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# SPECIALITY FOOD

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# EDITOR'S LETTER



Hello, and welcome to the February edition of *Speciality Food*. I hope this letter finds you in fine health, having smoothly navigated the first few weeks of the year and full of ideas for the rest of 2017.

It goes without saying that the start of a new year is a great opportunity to look at what you do with a fresh pair of eyes, and the current quiet season should hopefully give you the time and head space to think about what you might like to do differently. Today's political climate sees many businesses planning significant changes, either in order to make the most of the evolving economic world or to simply stay afloat. Change is in the air, for better or worse, and it's up to us whether we embrace and make the most of the situation we're in, or wallow and sink.

> "Change is in the air, for better or worse, and it's up to us whether we embrace and make the most of the situation we're in, or wallow and sink"

For our part, we'll keep you up to date with new product launches, display ideas and retail expertise, but the time is ripe for you to be on the hunt for new items to refresh your shelves.

To this end, we're running four pages on those we deem our Essential Products (p26), all items of superb flavour and quality which we think you should be aware of. Ranging from pasta and preserves to snacks and a true first – British biscotti – these products are well worth space on your shelves. Also in this issue we take a look at how a number of key markets in our industr y stand today: Fairtrade (32), Tea (p24) and Frozen Food (p34). Never to do things by halves, we've also spoken to some of the biggest players in the temperature controlled packaging world (p35), so you can get those frozen products safely to your door.

Holly

holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

# NEWS IN BRIEF

### NFU ANNOUNCES NEW HEAD OF FOOD AND FARMING

The National Farmers' Union has appointed Philip Hambling as its new head of food and farming.

Hambling joins the NFU in mid-April, a crucial time for the commodity boards, as they face both the challenges of responding to Brexit and establishing food and farming's sustainable recovery from depressed markets.

Philip Handling said, "The NFU has a hugely important and influential role to play in the development of agriculture and food chains at this time of significant challenge and potential opportunity for UK producers."

### SKREI SEASON SET TO BEGIN

Norwegian Skrei is about to land on premium retailers' fish counters as the season runs from February until April.

Thanks to its lengthy migration, the fish is lean and rich in protein, vitamins and minerals.

According the the Norwegian Seafood Council, the total sales volume of skrei to Europe is expected to be 3,000 to 5,000 tonnes for 2017, depending on the availability of the fish.

Jack-Robert Moller, UK director of the Norwegian Seafood Council said, "It has been highly encouraging to see the demand for Skrei increasing since its introduction to the UK in 2012. We have strong support from the premium retailers, not to mention the finest chefs, fishmongers and of course our distribution partners."








# "We have a unique opportunity to build on our success"

## An exclusive address from Andrea Leadsom, Environment Secretary

**While the UK was once famous for fish and chips and pie and mash, these days most would agree our culinary offerings extend far and wide.**

In fact, we've now taken our place as one of the most exciting food cultures in the world.

We are as well known for our Michelin-starred restaurants as we are for our traditional produce – whether that's Welsh lamb, salmon from the highlands of Scotland or clotted cream from Devon.

What's more, we have some of the highest standards of animal welfare, quality and safety in the world, meaning when consumers choose British they can have complete confidence in the food they buy.

It was the opportunities presented by this fantastic reputation that meant I was so delighted to be appointed DEFRA Secretary.

Britain's changing food culture is thanks in large part to our successful start-ups, budding entrepreneurs and up-and-coming producers and as we prepare to leave the EU, we have a unique opportunity to build on this success.

Small and medium-sized enterprises account for 96 per cent of businesses in the food manufacturing sector, employing over 120,000 people and bringing around £22 billion to the economy every year.

Our SMEs are well placed to make an impact – for example we've seen a fantastic range of small craft beer suppliers springing up in recent years. These microbreweries use British barley, wheat and hops, benefiting producers across the whole supply chain.

I recently visited a small microbrewery in Northamptonshire where I saw first-hand how the demand for locally-brewed beer has soared. The number of microbreweries has more than doubled in the last five years – a trend reflected across the country.

There are now more than 1,500 microbreweries in the UK, and I'm confident this growth will continue. At the same time, it's quickly become clear to me government has a role to help our SMEs develop, grow and showcase the best of British.

In October, I visited the SIAL food fair in Paris, where I met some of the sector's best and brightest. From industry heavyweights such as Walkers Shortbread, to rising stars like crisp makers Ten Acre, there was a remarkable amount of talent on show.

We now need to make the most of our excellent reputation for food and drink and harness the export opportunities that come with it. That's why I recently launched the UK Food and Drink International Action Plan, which aims to forge stronger economic links with key countries around the world, tapping into new markets like Japan and Latin America and bringing a £2.9 billion boost to the economy over the next five years.

Our SMEs have an important role to play in this. I want them to feel confident to take the next step into international markets and have access to mentoring and support to give them the skills and confidence to begin exporting.

Fever Tree Drinks is one example of a start-up now rivalling the very best. They have capitalised on the global demand for the classic gin and tonic, with their exports growing from £16 million in 2013 to £38 million two years later. They are now the UK's largest exporter of soft drinks and their tonics are served in seven of the world's top 10 restaurants, including El Bulli in Spain.

There's also gourmet popcorn maker Joe and Seph's. This family-business started small but is now selling its snacks to more than 20 countries around the world, including the USA and Middle East. In 2015, exports accounted for more than 20 per cent of its business – and the company is predicting this will reach 30 per cent by 2018.

Growing our food exports and building demand for the great British brand overseas will continue to be a major priority. In leaving the EU, we've been handed a once in a generation opportunity to take Britain forward and to establish new trading relationships right across the globe.

I also want smaller producers to have the tools they need to create and innovate to compete internationally. There are some incredible projects and ideas out there and often they just need a helping hand to get off the ground.

That's why I recently launched the Food Innovation Network, linking ambitious companies with the latest scientific knowledge and expertise, to foster the innovation that will help us stand out from the crowd.

Through an online portal, businesses will be able to tap into expert advice on complex issues such as intellectual property rights and developing new technology. A network coordinator will act as a 'matchmaker', joining up companies with the expertise they need for any aspect of their business – from advice on new packaging and waste management, to test kitchens and laboratories to help them launch new products onto the market.

Going forward, my department will be publishing two long-term plans – one for food, farming and fisheries, and one for the environment.

To develop these plans we will soon launch a consultation, giving everyone a chance to share their views and ambitions for the future, either in writing or at the many stakeholder meetings we're planning around the country.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to look at new ideas, from market access and how we can increase food production, to protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

So, there is a lot to be optimistic about and in my first six months as Environment Secretary, I've met many inspirational entrepreneurs, seen innovative ideas taking off and witnessed the hard work and dedication that makes this sector such a success. There is no doubt our food and drink industry has a very bright future.

> "In leaving the EU, we've been handed a once in a generation opportunity to take Britain forward and to establish new trading relationships right across the globe"





## JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES

# "The results are in"

I am pleased to report that Christmas 2016 proved to be our busiest Christmas yet. For the 24 days of December up to Christmas Day itself, we were 5.7% up on 2016. For the entire month of December 2016 our sales rose by 6% on the previous year. Our previous best year was 2015 which we increased by 4.5%.

It is always pleasing to surpass the previous year's sales figures, of course, and there are a number of reasons I would put forward as to why this year achieved such a good result in our small corner of the world. Which is of course a very subjective analysis.

Firstly, I always believe that Partridges performs better when Christmas falls on a weekend. Some of our best years reflect this – for example 2004, 2011 and now 2016.

The main reason is that the run up to Christmas is not disrupted by a weekend which is often when our customers decide to go away. Also, the five days before a weekend Christmas enable customers to buy their foodstuffs in a more planned manner, hopefully building up to a crescendo by the end of the week.

Secondly, the weather was very kind to food retailers. There were no disruptive weather events like last year when we had an extremely windy day that played havoc with travel arrangements on a key Saturday. In general, the crisp and clear weather we experienced was most conducive to Christmas food purchasing. In fact, Saturday 17th December was our busiest day ever and a particularly benign day weather-wise.

Thirdly, the lower value of the pound did seem to increase the number of foreign visitors to London. It is always difficult to know how this directly impacts on our sales, but anecdotal evidence suggests it did not do us any harm, and our own label range performed particularly well as a result.

Fourthly, website sales continue to rise at a much greater rate than shop sales, although admittedly in much smaller volumes. In 2016 our website sales were the best ever, with a 19% increase over the previous year. On the downside, traditional hamper sales continue to decline. Our 2016 sales were 10% down on 2015 and have been down year on year since 2011. Bespoke hampers are the one area that does show signs of growth with an increase of 15% in this category alone. It seems Christmas hampers are very much commodity items these days, and a Google search reveals over 400,000 listings for them. Everyone's doing them.

Looking through the best-sellers list for Christmas 2016, it is pleasing to note that there are still many good old stalwarts to be found. Mince pies had a great year for us, particularly the ones we make ourselves. Chocolate Olivers, elvas plums, Champagne and Prosecco obviously, smoked salmon, Stilton jars, Vacherin Mont D'Or, marrons glaces, turkeys, Christmas crackers and all sorts of chocolates – especially Bittermints – and, not to forget, marzipan are all holding their own. Christmas puddings still appear on the best-sellers list despite gloomy predictions about the future of this institution. Perhaps they are being replaced in the affections of our customers by panettone which had an outstanding year again and comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and flavours.

However in a sense, and bearing in mind the Retail Price Index, every year should be the best year ever. Of course there will be new competition, prices will rise, external events will affect shopping habits and the weather will play a part, but in order to hold our own we have to constantly innovate and come up with new ideas. It is a slightly sobering thought that although our sales at Partridges have risen by around 67% since 1996 using the same methodology, the retail price index has risen by 61.8%. Which goes to prove that there are always highs and lows in the long life of a speciality food shop.

# High Street Experiences First Rise in December Footfall for Five Years

**The festive period contributed to high street footfall rising for the first time since 2011, according to figures from Springboard and the British Retail Consortium.**

The high street was the only type of location to see an increase in footfall, up 0.8 per cent on December 2015.

Although it proved a successful period for the British high street, footfall in retail parks and shopping centres fell by 0.7 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively.

Overall footfall in December was down 0.2 per cent on a year ago, making it the fourth consecutive month of decline. This was a far more shallower fall than in December 2015, though, when it dropped 2.2 per cent.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium said, "Overall, December saw a continuation of the downward trend in footfall, with shopper numbers falling 0.2 per cent over the previous year. It was a more positive story for the high street, which saw a modest bounce back with positive growth for the first time in December since 2011, after managing to draw in last minute shoppers.

"Solid festive sales did not translate into a lift in footfall above last year as online continues to grab the lion's share of growth. Ecommerce accounted for nearly a quarter of all purchases in December, suggesting that more shoppers than ever opted to go online rather than hit the shops.

"Retailers are having to gear themselves up to meet the evolution in shoppers' requirements from bricks and mortar destinations. This will be key looking ahead, with inflation set to rise and a subsequent squeeze on disposable income; the environment for consumer spending will become increasingly more competitive."

> "Retailers are having to gear themselves up to meet the evolution in shoppers' requirements from bricks and mortar destinations"

# Convenience Sector to Continue to Premiumise

**Fine food distributor Cotswold Fayre has seen sales of products in the sector increase by more than 40 per cent over the past 12 months.**

Research conducted with convenience retailers revealed that 45 per cent of them will seek to increase premium brand listings over the next year, with nearly 60 per cent seeking out local products and 23 per cent predicting an increase in artisan products.

Paul Hargreaves, chief executive at Cotswold Fayre said, "Over the past two years, our convenience orders have doubled in volume. The way we shop is changing; gone are the days of the weekly 'big shop'. This represents a real opportunity for convenience and forecourt retailers to capitalise on the 'top-up shops' by offering new and different products.

"Consumers are seeking out new products and brands from their local stores – and importantly, they are happy to spend more on quality produce. In order to stay relevant, stores must continue to diversify and react to consumer demand for premium, speciality products."

Cotswold Fayre states that its best performing categories for convenience in 2016 were snacks, soft drinks, meal solutions and home-baking products.

> "Over the past two years, our convenience orders have doubled in volume. The way we shop is changing; gone are the days of the weekly 'big shop'. This represents a real opportunity for convenience and forecourt retailers to capitalise on the 'top-up-shops' by offering new and different products"

## December Spending at Highest Since 2014

Festive sales contributed to the strongest quarter for consumer spend since 2014, according to the Visa UK Consumer Spending Index.

Expenditure was up 2.6 per cent in December on an annual basis. This was down slightly from November's 3.1 per cent, but rounded-off the best quarter for two years. The final quarter of 2016 saw expenditure rising at an average annual rate of 2.8 per cent.

Kevin Jenkins, UK & Ireland managing director at Visa said, "Consumer spending continued to increase solidly in the run up to Christmas, rounding off the fastest growing quarter for two years. Average year-on-year growth for each month in Q4 2016 was 2.8 per cent, twice as high as the average rates for Q2 and Q3.

"Online retailers enjoyed strong sales over the whole Christmas period, while bricks and mortar retailers saw an improvement, after a disappointing dip in November, as consumers made a last minute dash for gifts on the high street.

"Food was, unsurprisingly, another sector which performed well, with spend up 2.9 per cent."



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## CHARLES CAMPION

# "Gung hay fat choi!"

This year the Chinese New Year was early and the main festivities ran from 27th January until 2nd February. For everyone else this is a quiet time of year, with both food shops and restaurants choosing to lie low in January. Eventually St Valentine's Day will encourage an upward blip in the sales figures and things will perk up.

Meanwhile, the Chinese community is busy merchandising its flamboyant New Year. Drums are beaten, cymbals clashed, while the lion dances and rears up to the windows collecting lucky red packages of money. Everything to do with the Chinese New Year is about building up a stock of good luck for the year to come, and stirring up business during the "hungry months." It makes you wonder what we could do to put some pizazz into February and stop it being so grim.

British poets have not been much help. "February Fill Dyke" may be traditional but it doesn't deliver much beyond floods and mud. The Anglo Saxons also had a soft spot for February, which was said to be the point in the year when the first kale and cabbages were ready for the cooking pot. Goodness knows what those Saxons would make of kale's current role as a trendy year-round veggie. Only a very hungry man would be charmed by the fresh food available in February. Scholars would have it that the name "February" is derived from "Febria," a Roman Festival of purification, but for most Brits striving to eat fresh and local whenever possible, February means "Turnips á la mode Baldric".

There is a rich tradition of taking over feasts and national festivals and using them to drive business.

At the end of January, the Scots hold Burns Night suppers (dinners to celebrate the earnest poet's birthday). The skirl of bagpipes precedes a mighty haggis into the dining room – a.k.a. the "Great Chieftain o' the Puddin-race" – this is a magnificent bit of spin for a sheep's stomach stuffed with a suspicious oatmeal mixture. The whisky helps make it all palatable. For their part the Welsh have St David's Day (at the beginning of March), but rather disappointingly you're unlikely to find iconic seasonal Welsh delicacies – unless you count the "Eat a Raw Leek Competition" that is popular in village pubs. For once England has a real advantage in the race to cash in on the folklore front. St George's Day falls on April 23rd. The days are longer and there's a slightly higher chance of decent weather, but sadly no quintessential English dish to stand in as centrepiece. You are much more likely to eat well in April than in February, but that's explained by the first fresh vegetables coming through, the first spring lambs, and more good weather opportunities for fishing boats to put to sea.

One strategy for food shops and restaurants is to ease up on the seasonality imperative, and make the most of the flood of produce that comes to us as air freight. Which brings us back to the Chinese New Year. It's unlikely that we will ever see Morris Men as flexible as the dancers in the Chinese lion costume, but we could find some enthusiasm and perhaps a new festival or two that would encourage customers and retailers alike and so make a difficult time of year a bit less difficult. Happy St George's Day!

# Rural Indie Shops Seek Support from Government

**The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) has called on the government to help secure the future of the UK's 19,128 rural shops.**

ACS's Rural Shop Report 2017 states that rural stores are often the only places where customers in their local area can purchase essential goods and services. According to the findings, 59 per cent of shops operate entirely on their own, with no other retail or service businesses close by.

It also argues that the shops play a strong role in the community, with one in five owners having run their store for over 25 years. There are now 347 community-owned shops in the UK, primarily run by volunteers that have come together to provide the service in isolated rural areas.

The recommendations to the government include topics such as addressing the lack of fast mobile data coverage and asking for them to deliver on high-speed broadband for rural stores.

James Lowman, ACS chief executive said, "Rural shops are facing rising costs in many areas of their business, including increases in wage rates for staff, revisions to the business rates valuation that penalise investment, and an uncertain future for the thousands of stores that run post offices in isolated areas. For rural stores, they have to deal with these issues while also being hampered by a lack of fast mobile connectivity and unacceptable broadband capacity.

"The government must ensure that all rural shops are given the right conditions to be able to trade successfully. Without their local store, thousands of customers in rural areas would have no access to post office services, essential groceries and other services like bill payments."

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# Fortnum & Mason Enjoys Online Sales Surge

**Specialist food and drink retailer Fortnum & Mason has reported a prosperous festive season with sales rising 16 per cent in the five weeks to 1st January 2017.**

Fortnum states that online sales were up 22 per cent on the previous year and made up 34 per cent of the upmarket store's sales over the Christmas period.

The company's flagship London Piccadily-based shop recorded a footfall increase of 10 per cent and saw a record 27,000 shoppers come through its doors on the Saturday before Christmas.

Ewan Venters, chief executive of Fortnum & Mason said, "At the end of a year of great financial uncertainty and upheaval, these are very encouraging results. Our excellent Christmas performance is a reflection on the improvements we have made in our offering across online and our range of stores."

FAST FACT

Traditional Fortnum & Mason Christmas hamper sales increased by 19 per cent and caviar, hand-carved smoked salmon and white truffles were amongst the top-performing products

# Divine Awarded B Corp Certification

**The Fairtrade chocolate company, which is 44 per cent owned by cocoa farmers, has achieved B Corporation status.**

A B Corporation certification means that for-profit companies meet a range of rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

There are currently 2,014 B Corp-certified companies across 50 countries around the world, spanning 130 different industries. The ethical scheme was established in the USA in 2006 and has become a global business movement since.

Sophi Tranchell, the CEO of Divine Chocolate said, "We remain 100 per cent committed to Fairtrade and the social enterprise movement. We see B Corp certification as a demonstration that these values run throughout our business, and we believe that it is part of our leadership role to embrace systems that drive businesses to behave better and empower consumers to make informed choices.

"At the same time, we will be assuring consumers, customers and partners that they can feel as confident about the way we run our business as they do about the benefits that our products deliver to the farmers all around the globe."



# Retail Growth will Stagnate in 2017, Warns Think Tank

**Political uncertainty fuelled by Brexit and Trump means retail growth in Britain will stagnate in 2017, predicts the KPMG/ Ipsos Retail Think Tank.**

The think tank predicts that in the current political climate and with UK consumer price inflation set to rise to around 2.5 to 3 per cent next year, any growth in non-discretionary retail – including food and grocery – will be offset by a decline in discretionary spend, resulting in an overall retail growth figure of 0.5 per cent in the year.

It also predicts that cost prices will grow between 5 and 8 per cent in 2017 and that we will witness more retailers leveraging technology and consider multichannel or restructure to increase commercial headwinds.

Paul Martin, Retail Think Tank co-charmain and UK head of retail at KPMG said, "From a macroeconomic perspective, 2016 was a positive year with the UK delivering what is set to be an impressive 2.1 per cent growth in GDP. However, the year is not likely to be remembered for this fact but rather the UK's decision to leave the EU; the election of the new President of the United States, and the repercussions these events may entail for the years to come.

"You could argue that the 'Great British' consumer has broadly ignored the results of the Brexit referendum, with consumer spending continuing to grow over the final months of the year."

# Tesco to Acquire UK's Largest Food Wholesaler

**The supermarket's board has reached an agreement to buy the Booker Group in a deal worth £3.7bn.**

The firms said that the merger would create the "UK's leading food business", with Tesco CEO Dave Lewis stating that it "offered opportunity for new innovations in the way we serve Britain with food".

Booker Group owns the Budgens, Premier and Londis convenience stores, as well as being the UK's largest cash-and-carry operator, supplying goods to 700,000 convenience stores, grocers, pubs and restaurants. The deal means that Tesco will be able to benefit from its access to the foodservice and independent sector.

Charles Wilson, chief executive of Booker said, "Booker is committed to improving choice, prices and service for the independent retailers, caterers and small businesses that we are proud to serve. We believe that joining forces with Tesco offers the potential to bring major benefits to end-consumers, our customers, suppliers, colleagues and shareholders."

The deal has raised questions over how it will affect the grocery sector and is likely to be controversial with competition authorities. It even had a significant impact among members of the Tesco board, with Lewis admitting that Richard Cousins, previously the senior independent director of Tesco, left his position in early January as he did not support the Booker deal.



## STUART GATES
## FOOD CONSULTANT

# "Street wise"

Street food. One of those terms that can cover a multitude of images in people's minds, but usually one of interest and excitement.

Not so long ago we saw the creation of farmer's markets, then the appearance of producer's markets, and alongside this scene the emergence of a new generation of food producers. Judging by the number of these companies who exhibited at Speciality & Fine Food Fair last September, they have now become a regular source of supply to the fine food and deli trade. My only worry – and this has been aired by others as well – is that they sometimes need to be braver and have a point of difference.

Over the last few years I have been lucky enough to attend some great street food events that really have been an inspiration to an old seasoned grocer like me, and I think a lot can be learnt from this new breed of creative producer.

The stalls, cooking ideas, merchandising and presentation are all brilliant. The atmosphere is very 'foodie' with aromas, cooking skills, and visual treats with catchy names to attract the punters. My favourite: Mother Clucker Chicken!

The audience is generally young, knowledgeable and not shy about getting their money out and eating at least two offers, all washed down with craft ales, cider and other drinks both hard and soft.

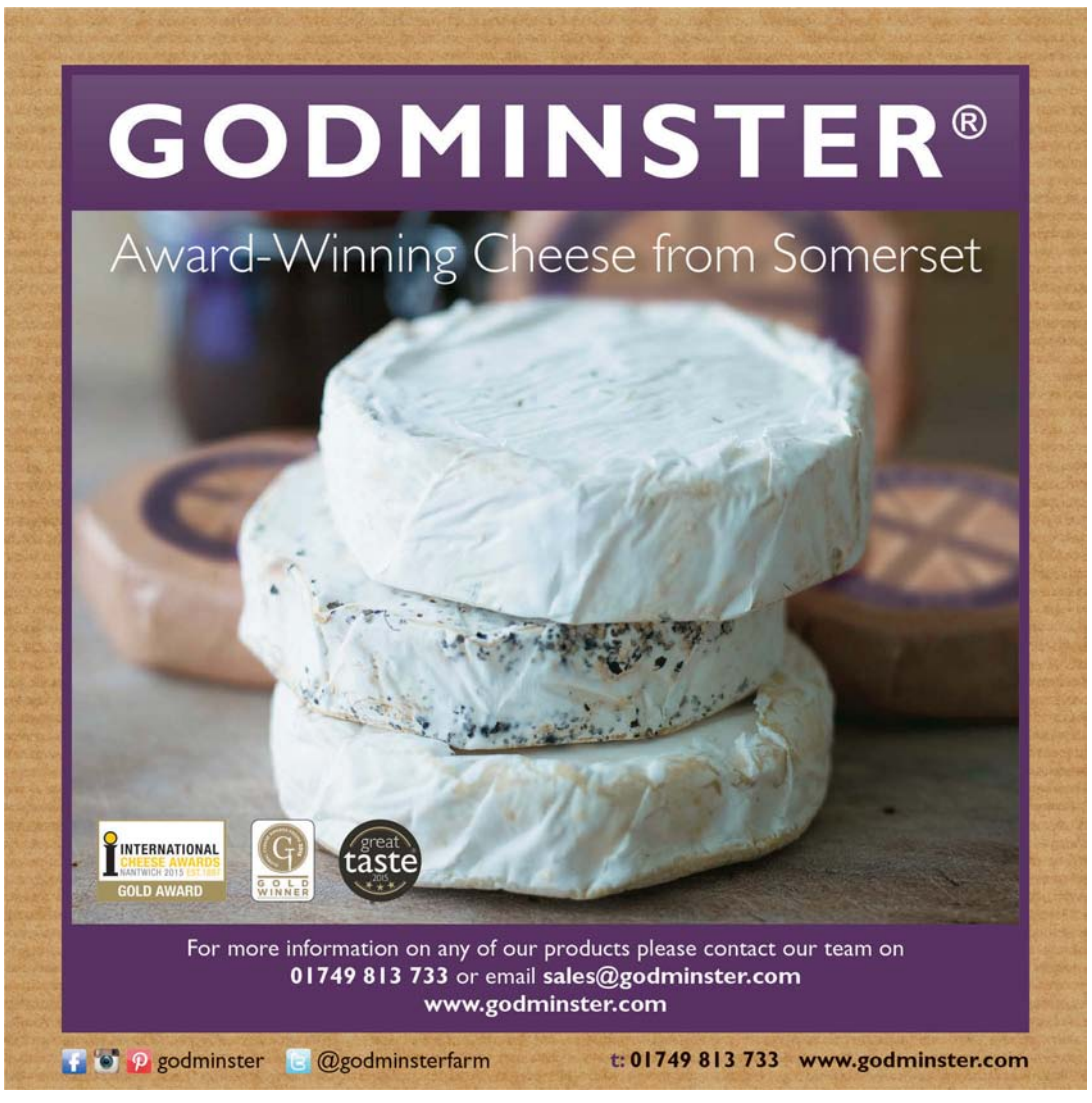
As I was munching a rather good soft shell crab roll I got to thinking that maybe some of these players would be appearing at trade shows in the future, as without doubt many of these products could look at home in delis and food halls. Maybe the ideas and presentation just need some creative thinking to adapt from the core ranges... I will be watching to see how this all progresses.

I attended an event with a friend which started at about 6:30pm, and we felt like those old folks who take advantage of the early bird specials – but we did not have to wait in line to enjoy a variety of dishes, which was a plus! As darkness fell the crowds arrived and everybody was engaging in conversation about the food and drink; it was one great party.

The multiples will never be able to create these sorts of products in an authentic light, but I believe the independents can and should to catch up with trends.

If you get a chance to attend one of these events I know you will enjoy.

> "My only worry - and this has been aired by others as well - is that new food producers sometimes need to be braver and have a point of difference"






# OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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



### ITALIAN DELI ARRIVES IN KENSAL RISE

**Messapica, named after the historic Puglian town Ceglie Messapica, has opened in Kensal Rise in North West London.**

The all-day café, deli and juice bar champions quality ingredients that are showcased in freshly-made dishes served in a dining area, and also available to buy separately in the delicatessen section of the premises.

The menu includes homemade pastries, hot and cold salads, lasagne, pizza and street food snacks prepared on an Italian charcoal grill.

Authentic Puglian foods such as olives, dry pastas and sauces are all available from the deli, as well as take-away dishes and fresh juices.

Rob Claassen, owner of Messapica said, "Feedback from locals has been positive – they're thankful to have a new addition to the Kensal Rise café and deli scene, offering fresh and seasonal Italian produce on their doorstep!

"Our cheeses include sweet and sour Pecorino (matured in Vincotto), Pecorino Stagionato, cheeses with walnuts and Caciocavallo Ubriaco, which is matured in Primitivo wine.

"We also import a range of wines directly and represent some fantastic growers who can be regarded as Puglia's most exciting producers, from whites to reds."



### NEW DELI FOR SUFFOLK

**Duck Deli has opened its doors in west Suffolk, operating as an additional retail arm to restaurant and pub the Long Melford Swan.**

The shop sells fresh breads and cheeses, locally-produced meat and game, and a range of ambient products which have been hand-picked by the restaurant's executive chef Oliver Macmillan.

In addition to retail products, Duck Deli serves freshly-made sandwiches and snacks that can be eaten at the shop or taken away with freshly-brewed coffee.

