

SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS



BURSTING — WITH — FLAVOUR

INSIGHT

ED SALT,
DELAMERE:
BRITISH CHEESE
POST-BREXIT

P. 17



TREND

TERRY THRELFULL
SELFRIDGES:
THE CRAFT SPIRIT
MOVEMENT

P. 30



INTERVIEW

WALTER SCOTT,
WILKIN & SONS:
"JAMIS THE
ELIXIR OF LIFE"

P. 36



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23 The Great British Cure
Charcuterie: what to stock and how to sell it



26 Pricing For Profit
Boost your bottom line with the right pricing structure



30 Speciality Spirits
The 'craft' distillers to know now



36 The Interview
Speciality Food meets Wilkin & Sons' Walter Scott



45 Picking Up Steam
We look at today's booming speciality coffee market

EDITOR'S LETTER



Spring has well and truly sprung, and I for one couldn't be gladder. No longer am I waking in the dark, driving to work in the grey morning gloom and not returning home until the sun has well and truly shone its last. In place of the gloom is a brightness, a new optimism which is only boosted by the thought of the trade shows ahead full of new products, concepts and businesses to meet.

Tiring they may be, not least for the individuals whose attendance means weeks if not months of hard work before the event itself even starts, when all the business really begins. Over the next couple months we have some excellent shows to look forward to, and you'll find in-depth previews of each in this issue. IFE is back for 2017, and is set to be bigger and better than ever before – the *Speciality Food* team can't wait to get their teeth (literally!) into some great new international food and drink (preview on p.37). We'll also be popping along to the Natural Food Show, where I'll be sharing my excitement about some of the best new products to hit the market. Find out more on p.34.

Last but certainly not least, I'm delighted to announce that *Speciality Food* is launching an awards scheme dedicated to celebrating the fresh new talent in our industry. Run in association with Bread & Butter,

“
I couldn't be prouder to be recognising and celebrating the hard work, dedication and imaginations of new businesses across the UK
”

The New Producer Awards have been created to reward young businesses across the length and breadth of the UK which encapsulate some of the most exciting facets of today's industry. As many of you will know, celebrating the evolution of our industry is a matter close to my heart, and I couldn't be prouder to be recognising the hard work, dedication and imaginations of new businesses.

Holly

holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

RETAILERS FACE RISE IN CYBER CRIME

More than half (53 per cent) of retail fraud is now cyber-enabled, new data from the BRC's Retail Crime Survey reveals.

The findings show that retailers lose £100m to online fraud a year and that cyber criminals are resorting to elaborate scams such as phishing, consumer data theft and a host of other methods when targeting retailers.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the BRC said, "These figures reflect a deeply concerning trend. A significant aspect of the cyber security challenge for retailers is the attractiveness of customer data from the point of view of criminals, many of whom operate outside UK borders but can nevertheless gain relatively easy access to UK digital networks."

DIVINE CHOCOLATE ANNOUNCES 2015-16 PROFIT INCREASE

The Fairtrade chocolate producer has increased its profits by 38 per cent, with farmers of the Kuapa Kokoo co-operative in Ghana entitled to a 44 per cent share of the profit via a dividend payment.

Jamie Hartzell, chair said, "Profit for the year was up 38 per cent. This means we can again pay a dividend to our co-owner Kuapa Kokoo, the largest cocoa farmers' co-operative in the world. This in addition to the 882 tonnes of cocoa beans purchased from Africa, all with a Fairtrade premium paid to farmers of \$200 a tonne."

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Speciality Food Launches Awards to Celebrate Start-ups

Dedicated to championing the creators and forward-thinkers that make the fine food and drink industry tick, *Speciality Food* is proud to announce the launch of its New Producer Awards, run in association with Bread & Butter

On Friday 6th October at this year's Bread & Butter Festival, held at the Institute of Directors in London, *Speciality Food* will be unveiling the winners of its inaugural New Producer Awards.

The New Producer Awards were conceived with the intention of promoting the young food and drink businesses dedicated to keeping the sector vibrant, high-quality and captivating. The market is highly competitive and can be daunting for start-up companies wishing to get an equal footing in the industry

– the New Producer Awards aim to identify new producers displaying unerring passion to their craft and creating exemplary food and drink.

Winners will not only obtain a coveted New Producer Award accolade, but will receive thousands of pounds worth of coverage in the pages of *Speciality Food* magazine and beyond, as well as get their products in front of buyers, wholesalers and key influencers in the fine food world.

The New Producer Awards are split into seven categories and completely free to enter. Those interested in applying will be able

to submit an application form through the *Speciality Food* website (specialityfoodmagazine.com/awards), which will go on to be judged by a panel of editors from top food publications.

Those lucky enough to make it to the shortlisted stage of the awards will then have their products judged by top industry names.

Bread & Butter was the natural choice to partner with as hosts of the awards, with the organisation creating the UK's first-ever food and drink founders festival, as well as consistently and emphatically supporting start-up businesses.

Bread & Butter, running from 6th – 7th October 2017, is a two-day conference and boot camp for emerging and scaling food and drink brands, bringing together food and drink founders, investors, media and industry leaders. Running throughout the festival is a programme of panel discussions, keynotes, workshops and mentoring sessions, and new for this year's event, the New Producer Awards.

To reflect the diverse nature of the food and drink industry, the categories available to enter are:

- New Concept
- Innovator
- British Brand
- Sustainable Business
- Young Producer
- Crowdfunded Business
- Farm-to-Fork

Holly Shackleton, editor of *Speciality Food* said, "Supporting new businesses – and the subsequent evolution of the food and drink industry – is a subject close to my heart. Today's emerging producers are the pillars of our sector's future, so it is imperative that they are supported and celebrated in order to strengthen tomorrow's industry. I'm delighted to be working alongside Bread & Butter on this project; as the founders of a truly innovative trade event and fervent supporters of new businesses, I'm confident that they embody exactly what the New Producer Awards are all about."



Jason Gibb, co-founder of Bread & Butter said, "When *Speciality Food* asked us to help them launch their business awards we jumped at the chance. The idea behind the awards – to support, recognise and develop emerging food and drink brands – is exactly what Bread & Butter is about. The fact that it is free to enter and will give an enormous marketing boost to category finalists shows how committed *Speciality Food* is to supporting emerging food and drink businesses."

Tara Mei, co-founder of Bread & Butter said, "Being a food and drink entrepreneur can be a lonely road, so we hope that the awards will give our community of emerging and scaling brands not only a huge marketing boost, but also peer recognition that they are doing a great job."

For information about sponsorship packages email sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk.

Interested producers can now register to an alert notifying them when entries are open.

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JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



“The Easter enigma”

What's It All About Easter? (to the tune of *What's It All About Alfie?* Sung of course by Cilla Black) often springs to mind at this time of year. Once the haggis, smoked salmon and whisky have been put away following Burns Night, and ditto the chocolates, Champagne and smoked salmon for Valentine's Day, an old retailer's thoughts inevitably turn to Easter and time for more chocolates, Champagne and smoked salmon and, of course, Easter eggs. However I cannot help thinking that Easter is not all it used to be. In the old days it was a sort of Christmas-lite. Lots of decorations, an explosion of yellow, mountains of hot cross buns and an army of Easter eggs. It was a real Easter Parade of interesting products, and Good Friday and Easter Monday were great celebratory breaks from the dull routine of winter.

