dryjanuary.org, which is Alcohol Concern's fundraising and campaigning page. Everyone seems to claim it's a great time to detox and going dry for January is the perfect detox programme. Really?

There is a fantastic phrase or maxim from Peter Drucker, The Management Guru, which says, "There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which shouldn't be done at all." Now, I'm not saying that giving up booze isn't a good idea – moderation is always wise (especially of moderation itself) but sometimes we end up doing stuff that we have no idea will have any lasting benefit. Try typing 'dry January bad for you' and you'll find 69,500,000 pages advocating why giving up booze for January is bad for you, headed up by the Daily Mail claiming that "a dry January is a complete waste of time health-wise." And that was written by a doctor. The article pours alcoholic scorn on the very concept of giving up and is withering in its criticism of so called 'Dryathalons' and the office 'Dryathletes' complete with justgiving and Facebook pages with requests for 'support for my biggest challenge yet'. Interestingly, Alcohol Concern's dry January webpage has a nice, neat get out clause as its footer. I quote: "Please note that this is not a medical detox programme and should not be attempted by people with an alcohol dependency problem." Hmmm.

Now, I do like the idea of reviewing the things we do and examining whether it's all as worthwhile as we think, so I'm spending January having a gentle drink about things – just to make sure those things we do so efficiently really do need to be done or whether we could just nip off to the pub instead.

Bottoms up. Mine's an Elderflower Spritzer.

DIARY DATES

January

24th–26th
SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW
SECC, Glasgow
scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com

31st–3rd
ISM
Cologne, Germany
ism-cologne.com

February

7th–11th
SPRING FAIR
NEC, Birmingham
springfair.com

10th–11th
THE SOURCE TRADE SHOW
Westpoint, Exeter
thesourcetradeshow.co.uk

10th–13th
BIOFACH
Nuremberg, Germany
biofach.de

COTSWOLD FAYRE TRADE SHOWS

January

19th Chesterfield

27th Birmingham

February

3rd Chippenham

10th London

cotswold-fayre.co.uk

Defra Names 2016 The Year of British Food

Defra has announced that 2016 will be The Year of British Food – an opportunity for retailers and consumers to support British-made food and drink.

In line with this, next year will see trade missions and pop-ups across the UK, offering British producers a chance to promote their work and expand their customer base.

In support of this year-long celebration of British Food & Drink, Defra has also launched a Great British Food Unit, partnering with UKTI to champion British produce at home and abroad.

In her speech at the launch event, Elizabeth Truss, environment secretary said, "Next year's food campaign is going to involve events, it is going to involve trade missions, pop-ups, even pop-ups in Defra, which we'll be organising – but also linking together the parts of government that deal with food, so UKTI on the food promotion side, and Defra on food exports, to create a Great British Food Unit that really is a champion for food right across government.

"What we want to do is to challenge people's perceptions about British food. People in Britain are not as proud of our food as maybe we should be. There is massive potential to grow the industry, which is already worth £100bn a year, and I want to make sure that we help people understand the opportunities [there are] with food – the ability to cook it, the ability to enjoy it and the ability to work in it."



Natasha Lovell-Smith, editor of Great British Food said, "It's great to see the government committing to put a proper strategy in place to celebrate British food and the amazing people who create it.

"Over the past few years London has grown to become one of the world's top food capitals, but there's still plenty of work to do to get our myriad regional specialities the recognition they deserve.

"In terms of protected foods we lag behind the rest of Europe at the moment – so anything that can be done to change that is very much welcomed by me. There are exciting times ahead I think."







Free-from Guidance Released for Retailers and Producers

The British Retail Consortium has released a guidance document to advise retailers, producers and authorities on how to make a free-from claim on a product.

The BRC has worked with the Food and Drink Federation, Coeliac UK and Anaphylaxis Campaign to produce the guide in order to regulate free-from claims on food and drink packaging – currently, there are no specific rules at UK or EU level to govern these claims and make them consistent across the industry.

Following the publication of this guide, all food labels must be substantiated and reliable to be considered safe for consumers.

Andrea Martinez-Inchausti, BRC's deputy food director said, "A 'free-from' claim cannot be taken lightly. A small manufacturer could now confidently understand whether producing a 'free-from' product is within their capability. It will also result in more consistency which means more consumer trust as acknowledged in the foreword to the Guidance by FSA Chief Executive Catherine Brown."

Chief Scientist / Policy and Sustainability Director at the Food and Drink Federation Barbara Gallani said, "This Guidance on 'free-from', which follows on from the publication earlier this year of FDF's Gluten Labelling Guidance, is going to provide food businesses with key information on legal requirements, risk assessment and consumer expectations.

We are pleased that our long standing collaboration with the British Retail Consortium, Anaphylaxis Campaign and Coeliac UK is continuing to deliver useful advice to businesses and ultimately more consistent labelling for consumers."

Selfridges Unveils 2016 As 'Year of Japan'

The renowned London retailer is being transformed into a slice of Japan for eight weeks, beginning January 2016, to offer its customers authentic Japanese products and experiences.

The food hall will host a number of food experts including Hidetoshi Nakata, Japanese footballer and sake expert, and Chef Murata, one of the world's most successful Michelin-starred chefs.

Nathan Herrmann, food and restaurants director of Selfridges said, "We decided to focus on Japan in 2016 as it has very strong artisanal traditions, and its incredible attention to detail makes for an interesting product and restaurant offer.

"There is also a limited awareness of the breadth of food traditions outside of sushi in London, plus an increased energy post-Fukishima including a renewed energy in regionalism. Also, the upcoming Olympics means there'll be an increased interest in Japanese food and culture in the UK.

"With regards to trends, I recommend keeping an eye out for mash ups, for example Japanese/Scottish whisky or Japanese/French patisserie. Be sure to stock some Japanese alcohol – there's an incredible breadth in Japanese whisky and beers, and ongoing potential in sake and sochu."

CHARLES CAMPION



"Through a glass darkly"

Towards the end of December, the editors of large newspapers start to fret about what stories they should be running in their New Year editions. News of the shortcomings of actresses and the latest scandalous behaviour of over-paid footballers can only fill so many of the pages. Food writers, the gardening correspondent, restaurant critics and the lady who writes about books and the opera will all get a terse email asking what are the hot trends going to be for the year to come – and all these worthies have one thing in common, nobody has the faintest idea what will be the next big thing.

About a decade ago I got the call, "What is the next great food trend?" Resisting the temptation to steer the great British public to a few classic horrors – salted puffins, donkey milk cheese, those duckling embryos still in their eggshells – I proudly proclaimed that the next great dining breakthrough would be Mexican. This was a logical and sensible choice, we Brits are fond of chilli; Mexican food is not expensive and has plenty of carbs; it sounds accessible. Strangely nothing happened, the world of food turned gently, while ignoring my suggestion. The next year I nominated Mexican once again. And the next year. And the one after that. Finally my nerve broke, and after half a dozen years singing the praises of Mexican restaurants whenever the editors dreaded "next big thing" query arrived in the inbox, I switched and confidently recommended Moroccan restaurants as the food to follow.

You've probably guessed that this was the year when Mexican food took off big time: the year 79 Mexican restaurants opened in London. It's a dangerous idea that anyone in the food and drink business could steal a march on his or her competitors by predicting the next big thing. For a start, a genuine trend has to gain a foothold before it is noticed, it doesn't become a trend worth following until it is established, and once established it has arrived and is no longer a trend.

Look back at 2015 and its trends. The restaurant sector had a good year (the Harden's 2016 guide blurb says that 179 new restaurants opened while 56 closed) and that reflects the public's interest in everything foodie continuing to build. Last year a barbecue smoked in every back garden – unless they were of the high ticket Green Egg variety, in which case they achieved blast furnace-like levels of heat and just the right amount of smokiness. Britain's obsession with pulled pork and smoked ribs filtered down to the High Street as people returned to the humble hamburger again and again. None of which gets us any closer to the vexed question – what is the next big thing? What is going to be the fad or craze that defines 2016 first in the shops and then in the kitchen? I lean towards a Moroccan spiced hamburger that has been slow-smoked and then finished with swags of pink icing... But will probably have to make do with a fistful of fajitas once again.





PRIME CUTS

James George, founder of Turner & George, on the history, relationships and philosophies behind this modern butchery

I own another company, Select Butchery, that supplies restaurants on a wholesale level with meat and poultry products. My path crossed with Richard's (Turner, co-founder) around 15 years ago while he was consulting on a new restaurant called Automat in Mayfair; Select had been recommend to the owners and they had called me in to meet Richard and discuss the menu, particularly their burger. It was from that initial meeting I realised that this man had immense respect for the animals and the way their meat was produced, and even from that brief meeting I learnt a lot. I continued to work with Richard on various projects for the next 10 years and we developed a very positive and creative working relationship and became good friends, too. Around five years ago, after noticing the huge popularity of burgers, steaks and all things red meat, I realised that there may be an opportunity in the market to have the same level of quality, ethically produced, dry aged meat delivered to your door. It was then that I suggested the idea to Richard and the journey began. Our site in Selfridges was born out of a chance meeting with the then Foodhall Manager Noel, and over a few beers it became clear that the owners wanted to redirect the route that the Foodhall was taking, introduce some fresh young blood and basically bring it back on trend.



I think the way we relate to our suppliers is very important to us and not particularly the industry norm. We personally visit every supplier on a regular basis to ensure that their standards are on par with ours and really try and work together as a partnership – after all, they are the backbone of our business. We also like to promote this fact to our customers and take pride in the fact that we can advise the exact provenance of each piece of our meat.

Our philosophy is very simple and should be for every butcher, no matter what level they are working at. Naturally-raised meat, free from antibiotics and hormones, that has been treated with respect from the beginning to the end from small, zero intensive farms tastes better. Fact.

We have a small network of farmers in the North of England who produce the majority of our produce, but we also like to work with even smaller operators, often new to the industry but passionate and



> "Our philosophy is very simple and should be for every butcher, no matter what level they are working at"

dedicated to their causes, as it gives our customers the chance to explore the range of farming techniques that are used. All of our suppliers are subjected to our pre-supply audit.

We like to keep things simple and have a small range of meat rubs and gravies that Richard developed. We also have some craft beers and a changing wine list that Fiona Beckett devises for us; we launch every new





list with a tasting at the shop in EC1 which gives us the chance to pair the wine with some cuts of our meat – it's always good fun and well received. Basically, if something can work well alongside our meat without stealing the show, we are happy to try it.

When starting out, you should begin with a small basic selection of products that you are confident in, it's not the time to take chances... that will come further down the line. One of our biggest mistakes was to start stocking a product because a single person asked for it; often it's not as simple as ordering one or two kilos etc so you take a risk and order in extra, but a week later you could be throwing the extra away. It's all money. Make sure you are working with like-minded suppliers who respect what they are doing; a supplier network of consistent quality is essential.

Our customers are people who care about what they eat and where it's come from, and ultimately have respect for the processes involved. It's not the case that we have people in daily picking up small amounts. Instead, we're seeing a trend whereby our customers buy meat for an occasion, which is exactly how meat should be utilised – it's not a daily requirement, its far better to eat better meat less frequently.

Staffing must be the hardest part of running a business; we have seen many butchers come and go for various reasons, but have realised that there is a a huge and growing interest in the industry and a resurgence of butchery. Invest in the young. Training is key and apprenticeships are, encouragingly, on the up. It wasn't that long ago that the average age of a British butcher was 56, but hopefully that's not the case now.



Rendles
The finest selection of gourmet foods.
Pates, Savoury Biscuits, Cakes, Individual Snacks, Gift Sets
The finest selections of gourmet foods to delight your customers, time and time again..
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SAMPLES, PLEASE CONTACT THE SALES TEAM
call 01473 217788 or email sales@rendlesuk.com
www.rendlesuk.com

JBP
JB PACKAGING
#JBP
UK Manufacturer
temperature controlled packaging
Keep Food Deliveries Fresh in Transit With Our Range of Insulated Boxes
Polystyrene (EPS) Boxes, Deluxe Reusable Boxes, Waxed Cardboard Boxes, Ice Sheets and Sundries.
(box samples available for purchase)
UK Delivery from Torpoint & Livingston
buy online: www.jbpackaging.co.uk call: 0800 285 1339





ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE NEW DELIWRAPS PREMISES

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

When fire broke out at Deliwraps, this family-run supplier to the independent food industry was determined to turn a disaster into an opportunity

Are you prepared for disaster? What would you do if your business was flooded out or ruined by subsidence? Disasters can and do strike and it's important that you have contingency plans and, of course, make sure your insurance policy is up to the job.

One speciality food industry supplier which hasn't let a small thing like a fire get in the way of business is Deliwraps, suppliers of purpose-made wrapping for cheese, meat, fish, sandwiches and other sorts of wrap to independent food retail businesses. Sales and marketing executive Jonathan Howitt describes how the morning of Saturday, 9th May 2015 got off to a decidedly bad start.

"The phone rang at 6am and my wife took the call," Jonathan says. "She said, 'You need to get down to the factory. The business is on fire.' Your heart sinks when you get a message like that, but I drove down to the factory, where my dad and my uncle already were, the fire having started around 4am."

Deliwraps had been making its dedicated wrapping on an industrial estate in Grantham, Lincolnshire for thirty years, although the company itself is older. Housed in a brick building with offices across the front and a two storey warehouse and factory at the rear, the interior walls and roof were asbestos lined, but this didn't stop the flames which were producing the pall of black smoke Jonathan saw as he crossed the police cordon that morning. Jonathan thinks that as many as six fire engines may have attended the blaze.

"It didn't look as bad as it actually was," Jonathan says. "You could clearly see there was a fire going on. There was a lot of smoke rising out the top of the building. One of the fire trucks had got the boom out and two guys were on top of this, looking down, trying to damp the roof down with the hose to give themselves more access to extinguish the fire. The majority of the fire appeared to be contained in one of the corners of the building, kept there by the prevailing wind. Although there was a lot of activity in one area of the building, the rest looked to be okay."

This proved to be wishful thinking. "Hot spots kept igniting," Jonathan says, "it was three days before it was safe enough to go in and we were able to survey the extent of the damage."





What Jonathan and the Deliwraps team saw was a scene of complete devastation. "We lost everything," he says, "the entire manufacturing facility, one of our warehouses, all the machines, all the samples, all of our printing plates, the inks, everything. The only thing to survive were the offices, which were protected by two fire doors, which did their job." Not quite everything. It was ironic, he says,that despite the warehouse being filled with rolls of combustible paper, being packed too tightly to burn, the rolls were only "singed at the edges."

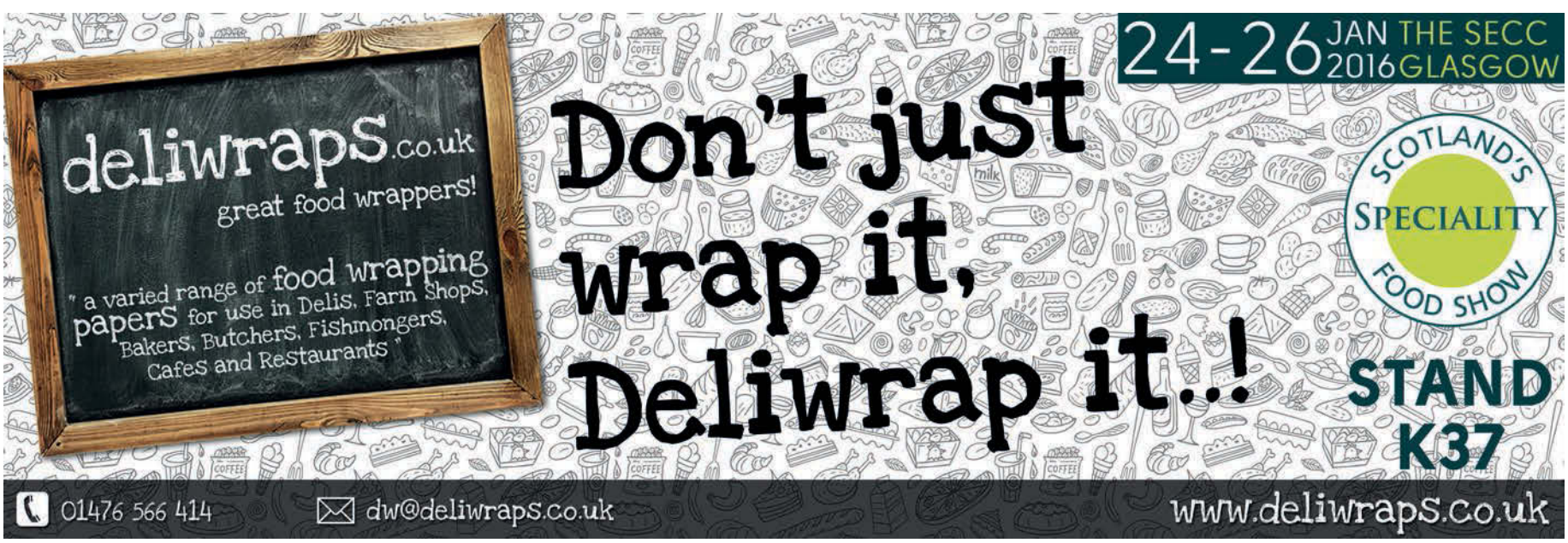
Damage limitation

Despite such dispiriting scenes, "throwing in the towel was the last thing which would have happened," Jonathan says. "We were already thinking of what needed to be done to carry on while the building was still burning." This family firm "saw the fire as an opportunity," Jonathan says. "It was a matter of one step back, two steps forward."

"Since the fire," he says, "we have been involved in damage limitation and doing some fire-fighting of our own in order to keep things going. We have been expediting planning and building and finding a temporary place to shoehorn the temporary machinery into. It was never on the cards to roll over." The fire has in fact provided opportunities for the firm "to refocus, regroup and look at rebuilding," as Jonathan says.

"In the first three months we have got printing, sheeting and guillotining back in-house. 80-90% of what we do on a daily basis is now under our control again." Rebuilding is planned to start soon, with plans in place for a single-storey building to house the replaced machinery. This machinery, Jonathan says, "will allow us to offer better quality and also sharpen up what we are doing and run slightly faster, so we can bring down lead times. The new press has a different printing-plate system which is cheaper as well, so we can pass that cost on. All in all, we have become a lot more streamlined and efficient."