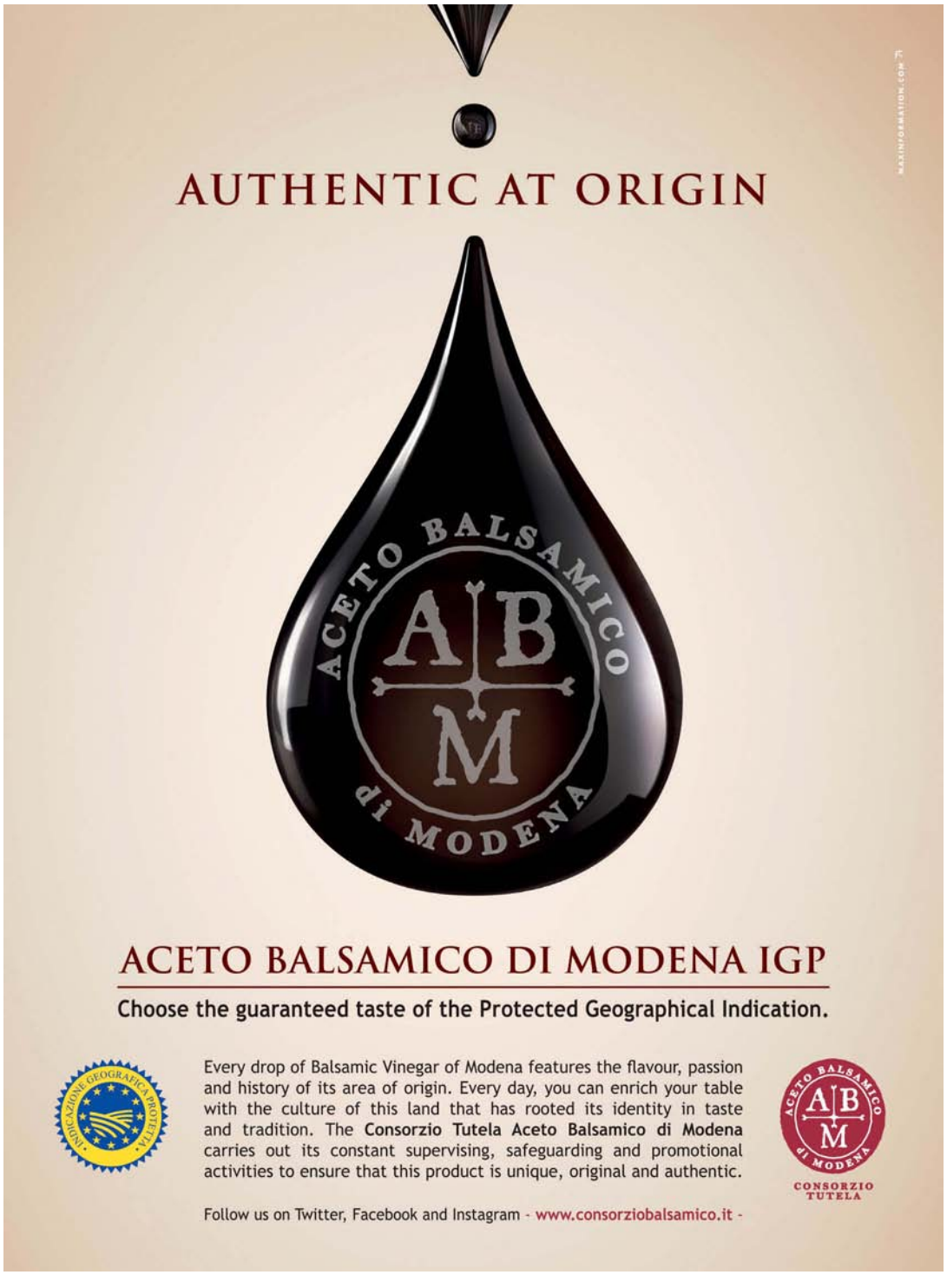
Lorna Pissarro, marketing director of Duck Deli said, "We are really excited about the feedback that we are getting from customers so far – 2017 will be a big year for the deli as we establish ourselves. We want to make sure that whenever customers arrive they get a friendly welcome and can choose from a selection of food that will always be of the very highest quality, whether that is a quick sandwich at lunchtime or the perfect cheeseboard.




"Duck Deli is a foodie's heaven, stocked with unusual foods and artisan products from East Anglia, regional and national growers and producers, plus a variety of loose leaf teas, coffee beans, cordials, fresh bread and speciality cheeses.

"We also offer customers the opportunity to have 'deli parties', where they can invite their friends along to taste the food, enjoy a drink and learn more about how to create their own tasting plates at home in a fun and relaxed atmosphere."



# FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW

## 24-26 April 2017 NEC Birmingham

# SPECIALITY RETAIL SUCCESS STARTS HERE

**If you're all about local, artisan and speciality then there's only one place to do business in April 2017.**

With over 400 leading suppliers and 3,500 switched-on visitors the Farm Shop & Deli Show is where the industry comes to find a fresh point of difference. Don't miss it!



*"There were a lot of exciting brands at the show, which was really useful to my business. It's a great show to attend and presented lots of new ideas!"*
**Brett Rogers, New Product Development, Village Bakery**

*"It's a perfect venue for meeting new brands and making new partnerships."*
**Calvin Meek, Manager, Knockhouse Garden Centres**

Register to visit at

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THE FORECOURT SHOW

William Reed
INFORMING BUSINESS GROWTH

# MEET THE PRODUCER

## Meet Joe & Seph's, the popcorn makers transforming a once-workaday cinema snack into a premium treat for discerning foodies

By now you'll be well aware of the popcorn boom of recent times and will probably have a couple of options on your shelves, but did you know that this boom began with the passion of one man, his wife and children?Adam Sopher, co-founder and director, tells the story worthy of fine food industry legend: "My dad made popcorn for us as kids years ago; he doesn't really cook, but popcorn was his thing. He tried popcorn in the US years ago and ever since then strove to produce an even better-tasting popcorn than what he could find elsewhere. Over the years he began to make it in a different way to how it's made in the States, and our unique recipe was born."

Triumph came early to the brand, as Adam explains. "In 2010 we arrived at a consumer food show with some popcorn and a brand new business, not knowing if it would be a success – so much so that on the way up there we were calling local hospitals and charities asking if they'd like to take it off our hands if it didn't sell." These nerves turned out to be unfounded: "We sold out in two days and it was the most amazing time; myself, my mum and dad were working as a team and we couldn't keep up with demand. We arrived







with 100 bags and bulk containers, and it soon got to the stage where my mum was hurriedly packing bags by hand while I was selling at the front of the stand. We launched in Selfridges six months later."

The name of the company was inspired by the founder's name, Joseph, because he is the business's key chef and popcorn creator – "the clue that it's the same name is that the hats above the two names are the same, just turned upside down!," Adam explains – and its one aim is to make the world's best popcorn. "We use big, whole mushroom kernels," he says, "which gives our popcorn a special quality, we air-pop our popcorn, we don't use oil, and we use 100% natural ingredients. We also make our popcorn ourselves, unlike a lot of other popcorn brands, who outsource their popcorn to a nondescript factory in the middle of nowhere. We have a team of pastry chefs, headed by my dad, who treat the popcorn like a pastry. This means you're not going to go into a store and see that there's an own-brand popcorn exactly the same as ours."




The brand's portfolio now boasts an impressive array of 40 flavours, as well as a selection of caramel sauces launched last year. Innovation lies at the heart of this forward-thinking brand: "The first thing we did was create our caramel-based flavours, for example salted caramel and peanut butter, then we created our cheese popcorn. We were passionate about only using real cheese in our recipes, with nothing artificial." The industry soon came knocking, with Joe & Seph's unique caramel-based popcorn flavours making waves throughout the UK. "Before long, we had chefs coming to us asking for us to bottle our caramel for them to use in desserts," says Adam. "It's an amazingly-textured caramel sauce made with a stunning double cream and flaked sea salt, and works well with pancakes, hot chocolates and all sorts of baking so is remarkably versatile."

Few could fail to be impressed by the business's balance of invention and fun, and this unique attitude has led to it working with some of Britain's best-loved brands.



"Inspired by Roald Dahl's The BFG, we created the world's first Frobscottle popcorn," Adam says, "and we're also proud to lay claim to the world's first Marmite popcorn; there'll be a few more 'world's first' products to come later on this year." Perhaps their most surprising invention to date is alcoholic popcorn, and, according to Adam, "the gin and tonic is a particularly strong seller." Joe & Seph's caramel sauce offering is also continually being extended to match the tastes of the food-loving public, with two new flavours coming out in February: Toffee Apple & Cinnamon and Rum & Raisin.

Seasonality is important to the brand: "We're launching a special edition popcorn for Valentine's Day in a heart-shaped bag," Adam says, "and will be bringing out plenty of ideas for Easter, including a chocolate egg which we've created alongside Divine. Our independent stockists are always keen on gifting items in particular, so for Christmas we created a giant cracker which looks amazing, as well as a stocking filled with popcorn."

Individuality is easy with a product range as extensive as Joe & Seph's: "It's easy for independents to have a point of difference," Adam says. "We recommend that they all stock our salted caramel flavour, as this is recognisable to customers so they'll be more likely to buy it, plus it's absolutely delicious so they'll be tempted to come back and try the other flavours in the range." Attractive packaging also aids sales, with all packaging featuring a clear plastic window "as we're so proud of what's inside it."

It's important to Joe & Seph's that the owners and staff of independent stores taste their product in order to pass on their enjoyment to customers. "Our popcorn is at a relatively high price point," Adam says – "which all makes sense when someone has tried it – so we always send samples for staff and customers to try." Retail customers are supported on social media, and the brand adds them to its online map so consumers can find their local stockist.

With consumers now being wooed in BrewDog sites as well as on-board British Airways and Virgin Atlantic flights, the sky's the limit for this engaging, exciting and thoroughly modern brand.










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# FARMA CONFERENCE 2017

## How will your retail business look in five years' time? This was the founding question behind this year's FARMA Conference

Over the coming years the UK economy will be going through changes that will lead to opportunities and risks, so business owners and their teams must think about how their business will be affected over this period. Whether its changes to the food supply systems created through leaving the Common Agricultural Policy, the impact of exchange rate fluctuations on consumers buying power or the growing in importance of young consumers, retail will change.

This year the conference has located itself in the heart of Bristol, one of the UK's food centres. This food city has enabled the conference to include some incredible case studies and inspirational restaurants in its itinerary.



### Dates for the diary

Sunday night (26th February), sees guests assemble at Cosy Club for a drinks reception before a movable feast around some of the city's inspirational restaurants. Restaurants such as Source and Chomp will showcase amazing fresh local produce in their own unique way.

Monday morning (27th of February) kicks off early with four bus tours leaving Bristol to explore some of the best farm retail businesses in the area. Each tour explores how the host businesses are dealing with the process of change within their business, whilst also managing day-to-day trading.

Monday night sees the introduction of the new party night, giving everyone an opportunity to let their hair down with the Amazing Curious Little Big Band and a locally-sourced dinner. With many of the farm shop owners bring their staff down, this evening is looking to be a can't-miss event.

Tuesday (28th of February), the big conference day, sees the full line-up of speakers, shop floor managers' workshops, a dedicated stream for farmers' markets and a trade event for partner organisations, including a butchery competition, merchandising competition and cookery demonstrations.

### Conference

Session 1 in the conference room looks at how consumers and staff are getting younger and how as businesses we need to understand them. Dr Paul Redmond opens the conference and uses his 30 years of experience to explore how retailers need to adapt to not only attract but also to retain millennial staff. Nikhil Acharya, creative strategist at Inkling leading brand consultancy will look at how millennials and Generation X-ers function as consumers and shoppers. Then Nikhil and Paul will be joined by Melodie Tyrer, a real-life food-obsessed millennial and food blogger to explore how she makes decisions on the food she buys and the businesses she uses.

During the afternoon sessions, the conference will explore three of the country's most influential local food businesses: Gloucester Services, Riverford Organics and Turnbull Deli, considering the influences they see affecting the businesses and the changes they will need to implement over the coming trading seasons. The afternoon will conclude with one of the country's most renowned leadership speakers, Paul McGee.

### Workshops

Running parallel to the conference will be a dedicated stream of activities for retail businesses, shop floor staff and managers. The morning will see workshops from The Guild of Fine Food, focusing on merchandising. The afternoon will look at some of the HR issues that can be dealt with on the shop floor with the HR Department. These workshops will be longer in duration and attendees will get a CPD attendance certificate from FARMA.

There will also be stream of workshops dedicated to farmers' markets, which will look at how they can increase footfall and engagement from young consumers. These workshops will include a session on the new FARMA farmers' market certification process.

Between all these events, speakers, attendees will also have a chance to catch up with trade partners take part in the third annual butchery competition in partnership with AHDB, test their merchandising skills with The Guild of Fine Food, or look at product costing menu design with a taste of game.

This year's FARMA conference looks to offer not just farmers markets and farm shop owners but their staff and independent delis a showcase of 19 businesses, 15 industry-leading speakers and a fully interactive trade event that will inspire them for the year ahead.

Full conference programme and key information can be found at farma.org.uk.




### FARM RETAIL TOURS

**TOUR 1: RETAILING WITH PERSONALITY**

How do you make your business stand out from the crowd? This tour will look at the retailing tricks used by four stand-out farm shops to communicate with their customers before, during and after their visit. The shops included on the tour include Puxton, Hartley, Farringtons and White Row Farm.

**TOUR 2: REINVENTING FARM RETAILING**

Four farm retail businesses, each showcasing different approaches to the future of farm retailing. From a new start-up via family farming retailing to the must-see retail innovator, there will be lots to learn for everyone. The shops included on the tour include: Over Farm Market, Chase Farm (the home of Chase Distillery), Court Farm Shop and Hanley Farm Shop.

**TOUR 3: LOCAL RETAILING**

Retailing local and farm-produced goods can take many forms; this tour brings together different businesses that have each looked at how they incorporate local produce into their offering in their own way. The businesses on the tour will include The Priory Inn, Jolly Nice Farm Shop, Jesses Farm Shop and Gloucester Services.

**TOUR 4: (NEW) RETAILING FROM PYO TO SUPERSTAR**

Spend the whole day at Darts Farm exploring how the business has grown to become one of the UK's leading farm retailers. Expert facilitators, Jonathan Winchester, will lead the day, ensuring everyone leaves inspired for the challenges ahead.

> "This year's FARMA conference looks to offer not just farmers' markets and farm shop owners but their staff and independent delis a showcase of 19 businesses, 15 industry-leading speakers and a fully interactive trade event that will inspire them for the year ahead"



# THE INTERVIEW: ALEX ALBONE

## For Alex Albone, brand owner of Pipers Crisps, hard work, fun and flavour are key to running a thoroughly-modern business




My background is in farming, and many years ago I was looking for a way to diversify. I've always been interested in doing things outside of my core business, and used to sell bottled beer to the major multiples as a bit of a hobby.

The business came about following a conversation between myself and two others, after the foot and mouth outbreak when as a nation we were starting to wonder where our food was coming from. Being from Lincolnshire, it seemed that we understood where potatoes and vegetables came from but not a lot else. I came across David Lee-Wilson at Anglesey Sea Salt and had a lightbulb moment – we could combine Lincolnshire potatoes and Anglesey sea salt to produce crisps with real provenance.

On 9th April 2004 we started making crisps, which I sold to a friend of mine who owned four pubs – I'd supplied him with my bottled beer prior to this – and it all took off from there. In the early noughties, anything was possible, and I was excited to think about where it could lead us.

Discussing the provenance of food was very new at that time, and we were the first to come up with the idea of using other passionate producer's products with our own to create exciting flavour profiles. I think that 'local' is one thing but 'good' is another. Just because something is local doesn't mean it is good. I searched out something I believed was the best I could find to partner with my product.

Regionality is very important and we have certain food heritages from different parts of the country – it is important that things are really good, so we've got to be careful talking about 'local' all the time. The provenance of a product is important, but one can get tied up focusing on 'local'.

People really enjoying Pipers products is what drives me. If we get critised by people, it's because they think that our flavours are too strong. To them I say that if it says on the front of the bag that it's Cheese & Onion flavour, it needs to taste of cheese and onion. Flavour is of paramount importance.

We've built a great brand which I'm incredibly proud of – awards, employees, customer letters – and I get a kick out of building a business on a shoestring, and punching above my weight in terms of doing things which are really good fun. I like to think that other businesses enjoy working with us, which is a great boost.

We have a nice team who give the best of themselves so the business can be the best it can be.

NPD is what we're always talking about, but ultimately it's about producing the best tasting product. We have 36 competitors now, whereas when we started there were just a handful.

It's so important that we're not always looking inwardly, so last year we got involved with a charity called Cat Zero, which is a charity that aims to help people, youngsters predominantly, who have fallen between the wallpaper and the wall. They may have gone through school but they're not actively in education or training. Cat Zero puts them on a 10-week skills-learning course, where at the end of the process they go on a 10-day voyage on a 72-foot ocean-going yacht. They'd have learned about teamwork and all sorts of lifestyles like how to cook during the 10 weeks, and on the way back from the trip the crew would get them to sail the boat home. This has shown amazing results – it has a 70% success rate.

For our part, we've shown them around the business here, spoken to them and given them the proceeds from other charity endeavours. For example, last summer we sold around 35 of what we consider to be the most expensive deck chairs ever made - we were selling them for £120 each! All of the proceeds for this venture went to Cat Zero. We plan to run something similar this coming summer, as they're fun and for a good cause, and help the profile of Pipers Crisps, too. As you can tell, I like to do things a little apart from the norm!

## QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

### THE FUTURE

**Going forward, we're going to do more of the same and innovate. This comes in many forms, and hopefully we'll have something to share in the next few months which will be of interest to the people we work with in the UK. We're going to do more exporting, as the pound dropping has helped us.**

### INSPIRATION

**I get the Sunday Times and always read Luke Johnson's column. He consistently has something interesting to say which is hugely controversial, and has some brilliantly thought-provoking ideas.**

### MANTRAS

**Keep having a go. If it doesn't work, stop it, and if it works really well keep doing it.**

> "We've built a great brand which I'm incredibly proud of – awards, employees, customer letters – and I get a kick out of building a business on a shoestring, and punching above my weight in terms of doing things which are really good fun"

## MAKING IT WORK

**You need passion, hard work and a great team to make something successful – plus luck, and you won't get any luck unless you work hard**. I'm constantly looking for people who can turn my job into obscelence as they're so much better than I am; there are always people who can get involved and make your business fly by doing a great job.

**While we were launching the business we worked out what our brand stood for, and a structure for how that looked**. Any time we produce a new flavour we ask ourselves if it does everything that is expected of it; people ask us for ham and beef flavours, but what do ham and beef really taste of? It has to be able to do what it says on the tin, the job of being what we say it is. We always ask ourselves if what we're doing is a Pipers thing to do, and if it's not we don't do it.

**I've learned that this business is hard work but can be fun. Our sector is great – I meet great, passionate people who I know will appreciate and pay for quality**. The people we work with are fun, which is quite important. The food and drink industry has some really interesting challenges in front of it. If we think about fine food, we've often thought in the past about where we might purchase it – farm shops and delis, supermarkets and discounters. I think some of the discounters have created an environment which has turned things upside down, and I don't know the answer about what that looks like. What I do know is that if you're traditionally a fine food retailer, you have to be a really great outlet. It has to offer loads, and that's really challenging. There are loads of businesses doing really well, but we're now in a situation where the best have to do better.

**Over the last five years we've seen a huge wash out of local pubs go to the wall, but also there's been a growth of businesses which do as described**. If you've got an outlet you need to promote exactly what you do well; my local village pub doesn't feed anyone, they do beer and crisps and the odd food night, but the landlord draws people through the door as he loves what he does and creates a great atmosphere. We have to get what we expect when we walk through the door of an establishment. It's the same with fine food – if we're saying we're producing or selling fine food, it has to be fine food. There can't be any passing off, and I don't think we're seeing as much of that these days as we were.

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# HIDA BEEF: THE ROLLS ROYCE OF WAGYU

## Hida beef is the leading name of Japanese wagyu and this premium, fat-mottled beef is now finding its way onto the plates of restaurants here in the UK

Several London restaurants such as Pidgin, Bella Cosa and Mayfair's The Square have been using one of Japan's finest brands of wagyu, Hida beef. While many top chefs are old hands when it comes to working with authentic Japanese wagyu, few have had the luxury of working with Hida beef.

Hailing from Gifu prefecture, which sits to the north-east of Kyoto, Hida Beef must meet strict criteria in breeding, rearing and diet, before qualifying for the highest meat grades in Japan. This attention to detail ensures Hida Beef remains one of the country's finest exports and carries an exemplary level of quality and flavour.

Hidagyu, as the beef is also known, translates as 'beef from Hida', a province within the Gifu prefecture. The cattle is all said to have originated from a single black wagyu bull back in 1981 called Yasufuku. This bull possessed the ideal genes to produce calves with meat of the highest quality and during his lifetime is believed to have produced around a staggering 40,000 offspring.

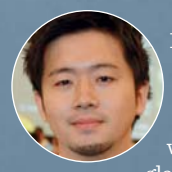
All Japanese wagyu is graded in a very specific way and inspected for things like texture, shine, meat colour, fat colour and marbling, while a yield score of each animal is also taken into account. For beef to be certified as Hida beef, it must have a firmness and texture grade of 5, 4 or 3 as graded by the Japan Meat Grading Association.

"The Hida beef we were serving was A5 grade and it was unreal," says James Ramsden, a food writer, and co-owner of Hackney's Pidgin. "Texturally, it's extraordinary. Just another level."



Pidgin's chef Dan Graham puts out a set menu that changes every week and prepared the Hida beef three ways; chuck was slowly braised in a Vietnamese pho reduction, while a tartare was made from the more tender part of the chuck and served with shiso, fresh English wasabi and a smoked white soy gel.

Graham also offered a sirloin of Hida beef that was cooked on the barbecue over oak. "Whereas normally we would cook beef rare to medium rare, with wagyu it needs to be cooked closer to medium in order to melt all the internal fat and get that unique, luxurious sensation of high grade wagyu," says Graham who glazed the Hida sirloin with a smoked white soy, shio koji and brown butter emulsion.



At Bella Cosa, an Italian restaurant in Canary Wharf, steaks of Hida beef were also served glazed, this time in a teriyaki style mixture of beef jus, red wine, honey, balsamic vinegar and rosemary. Bella Cosa's chef, Kentaro Torii, also agrees that Hida beef is perhaps the finest beef available, "It carries absolutely top-notch sweetness and has luxurious high quality fat. I tried not to kill those delicate flavours and texture, so I cooked the beef very simply."

> "Hida beef is very much the Rolls Royce of wagyu, unrivalled for quality, flavour and that unique melt in the mouth texture. This has made proper Japanese wagyu one of those bucket list meals that diners are increasingly seeking out. But chefs and food buyers should be careful when selecting wagyu as the name is now appearing on beef from Australia, America and throughout Europe, even though the meat does not adhere to the same strict requirements as in Japan"


PIGIN


GREEN HOUSE


THE SQUARE


YASHIN

All Japanese wagyu, including Hida beef, is well known for its high marbling of pearly white fat and the stories of how cows live a life enjoying massages are plenty. However, although massages are routinely given to the animals, it's important to point out that authentic Japanese wagyu actually carries a very different flavour profile due to a diet heavy in rice stems.



At the Mayfair restaurant The Square, Japanese chef Yu Sugimoto chooses to pair Hida beef with British malt. "This beef is a very different experience," says Sugimoto who uses Hida beef in his malt pot wagyu roast, a dish that comes with a Marmite-like malt jam made by cooking the malt as you would risotto. "It's definitely a dish we want to keep on the menu."

There are also places in London paying tribute to some of the traditional Japanese methods of preparing Hida beef. In Japan, wagyu is often served in a hotpot dish known as shabu-shabu, and in a sashimi style where the meat is thinly sliced and cooked very delicately. This is a treatment chef Yasuhiro Mineno put to practice at his restaurant Yashin Ocean House in Kensington. Thin slices of



Hida beef come on a heated volcanic stone that cooks the meat very gently, melting the rich marbling of fat. "The melting temperature of Hida beef is lower than other types of Wagyu" says Mineno. "Which is why it literally melts in your mouth as you chew it."

Japanese wagyu, particularly Hida beef, carries an intense marbling of fat that's ram-packed with Omega 3, Omega 6 and Omega 9 (oleic acid) – the same good fats found in avocados and olive oil. Thanks to this high level of monounsaturated fats, wagyu fat has a low melting point of just 25°C, meaning it melts under body temperature inside the mouth. Because of this, many chefs use gloves that have been chilled in the fridge to handle the meat, so as not to accidentally render the fat when working with it.

Chef Yasuhiro Mineno is one of few London chefs who have actually visited the Hida beef farms in Gifu and has been able to learn firsthand how the meat is selected, graded, cut and auctioned – a process that pays incredible attention to detail at every single step.

Thanks to this meticulous approach, paired with a rigorous breeding and rearing programme, chefs, retailers and consumers have a completely reliable seal of quality with Hida beef. In its native Japan, Hida beef out-prices other types of wagyu and remains one of the benchmark names in Japanese beef production.

Meanwhile, here in the UK Hida beef is still highly exclusive due to limited exportation from Japan. However, much like other big-ticket food items, Hida beef is something reserved for special occasions. "It should be positioned in the same way as other high end foods like caviar and foie gras," says Tada Mitsutoshi, director of the Japanese exporter, Zen Noh International.



Arnaud Bignon, executive chef at The Greenhouse is well versed with using such high-end ingredients. "I always enjoy working with premium products and appreciate that so much time and attention has gone into creating them," says Bignon who serves Hida beef with parsnip, black sesame, ginger and soya. "I chose to use the sirloin cut for its firmer texture as well as its flavor," he continues. "The acidity of the ginger balances with the richness of the meat."

## DISTRIBUTOR DETAILS

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The food landscape has undergone some significant changes in the past few years, with mainstream diners becoming more open to exotic dishes, obscure ingredients and far-flung cooking concepts. Today, you're as likely to find Japanese cooking techniques represented in a Spanish tapas bar as you are a traditional sushi joint. Thanks to this shift in attitudes, ingredients are being used outside their traditional pigeonholes and consumer awareness is now much broader in terms of regional cooking styles.

This has made proper Japanese wagyu one of those bucket list meals that diners are increasingly seeking out. But chefs and food buyers should be careful when selecting wagyu as the name is now appearing on beef from Australia, America and throughout Europe, even though the meat does not adhere to the same strict requirements as in Japan.

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# Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts



## GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S

# "Pump up the volume"

**In the dark months of winter, as the cold chill winds numb the body and brain and simply doing the routine tasks is a chore, it's hard to engage the spirit in creating and delivering the new, facing the challenges of looking forward and, most importantly, being even more relevant.**

The sheer pace of change in the consumer process will never leave our long established, rarely comfortable, demanding and challenging dairy trade in anything like the peace we might all desire, and some can get left behind.

As observed previously, the blurred visions of 2017 will doubtless slowly take shape through the hazy cocktail of price changes, Brexit impact, mature profile shortage, exchange rate uncertainty, technical demands, retail price wars and of course the important consumer piece.

An ageing population, new channels of supply via online, concerns whether real or imagined over debt and spending capacity, health messages, convenience formats in both product and retail, more single households impacting on volume requirements, snacking and eating on the go, freshness as a concept in itself, limiting waste, packaging technology, marketing channels, routes to market and so much more make the hurdles to be overcome less distinct, but appearing out of the blue at lightning speed. So, doubtless, many will hunker down and wait for certainty and sustainability to return.

But someone has to do it, someone has to seize the day, because doing nothing is often a terminal disease and those who are nimble, alert, ready to change and invest especially at the low point of the economic dial may well find the market less crowded and the ideas easier to land. Indeed some of the trends may be easier to realise than some consider.

It's a possibility that Britishness will return, with slight variations for Scottishness, Welshness, Irishness and Englishness, as the Brexit debate becomes more bitter, and politicians of different EEC nations make unpopular statements. It is likely a percentage of our countrymen will think it's time again to buy British, use British milk, use British cheese, so maybe waving the flag on product labels – say via Red Tractor, the Union Flag, or other clear British identity – may help to alert our consumer.

Product development, too, need not be a high hurdle, indeed some may be simply about a brand refresh, a label redesign, a size change or straightforward relaunch. It sometimes takes a new step to attract those who have become blind to what appears commonplace.

And then there is knowledge. There is a real thirst for this, as consumers seek what our American cousins call 'the edge'! Quite simply, that piece of knowledge, background, snippet of history, fact or distinction that makes a product unique and different.

So what is your unique identity, that item of interest repeated around the dinner table, to friends over a glass of wine and cheese, that gets embellished with the telling? What is your edge over rivals, competitors or the region or market in general? If you have a story it needs telling succinctly and often.

So as spring and summer beckon, the smiles and positivity returns as the warmth and opportunity breaks through. It's time, whether in image, and design, in new product or convenience, in story or history, to pump up the volume.



## JUDY BELL OF SHEPHERDS PURSE

# "We're in good hands"

**Almost 30 years ago I joined the throng of speciality UK cheesemakers as I embarked upon the journey that would result in the creation of our range of artisan cheeses and the building of our family company, Shepherds Purse Cheeses. Armed initially with a passion to supply a niche market made up of those allergic to cow's milk, I produced ewes milk and under the expert tutelage of master cheesemaker, my hero, Les Lambert, I learned about crafting cheese.**

Looking back, with the benefit of hindsight, it feels like we were there at the beginning of the British artisan cheesemaking revolution, which exploded over the ensuing years. We were fortunate to establish the business in 1989, at this time when regionality and provenance of foods were becoming popular. We were as committed then as we are today to producing top quality cheese from local milk. My husband had a quote on his desk warning of the ease of "making things cheaper" and "a little worse." We never wanted to be "that" company. And so we set about making the best quality cheese, refusing to compromise. Our company has been built on producing consistently high quality prize-winning cheeses, and as we became known as artisan cheesemakers we grew and added cows milk cheeses to our range in the mid 1990s with the creation of Yorkshire Blue.