It still is an important time for speciality food shops and the second biggest festivity, but now that hot cross buns are available throughout the year in some supermarkets, and everyone seems to sell Easter eggs and edible treats in-store and online, perhaps its retail significance has diminished. Conventional wisdom has suggested that it is better for retailers if Easter falls earlier because it is before schools break up, it is closer to pay day and the weather is more conducive to eating chocolate eggs. In fact, recent evidence suggests that this is the case, looking at footfall figures from high street over the last few years. In 2013 when Easter fell on March 31st it was 6.9% up on 2012 when Easter fell on April 8th.

In 2014, when Easter Sunday fell on April 20th, it was 6.4% down on 2013. However in 2015, when Easter fell on April 5th, it was a further 2% down on the year before. In this case the reasons were suggested as election uncertainty, economic worries and the usual old standby of the weather. It is a fascinating aspect to consider when political events are related to purchases in a food shop. Apparently our American food sales have been significantly down since the election of Mr Trump into the White House. How this is connected I am not sure. Perhaps the topic for another article?

This analysis is not entirely supported by our own experience at Partridges, however. Easter sales in 2014 were weaker than 2015 when there was the election uncertainty, and 2015 was stronger than 2016 when Easter was earlier. Hence the reason why I called this article 'The Easter enigma'. It is a very unpredictable time of the year with the weather, the strength of the pound, the occurrence of school holidays and all sorts of other factors playing a part. The week after Easter is also one of the quietest weeks of the year for us as so many customers have gone away, and one of the most depressing sights to behold is reduced to clear or partially damaged Easter Eggs – just like Christmas trees on the pavement two days after Christmas. Luckily we have avoided going down this route in recent years, although might not have maximised sales in the process.

Adopt a positive attitude towards the display daffodils, chicks and bunnies, Easter eggs, panettone and bank holiday pay for staff. It is a great time for families to be together, and of course summer is coming!

British Food and Drink Exports Break £20bn Barrier

British exports of food and drink grew by 10.5 per cent in 2016 to hit a record figure of more than £20bn.

Figures from the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) reveal that exports of branded food and non-alcoholic drink experienced a 16th year of consecutive growth, up 11.5 per cent to £5.2bn.

Excluding alcohol, the UK's top three exports are chocolate, cheese and salmon, with exports of the latter up 16.4 per cent. This was driven by large increases to France, Ireland and Germany.

The findings also show that the USA is now the second largest export market for the UK and the largest outside Europe, with exports increasing by 13 per cent to £2.2bn in 2016. Demand was up in every single one of the UK's top 20 markets in 2016, with China proving the fastest growing market, up 51.1 per cent on 2015 to £439.5m.

The fall in the value of the pound has made essential imports more

expensive and the UK's food and drink trade deficit grew 5.7 per cent to -£22.4bn.

Ian Wright, director general at FDF said, "British food and drink exports have hit a record high yet there is still massive untapped potential. More specialist support for new and existing exporters, with fiscal incentives and financial assistance, would get more of the country's 6,500 plus food and drink producers exporting. Our target is to grow branded exports by a third by 2020 to more than £6bn.

"Competing nations such as France, Germany and Italy offer greater support for training, help with start-up costs and showcasing opportunities at international tradeshow platforms to build their band of exporters. Building on the International Action Plan, we are working with the government and the Food & Drink Exporters Association to help businesses in this sector compete abroad and meet rising demand for British produce."

Simpler Safety Rules Proposed for Small Retailers

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has devised a more simplified approach to food safety management in small retail businesses, including guidelines on how to identify hazards at each stage of the food production process and appropriate control measures.

EFSA states that a combination of managerial, organisational and technical hurdles mean that many food retailers experience difficulty when adhering to the requirements of existing food safety management systems (FSMS).

Marta Hugas, head of EFSA's Biological Hazards and Contaminants unit said, "Some aspects of current food hygiene regulations can be challenging for small businesses, particularly where resources are tight or expertise is lacking. This simpler approach, which the European Commission asked us to develop, would make it easier for such operators to identify hazards and take action to counter them."



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GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL



“The laws of critical dependency”

So, how do you eat a hippopotamus? Same as an elephant. You need a sharp knife, a large table, some determination and go for it one bite at a time. Served with some buttered cabbage and a green salad it's not that bad.

It's like tackling any large, and seemingly insurmountable, task – reduce it to little chunks and just get on with it. Simple. Or possibly not. You have to be aware of the law of Ever Increasing Critical Dependencies that says whatever you want to do will need many other things doing first.

“ You have to be aware of the law of Ever Increasing Critical Dependencies that says whatever you want to do will need many other things doing first ”

Which is what we discovered when we decided to refurbish the floor in our on-site deli here at Olives HQ. Great. Call in the flooring guys. No problem – do it next week. Fine. Just clear the floor and we'll crack on. Simple. Or possibly not.

Where were we going to put everything? That's OK – we've got another building over the road. But that needed to be prepared. That meant we needed a plumber to move some sinks that were in the way. OK. Call the plumber. No problem. Do it tomorrow. Fine. Then we worked out that we needed to make space where the sinks being removed needed to go. Well that's OK because we'd planned that ages ago. The sinks from that unit were going to come upstairs into our demo kitchen. No problem. Just go to the demo kitchen and... Ah. Need to move that stuff out of the demo kitchen and into that meeting room – just for the moment. Oh, and get an electrician to sort the supply for

the hot water for the new sinks.

Fine. But the meeting room was full of the show stand. OK. We'll move the show stand out of the meeting room to make way for the stuff from the kitchen so the sinks can be installed and make way for the stuff from the deli so we can clear it to put the floor down. No problem. Where shall we put the show stand? Looks like the law of Ever Increasing Critical Dependencies was beginning to bite. Then one bright spark suggested putting the show stand into the empty shop. And that's where the second law of Dependent Inertia was

discovered. This law states simply that to do anything really requires so much trouble so why bother as you'll go round in a circle anyway (and no one will really notice the new floor so is it really worth it?). At this point we could have given up and let the second law rule. But we didn't.

We stored the show stand in the van, moved the kitchen into the meeting room, took the doors off so we could get the sinks out and the plumber in, put the old sinks into the kitchen, brought in the electrician, waved goodbye to the plumber, packed the shop and loaded it into the other building and said hello to the flooring guys while we settled down for a nice lunch of hippopotamus and elephant. One bite at a time and with the certain knowledge that critical dependencies have a habit of multiplying, meaning you end up starting in a very different place to where you end up finishing. Which can be fun.

Independent Retailers Fearful Over Impending Business

A large proportion of the independent retail community is expecting to increase opening hours and reduce staff costs and investment once business rates rise on 1st April 2017.

The change in payments is linked to the revaluation of property in Britain that happens every five years, but this time was delayed to seven years due to a controversial decision in 2015. The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) states that around 510,000 businesses will experience increases of up to 300 per cent, although a £3.6bn transitional relief fund has been organised to help hard-hit firms.

Business rates are a tax on commercial properties in proportion to the value of the building, which is estimated by government surveyors. This means that businesses based in affluent areas, especially London, are expected to pay higher business rates.

Jeanette Winterson, owner of the historic Verde & Company delicatessen in Spitalfields, east London, has stated that she will have to close her shop due to the rateable value increasing from £21,500 to £54,000.