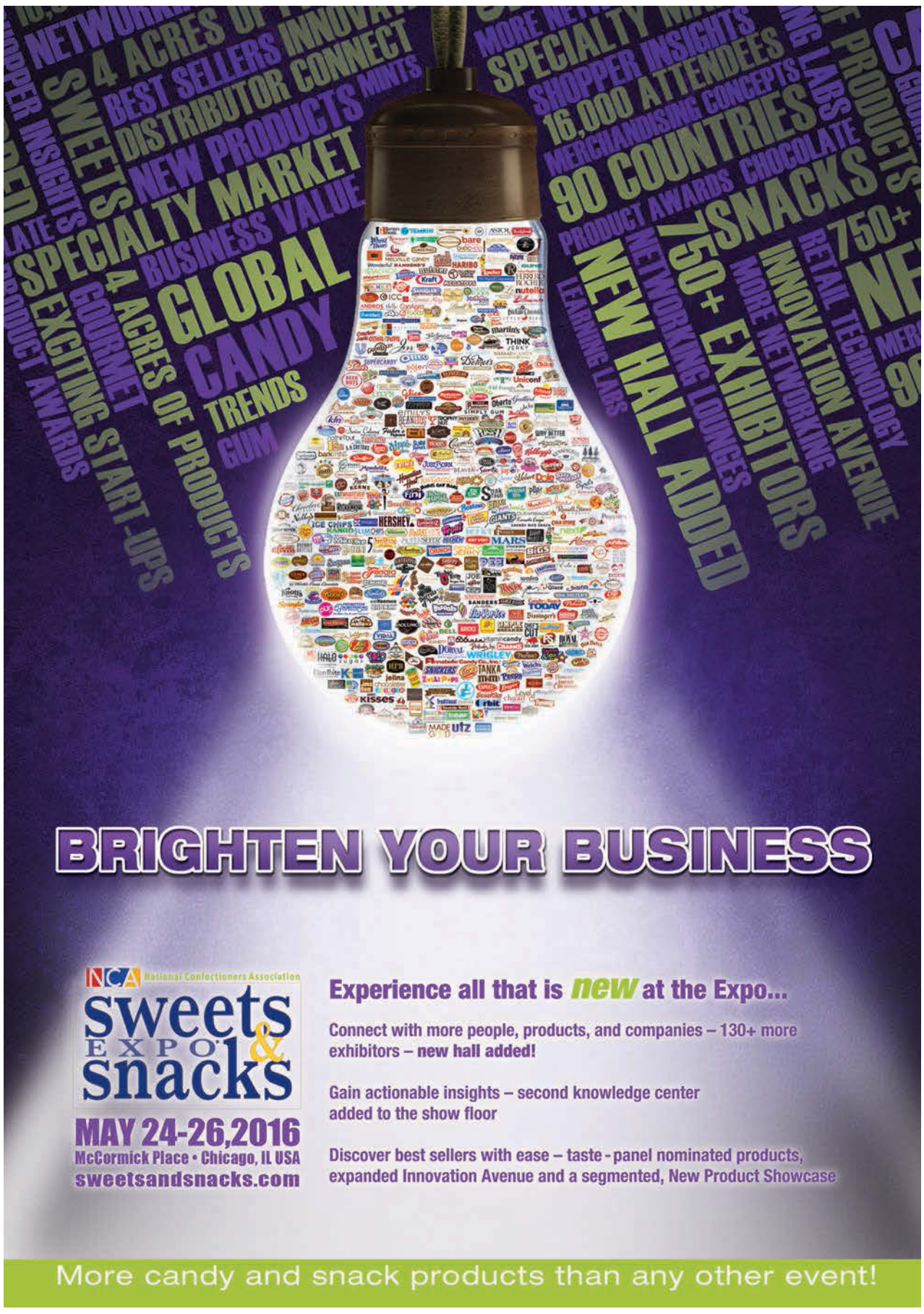
This upbeat attitude is shared by the rest of the Deliwraps team. With new and improved plant, better warehousing and BRC accreditation on the cards, the future for this key supplier to the independent food industry is, Jonathan says, " looking a lot more solid. We will be able to offer the same high standards of a service, with a higher standard of product quality."



How To Sell: Chocolate



Today's chocolate sector is ever-changing, simultaneously revelling in the traditional and exploring the new. Here's how to sell chocolate now



Worth approximately £4.1 billion a year with a growth rate of 1.6% (Mintel), it's safe to say that the UK chocolate market is booming. With shoppers increasingly discerning when it comes to the quality and ethical credentials of the food they're purchasing – and 'self-gifting' becoming more popular than ever – now's the time for speciality chocolate producers and the retailers selling their products to shine.

These days, the consumer has a lot to think about when buying chocolate – were the cocoa farmers paid a fair wage? Does this bar contain real sugar or a chemically-derived alternative? Can the 'superfood' ingredients in this truffle transform this treat into a healthy snack? With all the ethical and other equally thought-provoking matters currently surrounding the chocolate sector, it's easy to forget that at its heart, chocolate is a treat and will always be popular as a form of celebration – Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Christmas; all valuable opportunities to boost sales with chocolate products at all price points.

From a humble yet delicious chocolate bar to a box of the finest single-origin truffles, chocolate will always be a crowd-pleaser, so it's well worth taking the time to keep an eye on the ever-evolving sector to stay abreast of the latest trends, products and tools to help your store stand out from the rest.



Chantal Coady, founder of Rococo, shares her views on the growing interest in free-from chocolate

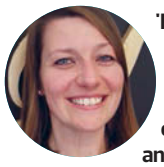
Being aware that there are many people have special dietary requirements, we are really keen to help support them and also to share the good news about real dark chocolate. It's funny that many people don't seem to know that all dark chocolate bars should be dairy and gluten-free. Our dark chocolate certainly is, and with a high cocoa content this means naturally lower levels of sugar. There are no shortcuts, and no expense is spared in the creation of our award-winning chocolates. It seems only sensible to communicate this with our customers.

One of my dearest friends and chocolate mentors, the late Mott Green (co-founder of The Grenada Chocolate Company) was vegan – it was always a pleasure to cook with him and eat some great vegan food – it's a shame it has such a bad press. When consumers are first faced with the challenge to cut down or exclude certain foods, they are often overwhelmed, and find a lot of negative peer pressure and false information about chocolate. This is probably based on the addition of butter oil in some industrially-produced dark chocolate in the past. One really simple way of discovering what's inside is to read the label!

We are very happy to share the good news: dark chocolate should by definition be dairy-free, and all of our pure dark chocolate bars are vegan by default. We have a collection of single origin chocolate bars; all plain, dairy-free bars with so many different naturally occurring flavour notes from fine cocoas from around the world that everyone can find a favourite amongst the wide variety of percentages. These are the equivalent of fine wines, from single estates, all showing the cocoa to its very best. They are certainly not bitter in my opinion, this is normally a sign of mass-produced chocolate bars where the cocoa has been over roasted.

One caveat – while we don't add any dairy produce to any of our recipes, it is possible that tiny traces of milk

may be found in dark chocolate with the exception of the Grenada Chocolate Company's, as most producers also make milk chocolate in the same building as dark chocolate.



'Fairtrade' is a word frequently seen on the packaging of a wide range of chocolate products, and a key concern for ethical shoppers. Charlotte Green, marketing director of Divine Chocolate, explains the value of Fairtrade in the UK and beyond

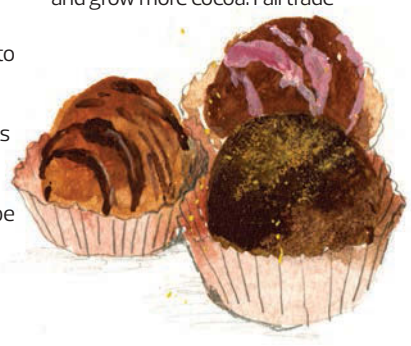
Divine Chocolate was founded in 1997 at the beginning of the Fairtrade movement in the UK and now sells chocolate globally, with significant sales in USA, Canada and Sweden. Every Divine bar and gift produced carries the Fairtrade mark, which means all the cocoa, sugar, vanilla and other flavour ingredients are Fairtrade-certified and sourced from producers at a Fairtrade price. Divine Chocolate is also co-owned by the farmers who supply its cocoa, so in addition to a guaranteed Fairtrade price for their cocoa and the Fairtrade premium, they also get a share of the profits and the knowledge and power that company ownership brings.

Divine demonstrates that it is possible to do business differently: to have fair and dignified trading relations, while delivering excellent chocolate at competitive prices. This unique business model, combining Fairtrade with company ownership, empowers smallholder farmers to be able to look after their families and farms, improve their communities, make decisions democratically and learn from each other. It also



empowers consumers to choose a chocolate that tastes delicious, knowing that farmers are also getting a good deal.

Over the last five years, most of the major chocolate manufacturers in the UK have made a significant commitment to Fairtrade. This is in part because chocolate lovers in Britain have asked them to, and also because there is a potential shortage of cocoa. They are looking at the most effective ways to get cocoa farmers to continue cocoa farming and grow more cocoa. Fairtrade guarantees a fair price for their cocoa and also requires long term contracts and a shared commitment to better farming practices. Divine also gives farmers a voice in the industry, to have a say in the future of chocolate and to ensure cocoa farming is a sustainable living for future generations.



Fairtrade continues to lead the way in challenging the terms of trade on key commodities grown by smallholder farmers in developing countries. It is the only certification system that guarantees a minimum price and a premium which farmers get decide how that money is spent. Over the next five years Fairtrade will focus on chocolate to secure systemic change, ultimately through regulation. The aim is that all chocolate will be made using cocoa purchased on a fair basis. This is aligned to the Divine company vision: to create a world where chocolate is cherished and celebrated by everyone.



FROM THE **RETAILER**

Rachel Stevens, gift food buyer at John Lewis offers a glimpse of the retailer's chocolate offering

WHAT CHOCOLATE BRANDS AND PRODUCTS DO YOU SELL?

We stock numerous chocolate products from well-known brands such as Hotel Chocolat and Charbonnel et Walker as well as smaller, niche brands such as The Chocolate Company. The chocolate products include individual chocolate boxes, bars, truffles and much more.

WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU NOTICING IN CHOCOLATE?

Chocolate is a growing market and customers continue to invest in this category for gifting. Development of interesting flavours, such as salted caramel, has been a key trend which customers are excited about. There seems to be a growing trend for dark chocolate, which is perhaps linked to customers thinking it is healthier and more suitable for people with intolerances such as dairy.

HOW DO YOU SET YOUR CHOCOLATE OFFERING APART FROM THAT OF THE SUPERMARKETS?

We ensure we differentiate our brands from that of supermarkets whilst still offering a range of price points. The packaging of our chocolate products is generally more giftable than that of supermarkets in order to offer a instant gift solution.

DO YOU HAVE ANY DISPLAY ADVICE?

Ensure each brand/collection has sufficient presence so gives a impactful look and feel. In addition to promoting what we class as 'core' year-round confectionery from our key brands, we buy in additional seasonal specific options to layer on top and create a distinct look and feel for the relevant event.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE CHOCOLATE SECTOR OF THE FINE FOOD MARKET?

I believe interesting flavours will continue to be developed by brands to ensure they continue to excite the customer and offer a point of difference to competitors. Branding and marketing will continue to be key to ensure the products stand out and catches the customer's eye amongst a vast array of branded chocolates.

Want to update your Easter offering?

Brian Watt, director of Sir Hans Sloane offers a different take on the traditional egg...

At Hans Sloane we like to do things differently; we make chocolate beads rather than powder for our drinking chocolate and we have a window on our pack so people can see what they're buying. Unlike a lot of mainstream products, our drinking chocolate actually tastes of chocolate.

We gave our chocolatiers a day off to come up with a different take on single serve drinking chocolate rather than the block of choc with a spoon. The result? An Easter Egg with some of the unique Hans Sloane chocolate beads inside, so all the consumer does is drop the egg in their cup add the hot milk or water and give it a whisk and there they have a lovely cup of rich dark drinking chocolate.



Chocolate Made for Drinking



Exclusive Range for Farm Shops and Deli's

For Orders: hans@sirhanssloane.com
01932 356008

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up



Pip & Nut Expands Range

Pip & Nut, the London-based producer of healthy nut butters, has added to its range with the launch of Honey Cinnamon Cashew Butter.

A healthier alternative to the standard nut butters on the market, Pip & Nut's selection is a nutritious and protein-rich substitute for traditional spreads and preserves.

The range now consists of Peanut Butter, Almond Butter, Almond & Coconut Butter and now Honey Cinnamon Cashew Butter.

Pip Murray, founder said, "Health is higher than ever on the consumer agenda and we're really pleased to be adding a brand new flavour, Honey Cinnamon Cashew Butter, to the range.

"We want to make people think differently about nut butter and expand it from being seen as an occasional spread to a protein source, nutrient-rich ingredient and on-the-go snack. With health higher than ever on the consumer agenda, our mission is to put the nut back into nutrition."

pipandnut.com

The Foraging Fox Spices Up Range

Makers of the original Beetroot Ketchup, The Foraging Fox, have extended their range to include a 'hot' incarnation.

To make the new condiment, chilli-roasted beetroot has been combined with horseradish to form a sophisticated, earthy heat which works well as both a barbecue accompaniment and as a base for a Bloody Mary.

The Hot One contains high levels of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, and is gluten-free and Vegetarian Society-approved.

Desiree Parker, co-founder said, "Frankie and I are always looking for ways to innovate and take The Foraging Fox forward. We're very much driven by our hunger for knowledge and grounded by the principles of respect and passion.

"We're fortunate that so many people have joined us on our journey and we believe that the Hot One will introduce our Beetroot Ketchup to an even wider audience."

foragingfox.com



Coconut Collaborative Creates World First

The Coconut Collaborative has expanded its range of dairy-free yoghurts with the lanch of the world's first coconut and almond milk yoghurt.

The yoghurt is free from dairy, gluten and soya and contains no refined sugar or cholesterol, is heart healthy and suitable for vegans.

The Coconut Collaborative's yoghurt range now includes Natural, Blueberry, Mango & Passionfruit, Raspberry and Almond.

James Averdieck, co-founder of The Coconut Collaborative said, "We're really pleased to be launching the world's first Coconut and Almond milk yoghurt, which harnesses the nutritional benefits of these two milks and gives the product both exceptional taste and texture."

coconutco.co.uk





Union Reveals New Look

Artisan coffee producer Union Hand-Roasted are relaunching their range of premium coffees following an extensive rebrand.

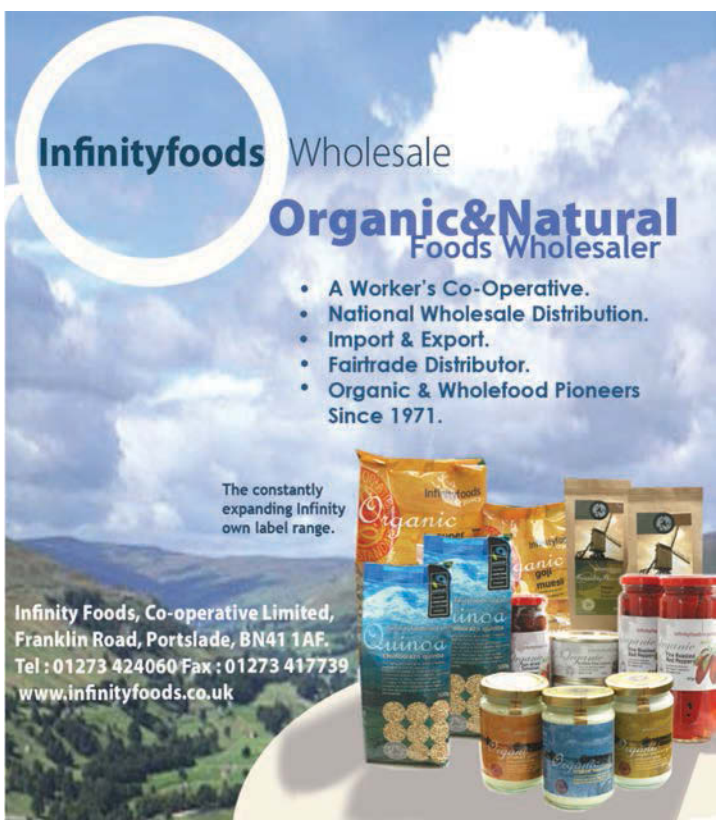
The range now has a premium, hand-crafted look – combining brown paper bags with copper accents – to reflect the quality of the coffee inside. The packaging now contains more information about the coffee, including tasting notes, quality score and roast profile.

Union's offering includes 14 speciality coffees from all over the world, both single-origin and signature blends, which have been sourced via the Union Direct Trade principle and expertly hand-roasted by Union.

Jeremy Torz, co-founder of Union Hand-Roasted said, "Our newly rebranded range aims to demystify the world of speciality coffee. Many consumers aren't aware of the variety of flavours, origins and roast types on offer and we want to help consumers discover their favourites.

"To do this, we are including a simple guide in every pack highlighting the distinctive taste profile of each coffee, information on its origins and advice on how best to brew it."

unionroasted.com







Stag Bakeries Unveils West Coast Range

Stornoway-based Stag Bakeries has launched a new sub-brand to provide a contemporary twist to the bakery's offering.

Stag Bakeries is built on provenance and heritage, whereas West Coast will provide a modern point of difference and allow the producer to utilise less traditional ingredients and flavours.

The first product to be launched under the new West Coast brand is a range of Sweet Straws, a twist on classic savoury straws which can be enjoyed with ice cream as a dessert or as an alternative to a traditional biscuit.

Sweet Straws are available in the following flavours: Apple & Cinnamon, Blackberry & Basil, Raspberry & Chocolate and Sour Cherry & Vanilla.

Jenny Burton, head of sales and marketing at Stag Bakeries said, "Stag Bakeries has built its brand on provenance and heritage but as a bakery we are awash with innovative ideas for new products. The West Coast brand will open up opportunities that we couldn't undertake with Stag – in terms of flavour combinations, baking styles and ingredients.

"We have been working on the launch of the brand and also the Sweet Straws for over 12 months as we really wanted to ensure that we got everything right. We've done market research on the flavour profiles and received very positive feedback. The Sweet Straws are an example of the type of innovative concept that West Coast will be launching.

"We've lots of new products in the pipeline so it's set to be a very busy 2016."

stagbakeries.co.uk

Mrs Crimble's Produces Special Edition of Best-seller

Mrs Crimble's has launched a special edition addition to its best-selling macaroon offering – a chocolate macaroon with stem ginger.

For this special edition macaroon, stem ginger has been added to the brand's classic chocolate-drizzled coconut macaroon for a warming afternoon treat.

As they are gluten-free they can be enjoyed by everyone, including coeliacs.

Claire Ramsey, director of marketing at Mrs Crimble's said, "We know that people love our best-selling Choc Macaroon – in fact one of them is eaten every second worldwide.

"We also know that ginger is a flavour popular with consumers, tapping into trends for nostalgia and wellness. Combining the two has created a truly delicious special edition!"

mrscrimbles.com





Cool Chile Co Launches Ambient Sauces

The London-based manufacturer and supplier of Mexican food has launched three new ambient sauces to make Mexican cooking at home fast, fresh and convenient.

The new additions to the range continue the brand's focus on authentic Mexican flavours for busy but discerning cooks, presented within a clean and distinctive branding.

The new sauces are available in three flavours: Mexican Adobo Marinade, perfect for lamb; Mexican Mojo de Ajo, a versatile garlic and chilli oil delicious with mushrooms and prawns; and Mexican Buffalo Sauce, a spicy sauce to add to both meat and vegetarian dishes.

The sauces are currently available in 70g pots, each containing two portions and recipe ideas on the back of the packaging; larger sizes will be available soon.

Kelly Peak, chief operating officer of Cool Chile Co said, "We are delighted with this new line which we are confident will appeal to both existing and new customers alike. With the steady increase in Mexican cuisine, the sauce pots offer a great new concept with different taste and heat options to choose from."

coolchile.co.uk



Retail School



Eve Reid from Metamorphosis Group explains how to make the most of your windows

Your windows are your biggest marketing tool. In today's retail environment, it has never been more important to ensure that you are making a big impact. Window dressing is not just about making things look pretty, it's about attracting attention, reinforcing your brand, setting yourself apart from the competition, promoting your products and telling your story. If used wisely, all of these elements can be an incredible lever that can have an amazing impact on sales.

Your windows provide a fantastic showcase through which to communicate your offer and specialism. It is crucial that you use them to their full advantage to:

- Grab attention
- Inspire potential customers to stop and shop with you
- Encourage them to buy
- Persuade them to return to shop with you time and time again

When it comes to products, shoppers are like magpies as they are attracted to bright and shining things.

Retail anthropologist Paco Underhill observed that as humans and as customers we are naturally attracted to certain visual elements i.e. colour, light and reflection.

Think about it...

- Have you ever slowed down to look at your reflection in a bank window?
- If you are walking along a high street, is it the colourful windows that catch your eye?
- If you are in a shop do you tend to walk towards the areas that are better lit?

If you want to catch my attention you have to make a visual impact. If you don't I will walk right past. Once you have my attention you need to use it to show me something I need, want or desire... or I won't shop with you.

When thinking how to use your windows, there are some key considerations to keep in mind:

- Window value
- Size and shape



- Facing the customer
- Using eye-line

Window value

This is an important one. If you are going to invest time and energy into your window displays you need to identify the value that will bring.

This means considering the positioning of your windows in relation to the traffic flow (both pedestrians and cars) to guage their prominence and visibility. You don't want to invest a lot of time and energy into your windows if they are not going to be seen!

Retailers with a lot of windows within one unit may decide to select their primary windows (i.e. those with the most visibility) as display windows and either keep the others open (through which to see into the store) or use permanent vinyls to obscure the windows and promote key messages.