Being a member of the local regional food group, Deliciouslyorkshire, was invaluable, especially in the early days. When we started our journey, we knew little about the mechanics of running a food business.

From marketing to the technical requirements to employment law, as we grew, networking with other food businesses was crucial as we found our feet and established the foundations of Shepherds Purse. I have been passionate about the network since I first got involved in 1989, and to this day I will encourage any new start-up food or drink business to join their local regional food group and take advantage of the experience in the group. As they grow, they will also have the opportunity to give back. It is important to get the basics right; involve the local EHO and Trading Standards to avoid making mistakes with packaging and labelling, which can be very costly if you get them wrong.

At the same time as looking out at your market for guidance and support, of primary importance is the team you build around the principles of quality ethical practices. For us, as we grew, it was about building a team around the production, ripening and packaging of the cheese and also in the way we deal with our customers large and small. Now, today, we have managed to define our values. Whilst we've always been a values-driven business, defining them has helped us build a team who are as driven as we always have been.

With Shepherds Purse, our next generation are now established in running the business. In 2012, it was the right time to take a step back and let my two daughters take up the reins. Here's to the future of UK speciality cheesemakers. With the next generation ready to go, I'm confident the future is in good hands.




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# Yorkshire Cheesemakers Set Sights on US Exports



**Shepherds Purse and The Wensleydale Creamery were amongst a 12-strong Yorkshire delegation exhibiting at the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco, which ran from 22nd to 24th January.**

The specialist cheese producers were looking to boost exports to North America and other overseas markets by joining the Northern Powerhouse trade mission. The Wensleydale Creamery's export sales to North America now represent about 50 per cent of its trade overseas. Other international markets include mainland Europe, Australia, Asia and the Middle East.

The family-owned artisan cheesemaker Shepherds Purse, from North Yorkshire, made its debut at the event, where the team showcased their Yorkshire Blue, Harrogate Blue, Mrs Bell's Blue and Yorkshire Fettle cheeses.
Its range of handmade ewe's and cow's milk cheeses are available in the UK, but the company is aiming to become a first-time direct exporter by securing orders from the event.

Caroline Bell, co-managing director at Shepherds Purse said, "The last time I was in San Francisco was when I worked for Apple. I was excited to return with our family cheese business, showcasing our award-winning artisan cheese at the prestigious Winter Fancy Food Show."

# Cheesemaker opens Northern Ireland Shop

**Organic cheesemaker Christo Swanepoel has opened what he claims to be Northern Ireland's first cheese shop in order to showcase his range of cheeses.**

Christo, originally from South Africa, opened the shop in Ballywater to sell his award-winning cheeses as well as other cheesemakers' products, plus locally-produced chutney, relishes and biscuits. The new shop also has an adjoining extended creamery.

Christo's catalogue includes: Young Culmore, a Gouda-style cheese; Angeluque, a Parmesan-style cheese, and Pitjes Kaas, a South African-style cheese containing cumin seeds.

The experienced chef previously operated a creamery nearby in Millisle, where he produced his range of organic raw cow's milk cheeses.

Visitors to the new shop, named Angelique's Pantry after Christo's wife who helps with the running of the store, can view the cheese being created and matured through a glass partition.

Christo Swanepoel said, "I needed more space to develop my artisan cheeses in response to the tremendous interest in my Dutch-style products, and I saw a gap in the market in Northern Ireland for a dedicated cheese shop.

"It's my intention to offer a broad range of artisan cheeses from Ireland and further afield. I've noticed a growing interest in Northern Ireland for such cheese. Tastes are certainly developing here and there's a growing appreciation of good artisan cheese, especially blue."







# Windyridge Cheese Moves to New Site

**Cheese-blending specialist Windyridge Cheese has announced its relocation to The Blending House in Wincanton to provide extended space and extra capabilities for the growing business.**

The father and son team set up the business in 2010, with a customer base all within a 30-mile radius, but it has now grown into a 14-strong workforce and sells worldwide with a turnover that has tripled in the last five years.

The new location is in close proximity to Wyke Farms, the company's Cheddar supplier, helping to aid a continued close relationship between the two.

Melvin Glynn, previously of Ilchester Cheese and Burts Chips and now managing director of Windyridge said, "The company has seen massive growth in the last year alone and is currently on track to achieve a £1.5m turnover for the year [2016]. Our range and exports have grown significantly with products now selling in countries across Europe, the Far East, Canada, the USA and South Africa. The Blending House is an important next step in the development of Windyridge Cheese. We believe it to be the first bespoke cheese-blending facility of its kind and will help us to continue innovating to bring exciting and distinctive products of an exceptional quality to market."

# Wensleydale Creamery Rolls Out New Blue

**Yorkshire Dales-based cheesemaker The Wensleydale Creamery has added a new blue cheese to its portfolio**.

Blue 16 is described as a "modern-day blue cheese" and has been created in order to appeal to blue cheese fans looking for variety, as it combines traditional flavours with a modern twist. The cheese has a russet-coloured exterior with a creamy texture and nutty flavour. Its name was coined as a nod to the successful 2016 that the company enjoyed, in which it saw the completion of a new state-of-the-art dairy development at its Hawes location.

Sandra Bell, marketing manager at The Wensleydale Creamery said, "The Wensleydale Creamery is recognised for its quality and authenticity, and whilst our cheese-making methods remain traditional, we constantly look to evolve and develop our cheese recipes to produce more award-winning varieties.

"Our skilled cheesemakers continue the art of hand-crafting cheese in the heart of the beautiful Yorkshire Dales using our own unique cheesemaking starter cultures and milk from local farms. There's an appetite globally for discovering new tastes, and blue cheese has now become more accessible to consumers looking to explore new flavours."



## JUSTIN TUNSTALL
## RETAIL CONSULTANT

# "Time, gentlemen (and ladies), please"

I've read opinions in this magazine that shops should always be open if there's a chance of customers being around. That's fine if one has an adequate supply of trained staff that can be put onto adjusted rotas and thus spread more thinly – the marginal cost of opening for the extra time would then run to little more than electricity for lights, tills and scales. Small shops seldom have that luxury; our world has the constant challenge of scheduling staff to cover core hours around sickness, holidays and other unplanned events. Naturally, should the additional business add proportionately to turnover, then it's worth looking at increasing headcount, or at least boosting the overtime budget.

When I was drawing up the plans for my shop, the consultant with whom I worked, the legendary Juliet Harbutt, was forthright with her views on opening at those times when shoppers would be in short supply. "You're creating a lifestyle business," she declared, "so leave yourself some time to have a life!"

Doing my research and looking hard at potential footfall, I realised that the shop would best trade for a core block of hours, seven days a week during the summer season and just three or four days for the balance of the year. January and February (until half-term) offered such a meagre trickle of visitors that we elected to close completely and take the opportunity to take a winter holiday and undertake annual maintenance.

As time passed I learned more about the nuances of timing for my customers, opening a little earlier during the week than my initial plan, so that shoppers could visit and still catch the morning's first return bus to the housing development at the top of the town's rather steep hill. I was always ready to adjust hours to fit in with local events. This embodies what a shop like ours is all about – we care about our customers, and as a cheesemonger we're a part of the agricultural industry – downstream, admittedly, but interdependent with farmers and producers alike. I tried later opening hours to fit in with evening events, but never with any success; it put a strain on staffing and we seldom sold more than a jar or two of chutney.

One element is crucial when deciding on opening times, or making subsequent adjustment to them: communicating them to customers. This is especially important for visitors out of hours. Hopefully, they'll have peeked through the window and decided that they want to investigate further. They already know where the shop is, so they are primed for conversion. But all too often retailers miss out at this point– shoppers can't easily find out when the shop will be open. Here's a checklist of places where opening hours could and should be communicated: on the door/window, on any answering machine message, on the website, on social media homepages, on Google, Trip Advisor and other listings. This becomes our promise to our customers: we'll be there for you at these times. Any breach of this promise needs to be carefully considered. As a business owner, I'd always try and fill the breach if staff members were ill and the shop unable to open. Failing that, I'd call a neighbour to put a sign up to explain that today's closure was unavoidable. I'd also go through the list of places where our opening hours are published and make the necessary adjustment. Creating an effective compromise with an opening schedule that values our time and our customers' convenience is a laudable goal. The clear communication of and adherence to it is essential.









Usher in fresh flavours with our selection of products that will supply your customers with the finest afternoon tea spread




**1 THE ORIGINAL CAKE CO.**

The Original Cake Co.'s range of hand-baked premium cakes are made with the finest ingredients, including real butter, and are all carefully finished by hand. Each cake is developed from a traditional recipe, some of which have been in the company for 40 years. For an extra indulgent afternoon tea treat, a slice of cheese on the Traditional Fruitcake goes down a treat.
**originalcake.co.uk**




**2 BODDINGTON'S BERRIES STRAWBERRY CONSERVE**

What's a splendid afternoon tea without a delicious conserve? Based at the top of Tregoney Hill in Mevagissey, Boddington's Berries offers truly unique Cornish conserves. Armed with a recipe book and open pan, Boddington's Strawberry Conserve was born. Containing only strawberries, sugar and a splash of lemon juice, the same recipe and open pan method are still used today with the extended product range.
**boddingtonsberries.co.uk**




**3 CHASH TEA**

"If 'tea makes everything better', shouldn't we be drinking better tea?" says Dan Rook, founder of CHASH tea. "We source and import an Earl Grey 1833, blended exclusively for us, and the signature English Breakfast Gold, which was created by our hands here in London. Our range includes 199 teas and infusions, and a variety of hotels, restaurants, delicatessen and cafés ask us to make things better with our tea"
**chashtea.co.uk**

# RE SPREAD




## 4 ISLAND BAKERY BISCUITS




Offer your customers Island Bakery's range of all-butter organic biscuits from the Isle of Mull in the Hebrides. The biscuits are baked in a unique oven but which is fuelled by local and sustainable sources of wood. In fact, all of the electricity for the bakery is generated from the island's plentiful supplies of rain and wind.
**islandbakery.co.uk**

## 5 RODDA'S CORNISH CLOTTED CREAM




Crafted to a family recipe from 1890, this local Cornish cream is gently baked until it is thick and crowned with Rodda's famous golden crust. It's perfect to top a warm and oven-fresh scone.
**roddas.co.uk**

## 6 INVERAWE ORGANIC SMOKED SALMON




This smoked salmon is simply in a class of its own. Only by slow smoking over hand-tended oak log fires can Inverawe's exceptional depth of flavour and luscious succulence exist. Inverawe salmon will always bring that extra special element to every platter.
**smokedsalmon.co.uk**

## 7 THE SOFTER BUTTER CO.




At last, a natural and softer butter containing no additives or oils, which spreads straight from the fridge. The Softer Butter Co. butter lends your toast a nice glow and negates any possibility of ripping of bread. "We specially select only the softest butterfats at our dairy in Wales, which makes it spread naturally," says Sarah O'Regan from The Softer Butter Co.
**castledairies.co.uk**

# BEST OF THE WEST

## The West Country is rightfully renowned for its top-quality produce as regional specialities sit alongside contemporary flavours






STEIN'S DELI BY SHEVAUGHN MUNRO

When you think of food and drink from the West Country, what first comes to mind? Cornish pasties, Devon cream teas, Somerset cider and Cornish cheeses no doubt. However, these days there is a raft of producers that are adding to the culinary diversity of the region. The beauty of the West Country is that each area within it boasts its own food identity, and smaller artisans are contributing to this on a daily basis, respecting the region's prestigious gastronomic history, while promoting other styles of produce, too.

### Producer pride

A brand that epitomises the juxtaposition of classic and contemporary artisanal food is Plymouth's Burts Potato Chips. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the crisp producer has recently launched its Quinoa Crinkles range – a product you wouldn't immediately relate to the West Country. However, the company works closely with the region's producers, which is apparent when you glance at the flavours which include the likes of West Country Cream Cheese. Chrissie Amphlett, Burts' brand manager for the trade says, "The company is known for working closely with suppliers from the South West to source the finest seasonings for its artisan crisps, and, as a result, winning 31 prestigious awards in the past three years for excellence, such as the Made in the South West Award."

Another company that pushes the envelope when it comes to the general perception of West Country produce is the Devon-based Great British Biscotti Company. Applying a unique spin on the classic Italian treat, the company is proud to take the biscuit beyond the restrictions of the traditional almond flavour – some of its experimental variants include Parmesan & Fennel, Indian Spice and Honey, Lemon & Ginger. Paul Rostand, director of the company, believes that the West Country has influenced the creation of his products, explaining, "The growth of our blossoming business has a lot to do with the unprecedented expansion of the region's independent coffee shop and discerning deli scenes – an epicurean movement driven by well-informed students, inquisitive tourists and uncompromising foodies all looking for the next big thing. The West's role as the UK's fine food hub, with its wealth of local ingredients and knowledgeable local workforce, meant that Dorset was the perfect setting for our bold 'biscotti with a British twist' ambitions."

### West Country retailers



David Greenman, owner of the Arch House Deli in Bristol, is passionate about the area's rich food and drink landscape. "When we bought the deli, we took on a deliberate policy of bringing in local products where possible," he says. "This is generally very achievable as there are a lot of great local products available. For example, our most successful hamper at Christmas was our range of Bristol & Bath hampers, which are made up solely of products from those areas." It's packages and initiatives like this that generate a lot of enthusiasm amongst his shoppers, explains David. Another way he champions local producers is by holding tasting event. "Trethowan's Dairy near Weston-super-Mare came in to the deli one Saturday and ran a tasting events for our customers, which went down a storm. We will do more tastings like this through the spring and summer with other local producers."

A particularly renowned West Country food category is cheese. It's also an area that Arch House Deli specialises in, making the most out of the ample talented cheesemakers on its doorstep. "We stock Montgomery Cheddar, Godminster's Cheddar and Brie, as well as White Lake's Rachel, White Nancy and Morn Dew," lists David. "Other local favourites include Stinking Bishop, Cheddar Gorge Smoked Cheese, and in the last six months we've also added Bath Blue to the range, too."

Arch House Deli is not alone in its admiration for the region's prolific cheese output. Stein's Deli in Cornwall also boasts an extensive West Country-focused cheese counter, says retail manager Tony Hendy. "We sell a range of local cheeses including Cornish Blue, Keltic Gold, Cornish Camembert, Miss Muffet, The Truffler Brie, Miss Wenna Brie, Boy Laity Camembert, St Mellion Brie, Davidstow Cheddar and Cornish Gouda."

Stein's Deli is part of the Padstow-based food empire of intrepid celebrity cook Rick Stein. A retailer that's able to flourish due to tourists wishing to have the "Rick Stein foodie experience," Tony believes that there are lots of other regionally-led reasons why people visit the shop, too. "Chefs like Nathan Outlaw, Paul Ainsworth and Rick have really helped to build a strong reputation and community for restaurants down here in the West Country, and it has become a foodie destination that people get excited about coming to," he says. "There is also a fantastic selection of suppliers and diverse products that have been championed by the chefs here, offering even more excitement for foodies as they can buy amazing products from our local shops."

When it comes to drinks, Stein's Deli's offering perfectly encapsulates the theme of traditional styles and their modern renditions. "Whether it's sparkling wine from Camel Valley, cider from Cornish Orchards in Liskeard or Tarquin's Cornish Gin from Wadebridge, we stock a variety of drinks made in the West Country," explains Tony. "We also have a selection of beers from Sharp's Brewery in Rock, St Austell, Penryn and Padstow, including our own Chalky's Bite beer."

It's this strong community of creative producers that naturally bolsters a retailer's offering, and many, such as Falmouth's Courtyard Deli, are incredibly proud of this fact. "We are able to build on a really excellent foundation of high-quality raw produce from right on our doorstep," said co-owner, Sarah Biggers. "You can already see great examples around the South West where people are successfully experimenting with new concepts which go beyond the old stereotype of fish and chips and a cream tea. For instance, Bristol has one of the most eclectic and vibrant food and drink scenes in the country, but there are exciting food stores opening up across Devon and Cornwall, too."

"You can already see great examples around the South West where people are successfully experimenting with new concepts which go beyond the old stereotype of fish and chips and a cream tea"



# MEET THE PRODUCER

## Meet Chunk of Devon, the West Country producer with good, honest food at its heart



Nothing beats a proper pasty, and that's something Chunk has been proudly producing in Devon for 10 years. Founder Simon Bryon-Edmond has food running in his veins; "I was very much brought up in catering," he says. "My father used to have inns before they were gastro pubs, and he was getting great recognition for his steak and kidney puddings so meat pies are part of my heritage!" Pies have long been part of Simon's story: "I made the move from pubs to fish and chip shops, but not being able to find a decent pie to stock led to him buying "a very small, undeveloped pie company... and that was it!"

The business's West Country heritage undoubtedly plays a part in its ethos. ""Devon runs at a slower pace than the rest of the UK," explains Simon. "It's not quite so rushed; people take their time and everything is paced in order to produce quality. That tumbles into things like animal welfare, and all the things that affects too. We have people we call 'cow cuddlers', and farmers who read books to their pigs at night; that's the sort of thing that happens down here. As a result of that, the West Country has brought a lot of really great, cool, premium brands to the food and drink market. Something must be in the water down here!"

It wasn't long before the age-old Devon versus Cornwall competitiveness appeared; Chunk won a Cornish pasty competition, and "the fact we come from Devon got the backs of a few Cornish competitors up, but the fact is that we were producing a better product!" Simon doesn't hold back when it comes to the importance of evolution and modern-thinking in the food industry, and cites this win as "an example of how Protected Designation of Origin labels can sometimes work to the detriment of the products, as the products can become watered down versions of themselves. We call those 'Cornish' pasties you see in train stations 'pastiches', as they're not genuine. They've been made in big factories and are run by accountants. When accountants run businesses, you lose the passion, the heart, the soul and the need to do things properly."

> "We're not arrogant about our products; we're there to wow people and give them what they want"

Good, honest food is at the heart of Chunk, and once established as a pie company the business started branching out to other traditional favourites. "To bolster sales in the summer we brought in a range of pasties – they're very popular as a snack in the West Country, and go down brilliantly with holidaymakers. We also added smaller pork pies to our selection, and sausage rolls were a natural extension of this. We're never shy of moving forward and always have new ideas in the pipeline; we've got a goat pie coming out soon which we're very excited about!" Real ingredients used properly are key to Chunk's success, and Simon's not one to cut corners for the sake of naysayers. "We've been using butter and lard for 10 years now," he says, "and when I received letters from Trading Standards saying I should be using margarine I kicked off big time – why would I use poisonous, carginogenic margarine rather than the real thing? It's about being sensible and real."

"We're a very honorable company," explains Simon. "In our game it's easy to fudge and fettle for awards, but we've never done that. We stand up to scrutiny, and if the judges make a fair point for something we need to change, we will be strong and humble enough to do so. We're not arrogant about our products; we're there to wow people and give them what they want." This approach has not gone unnoticed. "A blogger once referred to us as 'maximum taste, minimum pretension,' which I love," Simon says. "We're pie guys – let's knock 'em dead with flavour. Let's not be blah. If you're going to say something is Chicken & Tarragon, whack a decent amount of tarragon in it. If you say something's going to have red wine in it, put a decent amount of good, strong wine in there – don't muck about."

Although award-winning, Chunk is brilliantly down-to-earth, and Simon puts the brand's success down to using good, proper ingredients and embracing the traditions of their role as 'pie guys': "the reason we're here is to balance out the carcasses for the meat industry. The back end of a carcass is home to all the steaks that everyone wants to eat, and the front end is all the tougher bits nobody knows what to do with," he says, "so we cut it down and slow cook it with lots of lovely ingredients like herbs and garlic, and end up with delightful casseroles. Only by being able to sell those cheaper cuts at the front of the carcass, use them properly and add value to them, only then can you sell the back cuts of meat at a sensible price." Chunk's dedication to keeping things simple isn't always demonstrated in the work of other producers, says Simon. "We've all got a little bit caught up in being overly clever with our meat, but actually, a slow-cooked, tougher piece of meat really is delicious."

Simon likens the brand to a reliable and down-to-earth Land Rover: "flashy Porsches come and go, but we just keep on tackling the hurdles and climbing the hills." Honest, good quality food is the order of the day at Chunk – and that's something to celebrate.





# TALKING **TEA**

## Think healthy, functional and sustainable to cash in on the trend for speciality tea

The ever-increasing popularity of premium teas in the UK is clear to see. Coffee and tea shops of all guises have begun to offer a range of herbal, fruit and origin-led black teas the likes of which has never been seen before, and that's not to mention the myriad of options available in retailers great and small. Even the smallest corner shop or convenience store will offer at least one alternative to standard black tea, and the opportunities for independents to cash in on this trend is huge – just a quick search online will bring up a huge number of small-scale, great quality tea brands just waiting for your call.

One of these brands is Chash Tea, the founder of which, Dan Rook, has long been an advocate of a good quality cuppa. While, says Dan, the popularity of traditional teas are in decline ("sales have fallen 16%", according to Euromonitor), "consumers are increasingly moving towards premium speciality tea and in particular green tea and fruit infusions. Speciality teas will be pricier due to consumer willingness to pay more for a cup of premium tea," he says, and "an increasing awareness about health and wellbeing among consumers in the UK is reflected in the 8% growth in black speciality tea (Euromonitor)." The functionality and health benefits of tea – tipped to be a hot trend in 2017 – is also proving to be a fruitful sales tool in the tea market, with green tea in particular enjoying a popularity surge right now.

With Britons drinking 165 million cups of tea every day, and one fifth of the UK's population drinking herbal infusions – boosting the value of Britain's herbal infusions market to around £125 million – it's safe to say that premium, herbal and fruit infusions, the likes of which are produced to great affect by Chash, are well worth shelf space in your establishment.

### Go green

A key product in this movement is matcha tea, a powder of finely ground green tea leaves which can be used as a hot drink as well as an ingredient in smoothies, desserts and baking. Craig Coulton, founded of Bloom, producer of 'ceremonial-grade' matcha tea powders, explains. "Our matcha is ground from organically certified Japanese green tea leaves that are shade-grown before early-season hand-plucking. Shielding sunlight inhibits Theanine changing to tannin, which gives matcha its sweet grassy flavour and increases chlorophyll giving matcha its vivid green colour."

The reputed health benefits of matcha make it popular with wellness-conscious shoppers across the UK. "Healthy shoppers are no longer the minority," says Craig, "and consumers are aware of matcha and its growing popularity as a 'must-have' superfood. Matcha is arguably the world's most potent green tea as you consume the whole leaf and studies have shown it delivers 137x more EGCG antioxidants than a regular cup of green tea." The evolution of matcha has really taken off in recent years, with producers experimenting with flavours and formulations in order to personalise their offering to their customers' differing needs. "BLOOM has taken Matcha a step further by adding functional ingredients such baobab, moringa, chlorella, milk thistle, ginkgo biloba, goji and acai berries to create a range of nutrient-rich green teas that are naturally high in fibre, protein, vitamin C and minerals such as calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, and potassium," he explains.

**The lives of people involved in the tea industry are being supported more than ever before thanks to consumer awareness and the increasing consideration demonstrated by businesses across the world. Pranav Chopra, founder of Chaigaram, explains.**

The tea industry has always been plagued with inequality, and often those who grow and pick tea do not even earn enough to feed their families let alone plan for their future. However, a range of ethical initiatives have been put in place in response to concerns about the living standards of tea workers such as the implementation of Fairtrade standards and use of Rainforest Alliance-certified sources.

### EDUCATE & INSPIRE




Dilmah has traditionally taken the lead in bringing innovation to the global tea industry that has suffered decline as a result of commoditisation. Signature events such as the Dilmah Thé Culinaire, Dilmah Tea Sommelier, Chefs & the Teamaker, Tea in Five Senses, Mixologists and the Teamaker and Real High Tea are innovations in tea that seek to educate and inspire hospitality professionals to offer their guests a completely new tea experience. These foster greater interest in quality tea, and greater respect for this healthy, natural and versatile beverage.

Chaigaram is one venture which has its core base aligned with this ethos of doing well whilst doing good. It is a social purpose business that sells a variety of Indian tea blends, with all the tea used being Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance-certified as it aims to continually support the tea workers at the Borengajuli tea estate in the Assam region of India. It also looks to tackle the current challenge faced by refugees of integration as they look to settle in their new homes in the UK by providing them with employment through their business."

**Mint is a long-standing favourite when it comes to herbal tea. Anthony Terry from Summerdown Mint explains what makes their offering a stalwart for your shelves**

Summerdown Mint is known chiefly for its peppermint teas which have won several awards in the last few years, including a three-star gold in the Great Taste Awards for its top of the range pyramid peppermint tea in 2014. Last year, however, we were extremely pleased to announce that our Spearmint & Camomile tea had won two-star gold in the same awards for 2016, thus confirming what we already knew to be true – that this tea is every bit as delicious as our leading peppermint teas!

Whereas most herbal teas use only the dried leaf of the plant, to which hot water is added, with our spearmint and camomile tea, it is the camomile flowers that are dried and then infused with pure spearmint oil, distilled on the farm. This offers the consumer a more natural and intense flavour. It is the same process as for our peppermint tea, where we use the dried pure Black Mitcham leaves, which we then infuse with the essential oil from our own distillery.






# MEET THE PRODUCER

## Meet Les Comtes de Provence, a true taste of the cuisine of Provence




Provence has been heralded as a European capital for food, drink and lifestyle for many years, with businesses of all descriptions adopting its unique personality with varying degrees of success. To the delight of speciality retailers across the world – in Asia, America and across Europe – one brand has been typifying the best of Provence's attributes for 30 years, and the time has come for Britain to share a slice of the action.

Established in 1986 by Yves Faure, Les Comtes de Provence has earned a reputation for producing quality culinary and breakfast specialities in Manosque, the heart of Provence.

"Our positioning as a French speciality food manufacturer specialised in Provence culinary and breakfast specialities means that we have a whole line of speciality foods which represent the culinary art of Provence," explains Donatien Monod, international director of family-owned Les Comtes de Provence. "We produce jams, compotes (fruit sauces), honeys, preserves and fruit desserts as well as Provence condiments and spreadables."

While the award-winning brand primarily focuses on "fruit transformation", it also sells culinary specialities from Provence such as black olive tapenade and truffles, and every product in its range is produced with the craftmanship, quality and attention to detail which is so indicative of the region. "It is these qualities which make Les Comtes de Provence's products well-suited to the discerning consumers who shop and independent retailers," says Donatien. "All of our jams are made by craftsmen rather than machines, in open French preserving pans, with each small batch being monitored closely by the expert cook who will decide when it has reached optimum flavour and consistency.



The business's heritage is uniquely representative of Provence's French and Mediterranean culture and lifestyle – in particular its healthy lifestyle and delicious food – and its products deserve to be savoured. "These jams are very different to mass-produced ones from major manufacturers," says Donatien. "Producers making such products on an industrial scale don't have the time or resources to 'craft' their products, but within our business, machines are at the service of man, rather than man being at the service of machines."










Comtes de Provence's range now stands at 100 products, with a large percentage of this number fruit-based. Preserves, honeys, fruit desserts and breakfast specialities are key to the range, and all are produced using pure cane sugar and 100% natural and sustainable. As well as being totally natural, a number of products in the range are also organic or boast IGP (Certified Protected Geographical Origin) – including some of the options available in the brand's comprehensive honey range.

All of the products in Comtes de Provence's offering are surprisingly versatile, not least its all-natural fruit compotes. Made with 80 per cent fruit and available in Strawberry, Blackcurrant, Apple and Cherry varieties, they can be used to accompany yoghurts and cream cheese, as a filling for homemade pies and as a fruit dessert.

Proof of Les Comtes de Provence's dedicated to tradition and quality can be found in its label as a Living Heritage Company (Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant), which rewards the craftsmanship and culinary know-how demonstrated by the business. "It recognises that the products developed by us are very unique," says Donatien. "It's a great honour to be a living heritage company, and it's something we are very proud of." This EPV status has been granted by the French state as recognition of the business's efforts with regards to expertise, heritage and tradition, and positions the brand as leading the charge in Provence's culinary promotion across the world.

Despite its focus on tradition, heritage and craft, Les Comtes de Provence is excited to be making its products available to British independent retailers, and, says Donatien, "looking for a partner to develop our sales and to help us roll out our marketing activities."

> "We think there's a great demand for Provencal speciality food from discerning British consumers, and we're here to bring the best of Provence to them"



# ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS

The premium food and drink sector is jam-packed full of innovative, eye-catching and flavoursome products, and due to the busy nature of your job, you might not get the time to delve into them all.
So, take a well-deserved breather and streamline your sourcing process by taking stock of our roundup of essential products, which boast character, quality and profitability in abundance...

## The Dog Treat Company




Top notch, nutritionally ripper dog treats! When one in three dogs are deemed clinically obese and pessimistic predictions suggest that plump pooches will outstrip healthy hounds within five years, it's vital that pet owners re-evaluate the phrase 'dog treat'. Despite the well-being revolution gathering momentum within human food, too many pet treats remain stuck in the past, made from over-processed, inferior-grade meats, inappropriate 'filler' grains and deviously masked salts and sugars.