According to research conducted by the FSB, 36 per cent of small firms expect to see their business rates increase next month. Of those facing a hike in rates, 44 per cent of FSB members state that their business rates will rise by more than £1,000 per annum, and 21 per cent will see their annual bill increase by more than 40 per cent. The data indicates that of those facing an increase, 19

per cent may consider closing down their business as a result of the rise in their bills.

Mike Cherry, FSB national chairman said, “The business rates system is an unfair regressive tax which hits small firms before they've had the chance to make their first £1 in turnover, let alone profit. The major win at the latest budget to exclude 600,000 small firms from the business rates system remains hugely important. However, our survey shows the delayed revaluation harms too many small businesses who face unsustainable and unaffordable rises.

“This is particularly true in London where we urge the chancellor to raise relief thresholds as part of his Spring Budget. This will help protect hundreds of small businesses currently left out in the cold. A small hardship fund designed to assist pockets of firms throughout the country would go a long way to resolving the anxiety felt within the small business community.”

An area that could see business rates more than doubling in April is Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Gaëlle Coyle, co-owner of Fromage & French, a deli specialising in French food said, “The rise in business rates is obviously going to adversely impact the profitability of the business. We've only been trading for 14 months, and are therefore still paying off our initial investment costs. We have plans to refurbish the shop, but this may be put on hold. We always planned to set up an e-commerce website, but this will now be a

priority in order to fund the increase in rates. We may also need to look at opening in the evening, however this will increase our staff costs.

“Surrounding independent businesses are already struggling despite the fact that Tunbridge Wells is an affluent area. The larger retail chains will cope as they always do. The high street is relatively unique in the fact that it still houses several independent shops – it would be a shame if they were to be replaced by identikit chains. In an ideal world, business rates would be based on a business' turnover and not the rateable value of its premises. This would make it a much fairer tax, and would not exclusively apply to those businesses which trade from a physical site.

“The business has already been affected by the drop in the pound – 90 per cent of our stock is imported either directly from France or via French wholesalers based in the UK – most of our suppliers put their prices up in November and others in January. The rising cost of milk will also affect us, I'm sure.”

Following the rallying of business owners paired with the lobbying of the government by the FSB, Sajid David, Community Secretary has stated that the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, will announce new measures in the budget on 8th March, which he said will form part of a wider and longer-term re-examination of the system. Theresa May also pledged that small businesses facing the highest rate hikes will be helped.

“ The major win at the latest budget to exclude 600,000 small firms from the business rates system remains hugely important. However, our survey shows the delayed revaluation harms too many small businesses who face unsustainable and unaffordable rises ”

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CHARLES CAMPION



“Let me tell you a story”

Some would say that Damon Runyon was one of the greatest ever masters of the short story. He wrote reams of them and was still churning stuff out on his deathbed in 1946. They are well written tales and peopled with stylised characters like Harry the Horse and Nicely Nicely Johnson. Eventually Runyon amalgamated all these characters into a smash hit – Guys and Dolls.

He has left a mark on our language by his use of slang and he gets the credit for inventing the term ‘Hoorah Henry’. In one of his later stories the plot hinges on his cast of horse players considering betting on a particular horse following a heart-rending story about the jockey needing the prize money for his sister’s hospital bills. It turned out that the other jockeys had all agreed to pull up their mounts, the irony being that Runyon’s characters didn’t believe the “story” and so placed no bets, missing out on a sure thing.

Anyone who sells anything is probably aware of the importance of having a good story. Earlier this year there was a short piece in a national newspaper singing the praises of Cambodian Kampot pepper. Apparently, chefs in Paris and Los Angeles will grind nothing else and a chef super star called Olivier Roellinger waxed lyrical about Kampot’s “olfactory richness”. The pepper powerhouse in South East Asia is Vietnam, and while Cambodia produces 20 tonnes a year, the Vietnamese harvested 145,000 tonnes. Scarcity has its price and while a kilo of Vietnamese pepper fetches

around £6 in Europe, Kampot can cost upwards of £150 a kilo.

Kampot pepper has a good story; it is very aromatic, and has been awarded PGI status (Protected Geographical Indication) as well as scooping a hatful of stars from the Great Taste Awards. When any customer walks into a food shop the shopkeeper’s first task is to put him, or her, at their ease. Chat about the main British preoccupation – the weather – is good but what is most needed during this interaction is a story. That hard cheese in pride of place on the counter top for sampling, did it really spend some time buried on a beach above the High Water line? Those Dorset Naga chillies in the basket, are they really as incendiary as people say they are? Are these the ones you should only prepare while wearing gloves? Is that small, gnarled-looking sausage a highly thought of British salami? And what about that Kopi Lowak civet cat coffee? Has each coffee bean really seen the interior of a civet cat’s digestion?

Having a couple of good stories to hand is part and parcel of making a shop welcoming. But do not worry about the whys and wherefores, a made-up tale will do just fine. Customers are much more likely to buy from you if they are able to relate to you. Not every customer is going to splash out on a large quantity of Kampot pepper and a few ultra-hot chillies, but a story could mean that they feel at ease and shop to their full potential. We can all benefit from a good story, just don’t refer to customers as Hoorah Henrys... at least not in their earshot.

Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2017: Finalists Announced

The Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2017 has revealed a list of the category finalists, with the winners to be announced live at the Farm Shop & Deli Show on Monday 24th April at the NEC in Birmingham.

Nigel Barden, chair of judges, Elaine Lemm, co-chair of judges, and Jamie Hall of Neal’s Yard Dairy, were among a host of other awards judges, including Holly Shackleton, editor of *Speciality Food*, tasked with whittling down the category finalists.

Currently in its fourth year, the awards recognise top retailers within the specialist independent retail market and celebrate the best standards, levels of service, product innovation and community involvement in the sector.

The regional winners, which represent the best retailers that stand out among their local competition from across nine UK regions, will be selected from the category finalists and announced live at the awards ceremony, as well as the overall Farm

Shop & Deli Retailer of the Year.

Nigel Barden, chair of judges said, “It’s a joyous journey visiting the awards finalists around the UK and, with the standards being so high, it’s the attention to detail that really makes the winners stand out. It’s also apparent when staff have been well trained and crucially enjoy their work. Inspired, informed and enthusiastic folk behind the counter make a shopping experience so much better. To achieve this sense of nurturing in the Online Category is a piece of modern wizardry!”

“It’s also been marvellous to see the recently established businesses rise to the top in the Newcomer of the Year category. It’ll be a privilege to hand over the accolades at the Farm Shop & Deli Show on 24th April and to witness the look on the winners’ faces that clearly illustrates how all of their teams’ hard work has paid off.”