Size and shape

If your windows are too small they may not stand out, in which case you may also need to consider being more creative with your facade to draw attention to your windows. If your windows are too big, they can drown the products and can also be costly and time consuming to dress.

Facing the customer

An un-obvious, obvious one! Many people do fantastic displays that face directly outwards. If you have a window that is directly in front of oncoming traffic (either pedestrian or cars) then this is not a problem, but many window displays are approached from the side, narrowing the customer's field of vision. In this situation, if you face your displays directly outwards, customers passing would have to stop and turn 90 degrees to see them.

Instead, you need to be able to angle key display fixtures or elements within the display slightly so that the customers are able to see them at a 45 degree angle when passing.

In retail, 'eye-line is buy-line' – 64% of In-store UK sales come from eye-line shelves.

Customers only look at a window display for four seconds on average before deciding whether or not it is of interest to them, so when it comes to window displays we need to make them easy for customers passing by to see, and this means ensuring some product presence at eye-line to capture their attention. This is especially important if customers are passing by at a close distance as they will have a narrower field of vision.

Some of your customers' eye-line may be less obvious than others, for example:

- Drive eye-line
- Children's eye-line

I advise you to stand outside your shop for 10 minutes and just watch...

- Why does that man struggle with the door?
- Why does that lady look so confused?
- How many people are failing to stop just because they may get flattened by a pushchair?
- Why can't you customers see into our windows?

Note down your observations and I bet you you will be able to see clearly what you can do to improve the customer's experience of your windows.











THE INTERVIEW

The secrets to Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of Cotswold Fayre's success? Hard work, delegation and gut instinct

As is the story of many start-up businesses, I entered the fine food and drink business as almost a complete accident. I was doing charity work in South East London, then started a family so needed a proper job! This happened at the same time as the resurgence of farm shops so was a happy accident in that respect. I started by supplying a few shops in South East London on a very part time basis, just one day a week. The turning point came in 1999, when I had returned from holiday and there were far too many messages on the answering machine – I decided that I couldn't go on like this, and either I could forget it or make a real go of it... obviously I did the latter!

I've been inspired by the number of people who told me when I started this business that it wouldn't work, and have used that as positive motivation to prove them wrong. I'm very driven to succeed and am not afraid of working hard; I'd say those two things are the most important ingredients for success. You can be lucky as well but you can't control that, so drive and an openness to working hard are imperative. It's easy to spend money you haven't got early on but a lot of companies go out of business that way – they either think it's going to be an easy ride or they find themselves in flash offices before they can really afford them. I've read a lot of autobiographical business books and Duncan Bannatyne has always been a great inspiration (although not so much in his personal life!) – I remember him reprimanding his staff for buying paperclips, as they received more than they needed through the post from other businesses! There's got to be an element of frugality in your business plan.

The fine food and drink sector is certainly a very interesting one – there are a lot of egos in it, but I guess this is true across the board. Independent retailers are often by their very nature very independent, and think they know best – quite often they do! – but sometimes they don't. One thing that does frustrate me is that there's a frightening degree of non-commercialism in the sector. That's improving, but there are a lot of people who get attracted into the sexy world of speciality food and drink from other careers, and it's sometimes amazing what people don't know. There's more money and investment in the industry these days which is improving things, but there's a scarily large number of businesses in the sector without much commercial nous. Unfortunately, these businesses don't do the market very much good – we could probably do without them in the sector as it's a very crowded marketplace. Some are clutter and not making any money for either producers, retailers or wholesalers.

There's a number of initiatives in the sector which are there to help retailers, such as Fairtrade Fortnight and Organic September, but there didn't seem to be anything for fine food. We wanted to create something for retailers that would create a bit of a buzz at a time of year that would normally be quite quiet, so we have created Fine Food Fortnight. Only brands which aren't in the supermarkets can get involved, and in April this year we're doing a small trial run with a handful of suppliers and 50 retailers. There'll be things that will work and things that won't, so we'll do a bigger and better version next year! The main aim is for independent retailers to shout about the items that people can't get down the road in the supermarket, and to ultimately get consumers spending more with them than with the multiples. Retailers who are interested in getting involved should contact Ashton Marriott via ashton@cotswold-fayre.co.uk.

In other news, Cotswold Fayre is entering the chilled market this year. Our aim as a company is to double in size over the next three years and we see chilled as a large part of that growth. I have data from a number of our customers from which I can see that a large percentage of the products they sell is chilled. We'll be rolling out chilled distribution area by area over the next few months, with a plan to be available to the whole country before too long. The reason we did it is to fuel more growth for ourselves, but also we've found that the chilled market is even more fragmented than ambient and so we'd like to consolidate that. What really triggered me to supply chilled products was speaking to a farm shop which said that it needed to hire an entire separate skip for the polystyrene waste that comes with the chilled items they receive. Apart from being costly it's ridiculously environmentally unfriendly, so I thought there had to be a way for retailers to be able to buy in chilled foods without having to deal with 25 different suppliers. We're not doing cheese as there are already lots of businesses doing that, but we're offering every other chilled item and will expand into frozen food in due course, too.

We know from speaking to our customers that the New Year is the time when retailers review and assess their product ranges to ensure they are capitalising on current trends and seasonal uplifts. In order to assist retailers with this process we undertake our product review at the end of the year so we are ready to share what we believe to be the best new products to market. This year we will be giving retailers the unique opportunity to view and taste all our new products in a series of regional Launch Trade Shows which will be held in Chesterfield, Birmingham, Chippenham and London. The shows will also enable retailers to meet the people behind the brands so that they in turn can help their story in-store to help boost sales.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

MANTRAS

I plan on writing a book and have started writing the chapter headings, which are probably my professional mantras. One is that 'business should be the main force of change in the world'. I believe that the effective way of changing the world for the better is through business: the way you interact with your staff, the community, the environment and the poor. Unfortunately, a number of multinationals seem to be operating to change the world for the worse – no need to give examples! Secondly, 'follow your gut instinct'. I've made mistakes, and the main mistakes I've made have happened when I haven't gone with my gut. Another one is 'delegate or die' – if you can't delegate you won't have a successful business.

CAREER GOALS

I don't think I'll be at Cotswold Fayre for the rest of my working life. I'd like to have a brand of my own to develop, but I'm also involved with mentoring young people in business and I'd like to do more of that. I love different cultures and travel, and would like to challenge myself by starting a businesses in other parts of the world.

THE FUTURE

One thing I'm looking at currently is the environmental impact of our sector. Farm shops and other independent retailers have done a lot to source locally which is great, but I think in general we need to reduce our carbon footprint – that's key to making our sector more streamlined for the future. There are currently way too many small vans driving around the UK delivering small orders to retailers, generating a lot of pollution!

> "There are a lot of people who get attracted into the sexy world of fine food and drink from other careers, and it's amazing what some people don't know"

MAKING IT WORK

When it comes to getting your business to stand out from the crowd, the key thing is to stick your head above the parapet. Wholesaling is quite an old fashioned industry – buying and selling has been done for years – and I have always felt that whilst it's a thoroughly numbers-driven business, you can still be creative. I have always tried to be innovative and creative in the way we do business, and would attribute some of our success to that.

I'd like to see more innovation in our market – there are a lot of items which are basically rehashes of products which are already available, and I and buyers want to see something completely new. Because there are more independent retailers than there used to be, I think it's important for them to differentiate themselves from each other as well as from the supermarkets. I'd like there to be more theatre with people making products in front of customers, including in-house butcheries which I've happily seen a growth in recently. It's about educating customers and children about food, and telling the story of foods in-store is key to that.

I would say that the speciality food and drink market has reacted to the generally negative retail market in an inversely proportional way. Our fastest years of growth were during the times of deepest recession, and when the economy was doing better prior to and since the recession, growth slowed. In my opinion our sector is definitely recession-proof. Waitrose is in a similar position to our sector – it started to show strong growth in around 2008, in opposition to market conditions. People go out for more meals when they have more money and eat at home less, so to an extent the retail world suffers when the economy is doing well.

The sector's big enough for brands to exist to just supply the speciality food sector, whereas 10 years ago they would need to supply multiples too to make it work. If you wanted to grow beyond a certain size you had to have at least a few of your products in supermarkets as well as independents. I'd like to see more larger brands being wholeheartedly in the speciality food sector rather than just dabbling in it.

Too many people hold onto things they'd be better off entrusting to someone else. Also, we spend a high percentage of our lives working, so if you can't enjoy it then what's the point? I'm profit-driven in terms of the business, and that's in order to feed and educate more children in Kenya. Taking that out, just doing something well and having happy and motivated staff is key.

Norseland

innovative cheese specialists

Award Winning *Innovative* Cheese Specialists



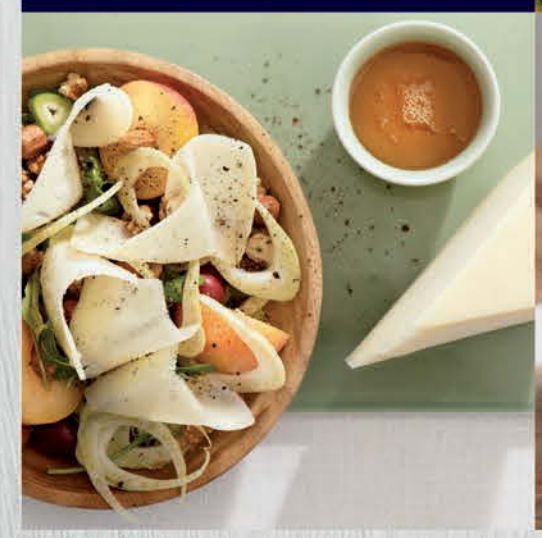


2016 Promotion

FREE Jarlsberg® Wedge and sampling kit for all Speciality Food customers*. Simply email your details to: Jarlsberg@norseland.co.uk



great taste 2015





*Until stocks last.

Applewood®

Smoky, smooth and creamy. UK's #1 Smoky Cheddar.

Vintage Applewood®

Made from 12 month matured West Country Cheddar.

Jarlsberg®

Smooth, distinctive, rounded taste. Made with Jarlsberg's secret recipe since 1956. UK's #1 Deli Cheese with Holes.

Jarlsberg® Reserve

Matured for 12 months.

Mexicana®

Add an extra kick to culinary escapades, dare you try it!... UK's #1 Spicy Cheddar.

Gudbrandsdalen

Norway's national cheese. Soft, sweet, brown cheese made from whey, goat's milk, cream and milk.

Snøfrisk®

Semi-hard ripened cheese made from pasteurised goat's milk. Easy to slice with a pure, rich, mild flavour.

Mexicana® Dare You? It Bites Back · Jarlsberg® · Applewood® · Ilchester® · Snøfrisk® · Gudbrandsdalen®

FOR SALES ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:
Nicky Gavey: ngavey@norseland.co.uk 07554 426745
Chester Jacobs: cjacobs@norseland.co.uk 07955 036719

www.norseland.co.uk

Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts



JULIET HARBUTT

"Bag and box your old ideas"

Whether you have had a good, very good or spectacular Christmas, January is not just a time to sit back and draw breath. By all means paint the shop, re-seal or replace the floor, defug kettles, cisterns, washing machines etc. Give the staff well-earned time off, send them off on training workshops and of course get them to check out what your competitors do better, differently or badly. But you need to stress test your non-food costs.

Check out the charges and costs of your bank, electrical provider or credit card company. Stop procrastinating. Businesses save hundreds or even thousands of pounds a year by renegotiating mortgages, changing power or gas providers or moving banks. There are numerous price comparison websites, the best known are gocompare.com – a British website which provides comparison details for insurance, breakdown cover, utilities, financial products etc, and moneysupermarket.com – a British website specialising in financial services including mortgages, credit cards and loans. Another one I have been recommended was uswitch.com/gas-electricity.

Rates and monthly charges on credit card machines vary significantly as does their ability to connect or not to the internet. I joined the FSB (Federation of Small Businesses) a few years back and got a significant discount on my credit card machine, however I have now returned it and instead take all payments online through PayPal and BACS and use iZettle to do face to face credit card transactions when I am at farmers markets, fairs or festivals (it connects through your phone like bluetooth).

Broadband, wifi, phones etc are an endless source of stress thanks to overcharging, poor service and incorrect charges. Despite cancelling Call Minder on one of my landlines by email, phone and online, I still had it for over two years. They stopped billing after three months but the service continued. On another line I was charged for Call Divert for six months after I had cancelled it – be sure to check what you are paying for and what you actually get. Same with banks: they come up with some very creative charges so it is worth shopping around. Packaging is another area that could give you significant savings for not too much effort. The introduction of the .05p plastic bag charge for large businesses is not just an opportunity to be genuinely more environmentally friendly, but to reduce your costs of providing unnecessary bags to customers and encourage them to buy your branded bag for life. My local farm shop, Daylesford, has the best ever paper bags with a stunning rural scene and strong handles – essential as I love their vegetables. Everyone reuses them so they're great for advertising.

Paper for wrapping cheese has improved in variety, effectiveness and quality over the last five years and extends the life and quality of your cheese and the cheese your customers take home, yet many retailers are still strangling cheese in clingfilm. Waxed or double back paper can be branded, but I recommend smaller or new retailers to start with plain paper and spend their money on attractive labels. If you have your own branded paper you have to order a significant volume which takes up valuable space, and if it becomes contaminated (wet, dropped on the floor etc) you will have to throw it away. It can also be used to line or wrap gift boxes. The supplier I have worked with is deliwraps.co.uk which has a wide range of wax, parchment and greaseproof paper – and they know what they are talking about.

> "Stop procrastinating. Businesses save hundreds or even thousands of pounds a year by renegotiating mortgages, changing power or gas providers or moving banks"

A good sticky label of your logo can make any item look more chic, elegant or artisan – it will add value to any product and save you having to brand your bags, paper, jars, gift boxes etc. They can be any size, colour or shape so you can have a variation of sizes made up. I recommend Sheldrake labels (sheldrake.co.uk) who have done the British Cheese Awards medal and award logos for the last 20 years, and many of my clients use them.

Last but not least, as I have said before, have a night out with staff and/or friends and come up with a month by month list of tweets for all occasions. You don't have to use them all, but it is better than trying to think of them when the pipes are frozen or the Easter eggs have arrived!

The road to hell is paved etc – so book your time off now.



GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S

"Looking forward to 2016"

The year usually starts slowly with a cocktail of issues that can affect whether or not the trading start is strong. If the weather and the feel-good factor continue in harmony the shopper will be out and buying, albeit usually with a wish to lose weight and minimise expenditure.

All the grocery pundits talk about health as one of the main trends in food, and I believe that cheese has weaved a way through the fat factors, with some justification we might argue, and I do not see that changing much in the year ahead.

So how will pricing fare in what is the back end of a turbulent year of rampant milk price deflation? Milk is still in over-supply in real terms and we probably cannot see much changing before the third quarter of 2016, with the probable exception of organic milk.

The pressure, therefore, will remain on the mass market products – especially Cheddar – and less so on speciality and organic where there are some who are at capacity, like Lincolnshire Poacher and Colston, and others looking for increased demand. The Cheddar wars will continue for some time yet, although I believe we will see an acceleration to increased sales and offers of vintage, cave aged, 30 month plus etc – indeed almost any definition that adds to the value – so I expect a few more steel containers buried in the ground to give the cave illusion soon.

Those with genuine credentials continue to have a bow wave of growth, and these include Wookey Hole Cheddar, Isle of Man Vintage and Belton's Red Fox.

I believe there will be some continued musical chairs amongst the big beasts of the retail jungle. Some majors will continue to reduce range and clear lines that sometimes add variety but achieve low hurdle rates, and that will possibly be a combination of the commercial and technical power bases who have their separate agendas. In contrast we shall see the likes of Aldi and Lidl expand their quality agenda across the whole cheese offering and seek further access into premium cheese.

Similarly, some of the majors are committed to reviving their local credentials but they face two challenges – one being their own technical straight jacket, which frequently has a one-size-fits-all approach, and another being the trust and credibility from some maker sources who have – in some cases – a fear of this fad approach and need the certainty of longer-term commitment, especially where products are made 10-12-15 months ahead.

There is undoubtedly untapped talents in the speciality arena which are well enough known but have not yet hit their stride, and this may be their year. Laverstoke has a reputation in organic Buffalo Mozzarella, but maybe its Buffalo Brie or Buffalo Gouda may make it an all-year-round performer.

Similarly, Northumberland Cheese Co. makes some outstanding and consistent-quality cheese, especially their hard goat cheese and smoked Northumberland cheese. Neat, professional and consistent, there is surely more to be had here.

Maybe organic will push on this year, as it seems to be in good demand and yet not as visible as it once appeared. I suspect a realistic amount of this now finds its way into export markets. One of the most recognisable being Daylesford, which has yet to ripple out from ts own highly regarded site to a wider audience.

So much depends on the certainty of milk supply and that should raise some thoughts for the year ahead. Not every specialist cheese maker has their own milk supply, and whilst it's nice on the one hand to have a low cost input to the product base, if in turn that low price ultimately destroys the production base of farmers there is a seismic crash coming somewhere in supply or distribution or both. It is better that a realistic price is delivered into the milk market, to what is one of the most cost-efficient farming set ups in Europe. That prospect could be nine months away.

The deli v prepack market will continue to be driven in favour of the latter, with few major retailers making headway in market share and a number now struggling to even retain it in any meaningful way. All of this is good news for farm shops, specialist cheese retailers and market traders as there is still a strong commitment to buying artisan cheese in those channels, and some are reporting growth in online sales.

So, in short, milk still in the doldrums, retail deli compression, export surge, discounter premium cheese, organic revival, vintage Cheddar rise, food service demand, and the shopper still very much seeking premium quality food... 2016 could be a good year!

> "There are undoubtedly untapped talents in the speciality arena which are well enough known but have not yet hit their stride"



Is Cheddar Losing Out to Continental Cheeses

Recent research from Mintel has revealed that Cheddar sales are declining, with consumers purchasing Continental cheeses such as Brie instead.

The research found that sales of Cheddar have dropped by 5 per cent in the past twelve months, and while it is still the UK's top-selling cheese, it is estimated to make up 48 per cent of British cheese sales compared with 51 per cent in 2013.

Patricia Michelson, owner of Fromagerie said, "It is all very well saying that Cheddar is seeing a decline in popularity or as the 'cheese of choice', but that is not the whole story or indeed the right way of looking at it.

"Cheddar is as strong as ever, but in more diverse and varying ways. The supermarkets have upped their game with many more foreign cheeses, and with the strong exchange rate it also means that buying continental cheeses can be more profitable for them.

"However, for specialist cheese shops and those who live and breathe cheese (like myself and others like Neal's Yard Dairy, Courtyard Dairy etc) Cheddar is probably the first cheese we give as a taster to customers coming to buy. What specialists and others like ourselves do is bring the Cheddar out of its comfort zone and pair it with different alcoholic beverages like whisky or Champagne, and develop interesting links with other styles of cheese, British or Continental.

"The sales of Cheddar in France have massively increased over the last few years, and Neal's Yard Dairy and others who export will testify to that. However, the problem lies with where these statistics come from and who has been asked for their opinion. I've never been asked – and that is probably the reason why you read things like this. These stats come from the big operators the Government or whoever does these poles go to for information.

"If you asked me what I'd pair with a Bordeaux red I'd say Cheddar and so would the French, so instead of being so entrenched in regionality, when pairing let's go and see what cheeses we can partner from a wider field; you will invariably find that Cheddar is a great platform for exploring taste."

The Cheese & Dairy Products Show Returns

Paris Porte de Versailles will play host to The Cheese & Dairy Products Show, a renowned marketplace for traditionally made cheeses, from 28th February to 2nd March.

The international event offers professionals an opportunity to share their knowledge, passion and respect for tradition while exploring the current innovations within the fine cheese sector.

Cheeses from 12 countries including France, Italy, Switzerland, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium and Spain will be on show for cheesemongers, distributors and buyers to discover.