The Dog Treat Company (DTC) is a proud Devon–based business that stubbornly insists on using only the finest human grade meats, oils, spices and botanical herbs in its all natural dog treats.

Having made its name in 'Graze-style' home delivery snack boxes, DTC has now broadened its appeal via a range of premium dog treats in quirky, collectible treat tins that help tackle every imaginable pet affliction. Plus, an expanding family of seasonal specials.

**01626 334 399 info@thedogtreatcompany.co.uk**
**thedogtreatcompany.co.uk**

## Hawkshead Relish




Hawkshead Relish has plundered the depths of the ocean in true British maritime style for the inspiration needed to create this most luxurious of sauces, Salted Caramel! Chock-a-block with fresh cream, farmhouse butter, silky golden syrup and delightfully decked out with the purest Halen Mon Anglesey Sea Salt.

The velvety texture and creamy taste fly its culinary colours, with the crunchy crystals bamboozling the sweet sensation amid its salty undercurrent. Definitely a condiment that crosses the creative line, sending your senses artfully adrift!

Pancakes can be 'Press Ganged' into relishing this seafarers' sauce, as well as ice cream, warm ginger pud or even 'cut and run' on a chocolate brownie!

**01539 436 614 hawksheadrelish.com**
**info@ hawksheadrelish.com**




## Coldpress

Let's raise a glass for indulgent almond drinks. Coldpress, the UK's leading light in 'cold pressure' juices is now enjoying meteoric growth in the field of top-notch almond drinks, a wholesome and deliciously distinct antidote to the bland and nutritionally vacant milkshakes that continue to clog up so many of the nation's chiller-cabinets.

Today the appeal of almond milk extends far beyond the 'milk-free' movement, challenging the permissibility of traditional soft drinks, flavoured milks and pasteurised juices in these increasingly health-conscious times.

Coldpress almond drinks come in two velvety smooth flavours: Very Berry, an opulent jumble of top-notch blueberries, blackcurrants and strawberries and Raw Cacao & Banana. According to founder, Andrew Gibb, "Our first foray into discerning milk alternatives underpins my team's commitment to marry meaningful flavours with nutritional indulgence, because a commitment to a healthier lifestyle should never mean dumbing down your tastebuds."

**0208 899 6699**
**info@coldpress.co.uk**
**cold-press.com**

## Rod & Ben's

Rod & Ben's unveils three perfectly-proportioned puds. Although Rod & Ben's organic mindset means looking after the wider environment, they also don't like the grass growing under their feet.

Having made their mark in broths, stew-in-pots, dips, sauces, spreads and vegetable bouillon, it was only a matter of time before the boys considered 'something special' at the end of the meal, especially considering delicious organic offerings are a little light on the ground if you're not a yoghurt obsessive.

Winters are naturally manic and dominated by wholesome broths and stews, and yet, the success of Roddy's dips and spreads suggested that there was untapped potential during the sunnier months.

Staying true to their honest, tasty and organic mantra, Rod & Ben's is proud to unveil three perfectly proportioned puds: a tangy Lemon Posset, a Lemon Posset with Berry topping and a magnificently mischievous Choc Pot, all using only the West Country's finest double cream.

**01392 833 016 info@rodandbens.com**
**rodandbens.com**




## Pasta Garofalo




Garofalo, premium Italian pasta makers, produces many different shapes - 72 at the last count! All pasta shapes are available in the UK for you to offer to your customers; from the well known Pappardelle and Macaroni through to the less well known Lumaconi and Orecchiette.

Each of our 72 shapes is made with only two ingredients: durum wheat semolina and water, and you can't produce excellent pasta if the best wheat is not used. Getting technical, it is the quality and quantity of gluten present that determines the quality of the wheat, and we only use high quality durum wheat semolina, which meets strictly controlled criteria. The result is a consistent, premium pasta, that is always a pleasure to eat, whichever shape you decide to choose!

All of our pasta is stocked in the UK for immediate delivery through wholesale distributors. Please contact the Garofalo UK office for more information on pasta shapes, the ranges we do and wholesalers stocking Garofalo pasta.

**01438 813 444 info@garofalo.co.uk**
**pastagarofalo.it**




## Peter's Yard

Peter's Yard has relaunched its three varieties of sourdough crispbread bites, with improved packaging and small recipe tweaks.

Each flavour is based on a Peter's Yard classic sourdough crispbread recipe, which is high in fibre and made with all-natural ingredients. Cut into bite-sized rectangular pieces, they are hand-baked until golden and crisp.

Now clearly stating their usage that crispbread bites are 'the natural choice for dips', the packaging has also been brought closer to the Peter's Yard signature branding.

Available from a wide selection of speciality distributors.

**07966 363 123 naomi@petersyard.com**
**petersyard.com**




## Ross & Ross Food

The rubs include BBQ, Cajun, Jerk, Sweet Ribs, Moroccan, Chilli, Steak and Tandoori blends and come in 50g jars.

The jams, in 110g jars, can be used as a condiment or a last-minute glaze and come in Habanero & Pineapple, a medium Smoky Chipotle and a mild Sweet Chilli & Lime flavours.

The salts come in an original blend of smoked, garlic, charcoal and spicy versions. In 50g jars, they can be used to season meat and vegetables but also as a finishing salt.

The 100ml Oils can be used to cover the meat or baste during grilling.

**01608 645503 orders@rossandrossfood.co.uk**
**rossandrossfood.co.uk**




## Walker's Nonsuch

Delicious and creamy Walker's Nonsuch toffee bars add a point of difference to any confectionery display. Made with just good ingredients like whole milk and butter, the bars are typically British and unique to the family toffee maker. All Walker's toffee is free from artificial colours, preservatives, hydrogenated vegetable oils and gluten, too.

Seven different varieties are available, like Original Creamy, Fruit and Nut, Treacle and Liquorice to name a few. Bars come packed in a traditional tin tray in tens. Walkers has twist-wrapped toffees and chocolate éclairs too, but there is nothing quite like whacking then unwrapping your own toffee bars to enjoy. Director, Emma Walker says, "Slab toffee always tastes the best, why I don't know, because we use the same unique recipe throughout the factory."

**01782 321 525 sales@walkers-nonsuch.co.uk**
**walkers-nonsuch.co.uk**




## Blue Star Crab Meat

Stock up now! Blue Star Blue Swimming Crab Meat is caught in and around the estuaries of Indonesia. This crab is known as a top feeder, spending most of its life swimming in the warm and not on the sea bed. The Claw Meat is pink in colour and sweet in taste, while The Lump Meat comes from the head of the crab and is white in colour, with a smooth rich taste.

Wild caught and hand picked, fully sustainable and ethically caught. Patented metal foil pouch, with an 18-month self life. 99% shell-free. Must be kept refrigerated.




To place your order or for further details please contact the UK distributor Strike the Gold Foods Ltd

**0800 987 5431**
**info@goldfoods.net**
**bluestarfoods.com**




## Higher Living

In an age where healthy living is building a head of steam, it's pleasing to see that specialist teas are not simply in the ascendancy, but broadening their appeal to a younger, health-conscious audience.

Higher Living is the latest artisan offering from family-owned, herbal pioneers, 'Only Natural Products,' a recent beneficiary of the Queen's Award for International Trade.

Standing tall in its stunning new livery is Higher Living's elegant teapee collection. Teapees provide the perfect setting for showcasing eclectic blends of herbs, spices and enticing ingredients, which includes much-loved classics and the odd 'curved ball' masterclass.

**01452 721 289**
**higherlivingherbs.com**



## Island Bakery

Offer your customers Island Bakery's range of all-butter organic biscuits from the Isle of Mull in the Hebrides. The biscuits are baked in a unique oven, fuelled by local and sustainable sources of wood, and all the electricity for the bakery is generated from the island's plentiful supplies of rain and wind.

The fun packaging tells the story of the island and its characters, presided over by the much-admired highland cow, MacMoo!

Luckily the biscuits can be found beyond the island's shores. Joe and Dawn Reade would encourage stockists to get in touch so they can be included on the stockist database on the Island Bakery website, which helps biscuit-seekers to find stockists near them.

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

## Granny's Secret




The award-winning Granny's Secret range of products are for those who like to be adventurous – gourmets who can appreciate traditional and authentic taste.

Ayvar (roasted red pepper spreads) contain the best whole red peppers in a single jar, which are all roasted, peeled and sliced.

The range of jams include carefully-selected fruit which is treated and prepared with lots of love and stirring mileage!

The freshest and most nutritious fruit juices are made of grinding the whole fruit – which is Granny's secret.

They're also all free from additives, preservatives, artificial colours, gluten and dairy and are vegetarian and vegan-friendly.

**01454 540 045 info@grannyssecret.co.uk**
**forestbounty.co.uk**







## Dean's of Huntly

Based in Huntly, Aberdeenshire, Dean's is a family-owned business baking its melt-in-the-mouth shortbread and biscuits using traditional family recipes. The business started in 1975 when company founder Helen Dean began baking her shortbread to raise funds for the local pipe band where her husband Bill was pipe major. Dean's is now a household name across Scotland and exports its products around the world.

Dean's delicious Cheese Oat Bites are made using the finest Scottish oats and intensely-flavoured extra mature Cheddar. Now available in convenient 105g peak top cartons, they are wonderfully rich and indulgent, and are the perfect accompaniment to enjoy with drinks. The range includes three variants: Extra Mature Cheddar, Extra Mature Cheddar & Chive, and Extra Mature Cheddar with Chilli.

**01466 792 086 michael.louw@deans.co.uk**
**deans.co.uk**

## Adesso

Adesso develop and manufacture an exciting range of salad dressings with multiple uses, including as a bread dipper or marinade. All our products are natural, ambient, full of flavour and free-from. We manufacture under the Adesso brand but also own label. Due to recent developments we are now able to supply our products in sachets.

The items in our range are gluten-free, nut-free, and suitable for vegetarians and vegans. They are also free from additives, E numbers, artificial flavours and emulsifiers.

When used as a marinade our product is designed to maintain the moisture of food, penetrating it with enhancing natural flavours and an added zing!

Due to their formulation they are also ambient, so no need for "fridge clutter".

Distinctive in quality and taste, Adesso products meet the desires of the discerning palate and the time-conscious needs of today's cooking as they are so quick and easy to use.

**01612 052 050**
**mail@adessodeli.co.uk**
**adessodeli.co.uk**







## Great British Biscotti Company

New Great British Biscotti Co has launched its range of both sweet and savoury biscotti. Along with the traditional sweet flavours for coffee, a revolutionary Honey, Lemon & Ginger biscotti has been created especially for tea drinkers – a world first! They're also available in three irresistible savoury flavours (100g packs, RRP £2.99) Chorizo & Parmesan, Indian Spice and Parmesan & Fennel, with the two latter winning Great Taste Awards in 2015. These work as fantastic accompaniment to any cheeseboard, canapé and finger food bases or just purely as a savoury snack with a glass of wine!

**07715 322 868 paul@greatbritishbiscotti.co.uk**
**greatbritishbiscotti.co.uk**

# ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS



## field fare

field fare, premium frozen food supplier, has launched newly-designed packaging for its pre-packed meals, making the range a 'must-stock' item for 2017.

field fare's meals consist of hearty, wholesome dishes. They have introduced new recipes including and have a larger range of double portion meals, too. Plus an enticing selection of traditional desserts. All dishes use the finest ingredients and have on average 25% more meat per pack than other notable ready meal suppliers.

There is no minimum order quantity for any of the field fare meals – simply add from one case upwards to your usual field fare order.

**01732 864 344 enquiries@field-fare.com**
**field-fare.com**




## Foresta

With an increasing number of people choosing to cook at home using natural and healthy ingredients, Foresta hand-picked dried wild mushrooms have now become a truly essential product for independent delis, farm shops and food halls.

Foresta is a leading brand of dried wild mushrooms, sold exclusively through the UK speciality food sector and are not available from any major supermarkets. This makes Foresta a truly independent product, offering retailers a real point of difference. Distributors include Hider Foods, Goodness Foods, Infinity Foods, Shire Foods of Norfolk, Holleys and Marigold Health Foods.

**01636 610 584 info@thepfc.co.uk**
**forestamushrooms.co.uk**







## Capsicana

Our delicious Latin American inspired cooking sauces are packed full of the authentic flavours from the region.

The sauces are inspired by genuine Latin American recipes such as the Brazilian Chilli & Coconut – based on Moqueca, a traditional Brazilian seafood stew commonly found in the state of Bahia.

Each pack comes with a quick and easy to follow recipe guide and can be prepared in under 20 minutes, perfect for a mid-week tasty treat.

We supply them in retail packs of 8 units per cartoon.

**01462 429 797 ben@capsicana.co.uk**
**capsicana.co.uk**



## Gruyére AOP

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

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

**gruyere.com**




## Frank's Luxury Biscuits

Frank's Luxury Biscuits began life in Frank and Lesley Cornthwaite's home kitchen back in 2002, and has since grown into an international business,.

In 2015 the company moved to new premises in Hereford, where it has continued to fine-tune its range of premium biscuits.

Five exciting new flavour combinations were added to the range in 2016, including Rocky Road Oaties and Dark Chocolate & Mint Butterbitessam.

Frank's Luxury Biscuits remains committed to its original vision, which is to: "consistently produce high-quality, traditional and innovative products, while providing a first-class service."

**01432 270 177 franksluxurybiscuits.co.uk**
**sales@franksluxurybiscuits.co.uk**

## The Bay Tree

Add a tasty twist to your preserves offering by introducing an exciting new sub-category to your customers this spring. Hailing from The Bay Tree's prolific and inventive jam pan, the latest additions to the extensive range of 150 products are collectively known as Marmajam.

These fruity compounds combine the sweet taste of jam with the tangy, citrusy after-bite of a marmalade. Available in 200g jars; the two recent additions to the line-up capture nature's finest flavours so that they can be enjoyed every day, in a multitude of uniquely stimulating ways.

The richly coloured, Blueberry & Lemon is sensational swirled through Greek yoghurt for a deliciously simple dessert. Whilst Strawberry & Orange adds a zesty dimension to a classic Victoria sponge filling.

Marmajam is a further indication of The Bay Tree's quest to pack taste and quality inside every jar and introduce consumers to an explosion of homemade flavours.

**01963 828 020**
**thebaytree.co.uk**
**hello@thebaytree.co.uk**







## Cotswold RAW

The flourishing premium pet food arena provides the independent sector with the perfect opportunity to differentiate itself from the bland, samey brands being offered across the supermarket estates.

As with 'raw' human food, Cotswold RAW acknowledges that traditional, heat-treated foods cook off a lion's share of the essential nutrients, antioxidants and vitamins.

Cotswold RAW is a proud family-owned operation that brings countryside common sense to the dog bowl, bringing human-grade ingredients, transparency, traceability, eye-catching packaging and significant choice to a sector once dogged by cheap grain fillers, artificial nasties and low grade, back-of- the-barn meats.

**01386 426 335 sales@cotswoldraw.com**
**www.cotswoldraw.com**

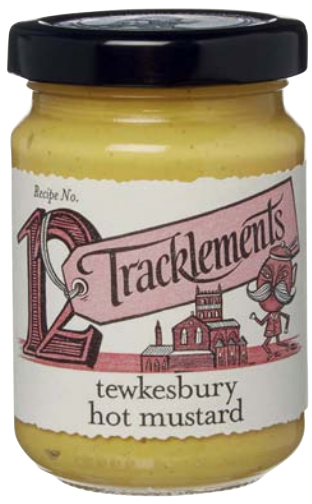
## Tracklements

Winner of the Best Supplier of Pickles and Chutneys for the sixth year running, Tracklements makes an unrivalled range of 11 artisan mustards including a 2016 Top 50 Foods award winner: Tewkesbury Hot Mustard. A hot, smooth mustard with a fiery kick of fresh horseradish.

With over 46 years of mustard-making under their belt, Tracklements are the leading brand for the specialist retailer.

Tracklements works with UK farmers and growers to source the best ingredients. They stone-grind the mustard seed and spices to retain all the essential oils before maturing the mustards in barrels to allow their full flavour to develop.

**01666 827 044**
**sales@tracklements.co.uk**
**tracklements.co.uk/trade**





## Anila's Authentic Sauces

Anila's Authentic Sauces' dedication to excellence has garnered them recognition throughout the industry.

Eight varieties of superb curry sauces are made with dedication and love, using the finest ingredients in small batches to give an homemade taste, without preservatives or additives. Quick and easy to make delicious curries without any effort, they are also free from sugar, dairy, gluten, onion and garlic.

The range also includes a selection of pickles and chutneys, made using only single fruits and vegetables to capture the freshness.

**0208 577 6162 info@anilassauces.com**
**anilassauces.com**




## Hawkshead Relish

Mediterranean Relish is a wonderful way to bring the flavour of the flamenco with vibrant colours of peppers, ripe tomatoes and aubergines combined with subtle spices and wine vinegar.

This refreshing condiment complements antipasti and cheese, as well as grilled chicken. A perfect pickle to escape the winter blues. The Mediterranean Relish Case: 6 x 200g for £16.78, RRP £3.90.

Mediterranean Relish is reminiscent of a salsa, this is a chunky and slightly-spiced relish providing a colourful accompaniment to cold meats, cheese or in canapés.

An ideal store cupboard essential for the festive period when you need to quickly pep up the cold turkey! It also makes a great pasta sauce, too.

Mediterranean Relish is gluten-free, nut-free and vegetarian-friendly.

**01539 436 614**
**info@hawksheadrelish.com**
**hawksheadrelish.com**




## Eat Grub

Eat Grub natural energy bars made with cricket powder are revolutionising the snacking market, one insect at a time. Crickets are high in protein, iron, calcium and essential fatty acids like Omega 3 and 6. Launched in partnership with The Economist, our Eat Grub bars are available in two delicious flavours: Cranberry & Orange and Coconut & Cacao.

Made from all natural ingredients, the bars are gluten, nut, dairy and soy-free with no added sugar. A great source of protein, fibre and sustained energy – let these cricket powder bars fuel your day. Wholesalers include Blakemore Fine Foods and Tree of Life.

**07932 040 003 info@eatgrub.co.uk eatgrub.co.uk**




## Scott Farm Sweet Potato Chips

Only the very best sweet potatoes go into our Scott Farms Orange Sweet Potato Chips and Scott Farms Orange, Purple & White Sweet Potato Chips, which is why they have such a delicious and memorable taste.

The sweet potatoes we use for our chips are fat-free, high in fibre and contain vitamins C and A, as well as potassium and manganese. Grown in the warm sunshine of North Carolina, our sweet potatoes are turned into chips once they arrive in the UK.

All we do is hand cook them with a pinch of sea salt before packing them up and bringing them to you.

**01386 420 913 hello@scottfarmsinternational.com**
**scottfarmschips.com**

## La Mortuacienne

La Mortuacienne is a range of traditional French lemonades first created in 1921 in Besançon, France. Over 90 years on, these refreshing and delicious lemonades are still produced in the purest tradition with local water, natural flavourings and sugar. Today's business is still family-run by the 4th generation family members and is still based in the exact same place, in Besançon, France.

Available in 330ml screw top and 1ltr swing top old style bottles, in a range of seven fruity flavours: clear, cloudy, orange, pink, mandarin, grapefruit and pomegranate.

These authentic, refreshing and delicious lemonades will be loved by adults who are looking for premium non-alcoholic drinks, or delightfully sparkling mixers. It's always five o'clock somewhere, right?

**0208 537 4080**
**sales@empirebespokefoods.com**
**empirebespokefoods.com**







## Windmill Hill Fruits Ltd

Christine and Anthony Snell grow, harvest, pack and store the best varieties of soft fruit at Windmill Hill Fruits in the beautiful South Herefordshire countryside.

By picking the berries for freezing at optimum ripeness, the best flavours can be obtained. Frozen fruit is healthy and nutritious, because the process neither adds or takes anything away, making it just as nice as the day it was picked!

Fruit purchased from our website is carefully packed with dry ice, and delivered the next day.

**01989 730 229 sales@ajandcisnell.co.uk**
**britishfrozenfruits.co.uk**

## Wiltshire Chilli Farm

Grown in the heart of Wiltshire, these chillies fill you with the fire that motivates their farmers to do what they're best at – creating preserves, sauces and seasonings that encourage people to discover new sensations. Bringing spice to life and adding depth and warmth to food, catering to every palate and taking great pleasure in introducing people to the wonderful world of chillies.

With the rise in popularity of the hot sauce as a staple ingredient in every discerning foodie's kitchen, it is essential to stock a brand that knows their habaneros from their chipotles whilst looking attractive on a shop shelf due to a recent award winning rebrand. Now available from Cotswold Fayre, get in contact to find out why these providers of Fearless Flavour are top of the British chilli scene!

**07870 377 867 bond@fearlessflavour.com**
**fearlessflavour.com**







## Stokes Sauces

Stokes' ketchups, sauces, relishes and condiments use only the best ingredients, so there is no compromise to the recipes. From the humble chip to the decadent lobster, food really is made better with a dollop, splash or spoonful of sauce from Stokes.

The mayonnaise is creamy and lush, made with British free-range eggs and Koroneiki EVOO. The award-winning Tomato Ketchup uses 200g of sweet, plump Italian tomatoes in every 100g of simmered, not milled, velvety sauce. The Brown Sauce is rich in puréed dates and black treacle, fortified with a blend of spices.

**01394 462 150 sales@stokessauces.co.uk**
**stokessauces.co.uk**

# 10 NEW FACES OF FINE FOOD

From fish noodles to mealworm bolognese, Nick Wyke has handpicked some of the most exciting food start-ups to look out for in 2017

## Emily Herrero, 32, Oominoodles



Noodles made from fish? It is possible, as Oomi has proved. Emily Herrero is part of a crack young team, all with food industry backgrounds in chilled categories and brands, who have recently launched this genuinely innovative product. The noodles are made from high-quality MSC-certified Alaskan fish such as hake and pollock using a patented technology and are sold chilled and ready to eat hot or cold. Herrero says: "The idea for Oomi stemmed from the clear emergence of a number of key trends: more protein, less carb, gluten free." The noodles have 12g of protein per portion, 75% fewer carbs than regular egg noodles and are gluten free. "Oh, and you can't miss the yellow!" adds Herrero. Oomi's target market comprises healthy, active convenience seekers. "Anyone that picks up a protein pot in Pret. Anyone that likes noodles but wants to be more healthy. We want to be in retailers, restaurants, gyms. Anywhere we see a noodle we want to see an Oomi noodle!"

## Ice Min, 27, MightyBee



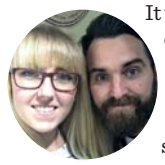
Ice Min has mined the current craze for coconut in a clever and original way. Her products, which include virgin coconut meat and a three-strong range of coconut jerky, tick the raw, vegan, paleo and organic boxes. "I grew up in a family with a history of diabetes and lots of strange allergies," says Min, "so I had few options in supermarkets. That's why we're so proud to have produced our range of guilt-free snacks." MightyBee's jerky is made by marinating the flesh of young Thai coconuts in a homemade sauce and dehydrating the jerky at a low heat for 24 hours to lock in the natural nutrients. Each flavour has its own inspiration: Chocolate & Hazelnut is inspired by Ferrero Roche, Teriyaki by Tokyo street food, and Spicy BBQ by the smoky notes of Spanish charcuterie. The key to her success? "The texture of the Thai young coconut meat has been a superstar here; it really helped us to develop something that truly appeals to both vegetarians and omnivores."

## Dean Dempsey, 42, Naturelly



Inspired by sports gels, Japanese drinks and his daughters' need for a healthy and convenient snack between mealtimes, Dean Dempsey launched Naturelly jelly juice in September 2015. The colourful squeezable pouches contain real fruit juice and gellan gum – a natural, gelatin-free dietary fibre – and are available in three flavours: Tropical Fruits, Apple & Blackcurrant and Summer Fruits. "I found it really challenging to find healthy refreshments on days out or when picking the girls up from school and nursery," says Dempsey. "Tears and tantrums would often follow. So we created a product that would fill them up just a little, until dinner time." It's been a steep learning curve. He has found working with logistics companies for delivery frustrating but loves seeing his product on shelves. "I hope our product plays its part in helping reduce child obesity, and we would like Naturelly to be listed in even more awesome garden centres, delis and farm shops around the country."

## Becky and Gabriel Osborne, 31 and 32, Fravocado Ice Cream



It was only a matter of time before creamy avocado made the leap from toast to sweeter things. Fravocado came about after Becky Osborne started making her own dairy-free ice cream as she wasn't a fan of what was on offer on the market. "I embarked on a much healthier, cleaner diet after having my son and ice cream just didn't fit into it," she says. It is a low sugar, dairy-free ice cream made from avocados and coconut milk with agave syrup and vanilla as sweeteners. Three flavours include Original Avocado, Avocado & Raw Cacao Nibs and Avocado, Raspberry & Basil swirl. Devon-based Osborne and her husband, Gabriel, have been surprised to find that since launching in February the ice cream has had a wider appeal than their original dairy-free and vegan target market. "Masterminding distribution for a frozen product has caused a few headaches," says Becky, "but it's been worth it, especially when we see children enjoying ice cream, who previously missed out because of various allergies."

## Eli and Lee Cadesky, 32 and 28, One Hop Kitchen



Taking insects into the new world of pasta sauces, One Hop Kitchen has crafted not another snack bar but rather a bolognese harnessing the protein power and foodie obsession with critters. Canadian Eli Cadesky launched his tomato ragu, which contains around 12% of texturised protein made from crickets and mealworms, in April and sells it as a sustainable alternative to traditional beef bolognese based on the much lower environmental impact of production. "Good for you and great for the planet" is his tag line, and he claims that in blind tastings consumers have preferred the

> "The idea for Oomi stemmed from the clear emergence of a number of key trends: more protein, less carb, gluten-free. We want to be in retailers, restaurants, gyms. Anywhere we see a noodle we want to see an Oomi noodle!"







> The growing ethical market is a key target, as we are a mission-driving brand that believes in sustainable, ethical sourcing and doing our part to reduce food waste and urban hunger

"meatier, Parmesan-like flavours" of his brand over traditional jars of bolognese. "Every jar of our sauces saves over 1,900 litres of water compared to a beef-based sauce," says Cadesky. "Our products resonate really well with open-minded individuals who want to see a better tomorrow. Interestingly, our best customers are women under 45 who are flexitarian and enjoy the nutritional benefit of a tasty sauce high in vitamin B12 and low in fat and cholesterol levels."

## Andrew Walker, 34, Tea Rex



Inspired by the cafés of Calcutta and the markets of Morocco, Tea Rex is reinventing the cuppa with the world's first raw fruit and root tea made from only fresh ingredients and natural processes. Its no-nonsense mission: "To stir up the tea sector and knock the dry fruit teabag out of the playground". Playful marketing – "every cup RAWRs with flavour" – and vibrant colours sets Tea Rex apart from the numerous designer bottled green tea drinks that claim to make us better able to deal with modern life. Each Tea Rex sachet contains fruits and spices that have been cold-pressed to naturally cram all the flavours, vitamins and nutrients into a raw blend ready to add hot water. "The traditional tea bag is in decline, where as the demand for fruit and herbal teas is massively on the up," says Andrew Walker, who launched the company in November. "We believe that while many new flavours are coming on to the market, as often as not a fruit tea smells great but does not deliver on flavour." The two initial lines are Wakey Wakey (lemon, ginger, lemongrass and turmeric) and Berry Time (blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, ginger and lemon).

## Sarah Durber, 28, Banana Karma



It's fair to say that Sarah Durber is pretty much bananas about bananas. Trained in her family's tropical fruit import business based at New Spitalfields in Leyton, east London, Durber gives her soon-to-be launched range of flapjacks and cakejacks a smiley banana flavoured twist. Playing to the healthy brigade and her own exotic fruit heritage, flavours include Mango & Chia and Coconut & Goji. "The idea for Banana Karma came to me on a trade tour last October en route to a banana boat in the middle of a Colombian estuary. For me, bananas have always been an understated superfood that I use as a dairy, egg, and refined sugar substitute, so that moment in the estuary was quite literally a eureka moment." Firmly aimed at the free-from market, all her bars are vegan, gluten and refined sugar-free and contain no artificial ingredients. "The growing ethical market is also a key target, as we are a mission-driven brand that believes in sustainable, ethical sourcing and doing our part to reduce food waste and urban hunger."

## Carmelo di Bartolo, 30, and George Smith, 60, The Nut Kitchen



Luxury nut product specialists Carmelo di Bartolo and George Smith have created an almond milk paste that allows you to make a smooth and creamy, dairy and lactose-free drink at home by just adding water. "It's easy to make and better quality than store-bought almond milk," says Smith. "It's also bursting with the flavour of Sicily's distinctive Avola Valley almonds, known for their full and assertive flavour," adds Smith. Made on the lower slopes of Mount Etna by a small team of dedicated skilled artisans, their products are aimed at home chefs though they are rolling out a professional platform in 2017. Other products in the Nut Kitchen range include a pistachio paste and cream of hazelnuts. "Our pastes have a much higher concentration of nuts and so are packed with more flavour, proteins and nutrients. At recent food shows it's been great to have been embraced by macaroon makers, ice cream shops, cafés, farm shops and delis."