FINALISTS OF THE FARM SHOP & DELI AWARDS 2017:

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Bondgate Bakery / Hambleton Bakery / Hobbs House Bakery / The Hungry Guest

BUTCHER OF THE YEAR:

Brace of Butchers / Cunningham Butchery and Food Hall / Meat NW5 / The Pink Pig Farm / Walter Rose & Son

CHEESEMONGER OF THE YEAR:

Cheese Please / Cheeses of Muswell Hill / Paxton & Whitfield, Jermyn Street / The Courtyard Dairy

DELICATESSEN OF THE YEAR:

Arch House Deli / Billingtons of Lenzie / Delilah Fine Foods Leicester / Papadeli / The Gourmet Pig / The Norfolk Deli

FARM SHOP – LARGE RETAILER OF THE YEAR:

Bodnant Welsh Food Centre / Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop / Drewton’s Farm Shop / Keelham Farm Shop Ltd

FARM SHOP – SMALL RETAILER OF THE YEAR:

Cross Lanes Organic Farm Ltd / Foxholes Farm Shop / Roots Farm Shop / The Gog Farm Shop / Uncle Henry’s / Welbeck Farm Shop

FISHMONGER OF THE YEAR:

Latimers / Ramus Seafoods / The Fresh Fish Shop Ltd

FOODHALL OF THE YEAR:

Bakers & Larners of Holt / Cranstons / Brampton Food Hall / Delifonseca Docksides / Ludlow Food Centre

GREENGROCER OF THE YEAR:

Andreas of Chelsea / K.D. Davis & Sons / Rafters of Driffield

LOCAL SHOP OF THE YEAR:

FINK / Shropshire’s Own / Siop Pwllglas / StockGhyll Fine Food

MARKET OF THE YEAR:

Horsforth Farmers Market / West Malling Farmers Market

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR:

Brace of Butchers / Court Farm Shop / Donaghy & Sanderson / Love Cheese / The Lambing Shed Farm Shop

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"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

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INFORMING BUSINESS GROWTH

Cotswold Fayre Product Launch Shows Prove Successful

The fine food wholesale distributor's series of trade shows showcased its new suppliers' products to more than 200 different retailers.

The events held in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Bracknell, Bristol and London introduced 35 new suppliers, and 18 new brands from existing suppliers, and presented their products for retailers to sample.

Among the most popular new suppliers at the shows were Great British Biscotti Company, The Snaffling Pig Co., Filotea, Little Turban, Tea Huggers, What A Melon and Sauce Shop.

Paul Hargeaves, chief executive at Cotswold Fayre said, "All of our new suppliers offer something unique to the speciality food market and we were incredibly excited to show retailers what they have to share.

"We have found that offering retailers the opportunity to come and meet all our new suppliers in one place is hugely beneficial to all parties and this year proved to be no exception.

"We are impressed with the number of post-show orders we've had so far and look forward to seeing how our new suppliers progress throughout the year."

Sales of Organic Food and Drink Top £2bn

The UK organic market is now in its fifth year of strong growth with annual sales up 7.1 per cent in 2016, reveals The Soil Association's 2017 Organic Market Report.

The findings show that the organic sector represents around 1.5 per cent of the total UK food and drink market. More consumers are looking to organic, with 39 per cent of shoppers opting for organic produce on a weekly basis.

Sales of organic from independent retailers have grown by 6.3 per cent, according to the report. The

association also saw an increase in applications for certification from producers, with the number of farmers applying for Soil Association Certification up 13.5 per cent.

Clare McDermott, business development director at Soil Association Certification said, "It's a positive time for organic as it ticks lots of boxes for consumers. Organic is extremely relevant for trends towards eating better food, knowing where your food comes from, avoiding pesticides or antibiotics and 'free from' diets. Increasingly, we're seeing consumers choose

organic as a shortcut to a healthy lifestyle and this will continue. Despite uncertainty around Brexit for us all, it brings lots of opportunities too – particularly for export for British organic and more product innovation."

Simon Crichton, food, farming and trade team manager at Triodos Bank said, "We've helped farmers to finance 1,185 hectares of additional organic land in 2016, a threefold

increase on last year. There are a number of opportunities for organic farmers at the moment – but those looking to convert need to have a solid market for their product. Clearly, having certainty around support payments would be of great assistance, but agriculture has always had to take a long term view and organic methods are well placed for both environmental and financial sustainability."

“It's a positive time for organic as it ticks lots of boxes for consumers. Organic is extremely relevant for trends towards eating better food, knowing where your food comes from and 'free-from' diets”

High Street Footfall Decline Deepens

Footfall in January was 1.3 per cent down on a year ago – the steepest drop since the 2.8 per cent fall in June 2016.

According to data from the latest BRC-Springboard Footfall and Vacancies Monitor, the high street experienced a drop in footfall by 0.8 per cent in January on the year before, when it had risen by 0.2 per cent – this is behind the three-month average of -0.1 per cent.

Shopping centres were hit the

worst after experiencing a decline in footfall for the 12th consecutive month. Retail park locations also fell year-on-year for the third consecutive month.

Helen Dickson, chief executive of BRC said, "The relentless downward trend in footfall picked up pace again in January as shopper numbers fell by 1.3 per cent over the same period in the previous year, following a 0.2 per cent decline in December. It was a fairly consistent picture across

different retail locations; with the high street, which saw a modest bounceback the previous month, failing to draw in shoppers.

"January's sluggish non-food sales, which undoubtedly corresponded with the dip in footfall below last year, go some way to explaining these underwhelming figures. Stores bore the brunt of the sales slowdown; posting their deepest three-month decline on record as online was the preferred

shopping channel for the month's clearance sales.

"At a time when retail is being re-imagined as customers seek more engaging experiences in our high streets, town centres and retail park and centres, the incentive for retailers to innovate and invest in physical space is being curtailed by the upward only trajectory of business rates. This disincentive needs to be removed and the burden reduced thereby encouraging, rather than deterring, investment to the benefit of those local communities most impacted."

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Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

Asterley Bros Launches New Amaro

Asterley Bros has launched its Dispense Amaro to cater to a growing consumer demand for authentic alcoholic beverages “crafted by real people”.

Amaro means bitter in Italian and is traditionally consumed as a digestif, but the company’s Dispense Amaro variety is intended as an aperitif option, too.

It is made from a blend of 24 botanicals and Rob and Jim Asterley’s signature vermouth, which is produced from British Pinot Noir supplied by Gusbourn Estates in Kent.

Rob Asterley, founder of Asterley Bros said, “The amaro takes over three months to make using traditional techniques, before being bottled and labelled by hand – showing care and attention right down to the smallest of details. The unique blend is carefully handmade in south London using only the finest ingredients, creating a heady mix that can be enjoyed in countless ways.”

Dispense Amaro is available in 500ml bottle at 26% ABV from wholesaler Speciality Drinks Ltd. asterleybros.com



New Crispbreads from Easy Bean

Somerset-based food brand Easy Bean has added Cheddar Crunch and Seaweed & Sesame flavours to its range of Chickpea Crispbreads.

The crispbreads are produced on a farm in south Somerset. They are made by hand using chickpea flour, making them gluten and wheat-free and high in fibre. The flour is combined with locally-sourced butter and buttermilk to create a varied texture.

The Cheddar Crunch Crispbread is produced using West Country mature Cheddar sourced from Ford Farm in Dorset. The crispbread also incorporates polenta and a topping of linseed, flax, millet and chia seeds.

Christina Baskerville, founder of Easy Bean said, “Expect to be addicted – it’s all too easy to snack your way through a pack. They are good partnered with tomato soup or served with Serrano ham and olives.”

A blend of native seaweed is used to season the Seaweed & Sesame Crispbreads, which are topped with toasted sesame seeds to lend them a Japanese-influenced flavour.

easybean.co.uk

New Organic Crisp Brand Hits the Market

Lisa’s, a new organic, ‘craft’ crisp brand has launched in order to “add a super-premium tier to the UK hand-cooked crisp market”.

The range is the latest development from Tyrrells, which acquired Alps-based organic crisp manufacturer Aroma Snacks in 2016. Each batch is made using Bioland-certified organic potatoes and seasoned with local Alpine ingredients. The flavours in the range include Alpine Rock Salt, Salt Alpine & Vinegar, Emmental & Onion and Mixed Alpine Herb.