Jacques Goudeau, show director said, "With 180 exhibitors expected, including at least 24% from outside of France, the Cheese & Dairy Products Show is now more than ever the international reference in the sector! With such specialities as Tomme Ilbesa from Spain, Cashel Blue from Ireland and Gouda with Wasabi from Holland, cheese is increasingly enjoyed across borders, but Paris is still its capital, a true business hub for professionals."

Alain Dubois, the show's president said, "The 2014 show was a resounding success with both visitors and exhibitors (with 98% expressing their satisfaction). The show has continued to evolve over the last 20 years. This 14th edition has a number of surprises in store, which will be revealed gradually starting in November."





Le Gruyère AOP Awarded Fourth WCA Title

Le Gruyère AOP Premier Cru has been named World Champion at the World Cheese Awards 2015, organised by the Guild of Fine Food.

2,727 cheeses from over 25 countries were entered into the awards to be judged by 250 cheese experts including buyers, retailers and writers from across the world.

Le Gruyère AOP from Cremo SA von Mühlenen was commended for its depth, creaminess and notes of nuts and fruit, and judges from a number of countries appreciated the reflection of the cheese's terroir in its taste.

Awarded 69 points out of a possible 80, Le Gruyère AOP beat Onetik's Tomme Brebis-Chèvre and a British Burrata from La Credenza Ltd which shared second place with 68 points.

René Ruch of Cremo SA said, "To win again and again is fantastic, and to win against all these incredible cheeses from around the world is a real honour. The World Cheese Awards is the greatest of all cheese competitions and it is very special to be recognised by a jury of top international experts. This award represents the hard work and dedication of our farmers, cheesemakers and affineurs, so I'm very proud to be going back to Switzerland to congratulate them."

Helen Daysh, Interprofession du Gruyère AOP head of marketing UK said, "We're absolutely delighted that Le Gruyère AOP has been awarded this prestigious title for the fourth time, particularly when you consider the quality of the cheeses entered this year. To win once is an honour, but to win four times is testament to the knowledge and passion of our team of cheesemakers, affineurs and farmers."





White Lake Releases New Cheese

Somerset-based cheese producer White Lake Cheese has created a new ewes milk cheese which is now available to stock.

The cheese, named Sheep Rustler, is made from thermised ewes milk and aged for around three months to create a medium mellow flavour.

The cheese is made to the same recipe White Lake uses for its Rachel cheese to create a semi-soft cheese with a washed rind and sweet and nutty flavour, but uses ewe's milk instead of goat's.

Peter Humphries of White Lake Cheese said, "We called this cheese Sheep Rustler because the first batch was made by Russell, our head cheese maker. We are also making some other ewe's milk cheeses, a soft white called Little She and an ashed one, too."



"The Gong Show"

Pass me my white coat and my cheese iron: let's go cheese judging!

Our society places high value on the opinions of others, particularly when they come from 'experts'. Shoppers peer into our cheese cabinet and ask which cheese won 'the award'. I respond that most of the cheeses I stock will have won an award at some point, be it bronze, silver, gold, Super Gold, best in category or (drum roll) Supreme Champion. Some bodies give just one bronze, silver and gold award in each category (akin to the Olympics), while others may award no Bronze, Silver or Gold medals – or as many as the judges believe merit them.

But what does an award really mean? Different awards have different judging systems – some judge within categories to identify, for example, the best Double Gloucesters entered against fixed expectations of what that cheese should be like. Others judge all cheeses against each other to spot those that deliver a real 'wow' factor. The first system requires that there are definitions of the ideal for a variety of cheese, although with broader categories such as "Modern British Goat", one is again looking for the outstanding rather than the fully compliant. In that case, we're not comparing items as different as apples and oranges, but we're not down to the precision of best Granny Smith.

Given the importance that the results can have, I'm frequently shocked by the selection of cheeses entered by some producers. We see whole aged cheeses that haven't had a cheese iron in them, and thus are presumed to be the same as the rest of a batch. We get cheeses that have clearly not been packed or chilled adequately for their journey. Sometimes it feels as though the selection of the cheese for the competition has been left to the office junior, rather than the cheese grader.

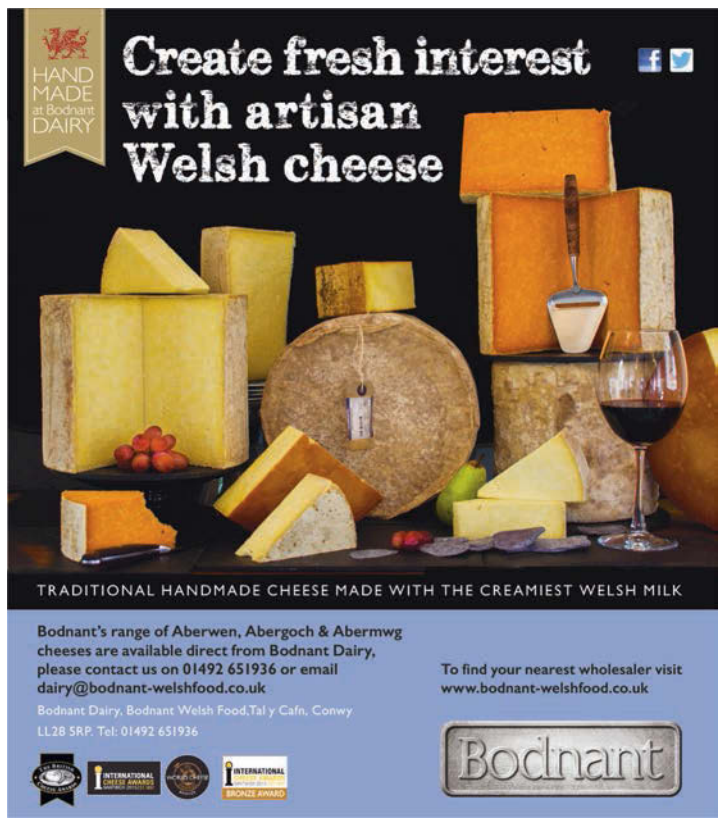
I am always concerned that the cheese in my cabinet delivers on the expectation imposed by the award it received. I'm well aware that it was a particular sample, on a particular day, with a small number of judges, that scooped the award – but all is for naught if the cheese I have for sale isn't up to snuff.

We're not afraid to reject cheeses that fall below the mark; infrequently, I'm glad to say. Artisan cheeses that win big awards time and again, such as Barkham Blue, Tunworth and Rachel, are consistently good – although sizes may vary, they seem to always deliver on the promise conferred by the Supreme Champion accolade.

Awards don't help unless we talk about them: we always make a story of the cheeses that we already stock when they win – and try to source any big winners that we haven't had. Signs and displays help make an event of the results after the bigger competitions and help us generate interest – and sales.

I truly LOVE judging at cheese competitions, but I do still need to remind myself not to dull my tastebuds with a hot and spicy curry the night before!





BRITISH TERRITORIAL CHEESE

Why you should promote your range of traditionally-made, British regional cheeses


CHESHIRE AND LANCASHIRE TAKE PRIDE OF PLACE IN THIS SPLENDID DISPLAY BY I.J.MELLIS

What does Britain do best? It's a question the newspapers are always trying to answer, because we all like a reason to feel good about ourselves. Cheesemaking is something these islands do very well indeed and it is something which sorely needs to be appreciated by a much wider market. The cheese-buying public needs to be aware of the 700 plus cheeses made in the UK. Unfortunately, too many people are familiar with just a handful of British cheeses, cheeses with good old British names like Cheddar, Cheshire and Lancashire, the sector we call the British Territorials, or, increasingly, British Regionals. With names redolent of the rural domains in which they are made – Cheshire, Red Leicester, Caerphilly, Cheshire, Double (and Single) Gloucester, Lancashire, Wensleydale, Derby and, of course, Cheddar – these are cheeses which people know, if only in the form of plastic wrapped blocks bought in the supermarket.

The regionality of cheese is not something unique to British cheesemaking, says Patricia Michelson, owner of London's La Fromagerie, whose website lafromagerie.co.uk features a useful guide to British cheeses. Rather, she says, it is something "that all other Continental countries adhere to. It was first introduced in Norman times when the French monks set up their monasteries all over England and helped the communities to be self sufficient, as well as to farm properly. Over the centuries, the cheeses have evolved and there are styles of cheese in France, for instance, that are very similar to our crumbly cheeses, e.g. Salers is very Cheddar-like, and Ossau from the Pyrenees, which has the same method of piercing needles into the curd to help drain the whey is similar to the Cheshire style. During the Second World War, the Milk Marketing Board was formed and nationalised dairy farming, which decimated the regionality of cheese. It is only in the last 30 years maybe, that we see more focus and identity, and also a growing number of new and young cheesemakers making cheeses from original or new recipes and making them part of their region or place."



Regional cheeses closely identify by name with the region in which they are produced, but, says Patricia, "the most important identity you give a regional cheese is the pastureland and also the breed of animal. In the past, it was just the big milkers that the Milk Marketing Board wanted, in order to to feed the nation. Now we are seeing old breeds returning to specific regions; Charles Martell's Single Gloucester being made with the milk of the ancient Gloucester breed, for instance, or Diana Smart's Single and Double Gloucester. The milking breed, together with the pasture, and then the particular starter and rennet, all contribute to the way the cheese will turn out. The Cheddar cheeses have that great nutty taste but there is also a sharp crumble too, which is quite unique. We have been known for our traditional crumblies, and they are the cheeses that have survived over the centuries; but you only have to read old books or recipe journals to see that there were many softer cheeses and curd cheeses in the past, too. "e."

Wine matching can increase the sale of your regionals and it helps to have someone on-hand with that knowledge. As Patricia says, "regional cheeses always sell well as we have passionate people working in the Cheese Rooms who impart their knowledge to the customer and help with making good choices. If you wanted to match cheeses with, say, a Bordeaux, we would more often than not offer a Cheddar, and from there a selection of styles that encompass both England and France."

Enduring popularity

At the Courtyard Dairy, owner Andy Swinscoe agrees that if you want to increase sales of your regional offerings, you must "taste them out!

Hamish Johnston

Farmhouse Cheeses from Britain, Ireland, France, Italy & Spain
Charcuterie, Olives & Other Delicatessen Foods

Retail
48 Northcote Road, London, SW11 1PA
020 7738 0741
mark@hamishjohnston.com

Wholesale
Unit 51 Martlesham Creek, Sandy lane,
Martlesham, Suffolk, IP12 4SD
Tel 01394 388127
will@hamishjohnston.com

www.hamishjohnston.com



Each regional has its own style (although one that is constantly evolving) but even within each regional the difference between each producer is exciting. Good quality cheeses are easy to sell – you just need to be confident to work with a cheese from each region that stands out to you and also find the best way to eat it. For example, the crumblies with fruitcake cannot be beaten!"

Regionals have enduring popularity, Andy says, because "people like what they grow up with, and in the UK, that is generally hard cheese. But the firmness of texture, the sharp bite (either refreshing like the crumblies or tangy like the Cheddar-styles) gives these cheeses an assertive flavour. I also think they suit our weather and other foods, like ale and chutney!"



Andy's personal recommendation is for "Creamy Lancashire when it is good. Kirkham's is hard to beat – the light fluffy texture, gentle acidity and buttery notes make it a versatile cheese that I always turn to." Being in Yorkshire, he says, "the majority of our sales are Lancashire, closely followed by Cheddar and Wensleydale. These three types still outsell all the modern and French varieties by a long way." In general, he says, sales of regionals are strong, those of Cheddar especially. "The crumblies (Wensleydale, Lancashire, Cheshire, Caerphilly) did suffer as they became known to be overly crumbly, wet and acidic. But good quality versions are helping to create a bit of a comeback (e.g. Kirkham's, Appleby's, Gorwydd, Kit Calvert.)"

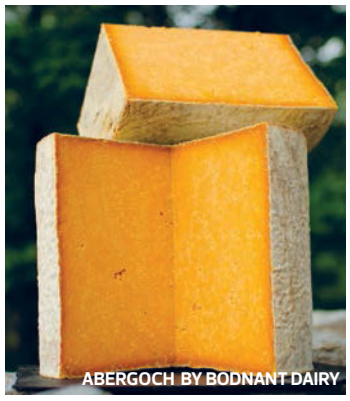
Over the years, a lot of regionals have been lost, Andy says, "or they've merged to become one similar type. Once upon a time, every Dale made cheese up here – Nidderdale, Wharfedale, Bedale, etc. However, they were all really quite similar (out of which Wensleydale, the only one really left, developed). As each farm area would have made a cheese there would have been even more little pockets of similar cheesemaking techniques, but we've lost that expertise and knowledge of what they were truly like."

Tom Chatfield, sales and marketing manager at Quickes, says that despite the diversity of British Cheeses, "a recent study revealed that many British consumers could on average name just four. Fortunately, I think this is changing as awareness grows and provenance is increasingly discussed in the mainstream media. Red Leicester and Double Gloucester were in the top ten most recognised cheeses, which is an encouraging sign. Typically, consumers appreciate the value of traditionally produced and regional British products. This is something that retailers can certainly take advantage of – the interesting story behind each cheese provides a useful sales tool that can help retailers to engage and sell more regional cheese."

Local ingredients



British Territorials stick to traditional production methods, using local ingredients where possible," says Todd Trethowan, maker of Gorwydd Caerphilly, "and this results in unique products that are very closely related to their place of origin. They are produced on a relatively small scale, and a great deal of care is taken to produce textures and flavours that you simply can't find in mass produced cheese."



ABERGOCH BY BODNANT DAIRY

In order to increase sales of regionals, Todd says, "staff training is absolutely vital. If the staff are knowledgeable about a cheese, and can talk a bit about the cheese's production methods or its history, then they will get customers interested and sell more. Cheeses are all made of the same few ingredients, yet the end products vary greatly, so if the staff can talk a bit about what makes a cheese the way it is then the customer will likely be more interested in buying some. Active sampling out of cheese is also really important – there are so many different kinds of cheese, and people have different ideas about what they like and what they think they like."

Todd and Maughan Trethowan produce a cheese which is recognised as a fine example of a British regional or territorial cheese. "We consider Gorwydd to be an 'everyman cheese'," Todd says. "It has a real complexity and depth of flavour, but is not overpoweringly strong. It is subtle but very tasty, with three characteristic flavours running through it."

Bodnant Dairy, which is part of the Bodnant Welsh Food Food Centre, is producing some excellent cloth-bound territorials with its Aber range, which now comprises Aberwen (white), Abergoch (red) and Abermwg (smoked) cheeses along with a new traditional Welsh Caerphilly. "We believe that Bodnant cheeses have a distinct flavour created on the quality of the full fat milk, which comes from a herd of Friesians grazing on a neighbouring farm in the Conwy valley," says Debbie Leviseur, Bodnant Welsh Food Centre's dairy sales and marketing manager. "This distinct flavour is enhanced with the maturation process on site. So our traditional Welsh Caerphilly cheese is only matured for a short time and has a light creamy, crumbly texture while our mature Aberwen, which spends four to five months developing, has a much more deep flavour and firmer texture. We know our customers love the different varieties we produce. They want to buy a hand-finished cheese, made from local milk, with a unique flavour."

STOCK CHECK

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE 2016



BELTON CHESHIRE
Belton's Cheshire cheese is a slightly crumbly and silky textured cheese with a full bodied, fresh flavour.
beltoncheese.co.uk



DEWLAY'S CREAMY LANCASHIRE
This Creamy Lancashire cheese has a beautiful texture with a mild milky flavour and is made to a traditional recipe.
dewlay.com



GORWYDD CAERPHILLY
Subtle but tasty, with three characteristic flavours, from the earthy rind to the creamy layer beneath, and to the crumblier and slightly citrus centre.
trethowansdairy.co.uk



MONTGOMERY'S MATURE CHEDDAR
The epitome of traditional, handmade, unpasteurised Somerset cheddar, this has deep, rich, nutty flavours.
montgomerycheese.co.uk



CHARLES MARTELL & SON DOUBLE GLOUCESTER
This full fat hard cheese, pasteurised or unpasteurised, is made from Old Gloucester cows' milk and is annatto coloured with a natural rind.
charlesmartell.com



WENSLEYDALE
Real Yorkshire Wensleydale is hand-crafted in the Yorkshire Dales to produce a refreshing, mild and crumbly traditional cheese.
wensleydale.co.uk







RETHINK & REFIT

The New Year brings with it a change of gear and a chance to revitalise your look



The slow days of January allow you time to draw breath, to take stock and to restock. It's probably also one of those rare occasions when you are afforded time to assess your store in detail and ensure that it's not only the stock and the service which is up to scratch, but every other aspect too. There is always something to be done, something which needs renewing, changing or updating. It may only be a matter of renewing your signage. Does present signage do its job and direct, suggest and inform as it should, or does it just look tired? Now is the time to re-evaluate, refresh and renew.





Eve Reid of Metamorphosis Group and in-house visual merchandising consultant at WBC, specialists in gift packaging and retail display, has this to say: "Many shops tend to grow organically, especially when it comes to independent retailers. Due to the nature of these businesses, store layouts and fixture choices can often be quite disjointed. But spending money on a strategic refurbishment, whether it be re-branding or space planning, can achieve a fantastic ROI. In my experience, a well thought-out and planned refurb can result in a 20% - 30% increase in sales."

A good refurb can "create an amazing customer experience, and help maximise all sales opportunities," Eve says. "This in turn could increase customer conversion and average spend, and even improve operational efficiency. Naturally, anything you spend making your store more 'shoppable' will attract more custom. Making it more aesthetically pleasing will encourage customers to interact with your space, spending longer in store and spending more money."

Your main consideration should be your customer, Eve says. "Be intuitive and learn how customers behave in your store. See your space as an area you want to invite your customers into. Careful planning with these basic principles in mind is paramount, before thinking of spending money. Remember, knowledge is power and it will save you from making expensive, wrong decisions. The Retail School at WBC runs masterclasses in space planning, specifically designed to teach small to medium retailers the basic principles in customer psychology."

Brand personality

You may already be drawn to a certain sort of look, but what if you are unsure? "The most important thing," Eve says, "is to create one cohesive look, depending on what type of retailer you are. Be indicative of what your specialism is. It could also be useful to work out what your brand authority is (what do you stand for?) and what your brand personality is (what do you look, feel and sound like?) It is important that your business is memorable and distinctive so people don't forget you; and that starts from the moment they step through the door, all the way through to the branding on your Facebook page."

As with anything else, there are pitfalls to avoid, such as "going to someone for help, but then thinking they are going to solve all your problems." In fact, Eve says, "you too have to put in the time to explore what is right. Flexibility is of the utmost importance and you must keep your shopper in mind at all times. Also, avoid complicating things. Be authentic, but keep things simple – you want to create an easy-to-shop store environment. A good store layout should naturally guide customers around your shop floor, enabling even a first-time visitor to see everything you have to offer." Good floor planning is worth spending time on. "It's imperative that your shop floor is working as hard as you and your team to actively drive sales," Eve says. "Space planning is primarily thought of as the specialised practice of an architect or interior designer, but is actually essential knowledge for any owner or manager looking to increase retail sales and improve customer experience."



THE SMART COUNTER INSTALLATION IS BY SRDS.

A major renovation will be something retailers will consider only once in a while. Eve offers these suggestions for retailers wanting to achieve a big effect on a small budget. "1. Re-evaluate the layout and product placement within your store. A simple rearrangement and reposition to improve the customer journey could easily be achievable. Look into using 'spatial cues' to entertain and entice; encouraging customers to interact with the space will inspire them to shop for longer. 2. Retailers on a budget should look for fixtures that are interchangeable and modular, and allow them to build big or small




THESE DISPLAYS FROM WBC USE SPACE EFFECTIVELY AND ADD CHARACTER.

depending on their space. At WBC, we developed an entirely modular retail display system called BRIX. Retailers can build a simple merchandised display or undergo a complete retail shelving fit-out. 3. Utilising packaging within your retail displays can also be very effective. Bottle bags hung by the till for example, can make a wonderful display and are the perfect cost-effective profit generators.