## First Sukpaiboon, 36, HER Coffee Concentrate



First Sukpaiboon has poured her experience of running the uber trendy Haggerston Espresso Room cafe in East London into her convenient cold-brew coffee concentrate. The slow, 24-hour extraction at room temperature using filtered water and freshly ground coffee from neighbours, The Roasting Shed, creates a perfectly balanced profile of chocolatey sweetness with medium acidity. All consumers have to do is add hot/cold milk or water and stir. "We spotted a gap in the market; there wasn't anything out there like the cold brew coffee concentrate, which offers you the convenience of instant coffee at home but with that speciality coffee quality and great flavour," says Sukpaiboon, whose product launched in July and can also be used in cocktails, baking and smoothies. "It was recently referred to as 'third wave instant', which sounds pretty cool – basically, you no longer have to be a coffee geek to make a great cup."

## Tom Jordan, 23, and Jesse Wilson, 24, Jubël Craft Beer



Unimpressed by a brief foray into the corporate world (the London Stock Exchange and Mars graduate scheme, respectively) Tom Jordan and his friend Jesse Wilson seized the day and created a peach lager inspired by a local beer tradition they encountered on a ski trip. Jubël, which means "a feeling of extreme joy" in German, was born in the Alps, raised in Cornwall and launched at Glastonbury Festival this year. It's a light, crisp lager with a fruity taste aimed at both men and women in their 20s and 30s. "We set out to solve a problem for consumers who find beers too bland but cider too sweet," says Jordan. "Jubël strikes a balance between these two categories." The pair have big plans for 2017. "We want to be distributing to the on-trade on a national scale, launching additional flavours, expanding our team and raising investment to fund our plans." Watch this space.

> We spotted a gap in the market; there wasn't anything out there like our cold brew coffee concentrate. It was recently referred to as 'third wave instant', which sounds pretty cool – basically, you no longer have to be a coffee geek to make a great cup








# TIME TO RETHINK FAIRTRADE?

## With high ethical standards influencing consumers' shopping choices, it could be high–time that your shop revises its Fairtrade selection

The Fairtrade logo has become instantly-recognisable to consumers, thanks to it adorning the packaging of products like coffee, chocolate, bananas and tea for years. It signifies that a manufacturer adheres to better prices, working conditions and terms of trade for farmers and workers. The Fairtrade Foundation has licensed over 4,500 Fairtrade-certified products in the UK, and as of 2015 the market is worth an estimated £1.6bn – to put its growth into context, in 2012 it was reported to be worth £1.57bn. This represents a growing demand amongst shoppers, and underlines the fact that the Fairtrade message is one that resonates.

Naren Duffy, licensing and customer services manager at the Fairtrade Foundation, believes that Fairtrade products are the best choice for independent food and drink retailers seeking to appeal to an ethically-conscious customer. "All products carrying the Fairtrade mark meet the rigorous Fairtrade Standards which protect farmers and workers' rights and the environment," says Naren. "Retailers can choose from an extensive range of products and innovative, exciting new Fairtrade brands, as well as long-standing Fairtrade companies. We encourage retailers to offer customers more of these products because they don't just taste good, but they do good, too.."

### Fairer deal

A case study which highlights the benefits of a transparent supply chain is that of olive oil producer Bassema Barahmeh, who supplies Palestinian food brand Zaytoun. Barahmeh produces around 300 litres of oil a year from her trees located around the Anza village in Palestine. She sells over half of it to Zaytoun's supplier, Cancaan Fair Trade, and keeps the rest for household use. "As part of her village cooperative, the premiums paid by Fairtrade customers allow her to invest in new tools for her business," says Cathi Pawson, communications manager at Zaytoun. "The cooperatives often decide to invest the premiums into community projects like schools or a village hall."

Fairtrade Fortnight, which runs from 27th February until 12th March, is an event that shines the light on the virtues of ethical shopping and helps to communicate key messages to consumers and retailers. Naren says, "This year's Fairtrade Fortnight is an opportunity for independent retailers to join businesses, communities and campaigners across the country to support the movement and encourage people to choose Fairtrade when they shop. Millions of farmers and workers around the world who produce the tea, coffee and chocolate we enjoy remain trapped in poverty, and Fairtrade's annual campaign aims to change the unfair global trading system that has brought profits for the few by exploiting the many."

### Retailer initiatives

One retailer that has a wealth of history selling Fairtrade-affiliated food and drink is Liverpool-based retailer Delifonseca. Proprietor Candice Fonseca tells us that the delicatessen stocks a decent range of Fairtrade commodities, including chocolate, tea, coffee, sugar and grains. "I think that is because we as a business place value on producers and growers getting paid fairly," she says. "I can't remember any customers ever asking us if we have a Fairtrade version of something, however I think that customers may choose the Fairtrade option if there is an alternative available."

Candice also believes that sometimes the public aren't aware of specific details, so they are often surprised when they do learn about the specifics of a company's supply chain. "The most accessible story for us is Divine Chocolate's," she says. "It's a popular product because of the range of flavours, coupled with quality and the everyday price point, and it doesn't look too 'worthy'. When customers hear about how it was founded and the communities involved, it's like a 'putting a name to a face' moment."

The lack of opportunity to transfer these details is perhaps why Fairtrade Fortnight is an essential platform for producers and retailers to connect with consumers on the subject. "For the last two years we have organised a 'Fairtrade Bingo' to mark Fairtrade Fortnight," Candice explains. "Customers can pick up a bingo card populated with a range of our Fairtrade products. As they buy the products over the fortnight, they can tick them off. Four corners or a line means that they win a prize, and a full house results in an even better prize."

Delifonseca's most popular Fairtrade products are chocolate-based, Candice reveals, is closely followed by tea. "That said, we do try and feature a range of products on the card," she says. "By doing so, this provokes awareness and interest. For example, the Mothergrain Quinoa range became more popular after the event, as people were tempted into trying it."

> "The lack of opportunity to transfer these details is perhaps why Fairtrade Fortnight is an essential platform for producers and retailers to connect with consumers on the subject"






# High ethical standards are upheld to produce these top-selling Fairtrade items




## 1 DIVINE: 70% Dark Chocolate with Mango & Coconut

"The bar is a luscious tropical twist on Divine's acclaimed dark, rich and velvety chocolate, containing real pieces of Fairtrade mango from Burkina Faso and Fairtrade coconut from Sri Lanka," says Gemma Hood of Divine. "It is not only a unique and mouth watering taste combination, but it may also be the fairest bar of them all, with 99% of ingredients certified as Fairtrade.

"All of Divine's chocolate is made using the best of the best Fairtrade-certified cocoa, grown with pride in Ghana by a co-operative of 85,000 cocoa farmers called Kuapa Kokoo, who own 44% of the Divine company. Co-ownership ensures the farmers receive a share of the profits they help to create, and also enables them to gain greater ownership of their industry."

**divinechocolate.com**

## 2 LIBERATION FOODS: Lime & Chilli Cashews with Peanuts

Kate Gaskell, managing director said, "We have been working with the farmers of the Del Campo co-operative for well over 10 years now. Del Campo was the first ever co-operative to gain Fairtrade certification for sesame seeds, closely followed by peanuts. We were Del Campo's first customer for Fairtrade peanuts and buy from them every year – the farmers appreciate the regular volume, the Fairtrade premium and the advance notice we provide of our requirements, to help them to plan. Del Campo's members place a strong emphasis on recognising and rewarding women's work in growing peanuts and on improving the quality of food consumed in their own communities."

**chooseliberation.com**







## 5 QUINOLA MOTHERGRAIN: Red Quinoa

"Red Quinoa is the 'wild rice' of quinoas. It has more pronounced nuttiness and adds beautiful colour to any dish," explains James Livingstone-Wallace, founder. "All of our products – except the two Wholegrain Quinoa varieties – are made with Fairtrade quinoa. In the first quarter of 2016 we passed the bar of $100,000 premium that's paid to the Peruvian co-operative that we work with. So a tidy extra revenue for the 500 smallholder farmers that make up that co-operative."

**quinola.fr**




## 3 STEENBERGS: Organic Rose Sugar

This Rose Sugar is hand-blended to Steenbergs' own recipe using organic and Fairtrade extra-light cane sugar from Paraguay and organic Damask Rose Petals from Bulgaria. It's an indulgent addition to scones or waffles and a delectable topping for pancakes or fruit salads.

Emily Bennison from Steenbergs says, "Steenbergs became Fairtrade for tea in 2004 and was the first company to bring Fairtrade spices to the UK in 2005. It also stocks over 70 own-brand Fairtrade products, including saffron and vanilla extract."

**steenbergs.co.uk**

## 4 CLIPPER TEA: Pure Green Tea

"Our green tea is delicious because we use fresh baby leaves and we are dedicated to keeping it natural throughout the process," explains Gill Green, managing director at Wessanen UK, the brand owner of Clipper Tea. "We're also fully committed to Fairtrade, having helped set up the standards for Fairtrade tea in 1994. This is because we believe in making a difference and doing business in the right way. We support tea producers and their families by paying fair prices, as well as the Fairtrade premium on our teas, which goes towards supporting projects such as roads, schools and medical resources."

**clipper-teas.com**




## 6 GUSTO: Gusto Cola




"We have always been an ingredients-first brand, with organic and ethically-sourced ingredients being our starting point," says William Fugard, managing director. "Transparency is a vital discipline for any business that has Fairtrade and organic credentials. All of our ingredients for Gusto Cola have been approved by the Fairtrade Foundation and where we source organic-certified ingredients we are tight with the proof of organic certification. Our premise at Gusto Organic is a no-nasties approach to the nation's favourite soft drinks; there are no tricks, just the finest ingredients blended carefully and packaged without preservatives and chemicals."

**drinkgusto.com**

## 7 GEOBAR: Cocoa & Beetroot Organic Bar

"Our bars are a global mix of goodness – every ingredient has a story," explains GEO brand marketing executive, Rosalyn Vinton. "Our dates are from the Hazoua oasis in southern Tunisia. The raisins are sun-dried in Uzbekistan and the cashews come from the Côte d'Ivoire."

The new bars, which are available from Traidcraft and other wholesalers from April 2017, are 100% organic, vegan and traceable. "We have used the highest quality Fairtrade ingredients from suppliers and farmers we know and trust to bring a delicious on-the-go fruit bar you can trust," says Rosalyn."

**lovegeobar.com**




## 8 ZAYTOUN: Extra Virgin Olive Oil




Naturally organic and ethically-sourced from small-scale farms in Palestine's West Bank, Zaytoun's olive oil was the first in the world to be awarded a Fairtrade certification back in 2009.

"Zaytoun pioneered the world's first sales of Fairtrade olive oil to British customers who wanted both a high-quality oil and credentials that guaranteed a fair price to farmers in Palestine," says Cathi Pawson, communications manager. "The olive oil comes from 43 farmer co-operatives located in the northern area of Palestine, and its sales across the world support thousands of farming families whose trees are sometimes hundreds of years old. Rain-fed, the olives produce a distinctive peppery green oil, and for the farmers who supply us, growing Fairtrade sales are welcome not just in terms of guaranteed income, but for the affirmation by customers that Palestine produces food and drink that is world-class."

**zaytoun.org**






STOCK CHECK 2017 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE




**FIELD FARE**
**MACARONI CHEESE**
Spiralli pasta is combined with a rich, mature Cheddar cheese sauce, Dijon mustard and a hint of bay and nutmeg for comforting deliciousness.
**field-fare.com**




**COOK**
**CLASSIC FISH PIE**
Cod, smoked haddock and plump tiger prawns in a classic, white roux sauce and seasoned with lemon, parsley and chives.
**cookfood.net**




**MINIOTI**
**PREMIUM VANILLA ICE CREAM**
Luxurious and containing no added sugar, this vanilla-flavoured probiotic ice cream is made using Jersey dairy milk.
**minioti.com**




**WHOLE CREATIONS**
**GRILLED PEPPERS & GOAT'S CHEESE WHOLEMEAL PIZZA**
Succulent peppers sit alongside mild and creamy goat's cheese on a light and crisp wholemeal pizza base.
**wholecreations.com**




**BIG FISH BRAND**
**SMOKED HADDOCK CAKES**
Smoked haddock blended with potato, spring onions and cheese lightly seasoned and coated in golden breadcrumbs.
**bigfishbrand.co.uk**




**FRY'S**
**RICE PROTEIN & CHIA SEED STIR FRY STRIPS**
These strips are high in iron, protein and fibre, and work nicely in stir fries, wraps and pastas.
**fryfamilyfood.com**




# FROZEN FOOD IS HOTTING UP

## With the help of premium ready meals, artisan ice cream and frozen berries for smoothies and breakfast toppers, frozen food's budget image is slowly melting away

The contents of a consumer's home freezer will look a little different now then it did, say, five or 10 years ago. Chances are, so will their outlook on frozen food. The market has shifted its identity somewhat, with the omnipresent peas, ready-made doughs and oven chips now sitting alongside the likes of Singapore noodles and sourdough pizza. The frozen food sector is successfully eschewing being pigeon-holed as 'budget fodder', and consumers are acknowledging the quality ranges readily available out there.

Statistics from Kantar Worldpanel from the 52 weeks ending 6th December 2015 show that the total retail frozen food market is worth £5.8bn. The figures represent solid growth in the frozen confectionery and ready meals categories, with an increase of 6.4% and 2.1% year-on-year respectively.

Brian Young, chief executive of the British Frozen Food Federation said of the findings, "The UK's frozen food market is steadily growing as consumers continue to demand convenient, first-rate food. With time becoming more of a precious commodity, consumers are increasingly looking for ingredients and meal ideas that offer nutritious, great value, time-saving options.

"The ever-expanding range of high-quality frozen food products – from frozen risottos, herbs and vegetables to rice, baked potatoes, artisan breads and patisserie – enables consumers to save time in the kitchen, while providing great tasting, nutritional food."

One company that has been championing quality frozen food for years is field fare. The brand specialises in supplying the independent sector and has continued to go from strength to strength. Karen Deans, managing director, believes that frozen food from delis and farm shops is perceived as being of a premium standard. "There is usually a wider variety of premium frozen ingredients and ready meals on offer," she explains. "The way frozen produce is merchandised in independents, often in branded freezers with minimal packaging, helps convey the quality image."

Karen has noticed a slight change in customer demographic, too. "Whilst historically it was mainly older consumers who bought premium frozen food, now the wide variety on offer and the message of frozen being high-quality, tasting as fresh and locking in goodness and vitamins being understood, premium frozen food and ready meals are now appealing to a much younger audience, too."

Karen believes that delis and farm shops are opening their eyes to the demand for quality frozen food, noting, "We have taken on a good number of new customers recently, as well as a number of existing customers who are taking on additional freezers and expanding their existing frozen food section, particularly since launching our refreshed branding."

For an infallible way of boosting frozen food sales, ice cream and desserts could be an area worth looking in to, suggests co-founder of sugar-free ice cream producer Minioti, Anna Boletti. "Ice cream is a key sales driver in the frozen food category," she explains. "Retailers need to be stocking and promoting their ice cream ranges all year round as it presents a sales opportunity at any time of the year. They should also consider in-store tastings and promotions to make sure that the consumer knows they sell ice cream and what the choices are. Have a summer and winter range, as ice cream still sells well in the winter months."

### Foray into frozen

One retailer which has done exactly that is Ludlow Food Centre, which has just extended its homemade frozen section. Paul Hill, commercial manager at the company said, "When I joined the business in May 2016, we were just setting out on a new journey of development and innovation and we identified that our frozen food proposition was one of the areas that needed to be improved. There has been great growth in more specialist, homemade frozen produce and we saw this as an opportunity to give our customer greater choice and more flexibility with our ready meal range."

The food centre pays close attention to the fare that it develops for its loyal customers, with this ethos reflected in its frozen range. "We stand by our quality of product and the whole team were keen to maintain this as we moved from a fresh ready meal option to frozen," explains Paul. "The head of our production kitchen refined existing recipes, using the same high-quality ingredients. Produce is frozen at its peak, therefore the consumer gets a truly fresh experience on every occasion."

It's not just Ludlow's own produce which occupies space in their popular freezer section, says Paul. "We also have a great range of brought-in frozen producers from specially-selected suppliers. Together with our frozen vegetables, desserts and meats, we have doubled the capacity of this department, investing in new equipment while retaining the traditional feel of our farm shop heritage."

### Gourmet-to-go

When walking around Britain's high streets on the lookout for good food, you may have noticed the emergence of COOK shops and branded freezers in delis and farm shops. COOK supplies high-quality frozen food, handmade by chefs in its kitchens in Kent – the labels on the ready meals even state which chef prepared your meal. Chris Portwood, sales director, describes its output as: "food that contains the same ingredients and techniques that a good cook would use at home". He explains that this was the founding principle in 1997, and it still remains today. "We are coming up to our 20th birthday and now have over 85 shops, a thriving home delivery business and hundreds of concessions across the country. We are focused on reaching more communities that wish to buy COOK," he said. "Perhaps even more exciting is that we have registered as a B Corporation, which is a tough accreditation [to get] – it means we are serious about using our business as a force for good in society."

Chris believes that the future is bright for frozen food in independents, but there are still some issues that need to be solved first. He says, "I think generally most independent retailers are striving for a point of difference to the big multiples, and frozen is an area where they can buy in something different. It is therefore likely that shoppers will start to perceive frozen products as better quality and more 'local' than in multiple supermarkets, although the choice is still very limited, which is primarily a consequence of space restrictions in independent shops."

COOK prides itself on the consistent development of its ready meals, particularly in its entertaining and party range, while continuously supplying its popular everyday meals such as Beef Bourguignon, Lasagne al Forno, Steak & Red Wine Pie and Chicken Dijon. "I find these best-selling dishes the most exciting because they solve a real problem for our customers on a daily basis: how to feed yourself well without the hassle of cooking yourself," said Chris. "Our customers tend to have an emotional connection to us because our products give them back time, which is a precious commodity for them."



# KEEP IT **COOL**

As an industry with fresh, chilled and frozen food and drink at its heart, temperature controlled packaging is key to smooth-running operations. *Speciality Food* speaks to four of the sector's biggest players to find out what's new

A business doesn't enjoy the kind of reputation KB Packaging can boast without a long history of reliable products, strong customer support and an eye for the next new thing. Having now been in the business for over 30 years, the brand has grown to become one of the food and drink industry's go-to companies when it comes to temperature controlled packaging. *Speciality Food* catches up with Ed Pearse, sales manager at KB Packaging, to find out what's new for the forward-thinking business.



"We have a new own-brand range of KB Gel Ice Packs which are designed to keep products chilled for longer during transit," says Ed. "We have a range of reusable bag sizes available including celled sheets for shipping fish." KB Packaging recognises that every business has its own needs, and so "Bespoke bag sizes are available if the customer can commit to a certain quantity."

The product has been carefully and considerately developed in order to negate the common issues businesses come across when dealing with temperature controlled packaging. "The KB Gel Ice Packs do not require bagging, soaking, drying, separating or any further handling like other forms of coolant," explains Ed. "Our range is stored in a BRC-approved warehouse, too," so retailers and producers can be confident that the utmost care has been taken from the beginning to end of the process.

> "We're currently supplying the product to a number of customers including seafood suppliers, a cheese company, a health food company and a chemical company"

Food and drink businesses of all descriptions could benefit from working with KB Packaging on their chilled packaging needs, as the company's broad customer base attests. "We're currently supplying the product to a number of customers including seafood suppliers, a cheese company, a health food company and a chemical company," says Ed.

Of course, if it's other types of packaging you're looking for, KB Packaging has it covered. "Based in the Midlands," Ed says, "we provide a wide range of other packaging products too including pallet wrap, boxes, adhesive tape and strapping."


# CHILL OUT FOR LONGER

KB Packaging is delighted to introduce our own brand of KB Gel Ice Packs, an ice replacement system designed to keep products chilled for longer during transit. Like all the best ideas, KB Gel Ice Packs are a really simple concept. The product is a series of reusable gel ice packs that contain a specially formulated non toxic gel that's ready to be frozen and then used in application.

- Keeps products chilled for longer
- Weight and coolant comparison approx 2 times that of ice
- Lighter than ice - saves transport costs
- High grade, puncture-resistant film
- Conveniently stored in cartons ready to be frozen and reusable
- Clean with no mess; no seepage; no soaking required
- Available in the following sizes: 275g, 400g (2 fold), 500g, 555g (2 fold), 680g and 800g (3 fold). Bespoke sizes also available
- Stored in our BRC approved warehouse
- KB Gel Ice Packs can be used to keep fresh fish, cheeses, meats, pharmaceuticals and cut flowers chilled for longer










**Contact us on: 0115 944 1600 to request your free sample or to place your order with the KB Packaging sales team. For more information please visit www.gel-pack.com or email info@kbpackaging.com**

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Our offices in Ilkeston, Derbyshire are open Monday - Thursday 7:30am - 5pm, Friday 7:30am - 4:30pm.

PACKAGING
sharing the load
www.kbpackaging.com

## "RELIABLE, FAST AND FLEXIBLE"

### Martin Stansbie, commercial and operations manager at JB Packaging, talks us through the business's convenience-minded services

**PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK YOU DO**

JB Packaging is a manufacturer and supplier of temperature controlled packaging. Established in 1982, we understand the importance of reliable, fast and flexible service. Our distribution centres are based in Torpoint (Cornwall) and Livingston (Scotland). We stock a large range of EPS boxes, returnable/reusable EPP boxes together with many packaging sundries. Customers can order any quantity from just one item to a truckload. Our experienced team are always on hand to help with any packaging advice needed.

**HOW DO YOUR SERVICES BENEFIT INDEPENDENT FOOD RETAILERS?**

We have a wide range of products available from stock for quick delivery. Our online ordering process is very user friendly and customers are not restricted to purchase high volumes of products. Our customer services team are always on hand to assist with advice on choice of box and how much ice to include if necessary and any calls are free. With many food retailers now offering online shopping, the JB Packaging offers a solution to suit their needs. Of course keeping food hot is also an option with our EPS boxes, but for improved temperature control, our EPP boxes retain required temperatures for longer and are reusable, too. We offer customers a loyalty points scheme for future purchase discounts. If space is at a premium, our collapsible boxes are the ideal solution. Our huge range of products meets a wide variety of customer requirements – be it for storage, one journey packaging, multiple journeys or catering/ready meal deliveries.

**WHAT PACKAGING SUNDRIES DO YOU PROVIDE RETAILERS WITH?**

JB Packaging is a one-stop shop for all packaging needs. We supply cardboard boxes, ice sheets, bubble wrap, tape dispensers/tape, vacuum bags, box liners, film sheets, document pouches, carrier bags and polybags.

**WHAT'S THE VALUE IN USING REUSABLE BOXES RATHER THAN NON-REUSABLE?**

Wherever possible we recommend that customers select our range of Deluxe Thermo boxes which are made of EPP (expanded polypropylene) for multiple transit of foods or for storage. The insulation value of these EPP boxes cannot be beaten, and can be relied upon to maintain a stable temperature and to withstand repeat usage or being dropped. The material does not house germs and may be washed or steam cleaned for repeat use if necessary. Dependent upon use and handling, the boxes can last many years and therefore a cost saving can be made in the longer term.

**IS ECO-FRIENDLINESS IMPORTANT TO YOU?**

Sustainability and eco-friendliness are critical to JB Packaging and the success of the business. At every stage, from manufacture to disposal, our boxes offer outstanding environmental credentials. The styrene base of the materials itself is a by-product of oil refining but styrene also occurs throughout the natural world in strawberries, coffee beans, wine and beer. Being 98% air, our boxes are lightweight, minimising impacts in transportation. EPS material is non-toxic, chemically inert and fungi or bacteria cannot grow on it. Most expanded foam is recyclable where facilities exist.

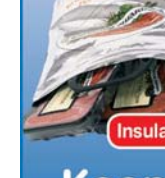
**HAVE YOU ANY NEW CHILLED PACKAGING OPTIONS IN THE PIPELINE?**

Here at JB Packaging we listen to our customers' requirements and constantly seek new products and applications. We will be adding more products to our offering over the next few months.
At JB Packaging we highly value our customers' opinions and feedback. We actively encourage reviews to help us to improve our service and product range, and to share their photographs of their products on our website. From the feedback we receive we have identified that our boxes are not only chosen for food but for a variety of uses such as hedgehog houses, pet live and frozen food, pharmaceuticals and even human organs in transit.

Further information can be found at jbpackaging.co.uk.


JUST ONE OF THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FROM JB PACKAGING

> "Dependent upon use and handling, the boxes can last many years and therefore a cost saving can be made in the longer term"



## "THE FUTURE OF CHILLED FOOD"

### Colin Rowland, business manager at Hydropac, sheds light on the brand's exciting plans for the coming year

**At Hydropac we have always been demonstrable innovators in our market sector, we just haven't always been the most successful at shouting about them. Having recently been appointed Hydropac's business manager, part of my responsibility is to change that. In 2017 Hydropac will be bringing many new innovative and exciting products to market. Alongside supplying to the food and retail industry where we have traditionally excelled, Hydropac shall be offering innovations to the Pharmaceutical and Biotech industries and boy are we going to shout about them!**

At Hydropac we are undergoing a drastic makeover and will be ready for reveal in March 2017. We are creating identifiable fresh new brands and products, relative to their market sectors and changing demographics.

One product area I believe will be an area for growth in 2017 is online frozen food deliveries. As it stands, many companies, whether large or small, shy away from this option. Why is that?

Currently, frozen food delivery requires refrigerated transport or dry ice to keep the products frozen for the 24hr+ delivery. Unfortunately this offering is all too often stalled by large







ATTRACTIVE CHILLED PACKAGING OPTIONS FROM HYDROPAC

minimum orders, short shelf life and the inherent hazards accompanying dry ice which have lead to reluctance for networks to carry it – but not any more! Hydropac have developed an ice pack for that!

Our new 'FreezePac' has a phase change temperature lower than any other ice pack produced in the UK, and is completely food safe. We have coloured it blue to distinguish it in the market and have engineered its phase change (freezing point) to -22˚C. FreezePac's characteristics will enable customers to send frozen food with confidence to new or existing clients, whilst maintaining the frozen cold chain. One of Hydropac's largest clients, specialising in organic food deliveries, have tested 'FreezePac' and are now about to roll out frozen food deliveries. Hydropac made that happen!

Furthermore, we shall be launching some new additions to our Thermal Postal Pocket range, with greater insulation and cushioning protection, to provide an all year round solution. These really are a great low cost product and what's more, if you wish to ship ambient food with fresh in the same box, or even fresh with frozen, our new Thermal Postal Pockets are ideal for product separation so you don't have to send products separately.

A third exciting innovation coming soon is 'DryPac'. Have you ever sent or received a food box to find the ice pack has burst or leaked? (Clearly you haven't yet been supplied by Hydropac!) Hydropac have addressed this concern directly to create an ice pack that – in the event it were to become damaged – does not leak or create a soggy mess of your food box. I believe this will inspire confidence in online shoppers and manufacturers alike.

Watch out for these and many more exciting additions to the range along with our makeover reveal in March, and catch us at The Farm Shop & Deli Show (Stand L88) in April.




PROMOTION

# SORBA-FREEZE

## Meeting the new challenges of chilled food transportation




**The growth of e-commerce and mail order has seen a dramatic growth in UK companies shipping their high quality food products across the country and beyond. Ensuring your product arrives in pristine condition is the number one priority, therefore guaranteed high quality performance and presentation are key factors in your choice of chilled packaging.**

Sorba-Freeze has been the trusted choice for chilled packaging solutions for speciality food suppliers worldwide for over 25 years thanks to its unbeatable ability to control temperatures during transportation at a substantially lower cost per unit than ice packs and flake ice.

The Sorba-Freeze polymer core is just one element of the triple action technology which delivers superior performance, keeping your products cooler for longer in transit, maintaining temperatures as low as -5°C for up to 48 hours. As you would expect, the Sorba-Freeze range is accredited with FDA 29 CRF and EEC 90/128 approval in relation to food contact usage. Its ultra-insulated thermal barrier helps to control the temperature whilst its high performance permeable layer means it is guaranteed never to leak, ensuring your product arrives in pristine condition.

The company continues to raise the bar in the chilled packaging market with the launch of its upgraded products, which now feature an additional 50% of its unique polymer core to enhance performance even further.

Bruce Melrose, Sorba-Freeze's production manager says, "A bespoke enquiry can be received AM, produced to our exacting standards PM and despatched the same day. Having such flexibility to respond to customer requirements allows delivery of an unrivalled service to customers."