The range will initially launch into Whole Foods Market, before being made available to delis and independent retailers in late-March. Packs come in both 40g and 140g sizes.

Julie Davies, brand manager of Lisa’s said, “Organic’ and ‘craft’ are exciting trends right now and the Lisa’s range, made in the foothills of the Alps near Lake Constance using Bioland organic potatoes, allows us to bring a unique and super-premium proposition to the UK snacks

category. Made with incredible Alpine ingredients and hand-cooked to a perfect crisp, we’re excited to create a craft crisp movement to complement the surge in interest in other craft products such as ales and gins.”

lisaorganic.com



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Belgian Boys Roll Out Moustache-Shaped Cookies

Belgian Boys, a company that creates premium European treats, has launched Mini Cookie Stash cookie butter biscuits primarily to service the on-the-go sector.

The speculoos – a traditional Belgian spiced shortbread – are palm-oil free, as well as nut-free, non-GMO and made from 100 per cent natural ingredients.

To run alongside the launch of the product, Belgian Boys has unveiled a campaign to encourage customers to upload a photo of them sporting the

moustache-shaped treat. A winner will be selected each month, with those that are successful able to nominate a charity of their choice for some of the product's proceeds to be donated to.

Greg Gale, president of Belgian Boys said, "We wanted to bring a twist to our national Belgian cookie, the original speculoos. With the introduction of our moustache-shaped cookies we seek to involve the consumer and raise awareness for their affiliated charities."

belgianboys.co.uk



Phrooti Launches Zero Sugar Fruit-Infused Water

Phrooti is a new range of fruit-infused waters that are completely natural and contain no sugars.

Each bottle includes real fruit, fresh filtered water and a touch of lemon juice and natural flavouring. The company uses a process which locks in all of the fruit flavours and removes the sugars, including naturally-occurring ones.

The range is available in Raspberries & Strawberries and Blackcurrants, Blackberries & Blueberries flavours.

Jerome Jacob, founder of Phrooti said, "We're looking to satisfy those consumers who want a healthier alternative that is still delicious and Phrooti provides just that."

phrooti.com

British Honey Company Unveils New Variety

The British Honey Company has released its Apple Blossom Honey, which is a light honey with a hint of apple.

Limited to just 300 jars, the apple honey is raw, unheated and unfiltered, which means that it only undergoes a straining process that removes remaining fragments of honeycomb wax, while still including the original pollen.

Super-heating is a process that the company distances itself from, but some commercial honey producers choose to use. It is believed to break down the sugar crystals and can

destroy any antioxidants, enzymes, vitamins and other beneficial attributes included in the substance.

Oliver Williams, sales director at The British Honey Company said, "The Apple Blossom Honey is an extraordinary, light, delicious honey with subtle tones of apple. All of our honey is handled with care from beehive to jar to retain all of the natural goodness. We have made a commitment to provide only the finest, safest British honey – honey you can trust."

britishhoney.com



Pinkster Releases Gin-infused Jam

Premium gin brand Pinkster has launched Gin Jam, an alcoholic preserve made from raspberries leftover from the gin production.

The gin-infused raspberries are a natural by-product from the production process of its signature pink-hued gin. The raspberries are grown locally to the company's HQ, with The Wooden Spoon Preserving Company producing the jam.

Stephen March, managing director of Pinkster said, "Gin Jam is very much in keeping with the brand's ethos. It's natural, tasty and slightly quirky. Jam appears to be on-trend as a cocktail ingredient and, buoyed by the trade reaction to our own Gin 'n' Jam cocktail, the logical next step was to produce the jam itself."

pinkstergin.com






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GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S

“Changing channels”

It is one thing to make great cheese, another to import great cheese, to handle, store and pack great cheese, but in the end it's all about who buys it.

So much has changed in the past 40 years that very few really remember the past ways until their memory is stirred. It was truly so much simpler, the buying and selling, the cutting and wrapping, the ability to influence the shopper, diverse routes to market, many of those being local.

Less than 30 years ago, 27% of all retail cheese sold was via the counter service route. Today it's less than 6%.

Much of that can be accounted for by the rise of the big retailers, with more than two decades of dominance, the corresponding loss of more than 30,000 small independents, and subsequently the accountants' dislike of counter costs in the big operators.

The growth of prepack, and its convenience for recent generations, the rise of fast food, grab and go, and the loss of specialism. Even now it changes again, as discounters and

high street bargain shops bite chunks out of grocery and the big retailer versus discounter war intensifies.

At the same time, however, it's true that a strong legion of independent specialist food retailers have emerged and most have become iconic outposts of good food, difference, and possibly most of all knowledge. Slow food fights back against fast food blandness and farmers markets, and farm shops appear to more than thrive using some of the long established approaches of the past.

The challenge for all those in cheesemaking, retailing, distribution and food service is to stay in tune with the consumer and hence the opportunity of growth. For without growth there is no long lasting future. Any business that believes otherwise is frankly already writing its obituary. Standing still is a terminal disease.

This may seem a statement of the obvious, however doing more of what you have always done may not in every case be enough, as the world now changes at lightening speed.

The word 'Brexit' is now so

tiresome to the ears, but whatever its direction to success or challenge there will be years of adaption and change to consider. Will European cheese carry a 40% levy if we trade at WTO rules?

Will the booming exports to France and Europe crash as the same level of duty is applied to UK produce, and how will that affect maker and exporter? Sterling languishes currently, though maybe the Euro will have the same opportunity soon, and how will shoppers react to the inevitable price rises?

But Brexit alone is not the only mover and shaker of change. Milk has thankfully risen from its appalling lows, and in that some have taken the opportunity to use it as a price hike moment, despite milk still being cheaper than it was two years ago, when many gave no reduction. But again, maybe the ceiling is being found quicker than expected and with milk price now effectively standing on, maybe a good spring flush will see weakness again.

Online buying continues to be a favourite of the coming generations, who get their news, influences and entertainment via social media and all the modern day channels which many other than the young are oblivious to. These are the buyers of the future, and this tide is rising.

It is wrong to believe that the current no change status in consumer spending, although it's actually flatlining, will necessarily stay as buoyant as that. Uncertainty, inflation, wage constraints amongst

others are good enough causes to keep purses tight shut, and the danger for some products is to outprice the market which in turn may be an opportunity for others.

Exports have been a success story, and British food does enjoy a good well earned worldwide reputation, albeit some pretty poor examples of life quality compromise are to be found in many markets. But trade agreements here too may be in flux for some time, and interruptions in a whole series of markets even temporarily damage some prospects, even in the USA.

It will be the pace of change that will be the major challenge in the coming few years, and new approaches, new partnerships, new packs and products, new routes to market, new thinking will be needed to enhance and maintain the hard work and investment so many have behind them.

Change is now an everyday behaviour, and it need not be dramatic, damaging, costly or change the core proposition, but change it should and must. Whilst the traditional and younger customers who face us and engage may be saying what we want to hear, there are thousands changing channels and it is no surrender of principle, or practice or integrity, to seek to capture them or face a blank screen.

This trades ability to regenerate and be relevant, and to be resilient is the hallmark of a fierce independence to sell the best, to be the best in any channel, and I suspect everyone is already doing it.