Even small details such as gift packaging matter, Eve says. "It's the finishing touches that can turn an everyday product into a beautiful gift or special self-purchase. Packaging and accessories that include bags, boxes, ribbons and wraps can 'dress up' your products and add hugely value, and work even with a minimal budget. Turning smaller items like jars, oils and chocolates into a gift can be just as profitable using cartons, hamper boxes or trays with cello lids. You could then accessorise with seasonal stickers, sashes, bows and gift tags depending of course on the time of year.

Custom build

SRDS are designers and installers of custom build display equipment and solid surfaces who can provide display solutions for delis, farm shops and food halls. The looks decided upon by customers can vary widely "depending on the sector that the customer falls into," says SRDS owner Mark Smith. "Butchers seem to go for a cleaner look, with Corian finishes and visible stainless steel, whereas the most popular look that we are being asked for in the deli sector is a rustic one."

Getting the look of the shop absolutely right is very important, Mark says. "Customers tend to want to buy more products from a tidy, hygienic establishment where the food looks attractive. Looking in from the outside, it's important to have good visibility of the products for sale, through either window displays or unobstructed views of the shop interior."

Clear visibility of all contained products is crucial. "A clean, organised and well-planned layout of serve overs/displays will entice customers into the shop and this will in turn increase sales," Mark says. There are various types to choose from. "Flat -fronted glass' cabinets are becoming more and more popular these days," he says. "Together with good lighting, these cabinets can provide far more visibility of the products than the more old-fashioned, curved glass counters. This type of cabinet has UV bonded glass and therefore has no brackets or light fittings to obscure the customer's view of the products. There are options to introduce shelves and steps on the deck to allow for better visibility of products, or to make more of a feature of some products by displaying them higher up on the deck. There are no restrictions to the length or the depth of the unit. This also applies to glass shelves within the cabinet, which is another way of allowing better visibility of the products on display."

The core of SRDS business is "bespoke, hand-built cabinets," Mark says, but adds that the company also offers "the alternative of off-the-shelf units, which can be nicely clad to look very similar to bespoke units. This is a much more cost-effective option." For those people operating on tight budgets, SRDS recommends that customers "get two quotes, one for bespoke and one for off the shelf, so that they can consider their options carefully." Opting for units which are hand-built by master craftsmen definitely makes a difference, Mark says. "I would say that customers definitely notice a difference! 99% percent of our customers' initial enquiries are for bespoke, hand-built cabinets and they generally give us an example of where they have seen one of our units. This in turn proves that they are eye-catching, clean and well-fitted displays. A hand-built unit is very versatile and therefore allows us to manufacture the unit to allow for the best possible visibility of products."

Shop Refit

Refits can be achieved surprisingly quickly. "A refit of cabinets only can be done in as little as one weekend," Mark says, "On average, a full shop refit, including ceilings, walls, floors, plumbing and all cabinets will take around 10 days." Mark's team works to minimise disruption, he says. "SRDS consultants are always flexible as to when we can take on a refit. Generally, we liaise closely with the customer to carry out the work when the shop is closed, or during "We provide a very personal service; with so many large companies out there, customers tend to get forgotten about. We have a quick turnaround on drawings and quotes and provide a very good after care service."

So while January may bring a lull in sales, it always brings much needed time for you to properly assess your business as it is at this moment. Why not treat this period as a much-needed breathing space in which you may be able to carry out a host of small improvements and repairs while you restock for the new year, or as a time in which you can draw up plans for a major refit or even an extension? Both will be very good investments of your time.

> "A good store layout should naturally guide customers around your shop floor, enabling even a first-time visitor to see everything you have to offer"


THE MODULAR BRIX SYSTEM FROM WBC IS EASILY ADAPTABLE FOR A NUMBER OF PURPOSES







TASTE DIRECT ★ 2016 ★

Here comes your chance to sample new and exciting products for free! Simply fill in the form and samples will be sent directly to your store



TG Green Tea

FREE SAMPLE FREE BOTTLE OR POUCH **FIRST 300!**

We're increasingly reaching for green tea for its health benefits, rich cultural history and diverse flavour profile. Tg is a new British tea brand that offers a modern delicious take on an ancient tradition which also helps retailers meet shoppers' increasing desire for natural, healthy and tasty drinks.

Each Tg green tea pouch contains 15 pyramid bags of organic and ethical whole leaf green tea, some blended with familiar and new wellness ingredients. The Tg hot range comes in resealable non-transparent stand-up pouches that keep great taste and freshness in! Winner of two Great Taste Awards.

Iced Tg green teas are a tasty, low sugar range of real brewed teas, each blended with delicious fruit and botanicals for added vitality – including the new-to-the-UK superfruit 'Jujube'). A 2015 World Beverage Innovation Award finalist, Tg is proudly bottled in the UK. Its 2015 Global Packaging Design Award will help Tg stand out on retailer soft drink shelves.



Biscottea

FREE SAMPLE BISCOTTEA® TASTING KIT **LIMITED TO 200!**

At Biscottea®, we bake unique shortbread using the finest teas, sourced from estates worldwide, each known for their quality and ethics. Biscottea shortbread was inspired by a team of tea lovers looking to share their passion for tea and speciality baking with unique tea pairings. Our bakery in Scotland blends the teas directly into melt-in-your-mouth shortbread squares to create Biscottea®: real shortbread from real tea, for real tea lovers. Biscottea offers eight innovative tea shortbreads for the UK and export markets: Chai, Earl Grey, Matcha, Rooibos, Mint, Blueberry, Rose and Traditional Tea Time. Biscottea Shortbread is available in Grab and Go single packs and sophisticated, contemporary retail packs for cross-selling wherever packaged and loose leaf tea is merchandised. Biscottea Baking Company also offers the same exciting marketing possibilities for your coffee sets with Bis*Coffee Shortbread, baked with actual Fairtrade Coffee in Espresso, Cappuccino and Mocha formats.

The Original Candy Company

FREE SAMPLE MIXED TASTING BOX

The Original Candy Company has a wonderful array of delicious products with which to tantalise your customers. The range they offer combines traditional natural candy products such as candy canes, lollies and wine gums with the scrummy and elegant range of Chocca Mocca products. This range offers the consumer a wonderful array of fruits and nuts enrobed in luxurious chocolate, plus many other chocolatey treats. We have worked hard to create great products and have recently added an eye-catching display to the range, making it even easier to stock and add impact to your shop. We are offering you the opportunity to sample some of the Chocca Mocca range to see why we are so proud of it and why your customers will love it.





Corkers Crisps

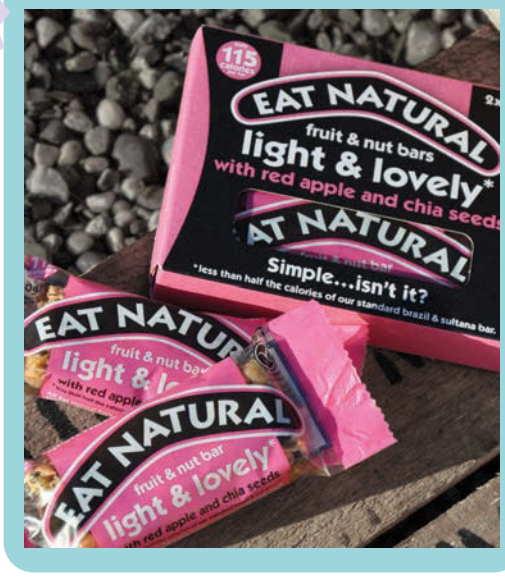
FREE SAMPLE FREE MIXED SAMPLE BOX

This January, not only is Corkers launching a brand new look and feel, but the company is expanding its vegetable crisp offering with the addition of two tasty new variants. Parsnip Honey & Black Pepper and Sweet Potato & Chilli join the existing Mixed Vegetable with a Sprinkle of Sea Salt and the range is available in 40g and 125g packs. Quintessentially British, Corkers crisps are made from delicious Naturalo potatoes and root vegetables grown in the rich Fenland soils of Cambridgeshire and hand-cooked to perfection, giving the crisps a unique crunch. The new branding aims to bring personality to the fore with iconic British imagery and bold bright colours. Predominantly stocked in Britain's delicatessen, farm shops, and independent trade, the crisps celebrate the very best of British good taste. Register for a mixed sample box of Corkers Crisps and speak to the sales team for more information.

Eat Natural Light & Lovely

FREE SAMPLE FREE BOX OF 12 BARS **LIMITED TO 200!**

Light & lovely is a gorgeous new addition to the Eat Natural range that takes healthier snacking to new heights. Just like the rest of our bars, it's made in tiny batches, pretty much by hand, with no artificial flavours, colours or preservatives. It has all the delicious, wholesome bits and bobs you've come to expect from the UK's favourite cereal bars, along with some exciting new ingredients like red apples, plums and chia seeds – thought by some to be amongst the healthiest foods on the planet. It's high in fibre too, and just as irresistible as our other bars. Uniquely, at only 115 calories, it has less than half those of our standard brazil & sultana bar. So, lighten up and enjoy a little more of what you fancy and a little less of what you don't. Simple... isn't it?



Cawston Press

Since we began, Cawston Press has had one mission – to make remarkable soft drinks. Taking our inspiration from the British kitchen garden, we choose the finest ingredients and only use pressed juice for our sparkling drinks range. Artfully balancing the natural flavours, we create delicious, refreshing blends. We never use anything artificial. That means no concentrates, no artificial sweeteners, no preservatives and no colourings. We simply add some sparkle.

FREE SAMPLE TRY THE WHOLE RANGE



TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ALL OFFERS

- Offers are only open to potential stockists of the products and are fulfilled at the producer's discretion
- One order per customer
- Offers may only be available to new customers, however it is at the producer's discretion
- There are no cash or credit alternatives to any ofthe offers
- The producers reserve the right to withdraw the offers at any time
- All orders and offers are fulfilled and dispatched by the producers, therefore Speciality Food Magazine is not responsible for any disputes over delivery, eligibility etc
- Offers available until 5th February 2016

TreeVitalise

FREE SAMPLE TRY THE RANGE **FIRST 200!**

No longer nature's best-kept secret, TreeVitalise is a new birch tree water brand from the Carpathian Mountains, whose mixed forests give TreeVitalise its special taste. A delicious soft drink, birch water has been consumed for centuries in parts of Eastern and Northern Europe, but has remained largely undiscovered till now. Rich in manganese and known as a good-for-you drink that stimulates the body's purifying and cleansing systems, the 'living' water wakes the tree from its winter sleep and kickstarts it into new life. We only take a small share in spring, and leave plenty of revitalising water for the tree itself to come back to life. At TreeVitalise we don't use artificial flavourings. Instead, the sap is infused with organic mint leaves or fresh lemons, which gives it a wonderful variety of naturally refreshing tastes. They are all only 10 kcal per bottle, too! Enjoy the hydrating powers of this 'old' new drink nicely chilled, as part of your healthy diet or as a much healthier alternative to sugary beverages. Children will love TreeVitalise too!





FREE SAMPLE FREE TASTER PACKS OF 11 NEW TEAS

Hampstead Tea

At Hampstead Tea our pledge to grow the finest bio-dynamic Organic Teas revolves around the dual notions of great taste and peace of mind. We farm tea intuitively, responsibly and in tune with nature, always nurturing the purity of the source. We produce premium grade teas that are freshly grown and harvested in India and then skilfully tasted, blended and packaged here in the UK. Our new selection of 11 green and black teas are presented in dual purpose packaging, delivering ease of use in both retail and foodservice environments. The bio-dynamic Organic ingredients that are used to make our blends help to deliver a quality of experience that we believe is hard to beat, at a price which is as competitive as main stream generically produced teas. For a unique brand with unique teas we have free taster packs of all 11 new teas of send to prospective customers.

Franklin & Sons

FREE SAMPLE TRY THE MIXER RANGE



Introducing Franklin & Sons handcrafted premium tonics and mixers, a perfect accompaniment for the most revered crafted spirits. The first products, which were introduced in 1886, were sold from the Franklin family confectionery shop at 171 High Street, Rickmansworth, London. The three Franklin brothers embarked on a mission to introduce Victorian Britain to new taste experiences using the finest natural ingredients from around the world and began selling their handcrafted range of soft drinks to great accolade. Over 100 years later their success is celebrated in today's range, which combines unique ingredients to deliver the exquisite taste of Franklins, without ever compromising the spirits with which they share the glass. Each variant is made from the beautiful spring water sourced from Staffordshire, which complements the flavours of each drink and allows the subtlest of flavours to carry through. Franklin & Sons tonics have no preservatives, artificial colours or sweeteners and are gluten-free.



Ten Acre

FREE SAMPLE 4 DIFFERENT FLAVOURS LIMITED TO 200!

Ten Acre is an award-winning and innovative brand of deliciously quirky hand-cooked crisps and premium popcorn from Yumsh Snacks. There are seven flavours of tantalisingly tasty popcorn, including the new Lucia Popperley's Cappuccino and Cousin Penelope's Strawberry & Cream – as well as the Great Taste 2015 award winners Ambrose Popperley's Wasabi and Aunty Winifred's Sweet & Salty. All Ten Acre popcorn comes with unrivalled free-from credentials. The range is gluten, dairy and MSG-free, vegan and vegetarian – plus great tasting, too! The first 200 responses will receive four free samples of Ten Acre popcorn – Lucia Popperley's Cappuccino, Cousin Penelope's Strawberry & Cream, Ambrose Popperley's Wasabi and Aunty Winifred's Sweet & Salty.

CliQQ PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography produced by our photography service – CliQQ for more information please contact cliqq.co.uk

TASTE DIRECT ★ 2016 ★

Getting your hands on free samples could not be easier. Simply fill out your details below or save yourself a stamp and visit tastedirect2016.com

Taste Direct is only open to retailers and potential stockists of these products

YOUR DETAILS

Name:

Job Title:

Business Name:

Phone Number:

Mobile Number:

Business Type (Deli, Café etc)?

Delivery Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Company Website:

PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING SAMPLES

- [ ] The Original Candy Company
- [ ] Tg Green Tea
- [ ] Corkers Crisps
- [ ] Eat Natural Light & Lovely
- [ ] Biscottea
- [ ] Cawston Press
- [ ] TreeVitalise
- [ ] Hampstead Tea
- [ ] Franklin & Sons
- [ ] Ten Acre

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:

Speciality Food Magazine
Taste Direct 2016
21-23 Phoenix Court
Hawkins Road
Colchester
CO2 8JY

Alternatively, sign up online at tastedirect2016.com

FARM SHOP FOCUS

Derbyshire's Marsh Green Farm Shop has found that when it comes to displaying stock, less can be more



"THE STOCKING POLICY IS TO CHAMPION A LOT OF LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES"

The road between the Derbyshire towns of Matlock and Chesterfield is a fast one. Traffic shoots down a long and very steep road and quite often passes the farm shop in converted farm buildings at Kelstedge at an indecent speed. Not surprisingly, a top priority for the new owners of Marsh Green Farm Shop was to improve the roadside signage. "It's an extremely busy road, with 200 cars passing per hour," says Wendy Townsend, who owns the business along with her husband Ray and her daughter. "The difficulty has been in getting them to stop." To this end, the Townsends have replaced the original sign with a more contemporary and eye-catching one. Also arresting the attention of passing motorists is "a big man we have built out of straw bales, who stands at the entrance," Wendy says. "Our intention is to add various smaller signs with bullet points about what we are about and when we serve food."

The signs have been successful. Since the change in signage, Wendy says, "it is amazing how many people have come in and said they never knew we existed. I don't think the previous owners were big on advertising and promotion." This is an important area of focus for a farm shop such as this because, as Wendy says, "there's not many chimney pots around us."

The conversion was carried out by the original owner of the farm estate. "He restored the derelict buildings on the farm about three and a half years ago," Wendy says. "A proviso of the grant he obtained was that he ran it for two years as a going concern before he sold it." The new owners did not have experience of independent food retail. "For the previous 22 years," Wendy tells Speciality Food, "we had been running a business which manufactured and wholesaled fishing tackle throughout the UK and Europe. We had sold that and were looking for a change of direction." Although the shop is situated on a working farm with long-horned cattle, this does not supply food to the farm shop. Because the farm is still building up its herd, and "doesn't stock enough to keep us supplied," meat for the shop is sourced instead from a good local abbatoir.

The farm shop was bought as a going concern, having been an established business for three years. "We didn't have to change much," Wendy says. "We altered the stock slightly and incorporated new lines. Also, in order to make the farm shop more of a destination than just a place to buy food, we started selling gift items. That said, we do concentrate on the food side." The stocking policy of the Marsh Green Farm Shop, Wendy says, "is to champion a lot of local food businesses." As examples she offers "a gentleman just outside of Chesterfield who trades under the name of Dad's Bees and has several beehives dotted around the Peak District from whom we get honey, of course, and several of the quality products he makes with the honey.

"A lady of Italian descent who lives in Chesterfield produces her own traditional pasta sauces and dressings from family recipes. We stock products from The Bakewell The Original Bakewell Pudding Shop, along with the local Amber Valley wines and the Renishaw Sparkling wine produced by the Renishaw estate. Northern Tea Merchants in Chesterfield supply us with all our own-branded coffee and tea. We have just managed to source somebody quite local called The Herb Table, whom we will be talking to about supplying our herbs and spices. We deal with the Hartington Cheese Company a lot; we always stock their Stilton. We get the majority of our more exclusive cheeses from Anthony Rowcliffe and most of our cakes are from a lady in Matlock, who is very good baker,"

Learning to handle stock







Sponsored by

effectively was "a steep learning curve" because "although we had dealt with retail and had knowledge of it through being a supplier to retail, the perishable side and best before dates were new territory." They were helped by the previous owner, who notified his existing suppliers of the change of ownership. "After this," Wendy says, "a lot of them came in and had a chat, and pointed us in the right direction." Because "you can't get everything from local producers," the Townsends began dealing with general wholesalers and assessed new products at last year's Farm Shop & Deli Show at the NEC which, Wendy says, "we have every intention of revisiting this year." Working alongside Wendy, her husband and her daughter is a chef, a butcher, "and we have six ladies in café and shop."


THE FARM SHOP MAKES ITS OWN SAUSAGE ROLLS, MEAT PIES AND PASTIES

Thinning products

Shortly after taking over the business, the family did a stock-take of the lines which had come with the shop. "It came to light that there was a lot of the same stuff distributed around the shop," Wendy says. "There is shelving all around the retail space and the previous owners had tried to fill these with as much stock as they would hold. We condensed that and ended up with quite an empty shop. We started to refill the shelves with more variety, but then we discovered that less is more." Wendy learned that "if you offer too much, you tend to start to overwhelm people. There was too much for people to take in." Thinning out the products on view has worked wonders, she says. "Things that were not selling are suddenly being noticed."

The farm shop also features a delicatessen and a café. Based on the figures available from the previous year, it's the shop which has proved most important to overall turnover. However, Wendy is of the opinion that "there is more margin in the café part, and we are trying to push that. What we want to do is to cross-sell, so whatever we make in the shop we sell in the café. The food which we cook in the café, we try and pull through into the shop." Marsh Green Farm Shop makes a lot of its own comestibles and these all attract footfall.

"All the sausages are made on the premises," Wendy says, "and as well as selling through the butchery, we serve them in the café breakfasts too." The butchery makes "a range of pies in some quantity" and specials have been introduced "so that we can use more of the produce out of the shop. This means that when people are eating and ask if we sell a certain item, we can point them in the right direction." The farm shop cures all its own bacon and produces sausages, pork pies, meat pies, pasties and sausage rolls in various flavours. "I am quite a foodie myself," Wendy says, "and like to cover fairly often in the kitchen. I work closely with the chef to devise the menu and the specials and so on, and I will often make things myself."

Shop-made foods have become best-selling items for the shop. "People come from miles around for our bacon," Wendy says. Also selling well here are sausages and pork pies. The shop has "won numerous awards at the Bakewell Show," she adds. The shop draws custom from the towns of Matlock and Chesterfield and the attractive nearby village of Ashover, as well as walkers and Peak District tourists in the summer. Also bringing income are the tenants of properties recently converted by the previous owners of the farm shop. "We offered them an incentive," Wendy says. "If they actively promoted our business in their cottages, we would give their visitors 10% off." Extra revenue comes from a scattering of caravan sites.