The standard stock range of Sorba-Freeze not only delivers a lower cost per unit solution over ice packs and flake ice but has the additional benefit of minimal storage. One box is equivalent to a full pallet of hydrated product, thus ensuring your valuable floor space is free for production rather than storage! Responding to continual enquiries from its clients, Sorba-Freeze recently launched a range of high performance insulated boxes, trays and envelopes to optimise the Sorba-Freeze performance. The white kraft stock range is complimented by a bespoke full colour print offer to ensure customer brand awareness is maximised.

Michelle Ottolini, Sorba-Freeze general manager says, "Sorba-Freeze has long provided temperature control mechanisms for our extensive client portfolio, allowing them to ship their food products with confidence. A solutions-based approach is a key focus for Sorba-Freeze. Clients can now take advantage of our consultancy service advising on the optimal packaging solutions for their products.

"The launch of the range of boxes and envelopes is just the first of many new product developments we are looking to introduce in the near future as we work closely with our clients to understand the challenges they face and develop solutions to overcome them."

Sorba-Freeze currently supply a number of high calibre clients across various speciality sectors, all of whom demand their product arrives with their customer in the same pristine condition it left their warehouse.

Sorba-Freeze has delivered this exacting result over the last 25 years and looks forward to helping clients meet the challenges generated by increasing consumer demands.

**For more information visit sorbafreeze.com.**



COTSWOLD FAYRE*

-EST 1999-

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cotswoldfayre.co.uk

# Last Words

The final word on fine food

## Jimmy Doherty

### "Bring on 2017!"



2017 has got off to a flying start at Jimmy's Farm. January started with a bang when New Years' Day was rung in with a sell-out event in our restaurant following a bumper Christmas season of parties and private functions.

Despite the cold spells, the Farm Park remains a destination for families who want to get out and about and run off some energy during the winter months.

The addition of our Woodland Timewalk makes for extra adventure. Lifesize replicas of dinosaurs and extinct ancient creatures who would have roamed the British countryside are dotted around the trail and kids of all ages are loving it!

It doesn't stop there; we welcomed a new addition to our animal collection – a family of coatis. These raccoon-type creatures are happily living in a brand new enclosure. They're incredibly friendly and fantastic to watch climbing around the trees, foraging for food we've hidden and playing amongst the branches.

The feedback to them has been fantastic and it's so exciting to know that people are enjoying our hard work as much as we are.

The best part is, we plan to add even more to our collection throughout the year, so we're constantly adding to our offering.

Being a year-round attraction, we ensure we provide as much as we can for a full visitor experience. After your stomp around the Farm Park, the next natural stop off in the visit is to the restaurant. We attract everyone from families with young children to business lunches.

Our head chef has written a daily changing menu, which not only manages to cater for our broad visitor base but also showcases and is true to our ethos.

I started the Farm all those years ago to provide high welfare, high quality free-range meat, whilst conserving rare-breeds. We still do that and present it in the best possible way. You can sit in our beautifully restored barn having walked around the farm, metres from where your plate of produce is from. Then you can walk through our farm shop and buy our handmade sausages to take home with you.

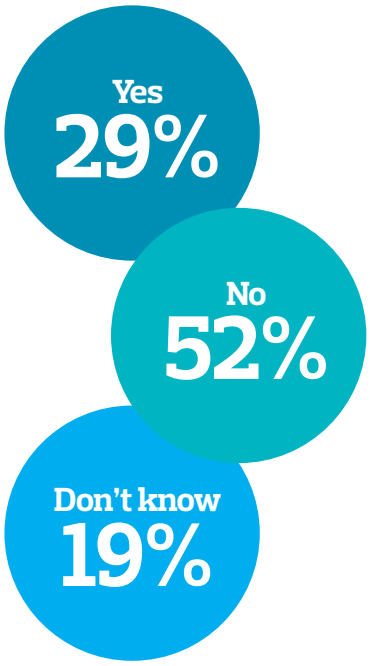
Stopping off in our newly relaunched Toy & Sweet shop is an added bonus for the younger members of the family. It's all about providing that end to end experience.

Spring is just weeks away and is always really exciting. We have more big plans for this year and we can't wait to get stuck in. Bring on 2017!

> "Being a year-round attraction, we ensure we provide as much as we can for a full visitor experience. It's all about providing that end to end experience"

## TWITTER POLL

**Will the Trump Presidency affect our industry?**




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

**Deputy Editor**
james Fell, 01206 505971
james.fell@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 Manager**
Aaron Northcott 01206 505934
aaron.northcott@aceville.co.uk

**Account Manager**
Samantha Giles 01206 500240
samantha.giles@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

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- Craft Drinks
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# SPECIALITY BITES

## Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre



Many people over a certain age have grown up in a very isolating business environment. An adversarial way of viewing other companies, whether they be suppliers, competitors or customers is their default setting. Whether this was a function of many growing up in the modernistic decades of the 60s,70s and 80s rather than the current post-modern age, I don't know.

One factor that has had a definite influence has been too many male-dominated boardrooms. Women tend to be less adversarial and more collaborative in the way they work internally and externally, and we men still have a lot to learn. (If you don't believe me, look at groups of children playing together. Boys tend to be competing and girls working together.)

I have spent a little time recently watching Simon Sinek's presentations on YouTube. I can thoroughly recommend this guy – he talks a lot of sense. Although I haven't watched it yet, one of his pieces on collaboration is the most viewed on YouTube. No doubt there is a new way of doing things, and I recommend we all move in this direction at pain of being left behind in the business world.

As a wholesaler, collaboration is essential to our business model. We collaborate with both customers and suppliers to achieve, hopefully, a 'win-win' for both. This can work tremendously well where suppliers "get it," but can cause conflict where they simply don't.

> "Which business model do you follow, collaboration or isolation?"

Whether people are naturally able to collaborate or not does depend, to some extent, on their personal background. Sorry to become all psychological on you, but I have studied a little psychology, and it is very clear to me that if we are let down as children, it is harder for us to trust people as adults. Even those that are wronged as adults will find to harder to trust in their later life. These barriers are by no means insurmountable, but if we have been let down or "stitched up", it does require an active choice against our natural inclination to be able to trust again.

And trust is absolutely the key to working collaboratively. Without trust, there is no collaboration. Sorry to be dogmatic here, but any collaborative working requires letting go. Control freaks need not apply! Perhaps this is why we see far less collaboration amongst the baby-boomers and Generation Xers. These generations tended to produce highly motivated entrepreneurs, who ran their own businesses partly because they don't want to be told to do by others: "I am my own man!" Decisions by consensus do not come naturally to these people, nor does working in partnership with others.

However, there is a new generation for whom collaboration is the norm. Working as a lone, adversarial lone ranger is weird for them. Not all millennial traits should be re-enforced within the workplace, but this is one that certainly should.

Look forward to working collaboratively with you in 2017!

# 5 MINUTES WITH...

# GRAHAM JOHNSTON

## Owner of Smoky Brae




**WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T WORKING IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?**
I would be a designer – I went to art school and studied 3D Design. It was great fun! I spent four years making things in the workshops and am always creating new products in my small workshop, even today. I have a foodie range that I may launch under the Smoky Brae brand when I find the time.

**WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?**
Working in a supermarket stacking shelves with lots of wonderful products; the tins trolley was the worst, it was stacked ridiculously high and weighed a tonne... I'm not sure if it fully complied with Health & Safety!

**WHAT INSPIRES YOU?**
Life does – family, friends, experiences, travel, beliefs, design, my love of food. I also love business, although it is unbelievably challenging. Starting a food business has been the hardest thing I have ever done.

**WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?**
Working as a pot washer in a hospital canteen one summer during university.

**DO YOU LIKE TO COOK?**
I absolutely love it, when I have the time. I love experimenting and learning to cook new things but hate cooking in a rush.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?**
Meeting consumers interested in my products at fairs. I also love designing, making and continually developing new equipment for my smoke house.

**AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?**
Cleaning equipment between smokes; I did my time as a pot washer.

**TEA OR COFFEE?**
Always coffee. I also love red grape Shloer – a weird bad habit.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SNACK?**
I am a sucker for crisps.

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?**
Ooh that is a hard one, I love so many foods... Is it terrible to say a good kebab?

**WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?**
Smoke it OR don't be an idiot – changed my life.

**WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?**
Hmmm, so many. All funnily enough in Japan. Canned bread, green tea ice cream, wasabi ice cream, barbecued oysters with cheese. The worst was raw translucent squid at 8am in Tokyo's fish market, Tsukiji.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?**
The Hungry Caterpillar – I have kids, and it allows me to be one too!

**SWEET OR SAVOURY?**
Savoury every time, until I have a massive craving for a refrigerated Dairy Milk!

# DIARY DATES

## February

**5th–9th**
SPRING FAIR
NEC, Birmingham
**springfair.com**

**8th–9th**
THE SOURCE TRADE SHOW
Westpoint, Exeter
**thesourcetradeshow.co.uk**

**15th–18th**
BIOFACH
Nuremberg
**biofach.de**

**22nd–23rd**
CASUAL DINING
Business Design Centre, London
**casualdiningshow.co.uk**

**26th–28th**
FARMA CONFERENCE
Bristol
**farma.org.uk**

**26th–2nd**
GULFOOD
World Trade Centre, Dubai
**gulfood.com**

**27th–12th**
FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
Nationwide
**fairtrade.org.uk**

## March

**11th–12th**
ALLERGY & FREE FROM SHOW SCOTLAND
SECC, Glasgow
**allergyshow.co.uk**

**14th–15th**
HOTEL & CATERING SHOW
Bournemouth International Centre
**hotelcateringretailshow.co.uk**

**19th–22nd**
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ExCeL, London
**ife.co.uk**

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2017

# DRINKS BUYER

MAGAZINE

From the publishers of SPECIALITY FOOD

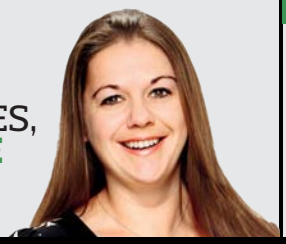



## WAY BEYOND THE ORDINARY

### The Sweet Potato Spirit Company


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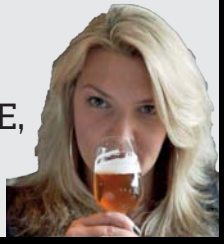
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MELISSA COLE, BEER SOMMELIER
P. 12





# WELCOME TO DRINKS BUYER



Welcome to the second edition of *Drinks Buyer*, an exclusive look at the world of premium soft and alcoholic drinks brought to you by the makers of *Speciality Food Magazine*.

We've really enjoyed putting this publication together, not least because it's allowed us to delve into the ever-exciting world of beverages and see for ourselves just how dynamic this industry is. Innovation is everywhere in the drinks market – you don't have to look far to see it – and this is great news for independent retailers. Not only do you have a customer base eager to discover what's new via your establishment, but you have a relatively flexible business model which allows you to trial products without too much of a headache.

While trends are constantly changing the sector – every year seems to bring with it a new 'in' drink – there are some things which will always be attractive to the retailers and consumers of fine wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks. Beverages with a story will always go down well, and no product will last long without true point of difference, but of number one importance is quality. All of the drinks we've chosen to highlight in this publication bring these three elements together with aplomb, and I can proudly say that every single one is well worth a space on your shelves. From the finest quality soft drinks and mixers from the likes of Folkington's and Fentimans to innovative spirits from The Sweet Potato Spirit Company and Devon Distillery, you'll find plenty of products to quench your thirst for the latest and greatest tipples to hit our industry.

Whether you're looking to boost your craft beer knowledge, guarantee your wine selection is top notch, hold events, perfect your drinks displays, learn how to pair and upsell, or even just get a license to sell alcohol, we've got all you need within these pages thanks to our comprehensive articles.

We also hear from some of the biggest names in the industry, from star beer sommelier Melissa Cole to Berry Bros. & Rudd and Waitrose, all of whom share their expertise on this evolving market.

Holly

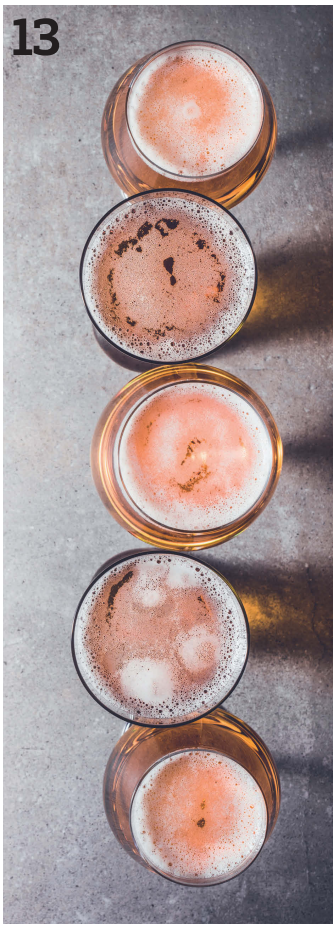
holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk










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The beer sommelier, industry spokesperson and all-round hop head shares her views on this booming market


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

**Deputy Editor**
James Fell 01206 505971
james.fell@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 Manager**
Aaron Northcott 01206 505934
aaron.northcott@aceville.co.uk

**Account Manager**
Samantha Giles 01206 505240
samantha.giles@aceville.co.uk

**Art Director**
Lee Whiteford
lwhiteford@btconnect.com

**Accounts**
Sue Carr 01206 505903

**Subscriptions**
01293 312188
specialityfood@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

**Publisher**
Helen Tudor 01206 505970

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



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# TASTING NOTES

*Quence your thirst for the next trends to influence the industry with our forecast for 2017*

## Heard it through the grapevine

**What's next in the world of wine? We've convened with connoisseurs and industry insiders to predict emerging trends:**

### WHITES FROM RED REGIONS

Bibendum recently stated that 2017 will see a rise in popularity of white wines from French regions recognised for their red wine output. "We'll see more white Rhônes, white Bordeaux and white Beaujolais hitting lists," predicts the wine supplier. "We're also seeing a massive growth for Spanish Tempranillo, showing very positive brand recognition for the UK's favourite wine region, which means this trend has the potential to stretch to white Rioja. There are a growing number of white Riojas appearing on wine lists and it is a style that can succeed at all price points. A bold prediction maybe, but definitely one to watch."



### SPANISH AND ITALIAN WHITES

Anne Jones, drinks expert at Waitrose, predicts that rosé, Spanish white wines such as Albariño and 'other' Italian whites, such as Gavi or Pecorino will see slow and steady growth. "I'm excited about Italian sparkling wines such as Franciacorta and Pignoletto (a vibrant, purple-coloured, dry Lambrusco)," she says. "I'm also enjoying seeing increasingly high-quality wines available, as well as grower Champagnes slowly making their mark in the wider market."

### SPARKLING REDS

Drinkers of the UK aren't turning their backs on Prosecco anytime soon, but Bibendum says that as on-trade fizz volume growth is being driven by lower prices, outlets are diversifying to offer customers a taste of something different when it comes to the sparkling stuff. "Alternative sparkling is already an established trend," it explains. "But we're now seeing this expand to include sparkling red and Lambrusco – one in five of the lists analysed in Mode A/W 2016 contained at least one sparkling red wine."

### PORTUGESE WINES

Wine retailer Majestic celebrated its "biggest ever Christmas" after its 10-week festive sales were up more than 15%. Amongst its best-sellers were Portuguese bottles, which were up 160%, trumping the best-selling red wines that it sells and eclipsing Spain's Rioja red wine which once dominated Majestic's sales. Many customers were said to have rushed to the shops to purchase the 2012 vintage of Porta 6, a Tinta Roriz, Castelão and Touriga Nacional blend from Lisbon, recommended by Susie Barrie on BBC's *Saturday Kitchen*. James Martin deemed it one of the best red wines he had tasted in the 10 years that he helmed the show.

### WINE IN CANS

Perhaps taking a leaf out of the flourishing craft beer industry's book, some wineries are now selling their wines in cans. In fact, canned wine sales in the US more than doubled in sales in the 52 weeks ending 18th June 2016, according to data from Nielsen. Canned sparkling wines have been available for a few years, but Oregon's Union Wine Company has started selling its Underworld Pinot Noirs in self-serve cans. Just like with the craft beer phenomenon, we can expect this trend to make its way over the Atlantic and settle on these shores soon.

## Sipping suggestions

**Gin celebrated a successful 2016, and this momentum looks set to continue into 2017, but what about the other spirits that are piquing drink aficionados' interests? We share the skinny on spirits with assistance from some of the industry's top experts:**

### COFFEE LIQUEUR

Mr Black Cold Press Coffee Liqueur is set for big things in 2017. Made at a small Australian distillery from single-origin Arabica coffee beans from Ethiopia, Brazil and Papua New Guinea, a cold extraction process creates a 'full-flavoured' coffee that is then blended with grain spirit to allow the coffee taste to shine through. Sound delicious? You're not the the only one to think so; The Whisky Exchange's Dawn Davies called it her "Christmas product of the year" at a recent spirits trends event.

### TAIWANESE WHISKY

The small East Asian country is giving Japan and Scotland a run for their money these days, most notably thanks to the whisky produced by the Yilan-based Kavalan Distillery. The maker's creations are picking up some huge accolades, with its Solist Amontillado Sherry Single Cask Strength scooping the World's Best Single Malt Whisky award at the World Whiskies Awards 2016 – high praise indeed!

### PREMIUM BOURBON

Waitrose's head of beers, wines and spirits buying, Peirpaolo Petrassi, mentioned in the premium supermarket's Food & Drink Report 2016 that, "versatile and flavoursome bourbons from niche distilleries are enjoying strong sales." Woodford Reserve is a variety that bourbon enthusiasts insist is the perfect gateway option for whiskey novices, as well as Kentucky's Makers Mark.

> "There are a growing number of white Riojas appearing on wine lists - it is a style that can succeed at all price points"

## Johnny Roberts of Berry Bros. & Rudd on why it's an exciting time for the spirits category



"We are living in a seminal moment for the spirits industry; the power of social media has enabled small brands to reach bigger audiences, and in turn those consumers demand to know more about the goods in which they invest their hard–earned cash. While distribution strength will always be hugely effective for large companies, social media has shifted some of the balance of power and influence back to the consumer and the trade. For that reason, it's imperative that distilleries and producers deliver on the promises in their stories – if their story is about independence and regional product, then that is what they must deliver. Gin is clearly a category in rude health and I expect that trend to continue."

## WHAT'S BREWING?

**Thought craft beer was a flash in the pan? Think again. We investigate the newest trends to emerge from the brewing sector:**

### JUICY IPAS

Breweries are paring back the hard-hitting nature of highly-hopped IPAs by including a host of different tropical juices. Take BrewDog's Elvis Juice which was launched last year – its inclusion of grapefruit peel creates a pleasantly-balanced brew.

Following suit, Samuel Adams has just launched a Rebel Juiced IPA, which features a satisfying helping of melon juice.

### CRAFT LAGERS

Another trend that has become prevalent, perhaps due to consumers becoming a little disenfranchised with the super-charged flavour and aromas of IPAs, is the quest for the perfect lager. Many experts have predicted that every year gone by would be the one for lager, but most are determined that increasing amounts of consumers are actively seeking the likes of Helles and Pilsners, and breweries are taking notice.

### SMOKY BEERS

More and more smoked beers are popping up in pubs and bars. Scotch ale is a style that is increasing in popularity, with a handful of breweries releasing a few variations over the last couple of months. Smoked porters are also very popular right now, which could be indicative of drinkers craving more traditional, British-originating and darker ales.

## TEETOTAL TIPPLES

**The latest alcohol-free beverages don't hold back when it comes to innovation. We find out which drinks are set for big things in 2017:**

### ALCOHOL-FREE SPIRIT

Peirpaolo Petrassi pointed out in the Waitrose Food & Drink Report 2016 that distilled alcohol-free spirit Seedlip is one to keep on our radars. Made with a mixture of botanicals like lemon, cardamom and allspice, Petrassi notes that demands for producers like this are "niche, but growing". It makes for a great talking-point with customers looking for an interesting non-alcoholic option.

### CACTUS WATER

We've witnessed the rise of coconut, birch and maple water, so perhaps it was inevitable that somebody would tap into the succulence of the cactus to give consumers their next healthy hydration fix. The berry-tasting prickly pear drink is a low-sugar alternative to other juices, claims Waitrose.

### MATCHA GREEN TEA

The vibrant green-coloured ingredient hailing from Japan has been proving very popular with consumers over the last few years, especially health and fitness fans. Innovation in this category is developing at a rapid pace, and many soft drinks manufacturers are looking to concoct beverages with it included, for example matcha-based iced tea.

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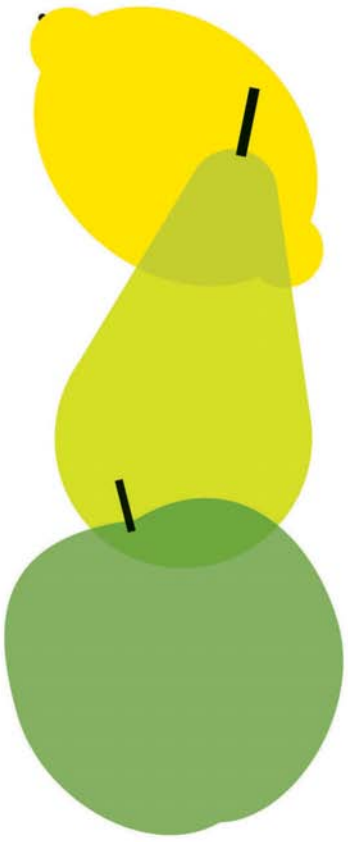
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# HOW TO…

## GET AN ALCOHOL LICENCE

If you have got your sights set on selling alcohol in your shop, there is a whole host of measures that need to be implemented before you ring that first bottle through your till. To state that it would be wise not to launch straight into selling alcohol without your local authority's permission is to put it lightly. The government can take your licence away from you if it is not used correctly, so it is best to be vigilant in your practices. Here is our rough guide to help you better understand the process:

### Personal Licence

• In order to sell alcohol from your premises, either you or a member of your staff must hold a valid personal licence.

• To apply, the applicant must be over 18 and have passed a licensing qualification, for example a BII Level II examination certificate.

• If the owner of an establishment holds a personal licence both they and their staff are authorised to sell alcohol, but the owner may lose their licence if the correct protocol is not adhered to by staff.

### Premises Licence

• A premises licence authorises any premises to sell alcohol (defined in the Licensing Act 2003 as any place or part of a premises, vehicle, vessel or moveable structure).

• You can apply online if your council approves electronic applications; there are separate processes for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

• Planning consent and a personal licence must be obtained before applying for a premises licence.

### Designated Premises Supervisor

• Any premises which sells alcohol must have a designated premises supervisor. This is the member of staff who holds responsibility for the running of the operation, who acts as the contact for the local government and police, and is named in the operating schedule which will need to be completed while applying for a premises licence. A DPS must hold a personal licence and have been nominated by the premises licence holder for the role.

• To apply for a licence, a completed application form must be sent to your local council with the fee; some types of applications may require copies of the form to be sent to other 'responsible authorities'. These include the police, Fire Authority, Trading Standards, Child Protection, Town and County Planning Department and the Environmental Health department.

### New Measures

• From 1st April 2017, businesses that sell alcohol to the public will need to ensure that the UK wholesalers that they purchase alcohol from have been approved by HMRC.

• Retailers will need to check the wholesaler's Unique Registration Number against the HMRC's online database.

• If a business is found to have bought alcohol from an unapproved wholesaler, they may be penalised or could even face criminal prosecution.

Further reading: **gov.uk/guidance/alcohol-licensing**

## DISPLAY DRINKS



It is all well and good sourcing superlative bottles of alcohol, but if they are not well-positioned in your retail space, they can be tough to shift. Your retail display space needs to be as affective as your best salesperson, but should also incorporate some canny visual marketing techniques in the process.

The BRIX Modular Display system is a well-received unit that drink retailers should consider. It comprises of four basic components and requires no tools to construct - making it ideal for shops with minimal display space. It also allows retailers to construct their own unique shelving, central floor displays, merchandising hot spots and more, with the ability to reform it whenever they please.

Kate Jackson, marketing manager at WBC, a supplier of packaging and display items describes BRIX as: "an off-the-shelf solution with infinite configuration possibilities - there really is something to suit all spaces, sizes and layouts."

Consistent rotation of products can really work in your favour. Seasonal, holiday and promotional items can be guilty of only having a limited shelf life, so showcasing your newest stock first can freshen things up, especially for your regular customers.

Displaying additional items that complement the product you're wishing to push can be a nice touch. For example, if you are aiming to promote gin, then surrounding it with tonic waters and cocktail mixers can help to boost sales and create an eye-catching display.

Wooden retail display stands are a handy unit to opt for, as you can find ones that come specially designed for bottles of all shapes and sizes. They typically come flat-packed for ease of storage and can be quickly assembled as and when space or season demands.

A thoughtful approach to packaging can also go a long way with your customers. Most shoppers relish the attention and camaraderie that a specialised gift packaging service can offer. Unique and characterful boxes and packaging show that you operate a store that has the shoppers' intentions in mind, whether they are picking up an item for a gift or wish to treat themselves to a product with extra bells and whistles. There are numerous ways retailers can cater to this demand. "Our new pine-wooden bottle boxes with smart, sliding lids have been fire-branded with different messages – they are the go-to gift packaging when it comes to gifting drinks," Kate explains. "They are an impressive alternative to the traditional tissue paper or bottle bagged gift-wrap look, and only take seconds to create. The new designs printed with 'WITH LOVE' are ideal for Valentine's Day sales."





## PAIR AND UPSELL

Every retailer understands the importance of cross-selling and upselling their products. The advantages are obvious; they can multiply sales swiftly and effectively. If you are a specialist drinks seller, the chances are your customers chose to visit your shop because they are looking for a particular bottle of drink for an event or social occasion. Delis, farm shops et al are often overlooked in favour of specialist drink retailers, so this is where pairing and upselling comes into its own.

First decipher what combinations work, then sell according to your findings. The researching phase can act as a rewarding way to train staff and to bolster their knowledge of your stock. Undertaking mock selling situations where staff share their recommendations can be a useful exercise and can present you with the chance to constructively critique their pairing suggestions.

Cheese is a popular and well-trodden area in the world of alcohol pairing, and isn't considered too daunting a subject for casual food shop browsers. A great way to sing the praises of a particular beer is to select a cheese that it works well with, and offer an exclusive deal which combines the two.

Supplying tasting notes can go a long way with customers, too – these snippets of information make for great dinner party conversation.

Darker ales like porters and stouts make a delectable double act with a bold blue cheeses, and the spicy notes of wheat beers work spectacularly in tandem with flavoursome washed rind cheeses. Washed rind pairs nicely with cider, too, as does a farmhouse Cheddar.

Cross and upselling do need to be approached with care and tact, though. It makes no sense to make a customer feel pressurised – it could dissuade them from visiting your business in the future. A quick scan of the items that they are purchasing and thinking on your feet is generally a foolproof tactic to employ. Are they purchasing cheese and wine? Then a suitable chutney or crispbread is just a stone's throw away. Picking up some French charcuterie? Then explain how a Beaujolais can complement its flavour profiles. Flavour combinations can be subjective, so weaving together the similarities in background stories of products (they're revered as a classic combination in their homeland, for example) can capture your customer's attention in a potentially profitable way.

> "Supplying tasting notes can go a long way with customers, too – these snippets of information make for great dinner party conversation"

## HOST AN EVENT

When it comes to offering jaw-droppingly low deals and a broad range of booze, it's fair to say that most multiples are tough to compete with. This is an area they monopolise and it would be quite the uphill battle to try to rival them in those respects. In the drinks arena however, quality can win out over price.

It is well-documented that the general public is becoming more discerning in their drinking choices, with gin enjoying an astonishingly successful 2016 due to the artisanal and creative spirits at the forefront of the movement, and craft beer doesn't look like it will be encountering a drinker drought any time soon either.

Your varied range and fine foods makes your shop well-equipped to offer pairing options. Your arsenal of artisanal goods gives you the perfect platform to organise drink events – you could even group the food and drink discussed into a hamper for attendees to purchase at the end of the evening.

A hugely popular event is the ubiquitous wine and cheese evening, however beer events, regionally-focused nights and producer-hosted evenings are just a few examples of events that have proved successful for businesses just like yours.

Events are great ways to gain extra revenue while cementing a strong bond with your food and drink-loving customers. A sense of community is a vital factor in most adored eateries, and establishing and nurturing that bond by hosting events can be a valuable asset.



### David Greenman on Arch House Deli's wine and cheese events:



We started our wine and cheese events five or six years ago initially to support some of the local businesses we were supplying cheese to. They went down well, so we put on a few events. This has since snowballed and we now hold over 25 events a year. They add a much-needed revenue stream and also are fairly profitable, as they require minimal staffing and utilise the building when it would otherwise be empty.

Linked to attending one of our events, we provide a discount on cheese and wine for a month. They have also helped to boost our reputation cheese-wise, and led to a boost in cheese sales at Christmas as well.