ED SALT OF DELAMERE DAIRY

“Championing British cheese post-Brexit”

There remains a great deal of uncertainty since the Brexit decision of last summer, and with the value of the pound down roughly 10% since 23rd June, is now the time to sell more British cheese and think about how we can do things a little differently.

For example, the fall in the value of the pound means continental cheese imports are now more expensive, a trend that looks set to continue while our currency fluctuates and the fallout of Brexit becomes clearer. Continental cheese sales added more value than any other subcategory in 2016, with a 5.7% increase to over £450 million, due to growing demand for cheeses such as Feta, Halloumi and Mozzarella. So

could British cheesemakers look to innovate and embrace Continental style, UK-made cheeses? Indeed there are companies doing this already, look at High Weald Dairy and their award-winning Halloumi or Yorkshire Fettle – a Mediterranean-style salad cheese akin to Feta. Both have been around for years and are well established, so is this an opportunity for more British cheesemakers to follow suit with their own NPD? Of course consumer demand is a big factor here, and it will be a balancing act between satisfying those customers looking for authentically produced PDO-certified cheeses and those preferring cheeses produced closer to home. Continental cheeses have been imported for decades and long may it continue, but equally, UK cheesemakers could address

the demand for such products with excellent homegrown products.

Equally, with the weakening of the pound, should more UK cheesemakers be looking to sell their fantastic cheeses around the world? Larger well-known brands are already selling around the globe, but it could be an opportunity for smaller artisanal cheesemakers to sell their wares in foreign markets. Smaller companies have in the past been fearful of export, but with a growing number of consolidators and export wholesalers, there's a great opportunity to sell and it doesn't need to be a daunting prospect. British cheese is renowned for its quality and now it comes at a slightly more affordable price.

UK consumers are eating more and more goats' cheese, which we believe is due to a number of influences including its prevalence on restaurant menus, inspiration from celebrity chefs and the variety of goats' cheeses available on supermarket shelves. There really is a goats' cheese to suit every palate, whether it be a UK-made Cheddar-style goats' cheese or a more distinct Continental soft cheese, with many more choices in between.

As we all know, the UK's cheese staple remains the trusty Cheddar with it bought by 98% of British households. Cheddar is the nation's favourite cheese, accounting for

55% of purchases, however, it is in decline. Barriers to sales include range rationalisation within retailers, price cuts and lack of differentiation between brands. These factors mean there is less brand loyalty as consumers are driven by price, and a lack of distinction leaves consumers without any other reason to purchase. Cheddar brands need to retaliate with stronger USPs, whether that be flavour profile, format (for convenience), how it's made, where it comes from, or any other interesting references that are specific to their brands, including ethical credentials. Innovation will be important to drive growth back into the sector.

Whether it be continental-style cheeses, Cheddar, territorials, blues, soft, mould-ripened or smoked, there is a real opportunity for British cheesemakers to review what they are making, address current trends e.g. low fat, reduced salt, high protein, convenience, and most importantly respond to what consumers are looking for. While Cheddar remains a firm favourite, UK consumers are broadening their cheese horizons now more than ever. Could this be an opportunity for UK cheesemakers, the silver lining in the Brexit cloud perhaps?

Talk Cheese

New retail perspectives from industry experts

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

The Cheshire Cheese Company Launches Products into Retail

The Cheshire Cheese Company, which specialises in flavoured cheese truckles, has launched into retail after experiencing “powerful consumer demand”.

The company's products had previously only been available through its online shop and at trade shows, but after growing a four-figure social media following, signing up 25,000 members to its Cheshire Cheese Club initiative and receiving positive customer feedback, it has made the decision to roll out its products to retailers nationwide.

Cheeses come in 200g wax truckles or 2kg cutting wheels, both of which are accredited and approved by the Vegetarian Society. Two of its most popular products are its flagship Traditional Cheshire and a Caramelised Onion & Rioja variety.

The Cheshire Cheese Company was co-founded by Richard Buxton and Simon Spurrell, in association with master cheesemaker Dave Williams, whose family has been making cheese since 1876. Richard and Simon combined their knowledge of sales, marketing, graphic design and branding with Dave's cheese making experience to set up the company. It is now its fifth year of operation and has expanded by 700 per cent, employing over 50 members of staff. Laurence Bass joined the business as director for the wholesale division in 2014, bringing with him experience in sales and management for UK wholesale, multiple and international markets.

Laurence Bass, director of The Cheshire Cheese Company said, “We are an award-winning supplier of contemporary cheese truckles with a unique and large range of fascinating variants and flavours that will enhance your current cheese offering and create interest for your customers. Until recently our truckles have only really been available to online customers and at shows and consumer fairs in the north and midlands. We're now widening our customer base and looking to supply high-end retail and gift customers across the UK.”

Bradburys Retains AA Grading

Speciality cheese supplier Bradburys has retained the highest AA Grading from the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

The BRC Global Standards is a leading brand and consumer protection organisation used by over 25,000 consumer suppliers over 130 countries. The BRC Global Standard's guarantee the standardisation of quality, safety and operational criteria, with it now a requirement of leading food retailers, manufacturers and food service organisations.

Bradburys states that its AA grading award streamlines the supplier approval process and reassures customers that they can choose the company with the confidence that all legalities have been met.

Richard Mostyn, managing director at Bradburys said, “This award is a demonstration of the high production standards we work to throughout our production processes and we're delighted to receive this seal of approval from the BRC and to offer the highest-quality assurances to our customers.”



Godminster Receives Brie-Boosting Grant

Somerset-based cheesemaker Godminster has won £51,000 grant funding from the South West Growth Fund to expand its Brie-making facility in Bruton. Work to develop the operation and increase capacity has started and is scheduled to last for two months.

The grant funding will create six new jobs at the company and almost double the capacity at its Bruton location. To accommodate the increase in Brie production, the grant allows Godminster to invest in machinery to turn the Brie trays, a larger brining area, more space to pack, a new fridge for storage and a branded van.

To meet the demands of the new Brie facility, the management team has given the green light to increase its herd by 80 in 2017. This will bring an additional 500,000 litres of milk into production and support the increase in demand.

Richard Hollingbery, founder of Godminster said, “This is a first for Godminster. The management team put together a strong business case for the award and we are delighted to have secured £51,000 towards our investment in our brie production facility.”

The award is approximately 14 per cent of our total investment so it is a substantial and welcome contribution. The investment will also bring additional revenue into the thriving local economy, which is very welcome as Bruton continues to flourish.

“Since we launched Godminster Brie in 2013, demand has been very strong. In the past nine months alone our sales have grown 34 per cent. The investment in the Brie production will increase our output from 250kg a day from 16 vats with two cheesemakers to 470kg a day from 30 vats with three cheesemakers.”

Deborah Bradfield, head of sales and marketing said, “Our Brie sales have been strong and overall our sales have grown by 16 per cent in the past year. The increase in Brie production will allow us to supply more farm shops, delis and wholesalers nationwide. Interest in our products from abroad is increasing because of the weaker pound following the vote to leave the EU. Export to Europe and beyond is certainly something we are keen to develop. Who knows, we might one day sell Godminster Brie to the French.”

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NFU Outlines Areas of Success for Dairy Industry Post-Brexit

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has released its Dairy Board's key areas for success in the sector at the NFU17 Conference in Birmingham.

Michael Oakes, NFU Dairy Board chairman, announced that the three areas are: building better and fairer supply chain relationships; building a better business environment and promoting the best of British.