The new owners of the farm shop decided to learn the ropes first before they branched out into other areas, such as holding events. "We didn't want to overstretch ourselves and make a hash of it," Wendy says. Since then , she says, "we have introduced bistro evenings in the café. We held the first one in October, which was a success, and we have another one coming up soon which is fully booked. We are trying to do things a little bit differently to the way they had been done. Before Christmas, we organised some late night openings which allowed people to shop until 8pm and enjoy complimentary mulled wine and mince pies. We now have one or two suppliers booked and have sent a mailshot to holders of our loyalty card."





> If you offer too much, you tend to start to overwhelm people. There was too much for people to take in

Although the Townsends haven't been running their farm shop very long, they have already recognised that to do this successfully, "you must maintain the ethos of a farm shop. You must give people what they expect to come to a farm shop for, which is local produce, and out of the ordinary products, because you can't compete with supermarkets." It's also important, Wendy says, to maintain the right level of stock, "because you have only a limited time to sell it." The Townsends have settled into their new lives and for Wendy, what she enjoys most is "meeting the people who come in, and making sure they have a good experience both in the café and the shop. I love entertaining; I have put on a lot of dinner parties and I see it as an extension of that."

Future plans for the Marsh Green Farm shop include extending the special evenings, increasing the level of business, revamping the website and, in time, adding an online sales capability.





MAKE SAMPLING WORK FOR YOU

Sampling can be the most important part of your retail operation, says Adrian Beale of Buckley & Beale

Offering a free sample of food is clearly an obvious aid to help sell a product, but is it as easy as that? The simple answer is no, and despite all retailers knowing how much it helps, many still aren't maximising its potential. There's no reason why sampling shouldn't be done every day given its financial benefits. Doing it well, however, takes planning and commitment, but surely this is a small price to pay given the rewards for doing it right. After all, waiting for customers to walk in and pick something off a shelf is not selling – it's order taking.

There are actually many reasons why a retailer would choose to offer free samples of their products to customers:

- Promote new items
- Increase sales of an already popular line
- Seasonal sampling
- Highlight niche or unusual products
- Sell over-stocked lines
- Sell featured lines – something shown in an advert
- Building rapport with customers
- Market research

Some of these might be, in fact should be, obvious, but the last one is worth highlighting. All retailers visit trade shows at one time or another to find new products, and invariably end up not ordering something they liked because they were unsure if it would sell. How about asking the producer for a sample bottle to offer your customers, and then ask your customers if they would buy it if you stocked it? A simple demo station set up with two buckets labelled Yes and No, and a sign asking the question 'Would you buy this product?' will certainly point you in the right direction for making a good decision. And if there's one thing people love to give, it's an opinion!

It's crucial that there is a clear reason for the sampling, otherwise you could be simply paying someone to hand out free food. This is where choosing the right person is as important as choosing what to sample. The wrong member of staff could be worse than not sampling at all. Once they have understood their role, e.g. gathering feedback from customers, or educating customers on a new line, they must be:

- Friendly
- Outgoing
- Be of clean appearance
- Have good stamina – they could be standing for hours at a time, and slouching over the table is a definite no no.
- Have good attention to detail
- Be a natural teacher, ideally with a good memory
- Be happy!

Again, these should be obvious qualities, but we've all seen samplers standing behind sampling stations with their arms folded, or looking miserable. Given the amount of increased sales that a sampler could bring in, ideally the person needs to be the most experienced member of staff – and it's not uncommon for this person to be the owner. Not only will they have the greatest product knowledge, but it's an excellent way of building rapport with your customers, learning what they like, and showing your staff how you want it done. I would argue that the role of food sampler is the most important job in the shop. They are often the first person a customer would interact with, and this sets the scene for the rest of the customer journey while in the store – and we all know first impressions count! Someone seen as unhelpful, unenthusiastic or fed up is going to be hard to recover from, and yet it's a role I see time and time again given to the new person or the temp (especially at trade shows).

Next comes the all-important display.

Putting it in the corner out of the way just won't cut it. It needs to be in a high footfall, clearly visible area, ideally near the shelves that the product being promoted is situated on, so customers know where to find it in future. Set the table up with a nice tablecloth; napkins; all the utensils the sampler will need such as cups or spoons; signage; leaflets or recipe cards for the customer to take away; and plenty of cloths to keep the area clean and hygienic. It's important the area looks as clean and tidy after three or four hours as it did when it was first set up. No-one will want to take a piece of cheese that's clearly been left open all afternoon, or dip a cracker into a pot of chutney that has a thin film of cracker dust from the 50 people that tried it before them.

This leads me onto timing. You have the product, the staff, the display and you're all set to go – but very few customers will want to try your fabulous new hot chilli dressing at 9.15 in the morning just after their cornflakes. Match the scheduling to customers' moods, such as cheese and wine on a Friday/Saturday, coffee and pastries on a Sunday, and so on. Of course you want to bring more customers in when it's quiet, but sampling should be done when it's busy. This might sound counter-intuitive, but it's the repeat custom driven by the sampling that will increase footfall during the quieter times. Look at scheduling from a wider perspective, and plan around holidays and gift giving.

Once you have these four key points in place – the product, the person, the display and the time, don't forget to tell everyone else in the shop so customers can be directed to the sampling if they happen to miss it. But more important than all of this is to monitor the results. I hope all these tips will be helpful in driving sales, but none of it will matter if you don't know how much effect it's having.







PREVIEW: SOURCE TRADE SHOW

An established show for all your needs



After eight years the Source trade show is now well established and has become the go-to event for the food and drink sector in the south west. It has a well-justified reputation for its wide array of quality exhibitors, from the artisan producer to the larger foodservice supplier. The Source has a long standing relationship with Taste of the West, working together to deliver this fantastic show. Over recent years, the show has become a complete one-stop shop for everything you need for your food business – covering not just speciality food and drink but everything from raw ingredients to high quality food service products, furniture to EPoS, kitchen design to business services.

Source has matured over the years and continues to expand. Two years ago it merged with the Expowest Westcountry show, bringing a greater element of food service and catering to the event and broadening its appeal. Every year stand space and visitor numbers increase, and last year buyers were actually queuing to get in! With two days of successful business deals being done, it showcases the best the south west has to offer, helping to raise the region's profile further afield. It's the biggest food and drink trade show in the south west, and buyers travel from all over the UK from leading establishments such as Harrods, Selfridges, Hotel du Vin and Brend Hotels, all looking for products that they can't find anywhere else.

Vibrant atmosphere

The financial climate has changed over the past few years, and as the economy picks up, buyers are looking for something to give them an edge in an ever more competitive market and they visit the show focused on achieving that. But there's no reason that doing business can't also be enjoyable, and with the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the show, there is a really vibrant atmosphere. It's a great place to meet new faces and also to catch up with existing suppliers and colleagues, over a coffee in the café or whilst walking the show. More than 2500 trade buyers will attend in 2016, ready to discover what the 200 plus exhibitors have to offer.

Every year the demo kitchen hosts a number of chef demonstrations to entertain and educate visitors. It consistently attracts well-known chefs, keen to be involved with the show. In the past names such as Bruce Cole, Brett Sutton, Elly Wentworth and Michael Caines have shown the audience how to use local ingredients from the show and inspired those looking for menu ideas. This year the roll call of names will include South West Chef of the Year Professional and Young Professional winners, Jamie Rogers and James Mason, Tierra Kitchen's Mark Evans and development chef Richard Hunt.

Meet new faces

The show is also proud to play a part in introducing Newcomers to the market – new companies who have never done a trade show before. Given the opportunity to introduce their products to potential customers and pick up important new contracts, it's great to see them blossom, and to help them join the ranks of successful SW food businesses. One of the biggest challenges new companies have is getting their products to market, and the Source connects them with distributors who also get the chance to add exiting new products to their ranges. Of course, let's not forget the Newcomers also give buyers the opportunity to get their hands on the latest, newest goodies before anyone else!

The Westcountry Tourism Conference, which runs alongside Source, brings together leading tourism businesses and industry experts and complements the show perfectly. The conference is designed for businesses working in the tourism industry across Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset and further afield, and those who attend also have the opportunity to attend the show, bringing in yet more attendees and introducing Source to a wider market.

SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

- Everything your establishment needs for the year, all under one roof
- The Intoto Demonstration Kitchen full of leading chefs
- Newcomers appearing at their first ever trade show
- The biggest selection of food and drink from Taste of the West, the South West and beyond

IN DETAIL

WHAT: The Source Trade Show
WHERE: Exeter Westpoint, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, Devon EX5 1DJ
WHEN: 10th–11th February
CONTACT: 01934 733 306
TWITTER: @SourceFoodDrink
WEB: thesourcetradeshow.co.uk





> We love working in the food and drink sector in the South West. It's exciting and constantly growing. Organising a trade show like this is a real pleasure! Visitors get to taste the very latest and best produce on offer. They get to meet all the best service and equipment providers under one roof, and this helps their own businesses grow and prosper
>
> **MIKE ANDERSON, MD OF HALE EVENTS**



FREE-FROM

Britain's spotlight is set firmly upon the free-from sector. Robin Goldsmith investigates a growing industry





Free-from foods are manufactured and targeted specifically at consumers who suffer from a food intolerance, allergy or food-related autoimmune condition. The latter includes 1% of the UK population affected by coeliac disease (Coeliac UK). Additionally, these foods are often relevant for people following selective avoidance diets. The range of products covered comprises those free from gluten, wheat, lactose or dairy, but may also exclude ingredients such as eggs, nuts or soya.

Having doubled in size between 2009 and 2014, the UK free-from market is now worth around £365 million, and nearly 40% of households contain someone avoiding specific foods or ingredients (Mintel). However, there is an almost even split between those people avoiding foods on medical grounds and those doing so for lifestyle reasons. With increasing celebrity endorsement of gluten-free diets and media attention directed towards healthy eating, there has been a sharp rise in new gluten-free products (10% of food and drink product launches between 2012 and 2014, according to Mintel). Furthermore, the new allergen labelling legislation has increased awareness. As a result, there is plenty of scope within the speciality food sector to offer quality products that take advantage of this growing trend.

Baked goods are particularly significant, and Newburn Bakehouse, set up by Warburtons in 2011, became the first branded baker in the UK to enter this market and now provides a gluten and dairy-free range of artisan loaves. Nairns launched its gluten-free oatcake range in 2009 as a direct response to customer demand, and its latest offerings include Impulse Packs, which allow farm shops and delis selling hot food and takeaways to provide gluten-free accompaniments for soups and salads. Lucy White, marketing manager, explains why free-from goods often command higher prices but should become more competitive in future. "For a product to be labelled free-from, it needs not only to exclude that ingredient, but also to guarantee that there is no cross-contamination. Nairns' oats are grown, milled and baked in areas dedicated to producing gluten-free grains. This often means sourcing ingredients from further away and always involves higher costs due to the intensive cleaning process. However, as demand for gluten-free foods continues to rise, it is becoming easier to source these ingredients and hopefully prices will begin to reflect this."

Who buys free-from?

For products to have strong commercial success, a wide consumer base is required. Jackie Barber of Easy Bean identifies how the company's gluten-free chickpea crispbreads and one-pot meals appeal to three types of consumers: "those with a general interest in food, its ingredients and provenance, those interested in nutrition and healthy eating, and lastly, those with a specific food intolerance." However, products have to both appeal visually and win on taste profile, as Claire Ramsey of Mrs Crimbles explains. "Whilst once it was enough to have gluten-free equivalents of popular standard lines in fairly non-descript packaging, the consumer now expects a delicious tasting product which is also appealingly packaged. We're responding by developing great tasting, attractively branded products which stand out not only in the free-from sector, but against the competition in general. The trick is to never compromise on taste – great tasting products will appeal to mainstream consumers. The gluten-free element is an added attribute."

Tony Goodman, CEO of Yumsh Snacks, sees some clear trends. "We are noticing consumers opting for free-from products as a lifestyle choice rather than necessarily having a medical need. Additionally, they are steering away from more mainstream snack brands and moving towards premium quality snacks. I put this down to taste, quality, innovation and a willingness to be more adventurous and experiment with new flavours. We are also seeing a definite growth in demand for popcorn – a lower calorie snacking alternative – and of course more generally any snacks that are healthier and gluten-free. Consumers are choosing a healthier and more holistic approach to wellness, incorporating free-from foods in their diets." This theme is echoed by Katja Thrane, marketing director of Rebel Kitchen, which makes dairy, gluten, nut and soya-free coconut milks. "Many people use flavoured milk drinks as a gap-filler between meals or as an afternoon pick me up. Going 'dairy-free' is no longer just for people with intolerances: it's a long-term lifestyle choice. The ongoing consumer trend to try healthier snacks has made way for free-from to become a major sector in the snacking industry."

The concept of using nutritious, natural ingredients is central to inSpiral, a UK pioneer in raw foods. The company's 'Visionary Products'



> "I find it surprising how far gluten-free customers are willing to travel in order to seek out products"
>
> **LAURA MCGOWAN, COMPANY DIRECTOR OF VOAKES PIES**





are organic, raw, vegan, gluten-free, non-GMO and also free from soya and cane sugar. "People buy our products for a variety of reasons, including ethical or ecological", says co-founder Bella Willink. "They care for the environment and want to support products with eco packaging made using renewable energy. Increasingly, people realise the link between the food they eat and how they look and feel." Willink also comments on pricing. "Most goods can be manufactured for a lower price once production reaches a certain level of scale. Often Free-From products use ingredients of a higher quality, or even just more ingredients, but there is also the current small-scale level of production to consider."

Primrose Matheson, founder of Primrose Kitchen, sees a downside to the variety of free-from foods now available and offers advice to consumers. "Many people buy gluten, dairy or fat-free products and, due to misinformation, assume they are healthy. Unfortunately most are not and are just mass-produced foods with names of ingredients so long you couldn't pronounce let alone recognise them! When you look at a list of ingredients, ask is this something that I could buy as a separate ingredient like oats or sunflower seeds? If it is, you're probably eating something good. Free-from foods don't necessarily offer any more nutritional benefits. It's down to the morals and intentions of the particular business."

What's next?

The growing popularity of both paleolithic and vegan diets means that offering plant-based dairy-free options has gained greater relevance. Amanda Argent of free-from soup business Soupologie explains: "Our USP is that we're the only vegan, gluten and dairy-free soup company. The free-from sector is rapidly growing and the feedback from our customers is that they love just being able to choose which flavour soup they fancy, rather than carefully having to scan a long list of ingredients to check if a recipe contains gluten, dairy, lactose or meat."

However, although new flavour combinations will attract speciality food consumers, traditional products retain strong appeal. Voakes Free From is the gluten and wheat-free range from Voakes Pies. The company recently won the 'FAIR trophy for the best free-from food 2015' for its gluten, wheat, soya and dairy-free Traditional Pork Pie. Company director Laura McGowan says, "I find it surprising how far gluten-free customers are willing to travel in order to seek out products. We also find our regular customers are willing to spend a large amount of money in order to stock up their freezers. I think people are looking for something different nowadays and farm shops and delis are offering this. Gluten-free customers like to try different things too. Although the supermarkets have great offerings, it's nice to try a brand you haven't seen before and the supermarkets tend to stock the same things week in week out."

There are many reasons for the speciality food sector to stock free-from products, not least because the market is set to grow a further 51% between 2014 and 2019 (Mintel). Consumers avoiding ingredients such as gluten for medical reasons, as well as health-conscious 'lifestylers', those who prefer to scratch-cook and people searching for flavour variety are all targets for this sector.



STOCK CHECK

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE 2016



PRIMROSE'S KITCHEN RAW BEETROOT & GINGER MUESLI

A gluten-free muesli containing oats, beetroot, ginger, nuts and seeds and sweetened with raw agave nectar.

primroseskitchen.com



EASY BEAN CHICKPEA CRISPBREADS

These high fibre, gluten-free crispbreads contain chickpea flour, buttermilk from local farms and toasted seeds.

easybean.co.uk



TEN ACRE COUSIN MAISIE'S FENNEL & LEMON POPCORN

This gluten and dairy-free popcorn from the FreeFrom+ premium range can be enjoyed as a snack and pairs beautifully with drinks.

tenacrecrisps.co.uk



INSPIRAL CELTIC SEA SALT & LIME KALE-OS

These gluten and nut-free air-dried organic kale chips are flavoured with unrefined sea salt, vitamin B-rich nutritional yeast and organic lime.

inspiral.co



MRS CRIMBLES FUSILLI WITH A GOURMET MUSHROOM & CREAM SAUCE

This pack contains corn fusilli pasta in a mushroom, cream and herb-flavoured dry sauce mix.

mrscrimbles.com



SOUPOLOGIE ANCIENT GRAINS SOUP

This is a chunky soup with amaranth, flaxseed and millet, three ancient grains that are growing in popularity among gluten-free consumers.

soupologie.com



REBEL KITCHEN MATCHA GREEN TEA MYLK

A refreshing twist on matcha tea, this contains coconut milk, date nectar, spring water and matcha powder.

rebel-kitchen.com



CRIO BRÜ ROASTED & GROUND COCOA BEANS

This brewable cacao serves as a coffee alternative, is low in caffeine and is free from gluten, dairy and soya.

criobru.com



STRINGERS BEER OUTLOOK AMBER ALE

This copper-coloured gluten-free ale has a good balance of sweet, fruity, malty and bitter notes.

stringersbeer.co.uk



MUSKS GLUTEN-FREE SAUSAGE

An award-winning sausage made to a secret recipe, with British pork shoulder meat and rice in place of bread.

musks.com



SHOP **SCOTLAND**

Speciality Food explores the food and drink of Scotland, one of Britain's richest larders

Scotland's reputation for fine food and drink has preceded it for centuries, and no wonder – its landscape plays host to a natural bounty of food, from livestock (fine beef in particular) to oats and dairy products. This history brings with it a certain prestige, and a recognition that food products from the country have been made according to recipes and techniques handed down the generations.

One of the finest of Scottish-made foods – smoked salmon – follows just this trend, which could go some way to explaining why this traditional product remains a bastion of Scottish produce across the world.

Equally successful, with its popularity showing no signs of waning, is Scotch whisky. With innovation currently rife across the speciality drinks sector, it's refreshing to see this traditional tipple not only holding its own but becoming a firm favourite internationally. Perthshire alone is home to six distilleries of various sizes – from Famous Grouse to Edradour, fondly known as 'The Smallest Distillery in Scotland'.

Similarly strong is Scotland's baked goods sector, with shortbread, scones and pancakes as popular as ever, and Dundee cake a proud export of its home city. Meanwhile, the consumer demand for oatcakes is ever-growing and evolving, with both classic and flavoured varieties becoming increasingly popular with consumers – no doubt assisted by the image of Scotland's ancient oat fields and traditional baking methods.

One of the best things about independent retailers is that they tell the tales of the products they sell, and nowhere is that more prevalent than in Scotland. From IJ Mellis in Glasgow's reputation for offering the best cheeses north of the border to House of Bruar and the Ardardan Estate showcasing an impressive range of Scottish produce, Scotch pride runs deep – and it's through this that Scotland's food-rich reputation has grown.

Here, we speak to Scottish retailers and a Scotland-based distributor to discover what's selling well for them, hear from a producer who puts the story of his distillery and its home at the heart of his production, and find out more about the success of Scotland's Year of Food & Drink.

> "The Scottish food market is one of the real success stories of the Scottish economy"

Joe Wall, managing director of The Cress Company, on the past, present and future of Scottish food and drink

The historical stereotype of Scotland's diet consisting of a deep fried Mars bar washed down with a can of Irn Bru is now long gone. The growth of many smaller producers combined with an increase in the awareness of the range and depth of Scotland's larder, and its excellent provenance credentials, has increased both domestic and international consumption.

The choice of food and drink in Scotland is better than ever, and our catalogue is a reflection of the variety that is currently on offer. The overall increase in the demand for quality and artisan produce is here to stay and it's a massive opportunity for Scottish producers.