### Candice Fonseca, proprietor of Liverpool's Delifonseca, on drink events:



We have monthly wine events in the bar of our city centre restaurant. It's become a regular feature where we have a producer or supplier in to talk about a range of wines, which we serve paired with our four tapas-sized courses of food. We also host the occasional wine night at Delifonsesca Dockside and would like to do more, but we are limited by its space and size.

We enjoy hosting drinks events and it certainly reinforces our brand, food and drink knowledge and passion. As a by-product, they have also attracted a corporate market who have booked the same events privately.

As we have a number of suppliers on board, it is a great opportunity for the staff to learn more. In fact, we often tack on staff training before the event starts.

We continue to receive great feedback following our events. We price them very competitively on a weekday and have a lot of regulars that keep coming back. Sometimes our guests also buy wine on the night. Both the wine tasting nights and our butchery masterclasses have been bought as gifts for people.

We promote all events via our website, social media, newsletters and local PR. However, really the staff selling them are the key to getting bums on seats.



# FROM VINEYARD TO POCKET

*Complementing your fine food offering with a considered wine selection is a simple way to up your bottom line, says Lucy Talbot*

Between supermarkets, major wine retailers and independent wine shops all vying for market share, one could be forgiven for not wanting to join the fray of the UK wine trade. There's so much on offer already, with all the requisite information and price points available, that the idea of finding a new niche in wine to offer consumers can be daunting.

However, fine food retailers can definitely play on this market saturation to their advantage. When faced with the vast wine racks in supermarkets, for example, even customers who take their time to peruse the bottles on offer will gravitate to specific areas: what will fit their dinner, budget and taste? What have they enjoyed before? Wine is one of those products that we tend to repeat purchase, especially if it's part of the weekly shop. Whilst shops with a wide range can provide something for everyone, specialised food retailers could enter the game by selling only the wines that best fit the foods they stock and the story they tell.

## Personalised approach

Specialised food purveyors largely fit one of two categories: having a clear geographical or cultural focus; or sourcing high-quality, unique products for gourmand shoppers. There are various approaches that retailers can take to create narratives between the wine and food they offer.

In the case of culturally specific food purveyors, one might think that a small selection of wine chosen to match the food should directly reflect its provenance, for example a Sicilian deli stocking Sicilian wine – perhaps grown in the same villages where the cheese is made.

Crossing cultures in wine and food matching also allows retailers to be creative and really think about what a small portfolio, maybe of just five wines, says about them and their food. They might stock five wines designed to each fit a different flavour profile: dry white, rich white, tannic and salty orange, medium-bodied red, and full-bodied red. They can discuss how best to match these wines to the various ingredients they sell, and ask customers about their regular habits when it comes to wine and drinks with dinner. Or, they could decide on the range the other way round: think about what they'd like to drink with each of their hero food products, and construct a balanced list based on these tenets.

The second category of retailers, those such as The Food Company, who source interesting and unique products from all over the world, can take the same approach to wines (looking for something a little different and very special), as long as they fulfil our expectations first, according to Robert Mathias, fine wine buyer for Conviviality Group PLC. His three golden rules for fine food retailers designing a select wine portfolio are: price point, meeting expectations, and showcasing expertise. Robert believes that even a select wine offering must show some knowledge of British wine tastes: you expect to see a good Champagne, Prosecco, Claret with age, Rioja, and white and red Burgundies in a wine shop, and by the same vein at least a couple of bottles in a small portfolio should tick the tried, tested and respected box before more creative 'gems' are sought out. He believes that customers will have more faith in a portfolio that includes some quality, traditional bottles.

## Look beyond the obvious

Often, one can find a bargain in wines grown just at the other end of the vineyard from famous (and therefore expensive) counterparts. In the case of Bordeaux, this may mean stocking Lalande de Pomerol; wine lovers will recognise that this is made next to some of the best Bordeaux wine, and will be pleasantly surprised at the lower price. Another way of enjoying proximity to top-end fine wines is looking for declassified options, as some fine wine categories have volume limits on them and top winemakers must use up their grapes or sell off their remaining stock under lesser labels. Robert stresses the importance of a good price when stocking wine in a shop that primarily deals in fine food. Shoppers may well be tempted or persuaded into buying the wines stocked for the purpose of maximum enjoyment of the food, but the prices must be competitive in order to gain customer trust and encourage repurchasing.

Robert recommends supporting wine cooperatives to strengthen the wine narrative. Plenty of wines are made in interesting ways, and more and more can be classed as sustainable, organic, or biodynamic. Adding a human element to this story is a great USP, especially if the wine is tasty (at the end of the day, this is always the most important factor). Throughout Europe and the Old World, there are wine cooperatives that go back tens of generations and can be relied upon to deliver good wine most years (weather permitting!). Robert's guidance here is to start with better-known regions with good cooperatives, such as South-West France, the Languedoc, Alsace, the Mosel Valley, and Central and Southern Italy.

“Crossing cultures in wine and food matching allows retailers to be creative and really think about what a small portfolio, maybe of just five wines, says about them and their food”

# SPIRIT OF DISTINCTION

*Sweet potato? Used to make a spirit? Yes, The Sweet Potato Spirit Company went there. Pairing the much-loved ingredient with artisan distilling has proved an immediate hit, says founding director Garry Smith*




The majority of your customers will come to your shop as they want their imaginations tingled by products that stray from the norm. The Sweet Potato Spirit Company's eclectic range of drinks are perfectly positioned to accommodate this shopping experience. The concept alone is likely to pique interest, and everything from the label design to the vibrantly-coloured appearance of the liquid is capable of eliciting intrigue.

It was that exact sense of curiosity that willed the company's founder, Garry Smith, to embark on the gastronomical journey to produce a spirit made from a rather unlikely ingredient, the humble sweet potato. With sweet potatoes being a crop that grew in abundance in Garry's Scott Farms base – he also heads up a popular sweet potato crisp brand – he was perfectly equipped to start the experimentation process.

The story behind The Sweet Potato Spirit Company is one of genuine innovation, and can capture your customers' imaginations in a heartbeat. This makes their products ideal for independent retailers to stock because the shoppers at these establishments want to discover unique stories – something that the multiples just can't capture.

If you run a fine food retail business, an alcoholic beverage that utilises produce that your customers might be visiting your shop for will most likely resonate with them immediately; The Sweet Potato Spirit Company's farmyard origins is a very strong selling point.

As are its boundary-pushing credentials. Those that are into their spirits and are constantly on the lookout for experimental flavours, ingredients and distilling methods will be impressed with the spirits' complex characteristics. Providing signage with tasting notes will go a long way with customers, as it's fairly likely that they won't have come across something similar before. Of course, a sampling section for the spirits will be a great way for your customers to truly experience the product – close management will be necessary before putting this idea into practice, though, as they're sure to be very popular!

> "Every step of the process is honed to suit the particular drink we are creating, with the singular aim of producing an exceptionally enjoyable drinking experience for our consumers"



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*"It's not just about the traditional products, as good as they are, but there are some really interesting ones here and it does seem incredibly diverse - I think that's the key. The joy of it is you can wander round, which is really helpful, because actually it'll take you to areas that you wouldn't normally go."*

**Nigel Barden, Food & Drink Critic & Journalist**

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## BOTTLES IN BRIEF

### SWEET POTATO PLUM GIN

Throw the sloes away and embark upon a truly sumptuous journey of rich prunus notes and the finesse of a world-class crafted gin. Gorgeous simply over ice, lovely in your favourite Champagne or Prosecco, or decant into the hipflask for a seasonal hack.

### SWEET POTATO SPICED RUM

Fine sugar cane molasses entwine with the best sweet potatoes offering smoothness and intensity in equal measure. Maybe the most creative-sounding drink out there, it boasts flavours of ginger, treacle and lemon blossom which are balanced by cherry, peach and warm spices and a cracked caramel to finish.

### SWEET POTATO TOFFEE APPLE MOONSHINE

Fresh creme brulee with crisp apple on the nose, descending into rich buttery caramel and smooth brandied and candied apple; ending with a lingering apricot-peach sweetness.

### SWEET POTATO RASPBERRY LIQEUER

The smoothness from the potatoes marries the sharpness of the raspberries, while a perfume of violet petals gives way to a light fruit sugar rush and gentle acidic hit to finish.

## *Drinks Buyer* talks to Garry Smith about the past, present and future of The Sweet Potato Spirit Company:

### "CURIOUS BEGINNINGS"

The Sweet Potato Spirit Company was born as a consequence of a chance conversation in a breakfast eatery in North Carolina during a visit to our farm, Scott Farms. Whilst taking our orders, the waitress asked: "I know that you can make some types of spirits from potatoes, but can you make them from sweet potatoes?" A question that which, at the time, we had no answer to, but as an avid spirit enthusiast my curiosity was sparked. There began an exciting journey of experimentation and discovery which has ultimately led to our current multi-award-winning range of sweet potato spirits and liqueurs.

### "FARMYARD PROVENANCE"

We use Scott Farms sweet potatoes exclusively in all of our range, giving us seed-to-bottle provenance with our principal ingredient. We wanted to create a range that provided a taste sensation well beyond the ordinary that alone shaped our decision to only use natural ingredients. Any food enthusiast knows only too well how marked the difference in taste between natural and artificial is, so why put up with second best with your spirits?

### "REAP THE REWARDS"

Since our launch we have won The World Food Innovation Award 2016 for Best New Artisan Beverage for the range and we have won medals in no less than three highly respected World Spirit Competitions, including the San Francisco World Spirit Competition, International Wine & Spirits Competition and World Spirits Awards.

Our awards are a reflection of the passionate – some may say obsessive – approach to crafting our drinks from scratch. We don't buy in neutral spirits and then flavour them, each starts with the best-quality natural ingredients, with our Scott Farms sweet potatoes being the first building block, and it all goes from there. Every step of the process is honed to suit the particular drink we are creating, with the singular aim of producing an exceptionally enjoyable drinking experience for our consumers.

### "VERSATILE RANGE"

Our range consists of 10 different drinks, each with its own distinct personality to provide something for most palates. They are: Sweet Potato London Dry Gin; Sweet Potato Spiced Rum; Sweet Potato Moonshine; Sweet Potato Vodka; Sweet Potato Plum Gin; Sweet Potato Toffee Apple Moonshine; Sweet Potato Pink Marshmallow Moonshine; Sweet Potato Chocolate Moonshine with Chilli; Sweet Potato Orangecello and Sweet Potato Raspberry.

The range is incredibly versatile because each spirit can be drunk straight in a glass without so as much as an ice cube for company. They are all incredibly smooth, yet if it is your preference, then they mix very well because of their distinctive flavours, which makes them standout cocktail ingredients. This makes them highly appealing to a wide variety of drinkers.

### "SPECIAL SPIRIT"

They have great shelf presence with highly original and distinctive branding, bottles with either glass corks and watch straps or hand-dipped and stamped wax seals which really catch the eye of customers.

Our independent stockists are regularly telling us that they capture the imagination of both their sweet potato loving foodie and spirit enthusiast customers, who are seeking out something different and interesting to try.

### "INDEPENDENT SUPPORT"

We vigorously support our retailers with tasting stock and by providing quality point of sale materials, which include booklets containing information about our awards, how our spirits are made, how to drink them and some fantastic cocktail recipes. We also have great gift bags and boxes and listen carefully – and respond promptly – to feedback.

### "SWEET POTATO PROMOTIONS"

We are actively promoting brand awareness at consumer-facing events throughout the country this year. We always aim to promote stockists that are close to the events we attend in order to actively drive the repeat purchase customers to them.

We are also shortly introducing a dedicated trade resources area to our website, which will provide great value to help all stockists to maximise sales opportunities.

Our Sweet Potato Mobile Bars will be attending many events and festivals this year, too. They provide another great opportunity to promote stockists in the locality, both on and off-trade. We will also be repeating our very successful pop-up stores at key times to engage customers in strategic areas.

We have been completely blown away by the reception that our Sweet Potato Spirits and Liqueurs have received to date, and we're looking forward to working closely with our trading partners during 2017 to make it a vintage year.




> "We vigorously support our retailers with tasting stock and by providing quality point of sale materials, which include booklets containing information about our awards, how our spirits are made, how to drink them and some fantastic cocktail recipes"

# CRAFT-BREWED AMERICAN CLASSIC

*Get ready for Virgil's Root Beer Sodas – they're a flavour favourite in the states, says Empire Bespoke Foods*

At a glance you would presume that Virgil's was an American craft beer product. Its punchy label design and micro-brewed credentials are all hallmarks of the craft beer scene, however Virgil's is a very different proposition. Harnessing the same DIY approach, the company's array of root beers and cream sodas are made from completely natural ingredients and boast sublime flavour.

"Originally Virgil's was one man's passion to create the finest root beer ever produced," says Nick Thomas, sales and marketing director at Empire Bespoke Foods, the UK's importer, distributor and marketing team for Virgil's. "It's perfectly on-trend for adults looking for a sophisticated, premium, craft-brewed alternative to alcohol. Virgil's drinks are micro-brewed, made from natural ingredients without any preservatives or artificial ingredients, are gluten-free and contain unrefined cane sugar – it's one of the best-loved brands in the USA."

## Artisan and alcohol–free

The range comprises of three flavours – Root Beer, Cream Soda and Black Cherry Cream Soda – each of which comes in a 355ml bottle. "Empire Bespoke Foods aims to inspire customers with the finest and most authentic food and drink from around the world," explains Nick. "That's why we are delighted with our latest US discovery that has recently been launched into the UK soft drinks market – they're perfectly positioned to take advantage of the UK's current love for craft brews."

The originality of the product will be a huge draw for curious consumers, acknowledges Nick.



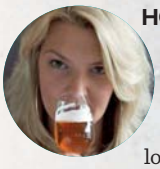

"It is important for independent retailers to differentiate from major retailers offering different products," he explains. "These on-trend drinks with their eye-catching packaging will attract shoppers who are ready to pay a little bit more for a unique drink experience."

The introduction of Virgil's to the UK drinks market perfectly aligns it with the flourishing carbonated drinks sector, which grew faster than the overall soft drinks category between 2008 and 2014, says Empire. "Nowadays, because it is more common for shoppers to choose brands that express a lifestyle or fulfil their need for healthier alternatives, there is a growing demand for premium, sophisticated and non-alcoholic drinks," says Nick. "Adults want to have a drink that is just as sophisticated as their alcoholic counterparts, but importantly, is still perceived as 'adulty'. 56% of consumers globally would like to see more craft-style non-alcoholic drinks, which reflects UK shoppers' current preference for personalised or hand-crafted products over more mass market versions."



# MELISSA COLE

*The beer sommelier, industry spokesperson and all-round hop head shares her views on this booming market*



**WHAT BEER TRENDS DO YOU EXPECT TO BE PREVALENT IN 2017?**

What we insiders and the geek side of the community see as a trend rarely registers on the radar of the average consumer for a few years, so that end I'd say sour beers are going to continue to grow in strength, as will the desire for quality. I also think really amazing no/lo beers like Big Drop's 0.5% Milk Chocolate Stout and amazing lagers like those being produced by Marble are also going to capture the public's attention. For me, one of the most brilliant trends emerging within the industry is that brewers are beginning to stand up for the right price for their cask beers; it has been woefully underpriced in the UK for far too long now and there needs to be a far more honest and open conversation about not only the level of skill that's needed to create this style of beer but for venues to keep cask beer. Training in the trade has to improve.

**WHAT CURRENTLY EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT THE WORLD OF CRAFT BEER?**

Everything! It's at its most dynamic right now, an ever-shifting scene full of brilliant entrepreneurs, young and older, and there is a passion that is spreading throughout the entire world for great beer. What makes me most happy is the amount of young, dynamic women who are entering the industry.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK INDEPENDENT RETAILERS AND 'BOTTLE SHOPS' OFFER THAT PERHAPS BARS, PUBS AND BREWERIES DON'T/CAN'T?**

First off, start local and always stock local – enagage with your local breweries, go and do a brew day with them. I also think the bottle shops that are installing draught beer and take out fills like growlers or crowlers are being very smart – I was hanging out in one near me the other day and it had a steady flow of people who met a few friends for one or two, bought a bottle or two to take home and left. It makes it a more convivial place and is really driving footfall and impulse purchases.

The other thing you need to make sure of, again, is that your staff are trained and eager but not pushy. They need to understand when someone might want help or is just happy browsing – I've had a number of incidents where staff are either totally disinterested (I have seen someone literally filing their nails) or who will not get out of my face long enough for me to even see what's on the shelves. Mind you, I'd genuinely prefer the latter to the former. Beer is a viable career choice now, and with so many people with a passion for the products, in my opinion there's no space for people who are indifferent.

**HOW DO YOU SUGGEST INDIE RETAILERS SHOULD PROMOTE THEIR BEER SELECTION – WHAT WOULD STAND OUT TO YOU?**

Social media is an invaluable tool; look at accounts like Hop Burns & Black, The Beer Boutique, Cotteridge Wines and Stichley Wines & Spirits for inspiration. Also, build a strong mailing list and advertise in-store – not everyone is on social media and it's easy to miss events when there's so much other noise out there. Run events and be engaging with your locals as they are your best advertising.

**HOW DO YOU THINK HOSTING 'MEET THE BREWER' AND SIMILAR EVENTS CAN BENEFIT RETAILERS? DO THESE KIND OF IN-STORE EVENTS PROVE POPULAR AMONG BEER FANS?**

Meet the brewer events are always valuable. People like meeting the faces behind the brands, they like showing off that they've met them and they are more likely to buy the beers as a result.

**WHAT BREWERIES ARE CURRENTLY PUSHING THE ENVELOPE AND CREATING DRINKS THAT ARE CATCHING YOUR ATTENTION?**

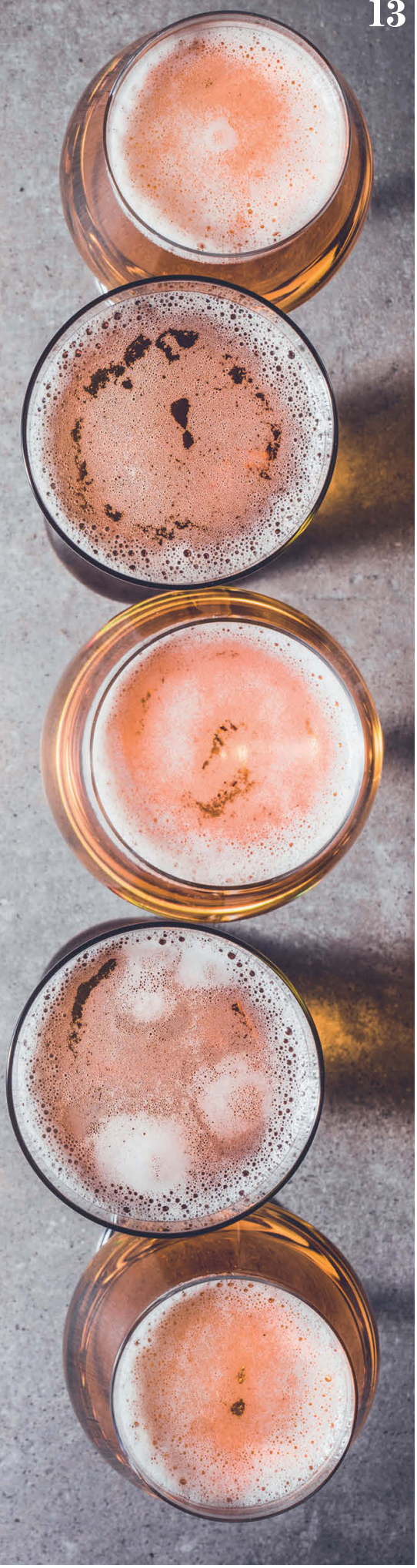
There are literally hundreds of fantastic breweries in the country, let alone the world, that are doing amazing things. Again, social media is a great place to look but also engage with the reps that come in, ask them if they can put on events and get them to help you push their products – it's not a one-way street.

**DO YOU THINK BEER IS NOW BEING TAKEN AS SERIOUSLY AS FINE WINE? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK CONTRIBUTED TO THIS?**

I don't think we need to look at beer and wine as being adversarial, they can be complementary to each other. The same goes for good spirits; craft beer drinkers don't tend to stick to one thing only, they are experimental; they look for the good in anything, whether it be wine, food or spirits.

**HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO SEE THE CRAFT BEER SECTOR DEVELOP IN FIVE YEARS? AND IN 10? AND BEYOND?**

It's still far too much of a closed boy's club at the top, where the 'cool' brewers are virtually all exclusively white men, with very few notable exceptions, but I have high hopes that this will start to change. There will be inevitable consolidation and a lot more acquisitions by big breweries – however I do believe that breweries that are run well as a business and who focus on quality will always be the winners.



# FROM INVENTION TO INNOVATION

*Fentimans botanically brewed beverages continue to lead the way in premium soft drinks*

## The invention of the premium soft drink

The Fentimans story started over one hundred years ago when Thomas Fentiman, an iron puddler from West Yorkshire, made a loan to a fellow tradesman and received a recipe for botanically brewed ginger beer as security. The loan was never re-paid and Thomas began making the drink and selling it in handmade stone jars. In fact, you could say he invented the premium soft drink way back in 1905. Today, Fentimans Botanically Brewed Beverages continues to produce Ginger Beer using the same time-honoured process of botanical brewing, but thanks to continued innovation the range now boasts a diverse selection of imaginative and full flavoured soft drinks, premium mixers, pre-mixed alcoholic drinks and craft beers.




## Increasing demand

"As pioneers of craft beverages, with a history of making botanically brewed drinks for over 100 years, it is satisfying to see a growing number of people seeking a premium alternative to ordinary carbonated drinks" says Mark Robinson, product manager UK and international at Fentimans. "It's a trend we've seen growing over the past decade and it shows no sign of slowing down. The shift in consumer habits is being driven by a desire to discover new and different drinking experiences and, to a significant degree, the rising popularity of premium adult soft drinks can be linked to the increasing number of millennials who are drinking less alcohol. They want a grown up choice and are seeking out interesting brands with different flavour combinations and, particularly for customers in the independent sector, provenance and quality is key. The explosion of premium spirits has also had an impact with drinkers wanting a premium mixer with superior taste to complement their spirit."

## New flavour innovations

Fentimans continues to drive growth and demand in the sector by delivering new and compelling drinks that have broad consumer appeal. In 2015 Wild English Elderflower was introduced and embodies what Fentimans stands for. It isn't just another elderflower drink, but a quintessentially British beverage bursting with provenance. A delicate yet full flavoured drink it is sweet on the nose with a light aroma and delicate floral notes and is doing particularly well in independents, with 40% growth during 2016. Also flying off the shelves is the Rose Lemonade mixer introduced in January 2014. It is Fentimans fastest growing drink, and its skilful blend of floral overtones with a robust citrus base appeals as a mixer with gin or vodka or as a sophisticated alternative to alcohol.

"Our most recent innovations have injected a balance to our overall offer with some interesting flavours that are particularly appealing to the female audience" explains Robinson. "As well as Wild English Elderflower and Rose Lemonade, we have introduced a Pink Grapefruit Tonic Water, a complex combination of distinctive flavours with a real zesty tang. It goes perfectly with pink grapefruit juice for a soft drink or peps up gin for a different take on a G&T. Our Sparkling Lime & Jasmine launched in February 2016 is also a popular alternative to alcohol. Its initial refreshing bitterness is quickly balanced by the botanical sweetness of hyssop, lime flower and Juniper Berries and the overall flavour is intensely invigorating."

## Time-honoured processes

However, the original Ginger Beer remains the best-selling and best-known drink in the Fentimans stable, with sales growth of 41% in the independent sector in 2016. Like Thomas Fentiman's first brew it is created using the time-honoured process of botanical brewing – as are all Fentimans beverages. Ordinary carbonated drinks are quick to make, taking just a few hours. Botanical brewing is very different. Each drink is brewed for seven days using a combination of infusion, skilful blending and fermentation of natural ingredients. The resulting flavours are three dimensional with a rich texture and a distinctive 'mouth feel'. Fentimans Ginger Beer is complex and full flavoured with a fiery kick and like its predecessor it tantalises the taste buds. From humble beginnings the Fentimans range now comprises 21 products, covering a spectrum of flavours from Mandarin and Seville Orange Jigger to Cherry and Curiosity Colas, Victorian Lemonade and, of course, Dandelion and Burdock.

"We are extremely proud of our history and heritage but we always want to push new boundaries," sums up Robinson. "Our mission is to continue to brew in the footsteps of Thomas Fentiman whilst continuing to innovate, drive customer demand and grow the market."

> "Our mission is to continue to brew in the footsteps of Thomas Fentiman whilst continuing to innovate, drive customer demand and grow the market"

# THAT'S THE SPIRIT

*We catch up with Chris Parker, CEO of London & Scottish International Ltd, to talk about Juniper Green Organic Gin and its enduring appeal*

The gin resurgence that was making headlines last year has helped to spawn a more curious consumer. Fans of the juniper-based spirit are perusing the bottle aisles for the most experimental and flavoursome versions of the beverage they can find; gin has officially now become 'craft'. One of the labels at the forefront of the movement which continues to follow a genuine artisanal ethos and applies the utmost attention to ingredients and production is Juniper Green Organic Gin.




"In 1999, Juniper Green was the fifth most expensive gin after Bombay Sapphire and Tanqueray. Today we are around the 190th most expensive," says Chris Parker, managing director of London & Scottish. "While we did not know it at the time, we were the first of the speciality or craft gins." Juniper Green is now sold in at least 25 different countries, and the company enjoyed a very successful 2016, explains Chris.

## Single estate

The first crucial distillation stage occurs on the estate where all of the grain is grown, making the spirit a true single estate product. The land, which has been used for those purposes for 35 years, is completely organic – Chris believes the super smoothness of Juniper Green is owed to its unique heritage. "Single estate provides the credibility and detail that today's consumer requires," he says.

The other ingredients and botanicals used to make Juniper Green are sourced with the same attention to detail. The FairWild juniper berries are certified organic and gathered from a forest in Bulgaria. FairWild accreditation means those involved with the harvesting are properly paid for their juniper berries, which are all collected in a sustainable manner. In fact, Juniper Green is the only gin in the world to boast this certification. "Organic ingredients are the raison d'être for this range," says Chris. "Organic is extremely important to nearly all of our customers."

The Organic Herb Trading Company grows angelica and summer savory herbs especially for the production of Juniper Green. The company hand-harvests and dries the botanicals on-site within hours of them being picked, to retain optimum freshness and flavour. It is then batch-distilled and bottled in London, with all the carefully-selected botanicals being distilled in a small capacity gin still.




## Spirit showcase

While Juniper Green remains an essential part of London & Scottish's output, the company also boasts a portfolio consisting of an array of other delectable alcoholic drink brands. The extensive range includes Highland Harvest Organic Malt Scotch Whiskies, Utkins U5 Organic Vodka and Papagayo Organic Rums.

If you're intrigued and would like to stock a London & Scottish drink in your shop, Chris states that the process couldn't be easier. "We have nationwide coverage via wholesalers," he says. "However, you can find out more about us by contacting office@londonandscottish.co.uk"





# MODERNISING MEAD

*Lyme Bay Winery's range of meads encapsulates the company's philosophy of exploring the traditions of the past using modern production techniques*

If you're unfamiliar with mead, it's best described as an alcoholic drink – one of the oldest known to man, in fact – made by fermenting honey with water, and sometimes including the likes of hops, spices, fruits or grains. James Lambert, managing director of Lyme Bay Winery explains, "We source a bespoke blend of honey from an apiary in Derbyshire. It's a blend of Mexican, Chinese and English honey that combines the most aromatic of indigenous flower species."

Full-flavoured and deliciously sweet, Lyme Bay Winery's mead is made from a unique blend of honey, water, yeast and sugar. "Our simple ingredients enable the beautiful natural characteristics that honey provides to come through to the final taste," says James.

The natural ingredients are then taken to a state-of-the-art laboratory, where everything from sugar levels to alcohol is tested, and a willing group of tasters are on hand to sign off on every single batch. "We ferment our meads in stainless steel vats prior to blending to produce the desired characteristics for each of our meads," says James. "There is no hard-and-fast rule to container type, ageing period or even the source of the honey, so we have a lot of fun experimenting and creating the very best products."

## Up-and-comer

Lyme Bay Winery creates seven varieties of mead, from a Christmas Mead to its recent experimental incarnation, a sparkling version named Yore. Yore is a lighter and dryer mead that clocks in at 4% ABV, and is positioned to offer consumers a unique alternative to cider and lager. According to James, first-timers tend to be surprised how drinkable it is. "We continue to work to educate consumers about what they can expect from mead," he says. "We often find that the lack of understanding of the category is where we need to work most. Once it is tried, however, we find that the product really speaks for itself!"

"Yore is lighter, drier and has a light carbonation. Essentially we're passionate about mead and keeping the traditions alive, and we therefore wanted to create something truly innovative that can be drunk by the bottle," he explains. "For honey lovers, mead will always offer something special, but ultimately consumers of meads expect something relatively sweet, and often of a punchy alcohol level. Yore mead is our gift to those consumers who are looking for something less challenging, yet still with integrity and heritage behind it."