He said, "Ultimately we've got to be the best we can be on farm. We have a great industry and we don't shout about it enough. It takes nothing to pick up the phone and

tweet positively and we've got to build on that, and we need you, our members, to shape consumer views of the industry."

Sian Davies, chief dairy adviser said, "We have huge existing trade flows in our sector that are already set up within the EU. We are the biggest importer of cheese value-wise in the world. But we also have the second largest trade deficit in the world. We are committed to calling for a future agreement which is as close to what we have at the moment with the EU."

Snowdonia Reintroduces Red Storm

Snowdonia Cheese Company has announced that it will be bringing back its Red Storm cheese, which hasn't been available to customers since mid-2016.

The truckle, which is a variety of red cheese with a nutty crystalline texture, is currently undergoing the maturation process that lasts for

up to 18 months to lend the cheese a stronger flavour.

Richard Newton-Jones, commercial director said, "Red Storm has been unavailable to customers since the middle of 2016. It is an absence that has been really felt, so we're all looking forward to welcoming the vivid scarlet waxed truckle back in August 2017."

Arla Invests £37.5m in UK Sites

Dairy producer Arla has announced plans to invest £37.5m in its UK sites and logistics in 2017, an increase of 51 per cent from 2016.

The investment will be spread across all of its 13 UK production, packing and distribution sites, as well as its logistics operation.

One of its cheesemakers, Taw Valley creamery in Devon, will receive £5m to develop its capacity and harness latest technologies to supply consistent quality for its range, which includes Cheddar, Red Leicester and Double Gloucester.

Tomas Pietrangeli, managing director of Arla Food UK said, "Last year I unveiled the most ambitious UK business strategy to date to make Arla a household brand by 2020 and grow its revenue by nearly a third. This ambition is part of the company's global strategy for growth and will position Arla as the champion of British dairy. By continually investing and improving our sites, we can ensure we grow capacity, maintain high quality of our products and ultimately return the best possible price to our farmer owners."

Peder Tuborgh, CEO of Arla said, "With these investments we continue our relentless pursuit of the goals in our Strategy 2020 to move more milk from bulk into brands and improve the profitability for our farmer owners. You will see Arla take an even stronger position in the market as the innovative farmer-owned dairy company."

JUSTIN
TUNSTALL
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"Cobweb corner"

There's usually a little bit of a shop that makes the owner wince – not for reasons of cleanliness, I trust, but because the offering has become stale. It shouldn't mean your cheese stocks, as common-sense and statutory food hygiene must take care of that; nor the dry goods that have a stock rotation programme and are put on special offer in advance of best before date. Well-considered systems will sort those out.

The items in my shop that put lines on my forehead? Almost always the accessories: cheeseboards, knives, cheese safes, brie bakers, plates etc. They're great for increasing average basket value, have a relatively high ticket value, don't have a sell-by date, require no specialist staff input to sell – what's not to like?

Unfortunately, only some of the accessories we stock will come from our regular suppliers of cheese and other deli goods. That means special orders from companies we only use occasionally (in my case every two/three years). Consequences of that: opening an account and having to adhere to a minimum order quantity that stretches budget and represents months or even years of sales. On cheese, we've almost always sold the stock before payment becomes due; investment in large stocks of accessories sits on the balance sheet. I used to tweak my orders up to the level required to get free delivery, but soon realised that this was short-sighted – better to swallow a tenner or so for delivery than have three year old stock looking tired.

Often bought as gifts, a degree of novelty helps shift these items. My bright yellow cheese-shaped door stops sold briskly on the first order

of 250 pieces, but the re-stock after six months took almost four years to go. Lovely oak cheese boards with wooden mice attached were 'hot' for two years, but after that, everyone seemed to have seen them and sales stalled. Thankfully the mice were detachable! Wooden items don't need to be ordered from large companies; we identified a man nearby who repurposed offcuts from bespoke kitchen installations. Local provenance added to the appeal.

Reinforcing our brand via accessories is a challenge: big cheese retailers such as Paxton & Whitfield and Fine Cheese Co. supply their accessories to other shops, but the packaging, at least, is heavily branded – and is for a competitive retailer (online if not geographically). We explored getting slate boards etched and burning our logo into wooden boards, which help to get the message across. My most profitable accessory is a branded cool-bag which both gets the shop name around and enables people to buy more cheese. Having ice blocks for sale ensures that there's no excuse for travellers not to pick up something that catches their eye.

Obviously, keeping slow-moving items clean and free of dust is essential. I find it's also important to pay attention to any deterioration of packaging. If the box for a knife set or board is looking tired, dented and faded from excessive handling or window display, it pays to replace the box (if possible). Perhaps sell it loose or move away from from full-price items and discount to shift them. Keep items looking fresh, new, interesting and engaging, otherwise we might as well let the cobwebs grow until our display resembles Miss Haversham's wedding feast.

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

BATH WELCOMES THE WIDCOMBE DELI

The Widcombe Deli has taken over the space on Widcombe Parade in Bath where popular neighbourhood cafe Lennie's once operated.

Jon and Nicky Ison ran the original Widcombe Deli from a site just a couple of doors down from the current premises, but wanted the larger space in order to expand their offering.

The shop sells locally-sourced food and drink products wherever possible, including Seven Hills Chocolate and Somerset Hot Sauce, as well as locally-produced marshmallows made exclusively for Widcombe Deli.

Nick Ison, co-owner said, "Our honey comes from beehives located 200 yards from the shop, so we can practically name the bees!

"We are fiercely independent, having worked for large corporate companies in our previous careers. We are keen to promote local

producers from Somerset and the surrounding area.

"I felt that the area needed a place that sold local, good-quality and homemade goodies for Bath's residents and not the tourists. Having listened to what the regulars wanted, it was about being able to sit and eat what was being offered in a friendly and cosy atmosphere. I love entertaining, so wanted to recreate my home kitchen where I can cook

and chat all at the same time."

Widcombe Deli also specialises in home-cooked style dishes, including 15 varieties of quiche, which are baked every morning and offered with a variety of salads. There is a range of take-away options available, including sandwiches, lasagne, shepherd's pie, pastries and gluten-free cakes. The deli also serves coffee that is specially roasted for the site.



FARM SHOP OPENS IN CONVERTED SCHOOL

An old primary school house in Messingham, North Lincolnshire has been given a new lease of life as a farm shop by TV presenter and antique expert Mark Franks and co-owner Steven Kirby.

The Messingham Farm Shop & Café provides the owners with a location to conduct valuations of antiques in exchange for a donation of £1 per item, the proceeds of which go towards supporting the local Lindsey Lodge Hospice.

The premises is divided into different sections, including a café, deli, butchers, antiques centre and indoor flower market. The delicatessen sells a wide selection of organic vegetables, artisan breads

and olives, as well as chilled and ambient foods, and COOK meals from a branded freezer concession.

Penelope Codd, assistant at Messingham Farm Shop & Café said, "Through our time at a local farmers' market we have found out about fantastic products that are produced locally and have built up a supply chain, with most of our products coming from local businesses. For example, all our meat products are supplied by a local traditional family butchers in Winterton.

"The café makes everything from scratch using as many local and fresh ingredients as possible. Our menu showcases many of the items from our deli and butchery counters, together with farmhouse cheeses and vegetables."



REVAMP FOR COBBS FARM SHOP'S BUTCHERY

Berkshire-based Cobbs Farm Shop has brought its butchery in-house, rather than hosting it as a concession space.