The growth in farm shops and the increased emphasis on provenance among Scottish chefs has further helped the Scottish food market to continue to grow and innovate.

Scotland will hopefully continue to strengthen its 'foodie' credentials and, while it won't escape any general economic head winds, I do feel it's in a very positive place.



DEAN'S

Scottish shortbread and biscuit manufacturer Dean's will be rolling out a refreshed brand format during 2016. Following extensive consumer research, Dean's has created a cleaner, more contemporary brand style, with stunning new on-pack photography clearly communicating their unique, crumbly, melt in the mouth taste and texture. Based in Huntly, Aberdeenshire, Dean's still bakes its shortbread and biscuits using traditional family recipes.
deans.co.uk



INVERAWE

The Inverawe Smokery has been producing its award-winning flavours for over 40 years. They source the finest raw materials from Scotland's west coast, from the Shetlands to Oban. Starting with the best they simply follow an age old method: curing and cold smoking in their unique brick kilns over hand-cut oak logs. It's slow, it's gentle but the results are unsurpassed. A back to basics smoked salmon full of smokiness which melts in the mouth.
smokedsalmon.co.uk





James Withers, chief executive of Scotland Food & Drink, looks back on the country's Year of Food and Drink



2015 was designated the Year of Food & Drink in Scotland, an initiative whose aim was to inspire the people of Scotland and its visitors to celebrate Scotland's natural larder. The celebration came at a time when there is growing recognition of the importance of the food and drink industry as one of Scotland's key economic drivers, as well as international recognition of Scottish provenance as a mark of outstanding quality.

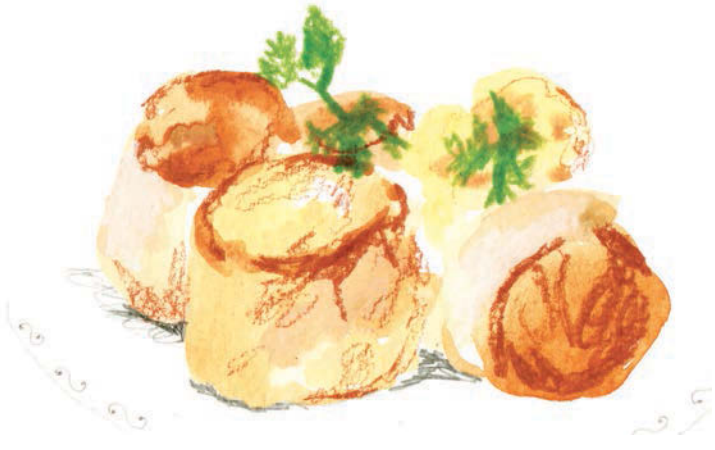


Scotland Food & Drink and Think Local together created 12 food and drink industry-focused themes to coincide with the Year of Food and Drink's visitor-facing activities conducted by VisitScotland and EventScotland. The celebration engaged with producers, retailers, caterers and wholesalers alike, promoting the country's larder and the people behind it.

Record industry turnover figures were announced in September, demonstrating the upwards trajectory of Scottish food and drink. With a value of more than £14bn, the sector is important to our national economy. The Year of Food & Drink has afforded additional profile for our success story and hundreds of events throughout the year have seen domestic and international visitors engage with what makes Scotland a Land of Food and Drink.

A significant highlight of the Year of Food and Drink came in October, when Showcasing Scotland welcomed 150 UK and international buyers to Gleneagles to meet with 100 Scottish food and drink companies to do business. More than 1200 prearranged meetings took place during 36 hours, as well as sectoral visits for the buyers to see for themselves the skills, strengths and best practice typical of our industry.

> “There is growing recognition of the importance of the food and drink industry as one of Scotland's key economic drivers, as well as international recognition of Scottish provenance as a mark of outstanding quality”



NEED TO KNOW... SCOTLAND FOOD & DRINK

Scotland Food & Drink is the independent leadership organisation working to grow the industry to a value of £16.5bn by 2017 and build Scotland's reputation as a Land of Food and Drink.

As the number one export sector and one of Scotland's best performing industries, food and drink is enjoying fantastic success driven by skill coupled with innovation and entrepreneurial flair, as well as a world-class natural larder of quality produce.

Scotland Food & Drink operates using a unique model of working collaboratively with industry and hand in hand with the public sector. This work aims to boost the sector's profitability and deliver greater success in a challenging and competitive environment. Market development is a major focus, and with 10 in-market experts embedded in priority export markets, the UK remains a priority offering opportunities across retail and foodservice sectors. Work continues apace to build exports, improve productivity, increase R&D investment and nurture innovation in the industry.

The organisation has a membership of more than 360 businesses, ranging from small artisan food producers to Scotland's biggest brands, major retailers and foodservice companies. With the aim of supporting commercial ambitions and tangible growth of individual businesses, Scotland Food & Drink offers a comprehensive range of benefits and services specifically for members, over and above the wider industry representation function that it performs.

The annual Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards are the 'Oscars' of the country's food and drink industry, recognising the country's quality produce and successful businesses across a range of product and business categories. The awards open for entries in January.
scotlandfoodanddrink.org



LUSS SMOKEHOUSE
Nestled on the 'bonnie banks' of Loch Lomond is the Luss Smokehouse, home to a team of food lovers passionate about bringing the freshest, highest quality produce to life using traditional methods, resulting in the finest quality smoked salmon available.

Their Beech Smoked salmon combines young, lean salmon, salt, beech wood to create a tantalising new slant on the Scottish classic.
luss-smokehouse.com

MRS BRIDGES
Mrs Bridges Orange Curd is a firm favourite amongst loyal Mrs Bridges fans. Made the old-fashioned way by combining milk and butter in open copper pans, the end result is a fantastically rich-tasting product. Providing customers with a welcome alternative to more traditional Lemon Curd, we recommend spreading over hot toast, baking into cupcakes or using as a filling for orange drizzle cake.
mrsbridges.co.uk





KALLIN SHELLFISH
We supply a large range of the finest seafood from the most pristine environment in Europe. Scallops, crab, smoked salmon, langoustine, lobster and more are available year-round. Available in beautifully packaged retail size for shops and delis, and larger packs for wholesalers, hotels and restaurants. Also available with guaranteed 24 hours delivery (signed for) from the Post Office throughout UK.
thehebrideancatch.co.uk



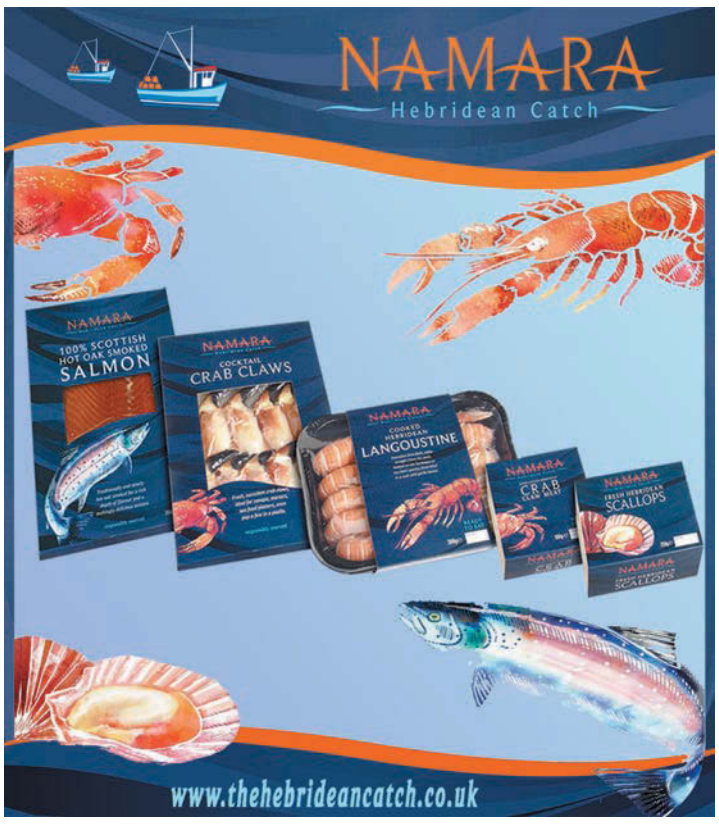




STAG BAKERIES
Stag Bakeries has announced the launch of a new sub-brand, West Coast, to bring a contemporary twist and point of difference to the range. The first products to be launched under the West Coast brand are Sweet Straws. There are four flavours in the range, each inspired by a different fruit base: Apple & Cinnamon, Blackberry & Basil, Raspberry & Chocolate and Sour Cherry & Vanilla. An alternative to a traditional sweet biscuit.
stagbakeries.co.uk

WALKERS
A byword for quality and excellence, Walkers Shortbread Ltd is a rare exception in the food industry, being a traditional family business with a global reputation. Walkers is proud to announce the launch of a new range of gluten-free products, which is produced using a specialist flour blend and has received certified accreditation from Coeliac UK, adhering to all regulated manufacturing processes and ingredient labelling, ensuring consumers, especially those living with coeliac disease, can be confident and assured. The products in the range are: Pure Butter Shortbread, Ginger & Lemon Shortbread and Chocolate Chip Shortbread.
walkersshortbread.com





FROM THE **RETAILERS...**



Beth Edberg, Cranachan & Crowdie
When we founded Cranachan & Crowdie in 2012, we knew we would select products we like because it feels authentic to us to sell what we ourselves buy. Three and a half years later, we are in the lucky position to be able to choose from a world class pool of local Scottish artisan producers.

Throughout 2015 we celebrated the Year of Food & Drink with weekly pop-up producers meeting our customers who like innovative products that taste great while introducing new flavours.

Our three best examples are Charlotte Flower Chocolates from Highland Perthshire which uses natural and wild flavours that are fresh and seasonal. Each piece is literally a taste of Scotland and we are proud to be her exclusive Edinburgh stockist. Rock Rose Hand Crafted Scottish Gin is our most popular gin and contains local Caithness botanicals that are weather dependent so subtlety plays a role in the taste. Great Glen Charcuterie air-dries wild Scottish venison in order to preserve the unique flavours in their award-winning range of products which are easy for our customers to travel with.

> “Over 90% of our customers are visitors to Scotland who are interested to learn about our Scottish producers, and of course to taste the food and drink on offer!”



Mark Angus, Gordon & MacPhail
Scottish-made products have always been sought after, and at Gordon & MacPhail our label range of Scottish produced jams, chutneys, toffees and fudges are all particularly popular, not only with our local customers but also from our visitors from overseas.

Many of the worldwide, well known and easily recognised Scottish brands such as Walkers, Deans and Baxter's are also frequently bought by a variety of our customers along with other items from our deli counter and from our large selection of whiskies at our dedicated Whisky Room.

Our best-selling Scottish product that we sell at our retail shop in Elgin, Moray is our Gordon & MacPhail Exclusive whisky. Our Gordon & MacPhail Exclusive whisky is only available to our retail shop customers and it can't be purchased online or through any other retailer. It is a single cask, single malt whisky which has been bottled at 50% and retails at £50.





UNCLE ROY'S
Uncle Roy will have additions to four of his popular ranges on show this year. As well as the new Rabbie's Burnie Sauce, and additions to the biggest and best Natural Flavours range, he has added Small Pink Rosebuds to his Edible Flower range and a lovely Red Rose Salt to the Scottish Gourmet Salts.
uncleroys.co.uk



GREAT GLEN
This award-winning salami from Great Glen Charcuterie is made with pure wild venison and gently spiced with green peppercorns. The company, based in the Scottish Highlands, sources sustainable wild venison from the local area. All products are handmade using traditional and innovative techniques, giving them a unique and distinctive flavour. Their products are available in retail packs with a three month shelf life and also whole. Visit us on stand N14 for a taste of our Wild Venison Charcuterie.
greatglencharcuterie.com

> “There is a huge consumer interest in products that have a story to tell and are rooted in the landscapes in which they are made. The popularity of our products is testament to a consumer desire for Scottish products that acknowledge their past and bring heritage into the modern day”

JAMES MACTAGGART, MASTER DISTILLER AT ISLE OF ARRAN DISTILLERY



MEET THE BUYER



The Scottish Deli operates on sites in Dunkeld and Pitlochry, where new owners Simon and Sarah Yearsley have been building ties with the local community

Location is an important consideration when buying a deli and for Simon and Sarah Yearsley, finding a two-deli operation with one shop in the historic market town of Dunkeld and the other in the tourist honeypot of Pitlochry was irresistible. In fact, the unit at Dunkeld was already well-known to the Yearsleys, who had lived in a village only four miles away for many years, while they ran a camper van hire business.

There had been a grocery store on the corner site for 150 years, Simon tells Speciality Food, but for the last few of these, the shop had operated as a delicatessen. "We saw it in a bit of a decline last year," Simon says. "It just didn't seem to be doing what it had done in the past. There was an occasion when we were taking the dog for a walk on a grey, autumnal day and we went inside and had an okay cup of coffee with an okay sandwich. We looked hard at the shop and saw that it looked beautiful even on a grey day. It was really the location and the unit itself which attracted us."

Simon was also attracted by the possibilities offered by the business as a brand." The Scottish Deli is a well developed and established brand. Having a brand established on two physical locations gives it so much more power." Having taken over the delis in July 2015, the couple's immediate priorities were to get through the twin spikes of summer with its influx of tourists and Christmas before they turned their thoughts to other matters such as exploiting the brand with own label products, but, Simon says, "watch this space!"

The delis, he says, operate "a very simple sourcing strategy, which is to source locally whenever we can. Some of our chutneys are made 50 metres away. If we can't find it locally, we will then expand the circle." Sourcing local is only one part of his intention to build strong links with the communities of Dunkeld and Pitlochry. "Our position in the community makes us special," Simon says. "Both are special places with very strong seasonal markets. There is a community growing scheme in Dunkeld and if they have produce left over, we give them some space in the shop at Dunkeld. We don't put a mark-up on it as it brings people into the shop. When they buy a pound bag of potatoes they might buy two cups of coffee from us. It's working on community linkage ideas like that which differentiate us from a lot of the other shops."

Natural larder

Stocking effectively has been a priority for the couple. "When we took over, the shops had lost a lot of the speciality food side," Simon says, "so one major thing we have done is increased the amount of speciality food in both shops. We've turned them back into proper delis and we increased the focus on local, and therefore Scottish, produce. We struggle with Scottish olives, but



there is a Scottish tea company just up the road. We are working very hard to make it a Scottish deli." This mission is aided by Scotland's own natural larder, he says. "We have smoked meats from Rannoch Smokery, pickles and chutneys from Lesley Young who lives in a small village down the road, we've got Mr C's pies from Robert Corrigan, which are raised pies made the other side of Perth. We stock venison products from Great Glen Smokery, including dried beef and venison jerky, which are all Scottish and all gorgeous. Our smoked salmon comes from Dunkeld Smoked Salmon, which is about 35 metres away. We offer autumn mushrooms foraged by local suppliers, and have giant puffballs three times the size of my head. We go to Casella & Polegato, an amazing artisan bakery in Perth for our bread and have sourced our chocolate from the best chocolatiers in Scotland. We go out of our way to try and use and enthuse people about what there is in Scotland."



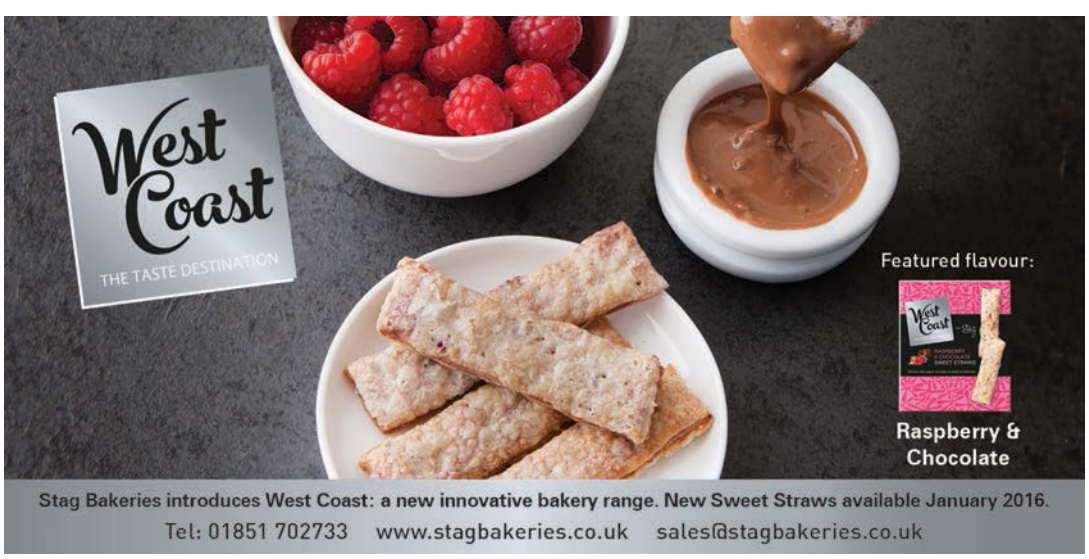


WE HAVE INCREASED THE AMOUNT OF SPECIALITY FOOD IN BOTH SHOPS

The shops, which are staffed by "two wonderful shop managers, Ady Hutchings in Pitlochry, Ruth Manson in Dunkeld and about eight others, also offers their customers "the best and the biggest sandwich range that you will find in Perthshire. Our range of 26 sandwiches reflects what we are selling, so we have a really nice ham with a sweet piccalilli made by Lesley Young, an Isle of Mull Cheddar with an apple ale & chilli chutney, a salami, Camembert and sun-blushed tomatoes, and a smoked duck with lime marmalade which works really well. We try to make sure we can cross-sell with products already sold in the shop."

The shops make a lot of their food, some of which may be foraged. "We have both been great foragers for as long as I can remember," Simon says."We sell good local produce, be that grown, produced or even foraged locally. Like most delis, we put a great emphasis on making a lot of the pies, quiche, tray bakes and soups ourselves. Both shops have good, small commercial kitchens in them. Homemade draws footfall without a doubt, but you have to get out and tell people." The markup on homemade food is, of course, much higher than ordinary stock but a good deli will preserve a balance, Simon says. "Our strategy is simple. We are a classic deli and classic delis will have speciality food, a range of staples, great sandwiches and great coffee."





PREVIEW: SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW

Fine food comes to Scotland



Scotland has come a long way from shortbread, whisky and haggis in its food offerings. and there's no better place to see and taste its delicious produce than at Scotland's Speciality Food Show, being held from 24–26th Jan at the SECC in Glasgow.

Over one third of the 150 exhibitors are new to the Show and complemented by an ever–increasing mix of established food companies and distributors, it has an excellent mix of Scottish, British and international foods.

Launching to the trade

At the centre of the show are about 20 innovative young companies, specially selected for their originality and quality who have been trading for under two years. This year's line up includes the new Luss Smokehouse, The Very Lovely Sauce Company with its range of caramel sauces, The Auchtermuchty Cake Company, Angus and Oink's rubs and marinades, Red Squirrel drinks, Ogilvy Spirits and Yorkshire Dama Cheese.

New to the Show

New for 2016:

- Clash Farm Pedigree Saddlebacks – from their herd of free–range saddlebacks, this company produces traditional pork, bacon and salumi in Scotland using traditional methods. They will be launching an artisan range and are already favoured at many of Scotland's top restaurants.
- Wild Fig – producers of artisanal sauces, marmalades and chutneys, they will be launching a Glengoyne Chutney at the Show.
- Techni–K – a food safety consultancy that works with the food manufacturing industry.
- Koppert Cress – purveyors of different types of cress from the Netherlands, grown especially for the food service industry.
- Yushoi Snacks – savoury snacks made in Scotland from green peas and rice.
- Yum Yum Bros – the gourmet snacking company
- Spice Pots – Indian Spice pots
- Famous Luca ice cream from Mussellburgh.