Just like with the craft beer renaissance, it is interesting to look across the Atlantic to analyse the impact this sector is having. The American Mead Makers Association's (AMMA) first Annual Mead Industry Report was compiled in 2014, and showed that mead sales were up 130% from 2012 to 2013. After these findings, AMMA proudly proclaimed that mead was the smallest but fastest growing segment of the entire US alcohol industry.

James has witnessed this desire for mead products transfer to these shores, too. "Demand has grown steadily since we released our first Traditional, West Country and Christmas Meads," says James. "In 2010, we decided to enrich the offering by developing a Garden Mead (blended with notes of garden mint) and a Tournament Mead (our finest version that incorporates the heat of ginger). These have been wonderfully received by our customers. Mead remains our best-selling product, and we have seen a huge revival in popularity in recent years."

James also believes that the range of meads are a great stocking option for delis and farm shops, as they offer a point of difference and can pair well with other artisanal foods, too. "Our best-selling mead is our 14.5% ABV Traditional Mead. It's sweet, pungent and deliciously full-flavoured and is a wonderful accompaniment to strong cheeses – it's also won many industry awards over the years."

> "Mead remains our best-selling product, and we have seen a huge revival in popularity in recent years"

# PROGRESSION OF MEAD

CONSIDERED BY MANY AN ELIXIR OF HEALTH, FERTILITY AND LONGEVITY, THIS SO-CALLED 'NECTAR OF THE GODS' IS HAVING A VERY 21ST CENTURY REVIVAL, AND LYME BAY WINERY IS LEADING THE CHARGE WITH ITS RANGE OF AWARD WINNING MEADS - THE NEWEST ADDITION TO OUR MEAD RANGE BEING YORE







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LYME BAY WINERY

# WHAT IS IN THE SECRET?

*Drinks Buyer talks to Snezana Knowles, founder of Granny's Secret UK, about the brand's cutting-edge all natural fruit juices*




The varied and unique produce of Serbia had been sparsely available in the UK until five years ago,when inspired by memories of her childhood, Snezana decided to bring them from her native country to the UK. "The age-old tradition of preserving nature's bounty by grinding fine fruit that comes fresh from the hedgerows and trees still resonates in modern Serbia and lives on in the folk knowledge of the people," says Snezana.

Snezana quickly set to work on applying her country of origin's philosophy to Granny's Secret's array of fruit and vegetable juices. "The freshest and most natural juices are made by grinding the whole fruit, rather than pressing it," she explains. "Following this method means that all of the important ingredients are preserved. Our drinks include depth of flavour, are an irreplaceable source of nutrition, are sweetened by white grape juice instead of sugar, and are packaged in glass to keep them cool even at ambient temperatures." As well as adhering to the nutrition-boosting grinding technique, the fruit juices contain the peel of the fruits, which Snezana says are another essential nutrient-rich source.

## Serbian sensation

Granny's Secret products are available in 12 single fruit flavours and come in 200ml and 700ml-sized bottles, with vegetable and fruit combinations available, too. The eclectic array of flavours, from Orange to Wild Blackberry and more, earned Granny's Secret a spot on deli shelves when it launched in 2012. A month after the company got its first listing the accolades starting rolling in, and the brand has even been the awarded Great Taste Producer status, too.

Snezana is very passionate about the healthy credentials of the Granny's Secret products. These




credentials have been confirmed by an online listing at Holland & Barrett. "We pride ourselves on helping to reduce obesity by not adding sugar, except naturally-occurring ones from fruit," she says. "We even recommend them for babies (over the age of six months), small and school children, as they're a great introduction to fresh fruits without turning to other juices which include added sugar."

The juices are also incredibly versatile – some can even be used in cocktails or cooked with. "Tomato soups taste great with the herbs and celery included in our Tomato & Celery juice," explains Snezana. "It tastes great in Bolognese sauce especially, and unlike passatas that need a long cooking time to reduce the acidity, our pasteurised tomato juice can be added later in the process to preserve freshness."






# FRESH FROM THE FARM

*From Heartsease Farm to your shelves, this range of premium pressés boast flavour, heritage and prestige*

Using its very own fresh spring water as the foundation for its beverages, Heartsease Farm pays keen attention to the ingredients that are used to make its range of sparkling premium pressés. "We try to source the best available ingredients," says William Watkins, managing director. "From the finest Sicilian lemons to traditional British blackcurrants that arrive from a farm just down the road in Herefordshire. Provenance of our ingredients is key to each flavour."

With concoctions like Apple & Rhubarb and Raspberry Lemonade, the company errs on the side of sophisticated flavours, and even has smartly-designed bottles to suit the theme. This was a conscious decision, admits William. "Central to our business belief is to create products that look and particularly taste better than those of our competitors. With that central core value in mind, we have assembled a team of experts in developing and producing delicious products. This is where some great ideas turn into reality."

The pressés are available in both 750ml and 330ml glass bottles, as well as 425ml premium PET bottles. These creative flavours can be found in local delis, food halls, farm shops, garden centres, pubs and cafés across the country.

## Flavour heritage

Named after the Welsh farm that has been in the family since 1903, the company began producing bottled mineral water in the nineties as part of the Radnor Hills brand. William's family wanted to create a drinks range that reflected the heritage of their beloved farm, thus Heartsease Farm was born.

It wasn't long before the brand started catching the attention of drinks buyers.

"There was a clear gap in the market for a really premium range of sparkling pressés that are bottled in both glass and plastic," says William. "Many outlets can't stock glass and this gives them the chance to sell a super-premium pressé range in plastic bottles. It's because of this, and many other reasons, that Heartsease Farm is performing extremely well."

Constantly with their eyes set on producing exciting flavours, the team at Heartsease Farms has a new guest flavour being released in the coming months. "Our new Strawberry and Mint tastes amazing," says William. "It's like summer in a glass."

William also believes that the Heartsease Farm pressés complement Radnor Hills' other range of beverages. "We have become a one-stop shop when it comes to soft drinks," he says. "Buyers can order mineral water, flavoured water, healthy school compliant drinks, fruit juices and premium adult pressés all from under one roof!"






# ALL IN GOOD TASTE

*Luscombe Drinks has long had a well-earned reputation for producing some of the sector's finest soft drinks. Here, find out what makes them tick*

Hard work and dedication has been key to the success of Luscombe Drinks. Founder and chairman, Gabriel David, along with a committed team, has been passionately crafting premium soft drinks in Devon since 1975. Gabriel continues now, as ever, to take great care to ensure he creates only the very best drinks. He is immensely proud to use natural raw organic ingredients harvested from Luscombe's own orchards and trusted growers in all of their drinks.

**Not only do Luscombe source the finest ingredients, they ensure they preserve their integrity through using the most natural and sympathetic methods they can, which allows them to gain maximum flavour**. Constantly looking to innovate and push the boundaries in terms of product development, Gabriel takes inspiration from his travels around the world where he meets with growers and sees the fruit being grown. Gabriel's uncompromising approach when it comes to taste and a lack of interference with the raw ingredients, has been instrumental in earning Luscombe Drinks their reputation as being an innovative soft drinks producer.




**Consumers are now, more than ever, looking for differences in taste between adult soft drinks as well as more adventurous and complex flavours**. With their range of 22 award-winning soft drinks which include juices, crushes, ginger beers and bubblies, Luscombe Drinks has a flavour to suit everyone. Drinks in their range also appeal to the increasing number of consumers who are looking for interesting and different flavoured drinks such as those incorporating spices and botanicals.

**With food matching recommendations available for all of their drinks, one of the most popular is Luscombe Drinks' St Clements**. A classic sparkling drink created by Gabriel, organic Sicilian oranges and lemons have been perfectly combined resulting in a natural pairing with seafood dishes, in particular smoked salmon. Their Damascene Rose Bubbly, a delicate and fragrant bubbly with Muscat grape juice and Damascene rose water, also pairs particularly well with white fish and seafood dishes too. Another firm favourite is their famous ginger beers. Both the Hot and Cool Ginger Beers are delightful with Asian cuisine, especially sweet and sour dishes, stir-fries and chicken or prawn based dishes which contain sesame oil. The organic root ginger used is fresh, and is expertly combined with organic Sicilian lemon juice to result in a unique tasting ginger beer. Some flavours in the range are more suited to matching with meat dishes, such as Raspberry Crush which is best served with game terrine, smoked duck breast, smoked chicken or smoked venison. Alternatively, Mostly Devon Apple Juice can take on a range of pork and chicken dishes including pork pasties, Scotch eggs and pork chops. Soft drinks can be matched not only with savoury dishes but also sweet. Strawberry Crush, Wild Elderflower Bubbly and Apple and Pear Juice, which is richer and slightly sweeter than an apple juice, are all perfect accompaniments to desserts or cake-based treats.

**As a leader in the soft drinks sector, Luscombe Drinks is constantly innovating and driving the category forward**. Gabriel and the team are always working on new product development and new processing and manufacturing techniques, however, they only release new drinks once certain they have created the very best. The future is looking very exciting for Luscombe.




## HOW TO PROMOTE PAIRINGS

**In-store tastings and sampling events are always hugely popular and attract a high level of interest and engagement with consumers. The importance of Point of Sale materials must also not be underestimated, for example, in-store signage and postcards can work particularly well. Independent retailers also shouldn't hesitate to speak with the team at Luscombe who are always on hand to offer support and advice.**

> "Gabriel and the team are always working on new product development and new processing and manufacturing techniques, however, they only release new drinks once certain they have created the very best"

# DELICIOUSLY DIFFERENT

*Drinks Buyer talks to Justin Horsman, Franklin & Sons brand controller, about the heritage drinks producer*

**WHAT DOES THE RANGE CONSIST OF?**

Franklin & Sons has seen unprecedented success since the launch of their premium soft drinks range in June 2015.

The range started out with five all-natural flavours with a twist, including Sicilian Lemonade & English Elderflower with crushed Juniper and Cloudy Apple and Yorkshire Rhubarb with Cinnamon, served in 257ml bottles. Overwhelmed with the response to the soft drinks, the brand launched its tonics and mixers range in December 2015.




Due to the rise in customer demand, there has been an increase in the amount of flavours in the range. Alongside the original core range, Franklin & Sons has added seven new SKUs over the last 12 months, including four 200ml mixer flavours and three 750ml soft drink flavours. Over the next three months, the brand has another eight products planned to be launched, introducing exciting packaging formats that will work brilliantly in travel retail, bars and the off-trade alike.

**HOW HAS THE COMPANY'S HISTORY SHAPED THE BRAND TODAY?**

The first products were introduced in 1886, sold from their small family confectioners shop in London. The three Franklin brothers then began to introduce innovative flavours to the UK, combining unique ingredients to deliver the exquisite taste of Franklins. Their passion and quality still continues in today's range.

**WHERE DOES THE COMPANY SOURCE ITS INGREDIENTS FROM?**

The all-natural recipes are designed for the adult palate with a complex three component flavour profile to each drink. Each one of these variants goes through a different production process, from hand-picking our Yorkshire rhubarb and freezing the produce within 12 hours of cutting to steeping our dandelion and burdock together for three weeks to optimise the strength in flavour.

**WHY DO YOU THINK INDEPENDENTS SHOULD STOCK FRANKLIN & SONS?**

Developed to create an experience worth sharing, focusing on naturalness and craftsmanship, the brand uses vast knowledge in innovation and flavours. The tonics provide a perfect base for spirits, allowing an upsell opportunity. Independents can offer something unique to their consumers, the soft drinks offer a twist of tertiary food style ingredients, from cracked black pepper to crushed juniper. Customers are supported through social media increased visibility and rate of sale through high quality POS and sampling experiences.



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Luscombe has been crafting exceptional drinks in Devon since 1975. The ethos is simple, source the finest natural ingredients and capture maximum flavour with minimal processing. Simple, really.

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# DAPPA DAYS

*Cosmo Caddy, founder of Devon Distillery, tells the story of the UK's first grappa*

I started making Dappa because my grandfather started a vineyard down here in Devon the year I was born, and ever since my mum introduced me to grappa – at far too young an age! – I've enjoyed it. Everyone was making gin and nobody was making grappa, so I thought I'd give it a go to really stand out from the crowd. We are the only English grappa made in the proper, traditional Italian way. In Italy, you can't walk past two restaurants without seeing grappa everywhere, but unfortunately it isn't the most visible drink in the UK; part of our challenge is to make people aware that it exists and it is good! People are becoming more familiar with food and drink from other countries thanks to travelling, and if they enjoyed it while they were on holiday they may want to try the British version when they come back home. There's a lot of interest in 'British' at the moment, which is working well for us.

## Breaking the mould

A lot of people go to Italy and are given a free bottle of not-so-great grappa on their table after dinner. Normally Italians would have a glass and stop there, but unfortunately Brits tend to think they ought to finish the whole lot then wake up with a terrible hangover and blame the grappa! In that situation, a lot of people drink it to excess rather than sensibly. If someone tries a great quality grappa like ours in the right circumstances at the right time of day, they'd be amazed by how much they enjoy it.

## Award-winning

We've won a Great Taste Two Star Award which is great for public recognition, and the International Wine and Spirits Challenge awarded us Silver Outstanding in 2015 and a Silver in 2016. I was taught by a ninth-generation grappa maker, for whom quality was paramount, so everything we do is in order to make the best product we possibly can. Within two harvests, we were already beating some of the Italian makers at the international competitions.

## How to enjoy

Traditionally, grappa would be enjoyed as an after dinner sipping drink alongside a coffee, much like you'd have a brandy. It's surprisingly versatile; it pairs very well with coffee and dark chocolate, and we've developed some cocktail recipes which include things like citrus flavours and passionfruit – these are great for people who find it a bit strong on its own. As we grow we're starting to experiment, for example ageing it in the grappa in oak barrels, and we're thinking about producing flavoured grappas infused with fresh raspberries or blackberries, or even honey produced by my next door neighbour!




great taste 2016

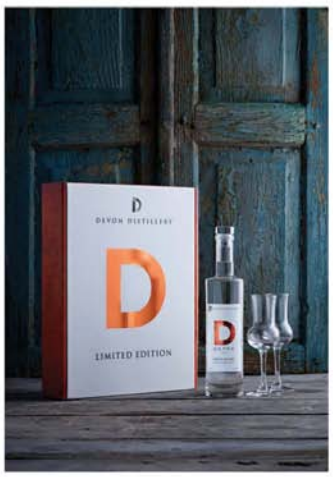
"Deep and mellow flavours. A clean distillation. Packed with fruit" - Great Taste judges




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# SPARKLING SALES

*Natural ingredients, great flavours and eye-catching branding have led Cawston Press to be one of the best-loved brands in the soft drink market*

**WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF CAWSTON PRESS?**

Cawston Press was founded by apple growers in 1986, and is now nurtured by lovers of good food – for us, ingredients matter. If it doesn't taste great we won't make it. All our drinks are created with pressed fruit and the results are delicious, lightly sparkling drinks. By only using pressed fruit and natural ingredients it means each drink tastes of the real ingredients they're made with.

**WHAT MAKES YOUR PRODUCTS STAND OUT IN THE BRITISH SOFT DRINKS MARKET?**

It's a combination of award-winning packaging and great taste, alongside a growing interest from consumers in more traditional ingredients like rhubarb and gooseberries. As a small company we don't have much to spend on advertising, and our packaging has to be really strong in a crowded market. The design is engaging; it has great shelf-presence and desirability.

**TELL US ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS YOU USE IN YOUR DRINKS**

Our heritage is in pressed juices. It's what we've been doing for over 30 years. We feel strongly that to get the desired flavour, we need to be able to taste the fruit we use, so we'll only ever use pressed juice. When we develop new drinks, Micah, our master blender, will experiment with juices and purees from a variety of fruits and vegetables before deciding on the final recipe. We're a small team and we all play a part in developing our drinks. Everyone is part of the tasting process – this really helps us to bring drinks to market that always deliver on taste.

**WHAT'S IN YOUR PRODUCT PORTFOLIO?**

Our sparkling drinks come in six natural, quintessentially British flavours: Rhubarb, Cloudy Apple, Gooseberry, Ginger Beer, Cucumber & Mint and Elderflower Lemonade, each of them refreshing without being overpowered by sweetness.

Our heritage shines through in our selection of pressed juices, with flavours including Apple & Rhubarb, Apple & Elderflower, Brilliant Beetroot and Apple & Ginger, among others. For younger palates we have our Kids' Blends, which are made with pressed fruit and water. As they're a little less adventurous than our 'grown-up' drinks, with simple flavours like Apple & Mango, Apple & Pear and Summer Berries, they're perfect for growing taste buds and the small cartons make them great for on-the-go.

**WHAT RECEPTION HAS YOUR SPARKLING RANGE RECEIVED IN THE UK?**

In 2016 sales of our Sparkling drinks grew by over 100% and we sold more than 10 million cans. Where it's stocked it has a great rate of sale and we know that if people try it, they will recommend it to others. This means we do lots of sampling to help spread the word. During the summer months the Cawston team will be out sampling at summer picnics and fetes as well as in-store. We like to work closely with customers who stock our drinks and are keen to get samples to their customers, as we know this really helps generate more sales for all.

**AND YOUR PRESSED JUICE SELECTION?**

We rebranded our pressed juices in 2009 and since then, despite a declining category, our juices have continued to grow. Our knowledge of pressed juice has inspired how we have created our sparkling range – many of the same ingredients are used in both the juices and sparkling drinks.

**WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE FOR CAWSTON PRESS?**

At Cawston we're always looking at new ideas and recipes and how peoples' palates are changing over time. Some of our more recent flavours like the Sparkling Gooseberry are a little less sweet and have a 'dry' profile, which really appeals to people looking for more grown-up soft drinks. The market is heading this way and we're keen to keep creating drinks that reflect this change; be it more interesting flavours or a less sweet taste profile.




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NOTHING ARTIFICIAL × 99 CALORIES
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# MASTER AND SERVANT

*Folkington's Paul Bendit explains the brand's decision to enter the emerging mixer market*

The phenomenal growth in craft spirits over the past five years has been incredibly exciting, and even in 2016 over 40 new distilleries have opened up. Gin sales alone topped £1bn last year in the UK. But despite some famous names the mixer category hasn't kept up, so we wanted to be in there, enjoying the party. Consumers are increasingly interested in pairing different gins with different mixers but the choice of good quality mixer brands is still relatively small. So we've now added to their range of options.

It was really important to us, as a premium soft drinks brand, that our mixers could stand on their own as really good tasting drinks before starting to mix them with gins and other spirits. We then needed to ensure that our mixers really did enhance the subtleties of the gins we were working with rather than overwhelm them. We believe that the mixer is the servant to its master, the spirit; not the other way round. We have two Indian tonic waters – including a 'light' alternative which has 33% less sugar. The rest of the Folkington's mixer range are the other classics: dry ginger ale, bitter lemon, club soda and lemonade.

In developing our mixer range we stuck to the main principles that we uphold across the the entire Folkington's range of juices and pressés: provenance behind our ingredients, the use of pure (un-concentrated) juices, an absence of anything artificial, and a rule never to over-complicate our products.




Folkington's mixers stand out at several levels. First, our botanical extracts are uniquely made in small batches, which was behind our decision to call the range 'Artisan Mixers' and which resonates well with many of the craft spirits brands and what they themselves stand for. Second, they are generally a little less sugary than the other brands out there. Third, we only use lemon juice that has not been concentrated down – it is as pure and fresh as on the day the lemons were picked in Sicily. And last, our blends of botanicals are completely unique.

Mini-cans are becoming really popular with consumers, especially when they can be bought in multi-packs. Many people have told me that they always hate throwing away half empty bottles of tonic water that have lost their fizz. The 150ml can is the perfect size for a G & T at home and there's nothing to throw away apart from an empty can into the recycling bin. Mini-cans also work well for the travel industry and for outside catering.



# AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

*Meet Clamato, a versatile alternative to classic tomato juice*

**WHAT'S THE STORY OF CLAMATO?**

Clamato's history began in California in 1966 when it was created by the Duffy-Mott company, by two employees who wanted to create a Manhattan clam chowder-style cocktail. Clamato is made with the finest Californian tomatoes for a freshly-picked flavour and is mixed with a blend of spices that liven the senses. It uses minimal processing and production for a balanced texture, with a light and distinctive taste.



**WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT TO OTHER TOMATO DRINKS ON THE MARKET?**

Clamato is different to other tomato drinks on the market due to the fact it contains premium New England clam broth.

**AND WHAT MAKES IT SO POPULAR IN ITS HOME COUNTRY OF AMERICA?**

The invigorating blend is perfect for cocktails, delicious to drink alone or to add a little depth to your favourite dish.

**HOW VERSATILE IS IT – HOW WOULD YOU USE IT IN COCKTAILS?**

Clamato is a classic cocktail mixer and can be used to make a bloody Caesar by just adding vodka. This is Canada's number one cocktail, and was invented in 1969. Clamato is also very popular in central America where the traditional Michelada, a beer cocktail, was invented. The drink consists of Clamato with beer, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, lime and pepper.




**AND IN COOKING?**

It can also be used as an ingredient within food, for example to make a prawn cocktail, gazpacho, chicken tacos as well as a grilling marinade.

**WHY SHOULD INDEPENDENT RETAILERS STOCK IT?**

Clamato is a versatile product that can be used for cocktails and food. It has a twist on the typical tomato juice and offers a point of difference to consumers. It is available in a glass bottle containing 473ml for a more premium look and feel and one person serving, and is also available in a PET bottle containing 946ml.

> "Clamato is made with the finest Californian tomatoes for a freshly-picked flavour and is mixed with a blend of spices that liven the senses"






# FORWARD-THINKING FLAVOURS

*Belvoir Fruit Farms always has plans in the pipeline. Serena Smith, customer marketing manager, tells us about what to expect next from the bespoke brand*

**WHAT ARE YOUR MOST POPULAR PRODUCTS?**

Without a doubt our most popular product is our original Elderflower Cordial. Still made to the same recipe that our MD's mother used back in 1984, this was the first commercially-available Elderflower Cordial on the market. We still use locally-picked elderflower from our own organic plantations – which we believe are the only ones in the country – and from those growing wild in the local area. It's still a real community affair as each year we put out the call for local people to come and help bring in the harvest.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TO BELVOIR?**

With an increasing number of artisan soft drinks producers out there, it's vital to demonstrate innovation. We like to think that we were pioneers back in the early 1980s when we produced the Elderflower Cordial, but today there are numerous brands on the market and while we welcome the competition to make the sector more innovative and vibrant, the trick is to ensure that the business stays innovative and vibrant, too! We do this by trying to change our range on a regular basis, introducing new varieties that tap into current trends.




**TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW DRINKS**

Our 'Wine Without the Hangover' range seems to have been very well received. There is a definite trend in people choosing to drink less and the number of people taking part in campaigns like Dry January increases each year. We saw an opportunity to use our expertise in blending fruit juices to recreate the pleasures of consuming wine with a similar taste and texture, however minus the associated sore head! The result is Belvoir Shiraz, Chardonnay and Rosé options, all without the hangover.




We also introduced a Belvoir Elderflower Pressé Light into grocery in 2014 in the 75cl bottle. This proved so popular that last year we added Raspberry Lemonade Light and Elderflower & Rose Pressé Light to the range. The Lights range contains 30% less sugar than the regular recipe, and despite the reduction in sugar, still delivers on taste and quality. As the focus on sugar in drinks is set to intensify, we decided to extend the Lights into our 25cl Pressé range. The 25cl bottles are great for smaller shelf space and as single serve options for cafés, as well as for immediate on-the-go consumption.

The 25cl bottles now include Elderflower Pressé Light, Raspberry Lemonade Light and, exclusive to this bottle size, Orange & Mandarin Pressé Light. Some outlets are unable to stock glass and to cater for them we have also introduced Elderflower Pressé Light and Raspberry Lemonade Light into our stylish 330ml cans, which many cafés and food-to-go outlets favour.

**WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR 2017?**

We have already launched a new Citrus Chardonnay Pressé in a 75cl bottle. This is a refreshing, sharp citrus drink made from a blend of Chardonnay grape juice, lemon and orange and with no added sugar. There are no other plans currently but the beauty of being a small business with a dedicated team such as ours, is that we can react to any new trends and develop new products relatively quickly if we see an opportunity.

**HOW DOES BELVOIR CATER TO THE DEMAND FOR HEALTHY DRINKS?**

Our drinks have nothing artificial added; pure and simple. They contain no artificial colourings, additives, preservatives or sweeteners but do however contain some natural sugar to counteract the sharpness of some of the real fruit juices used to make them. We believe that because they contain nothing artificial that they are better for you than drinks made using many of the accepted artificial sweeteners, which we distrust and think can have the opposite effect on health.

We will look at the full details of the sugar tax when they are available and announced in the budget in March. We may well take a little sugar out of our range before the tax is introduced but we will not be sacrificing taste and we will certainly not be using artificial sweeteners. Our newest products are all made with no added sugar while the expansion of the Lights range (and a continued focus on that) demonstrates that we are listening to those who are demanding less sugar.

> "We were very fortunate to develop the Belvoir brand just as the consumer fascination with provenance and artisan products came to the fore"

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**A range of non-alcoholic wine like drinks developed to mimic the sensation of drinking wine but without the alcohol. Full bodied Shiraz with its heady currant notes and hint of black pepper. Sweet, scented & crisp Chardonnay and lively Rosé with a nose of raspberry & a floral hint.**

Natural ingredients with no added sugar.

No artificial sweeteners, flavourings or colours.




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# POSH POP

*How does a drinks company balance independent values with innovative ideas? Claire Martinsen, founder of Breckland Orchard, tells us how it's done*

**WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE COMPANY?**

I started Breckland Orchard in the spring of 2009. I'd worked for a big food company and although I really enjoyed my time there, the commute was a very long way. When I had my two children, Wilf and Alice, I decided that I wanted to do something different and follow my passion. My granny Jessie had always made the most delicious lemonade and it all started with the idea that I could make her lemonade and sell it. I started the business back then with two children under three, and even now I look back and think: "how did I do that?". I am so glad that I did! Eight years on and the children have grown and blossomed and so has the business.




**WHAT'S IN THE RANGE?**

We have a range of nine Breckland Orchard Posh Pops, with flavours from Pear & Elderflower to Cream Soda with Rhubarb. All of them are the perfect single-serve size at 275ml. I love taking classic English flavours and giving them a modern twist – that's what I enjoy cooking in the kitchen and that inspiration flows through to my drinks. Plum & Cherry was a combination that I love using in desserts, and when I made it into a drink it tasted just fabulous. Ginger Beer with Chilli has won so many accolades I've almost lost count – I know customers who travel miles to buy a bottle.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS THE COMPANY'S INDEPENDENT AND FAMILY-OWNED STATUS?**

The drinks world is dominated by big corporates, and we're proud to be different. Breckland Orchard is a genuinely family-owned business, and that means that we don't need to dance to the tune of shareholders or venture capitalists. We have the freedom to do the right thing all of the time, to not compromise on quality, and to look after our customers as we would want to be looked after ourselves – that's a great place to be. We know from speaking to customers that they really appreciate this.




**HOW VITAL ARE INDEPENDENT RETAILERS TO THE BUSINESS?**

I made the call right at the start that we wouldn't sell to the major supermarkets. I know that's the dream and goal of other food and drink companies, but it's not mine. We focus on working with people who share our ethos of great quality food and drink. That means we spend 100% of our time working with independent retailers, coffee shops, hotels and delis. We know most of them by name. Our stockists know that they can put Breckland Orchard in their fridge or on their menu without the fear of seeing it on promotion in the nearest supermarket. That means they can truly offer a point of difference to customers.

**WHAT MAKES THE RANGE OF DRINKS AWARD-WINNING?**

I'm very proud of the clutch of Great Taste Awards that we've won over the years. It's really nice to be recognized by the wider food and drink community for all the effort that we put in each and every day. We just use a gentle carbonation and that allows the flavours to really come through. Last year our Elderflower Posh Pop won a Great Taste award and the judges commented that it was "well balanced flavours... not too sweet" which of course was very nice to read, as we work really hard to get the taste perfect.

The business has won lots of awards since starting, so we are lucky enough to have a very full shelf in the office. In 2017 we've been shortlisted for the East of England Family Business of the Year, which I am especially proud of. Being family-owned and playing a role in our local community is really important to me, so it's lovely to be recognized in this way.

**TELL US ABOUT THE ZERO SUGAR RANGE**

We'd been asked about drinks for diabetics and people watching their health, so we launched a range with sweeteners instead of cane sugar. It's a range of three zero sugar drinks, which do not compromise on taste and are super low in calories. There's Cloudy Lemonade (5 calories), Ginger Beer with Chilli (3 calories) and Elderflower (no calories). I love watching peoples' faces when they try our zero sugar Elderflower and can't believe that it would taste as amazing as it does and contain zero calories. One of my girlfriends describes them as "guilt-free, sugar-free gorgeousness" – that sums them up perfectly!

> "Breckland Orchard is a genuinely family-owned business, and that means that we don't need to dance to the tune of shareholders or venture capitalists"

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