Best of the show's established exhibitors

Show stalwarts include: Summer Harvest – launching new gift boxes; Patchwork Traditional Food Co – launching mushroom marmalade; field fare – traditional, quality frozen food; Stewart Tower Dairy – delicious natural ice cream from the producer's own dairy herd in Perthshire; Summerhouse drinks from Aberdeenshire; Anthony Rowcliffe – big cheese distributor returns to the Show; Stoats Porridge Bars; Caledonian Confectionery; Great Glen Game – award winning dried meats and salamis; Hebridean Sea Salt – new smoked salmon.

Trip to Orkney

The Orkney Isles will have their own aisle at the show. This includes Barony Mills breads and oatcakes, Orkney Wine, Jolly's of Orkney, Argo's Bakery and The Orkney Creamery. The Borders and Northern Ireland have a similar regional presence.

This year's show will have an impressive line–up of educational seminars on subjects such as social media, e–commerce, pop–up shops, how to choose a successful brand, food and drink tastings and more.

Best product awards are made for the best products in four categories – condiments and preserves, chilled and frozen, drinks and confectionery, biscuits and snacks.

Scotland's Trade Show is held in conjunction with the Speciality Food Show featuring over 400 suppliers of gifts, jewellery, clothing and a new Craft Gallery. Held at the SECC in the centre of Glasgow, Scotland's Speciality Food Show is easily accessible. Registration has already opened for the free entry to the Show: scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com.

AND FINALLY...

Mark Saunders, director of the show said: "Even though retail sales have not grown hugely in 2015, fine food sales in Scotland continue to rise. The quality, flavour and originality that comes from Scotland appeals to both the local consumers, and overseas visitors. This year we have no shortage of new products, exciting exhibitors and delicious tastings."

Jemma McDill of the Orkney Bakery, "This has been a great show and our award has given the product credibility and adds endorsement."

Alex Evans from Westmorland Farm Shops: "I am particularly impressed with the number of start–up businesses."

IN DETAIL

WHAT: Scotland's Speciality Food Show
WHERE: Hall 4, SECC, Glasgow G3 8YW. Run in conjunction with Scotland's Trade Fairs.
Organised by Springboard Events, tel: 01877 385772
www.scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com
WHEN: 24th–26th January 2016
Opening times: Sun & Mon – 9.30–5.30pm Tues: 9.30–4.30pm









WHO'S EATING THE PIES?

And the pasties? Everyone, it seems. Good quality, artisanally-made pies and pasties are proving real footfall drivers for farm shops and delis

It has to be said, one of the major attractions of artisan-made pies and pasties is that the buyer can generally trust the maker not to spring any nasty surprises with what's in his products. Gristle and parts of the animal foreign to British palates, and cheap vegetable fillers were for a long time part and parcel of the pie-eating experience. Now it's all change for both pies and pasties. Producers all over the country are discovering a ready market for baked goods which are not only trustworthy but utilise top quality ingredients and are available in varieties which would have been unthinkably exotic only 10 or 15 years ago. Several farmshops have reported that their own homemade pies, served warm as grab-and-go snacks, have proved real footfall finders, especially on days when the weather has turned cooler.

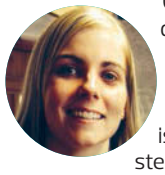
Making your own pies and pasties is not particularly hard and offers a good return on your investment. This is especially true if it allows you to use up food from your restaurant or shop. Pastry products provide farm shops with PYOs with one more route to market for their home-grown fruit. Apple pies and pasties filled with apple and berry fruits will sell well served warm as grab and go, cold for customers to take away and warm later, or as homemade desserts served with locally-produced cream or ice cream in the restaurant. Pasties have a story too, especially the Cornish ones. These D-shaped, crimped edge pastries, originally the conveniently portable lunches of tin miners, were awarded PGI status in 2011 and continue to be regarded as one of the Duchy's essential food products.



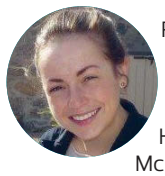
field fare is a company producing classic pies (British Steak and Kidney, Chicken and Mushroom and the very popular Classic Ham Hock & Pea) alongside more adventurous varieties such as its best-selling Sweet Butternut Squash with Goats Cheese. These, says Karen Deans, managing director of field fare, "all boast generous fillings, are encased in a shortcrust pastry base with a puff pastry lid. They serve one and cook from frozen in 35-40 minutes." The pies, Karen says, "are incredibly popular. We only launched them towards the end of 2014 and have secured an extensive number of stockists. We are really pleased with the sales rate and the repeat sales orders, too."

British meat

As a product, pies in general have been much improved over the years, Karen says. "Consumers are wanting premium quality ingredients," she says, and want "to know where their food is from, and that the pies include nothing artificial." field fare's own pies, she says, "are made with British meat and all are produced in the UK by a family-owned company that began as high quality butchers." They are ideal stocking items for farm shops and delis, she says, especially as "we recently won a Gold Star at the Great Taste Awards for our British Steak & Kidney Pie. The pies are sold in fully-branded field fare boxes with fabulous photography which gives them great stand out and makes them easy to merchandise in store."



One farm which does a brisk business in pies is Ardross, whose most popular pie is its home-made steak variety, says Claire Pollack, although the award-winning store does stock "a variety of other pies, including our homemade mince and steak rounds and puddledubs pork pie." Pies are all sold cold. "Some are fresh with the pastry already baked and others are frozen for our customers to cook at home," Claire says."We use the beef reared on the farm by my dad then hung for 21 days. My mum Fiona and Iain our chef then slow cook the beef for extra tenderness. In terms of ingredients, it costs us slightly more than many other producers, as we took the decision to use better cuts of beef in our steak pies. Time taken to make these pies is also quite high as they are all produced by hand to ensure quality in every one."



"We sell out of Wee Pies, which are individual mince and steak pies," says The Store House's Helen McLaren. "We then sell larger steak pies, mince pies, cottage pies and fish pies." Pies are sold from chillers and freezers and also served hot in the coffee shop." Meat for the pies comes from the Aberdeen Angus cattle raised on the family farm. In terms of cost of ingredients and time, pies can be expensive, Helen says, "but fully worth it. Our customers love our pies and so do we. The market we aim these at are the young couples, families and elderly." Every week, Helen says, "we sell about 80 individual pies and 70 of the larger sizes. They are a perfect farm shop staple and the possibilities are endless when it comes to combinations and seasonal ingredients." In Norfolk at Bakers & Larners, food hall manager Anthony Cude sells "200 of the hand-raised pies across three different sizes per week, plus our best seller, Brays Cottage Pies." The shops also offers Barsby pies made with the pork from hand-

> "Pies are available in varieties unthinkable 10 years ago"



STEAK & KIDNEY PIE FROM FIELD FARE

Now FREE on your mobile or tablet!

Google play

Available on the iPhone App Store

amazon apps Available on kindle fire



COTSWOLD FAYRE*
-EST 1999-
Sponsored by the speciality food wholesaler to the UK & Ireland
www.cotswoldfayre.co.uk

The Godalming Food Company, Surrey

Owners: Kevin & Helen Depree, Melindie & Loftus Theron **Opened:** May 2012



DESCRIBE YOUR DELI
Godalming Food Company is a small, award-winning deli based in the historic market town of Godalming in Surrey. Where possible we work with local producers and suppliers of unique and high quality food and drink which are sustainable and have a great story behind them.

WHAT MAKES GODALMING DELI SPECIAL?
The close relationship we have with our customers where we share the stories behind the food and drink, and we always have something to taste available in the shop, whether it's cheese, charcuterie or gin and toffee vodka!

HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR LOCATION?
Our location is essential as we are at an intersection been the usual high street shops and the trendier independent shops on Church Street which attracts a variety of customers.

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?
We have a very broad customer base, with chocolates, cakes and cooking ingredients appealing to the yummy mummies, craft beers to younger to middle-age groups and wine to the older generation. The kids also love the shop as it's full of colour and smells, as well, of course, as great cookies and biscuits.

HOW DO YOU CATER FOR THEIR TASTES?
By talking to each and every customer and gaining their feedback by comment cards and social media.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A DELI OWNER?
Having been a chef and a restaurant manager for many years, food and retail has always been my passion. The dream came true six months ago when a perfect opportunity came up to buy one local to where I live.

WHAT CHEESES DO YOU SELL?
Cornish Yarg, Montgomery Cheddar, Manchego Semi Durado, Smoked Ashdown, Buffalo Mozzarella, Golden Cross Goats Cheese, Morbier, Brie De Meaux, Fourme D'amberg, Stilton, Tunworth, Camembert, Cheddar mini truckles, Old Winchester, Comté, Tete De Moines.

WHICH STOCK LINES SELL BEST?
We sell a huge amount of bread which is baked daily for us by the Hungry Guest down in Petworth. We have a large range from traditional West Sussex White to the hugely popular Pain d'Alsace and also varied ciabattas, focaccias and rye breads.

WHICH PRODUCTS WOULD YOU NOT BE WITHOUT?
We would not be without our local products. They are essential to the deli as they provide the foundation for our ethos and range. Bread as above, Crosbies cakes and quiches, Nellies scotch eggs and sausage rolls, Art of Curry fresh curry sauces, Crafty Brewery Ales, Silent Pool Gin, Mummy Makes Fudge.

HOW USEFUL IS OFFERING FOOD ON TASTE?
This is very important as the majority of the products in our shop are very, very good and allowing customers to taste them encourages them to buy.

WHICH OF YOUR FOODS ARE YOU VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT?
Local cheese and chocolate, local ales, local wines.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE THE BUSINESS?
Local marketing in smaller publications; wedding fairs, tasting evenings. We are very active on social media and are building a customer database where we communicate relevant information once a month, advising of new products, events and offers.

IF YOU STARTED OVER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?
Bigger premises, better coffee machine and better prep area for artisan lunch food closer to the front of the shop.

THREE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO GET RIGHT?
1. Understanding what customers want by building relationships with as many as possible.
2. Keeping the range of products constantly moving – bringing in at least one new product a week.
3. Creating a colourful, wonderful-smelling, relaxed environment where shoppers can browse.

ONE GOOD TIP FOR A WOULD-BE DELI OWNER:
Learn the story of every product and meet as many of the producers as possible and taste their range.



Richard Fox

"The joy of pie"

When it comes to pie, life is simply too short to put up with sub-standard. That quality bar however, has nothing to do with fancy chef creations, designer packaging or even PDO status – apparently a Cornish pasty must now hail from Cornwall. Provenance alone is no guarantee of quality, any more than packaging that looks like it's been hand-crafted by a team of bookbinders from the 17th century is.

And as far as fancy chef creations are concerned, I have been hugely disappointed in the past. I accept that as an ex-resident of Harrogate, and therefore party to the edible source of Zen-like peace that is a Frank Woods pork pie – still warm from the butcher's oven, its classic hot water crust pastry cradling perfectly seasoned shoulder of pork moistened by molten jelly. I have indeed been spoilt, and my pie bar is high. Just ask anyone from Harrogate!

The point is: one needs to scratch beneath the veneer of faux artisan presentation and delve into the depths of the humble offering itself. And let's not forget the fact that it is indeed just that – a morsel for the masses; the original fast food for the pedlars and porters of the Thames who didn't have the option of a fancy roast at the master's carvery. It was the original fast food in the days before industrial processing, flavour enhancers and big business could get their grubby hands on the concept.

A prize pie is hard to find, and I find myself returning to the source of one on multiple occasions in a week – for years, if the pie is right. My new local bakery offers a simple chicken and bacon pie – I took a chance: a perfect, crispy puff pastry was filled to bursting by tender chicken breast and crispy bacon, all bound together with a generous slather of non-gloopy white sauce. It was perfect. I will be a customer for life.

Last Words

the final word of fine food



Editor
Ross Gilfillan, 01206 505971
ross@aceville.com

Deputy Editor
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505981
holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

Group Editor
Charlotte Smith
charlotte.smith@aceville.co.uk

Group Advertising Manager
Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk

Senior Account Managers
Aaron Northcott 01206 505934
aaron.northcott@aceville.co.uk

Richard Honey 01206 500240
richard.honey@aceville.co.uk

Business Development Executive
Nathan McLean 01206 505901
nathan.mclean@aceville.co.uk

Accounts
Sue Carr 01206 505903

Art Director
Lee Whiteford lwhiteford@btconnect.com

Illustrations
Louise Abbott

Publisher
Helen Tudor 01206 505970

Published by
Aceville Publications Ltd, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY

Next issue available
February 2016

Subscriptions
Rachel Tudor 01206 505965
rachel.tudor@aceville.co.uk

The BAR rate UK £29.25. Overseas £40.00
Tel. 01778 392464

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publishers. Every effort is made to ensure the veracity and integrity of the companies, persons, products and services mentioned in this publication, and details given are believed to be accurate at the time of going to press. However no responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted for any consequence or repercussion of responding to any information or advice given or inferred.

SPECIALITY BITES

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



Inevitably, at this time of year, a certain degree of forward planning goes on. Perhaps even more so in the food and drink sector as Christmas is such a busy time – apart from perhaps a well-deserved holiday, many of us do step away from the business and plan in January and February.

The thought I am challenged with currently is: "Am I a risk-taker?" So at the start of 2016, I am asking you, "Are you a risk-taker?" Look at your dominant hand for a minute. Is your 4th finger longer than your index finger? If so, you are statistically much more likely to be a risk-taker than not. Don't ask me why, but it is scientifically proven! That's just a bit of fun, but seriously, if you are running your own retail outlet, are a producer or brand-owner, or indeed if you are working for any of these, then if you are going to have a stunningly successful 2016 you will probably have to take a risk or two.

Generally speaking, when we start off a new business we have to take risks (unless we are extraordinarily well-funded, and even then we are still taking risks – just with someone else's money, not our own!) but as businesses grow it is sometimes easier to play it safe giving good reasons, such as your employees' job security or that the company is on an even keel and you don't want to rock the boat. However, if your competitors are taking risks that are paying off they may gain market share, and then not taking a risk may be the riskiest thing to do, if that isn't too paradoxical. Playing safe might mean negative growth (don't you just love that phrase) and struggling to pay your overheads. Did the owners of Innocent Drinks or Gü take a risk or not along their journeys?

> "If you are going to have a stunningly successful 2016 you will probably have to take a risk or two"

I am writing this article in Kenya, at a tea plantation owned by one of our suppliers. I have called in here on the way back from the orphanage and schools we are heavily involved with. Of course it is good to see the tea-picking and the factory, but it is also good to have running water and electricity for the first time this week – the team in the office are pleased too as I am going there straight from the airport! I am here for the sixth time, and as some of you may know I started a farm from the proceeds of the Speciality Food Charity Ball over three years ago. This year, for the first time, the farm is making a profit and now contributes around a third of the running costs of the schools and orphanage.

More recently we have set up a water project which provides water for the secondary school and locals, but now we have a potential game-changer on our hands. There is the opportunity to construct a bottling plant for the water and possibly fruit juices. If this works then potentially all the running costs of the centre would be covered. In Kenyan terms it is a massive investment, but could mean the place is never the same again. Should we take the risk or should we play safe and gradually grow the farm? Back to you. In 2016 are you going to take that risk and make that investment or play safe? Stick or twist?

Best Practice

Russ Haddow, fresh food manager at Suffolk Food Hall, gives us a glimpse behind the scenes



The role of greengrocer is varied and involves dealing with all sorts of people. I work with a small network of trusted suppliers, local, or weekly on my midnight run to London, to source quality produce, estimating volume and negotiating prices. Then come the customers; we include our own restaurant and production kitchens within that, preparing orders for them before our biggest push and putting on the best display with the greatest availability possible for our lovely customers day in day out. Every day is slightly different as the display is taken off each night to be replenished each morning. We do it all the way from start to finish, negotiating prices, setting prices, invoicing customers, being on the floor with customers, late night runs to London, training staff on the different types of apple, potato and the random bits and bobs we come across. It really has all sorts going on and is good fun!

In my time in this role I've learned to always check the produce you are buying from wholesalers and growers – smell it, taste it, and have a really good look at it – at this point you are the customer, much the same as customers who will buy off of our shelves. Without doing this you cannot have confidence in what you are providing to your customers. It makes it far easier to interact with the customers when asked questions too, as chances are you have already asked or thought these questions yourself and the reply can therefore be genuine and, fingers crossed, helpful! I think, even if it isn't necessarily what people are expecting or want to hear, they respect you more for knowing you are being open with them. The biggest no for us is holding onto something longer than we know we should, and that's extremely easy to do! Waste is our biggest enemy and it's not a case of happily throwing produce away because of the slightest imperfections, but at the same time, carrying older stock for longer damages the sales of the fresher stock waiting in the wings. Sometimes it's better to cut your losses and get the next sales rather than wait for the older sales which are unlikely to come.

Here at Suffolk Food Hall, we like to respect the seasons and the local farmers that strive throughout the year – it keeps what we grow special. It's all well and good buying imported asparagus or Spanish strawberries, and you could make money doing so but choosing not to do this and only buy local seasonal produce, despite a more limited availability period, makes it even more special, and an event to be looked forward to. These moments are worth more than the imported products could make for us. It is also essential to us that we are authentic. If we can't get something locally we have to be open and upfront, and make it clear why we are not able to do so, and why we stock the product despite this fact.

My proudest achievement to date has to be the increase in our local supply, we now purchase less from our weekly run to Spitalfields, London than ever before. This is the result of really looking into it and taking the time. It is difficult at first and the benefits initially don't balance the effort or time, but as the understanding increases it becomes very beneficial. We are always looking for as short a supply chain as possible.

We often make mistakes, and that is not a bad thing. We are always looking to improve. It doesn't become too big a problem unless the same mistakes keep being made! One of the biggest is getting too comfortable with a supplier. We had a good relationship with a local supplier and there was an element of trust, we began to lapse on negotiating price as we thought we helped each other out, but on closer inspection the prices had creeped to a point that exceeded the prices before we even began negotiations. Dealing with that situation was difficult and would have been easy to shy away from given the longevity of the relationship, but the trust had been broken.

I have learnt several things, both good and bad during my time as a greengrocer. I have learnt the importance of constant communication with suppliers and the danger of assumptions. There is nothing worse than forgetting something or wasting time finding out information you have already got, so a clear trail will take time to make or put down but save so much when the pressure is on, or you are up against it. It's also reassuring when you reflect on your own processes to see how you can do better.

> "I have learnt that just because something has worked or is working, it is no guarantee that it always will – I try to improve things constantly"

COTSWOLD FAYRE*

COME TO OUR

2016 LAUNCH TRADE SHOWS

We are launching over 35 exciting new brands for 2016 at four trade shows throughout the country!

Join us and meet our new suppliers, to see and taste all our new products.

Discounts and introductory offers are obtainable on all new brands, only available at these events.

COMING TO A VENUE NEAR YOU

CHESTERFIELD
Tuesday 19th January

BIRMINGHAM
Wednesday 27th January

CHIPPENHAM
Wednesday 3rd February

LONDON
Wednesday 10th February

Open from 10:00 to 18:00
Visit our website or contact your Account Manager for more details.

03452 606060
sales@cotswold-fayre.co.uk
www.cotswold-fayre.co.uk

FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW

18-20 April 2016 NEC Birmingham

THE FASTEST GROWING FOOD AND DRINK TRADE EVENT IN THE UK

- BUTCHERS
- FARM SHOPS
- FOOD HALLS
- VILLAGE SHOPS / LOCAL STORES
- DELICATESSENS
- GARDEN CENTRES
- BAKERS
- CHEESEMONGERS
- FISHMONGERS
- GREENGROCERS
- CAFES

FARM SHOP & Deli AWARDS 2016

Founding Partner

OLIVES·ET·AL

Join us for the Farm Shop & Deli Awards winners announcements including the prestigious Retailer of the Year on Monday 18th April

For further information, visit

farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

@FarmShop_Deli #FSD2016

This is a trade event. No under 16s will be admitted.

FULL MEDIA SUPPORT: British Baker, The Grocer, meat trades journal, restaurant

CO-LOCATED WITH: Food & Drink Expo, foodex, NCE National Convenience Show

ORGANISED BY: William Reed Business Media