To mark the change, the site has unveiled a new-look butchery

counter and enlisted new members to the team.

Available from the refurbished counter are a variety of flavours of handmade sausages, cured bacon, turkeys during the Christmas period, seasonal local game, free-range chicken and dry aged beef that is hung for a minimum of 21 days.

Meat is sourced from local Berkshire and Hampshire farms, which the company believes match its own welfare standards.

Katie Westwood, marketing coordinator at Cobbs Farm Co. said, "Running the butchery in-house means we get full control of the quality we offer and the ability to ensure it matches our own standards elsewhere in the business. Financially we stand

to get a better return than as a concession, but with that comes the additional management time needed to run it effectively.

"We've really maximised the space and introduced new added-value lines to give the counter some visual impact, as well as something different for the customers. We're also pleased to say that since taking the operations back in-house, sales have grown by nearly 10 per cent.

"The supply chain was also crucial to ensuring we produce consistent quality, this took a lot of time and we're now really proud of the suppliers we are working with. Sourcing great meat is one thing, but looking after it and conditioning it is another, and we chose to invest in a proper dry-ageing room where all of our beef is hung to mature."



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DRINKING TO SUCCESS

Welsh Drinks Cluster announced as part of Welsh Government's food and drink plans

Juice producers and soft drink businesses will join brewers and vineyards in a new drinks cluster being developed in Wales.

To be officially unveiled at Food and Drink Wales's BlasCymru/TasteWales event on 23rd-24th March by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, the cluster will be one of a number of key announcements made by the Welsh Government as part of its long term economic plan for the food and drink industry.

There are currently beer, cider, bottled water, juices and wine producers operating across Wales, and the new cluster network will see producers of all sizes and locations come together to tackle sector-wide issues, share best practice and

develop and grow the drinks sector.

Membership will be open to all Welsh drinks businesses with a range of discussions and activities to be organised aimed at unleashing further innovation as well as solving common sector wide problems.

The new cluster will join several others already in existence under Food and Drink Wales such as the seafood cluster, nutriwales cluster and a fine food cluster, though this will be the first of its kind for the drinks sector.

Linked with a range of wider Welsh Government supported initiatives, such as Food Innovation Wales, the clusters provide businesses with the platform and knowledge needed to overcome common barriers and exploit commercial opportunities. Activities undertaken will include



sharing resources, piloting new service provision and accessing new research.

The cabinet secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, commented

ahead of the official launch: "Our existing clusters have proved to be a successful way to create a network across various food and drink sub sectors to improve best practice, share ideas and develop businesses together. With the launch of the drinks cluster, I look forward to seeing the drink industry in Wales continue to thrive and grow in the future."

Andy Richardson, chair of the Wales Food and Drink Industry Board added, "The drinks sector in Wales is hugely diverse with dozens of businesses great and small producing all manner of alcoholic and soft drink beverages. This new cluster is a great platform for cross-sector communication and is also set to benefit every producer individually as well as to push the whole industry forward."

The announcement will be made at BlasCymru/TasteWales, where over a hundred producers will be joined by national and international buyers, journalists, dignitaries and industry leaders at Wales's first ever international food and drink event.

A range of products and creations to satisfy all tastes will be on show, not to mention a number of new product launches and other announcements in connection with the sector. These include niche and artisan producers such as Pembrokeshire Beach Food Company and specialist meat curers Cwm Farm Charcuterie, who will join established household favourites such as Edwards of Conwy, Penderyn whisky and Snowdonia cheese, as well as larger manufacturing businesses such as Fruitapeel and Radnor Hills.

Delegates are due to attend from as far afield as Canada, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates, and flying in from the United States will be John Rodger from Atalanta Corporation, who is very much looking forward to seeing what delights are on offer: "Wales is carving out a growing international reputation as a top food destination with plenty of high quality producers. While at BlasCymru/TasteWales I'll be on the lookout for new and innovative products, with it also being an excellent opportunity to forge new partnerships, and all under one roof."

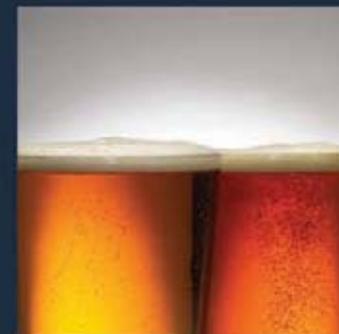


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ALCOHOLIC FOOD

Booze is turning up in places where you'd least expect it, says Sally-Jayne Wright, in popcorn, crisps, caramel sauce, marshmallows and jelly beans – and even ready-meal sauces

WINE OR SPIRITS?

Italian fizz, actually. Prosecco outsold Champagne by 1.7 bottles to one in New Year 2015/16 and is so trendy there were rumours in spring 2016 of a shortage. It has replaced still white wine as the 18-25 year-old female's favourite tippie.

Lakeland reports that Prosecco Gummies by SugarSin have sold six times as much as they expected – this, despite being relatively pricey at £6.49 for 250g and containing no actual alcohol. For winter 2016/17,

both Marks and Spencer and Tesco had own-brand crisps containing Prosecco. It was a surprise to find Asda's Salmon en Croute contained Prosecco and spinach béchamel, but then fizz has always made a meal extra special.

There's also gin. At Mark Sargeant's restaurant, Rocksalt, in Folkestone, I enjoyed Gin Mare-cured sea bass with a scallop beignet in tonic batter. Discounter Aldi has gin-cured smoked salmon for the party season and Ross &

Ross caters for the gift market with do-it-yourself Cotswolds gin -salmon-curing kits, £21. More remarkable are Gin & Tonic Caramel Sauce and Popcorn (both by Joe and Seph's), Gin & Tonic ice cream (Jude's with SipSmith), and Blueberry & Gin marshmallows (the Marshmallowist).

Artisan confectioner Buttermilk and Cornish spirits producer Southwestern Distillery collaborated in 2016 to produce two brand new fudge flavours, gin and pastis. The gin fudge has juniper and orangey coriander notes from the gin, and the pastis has a sweet aniseed flavour.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE TREND?

The rising number of micro-distilleries, Rio and the growing popularity of south American food and drink have given a fillip to the existing cocktail boom. Facebook, Pinterest and *Great British Bake-Off* have seen more and more cakes infused with alcohol. A wallop of booze or bubbles makes sweet treats more celebratory and also less cloying for adults. Lakeland sells a kit of 12 martini glass-shaped pipettes

so you can dose your cupcakes with rum, whisky, Bailey's or pina colada, £4.99. They also sell gin and tonic and Prosecco-flavoured frostings, £2.39.

Premium crisps with far-out flavours are where it's at. At the lunch! show in September, we discovered newcomer Savoursmiths' Changers & Serrano Chilli, and Parmesan & Port crisps. Combine the need to innovate and the celebration of local foods and you get snacks like Kent Crisps' Salt & Vinegar with Biddenden Cider and Roast Beef & Spitfire Ale crisps.

WHERE IS THE TREND MOST SUCCESSFUL?

We think Olives Et Al's Neat & Dirty olives steeped in lemon-infused vodka or gin, £10, will stand the test of time. We also like Boozy Udders' refreshingly grown-up Margarita ice cream (RRP £9.99). The latter also offers Jamaican Rum Punch and Chocolate Brandy Alexander. Lushice's dairy-free Mojito sorbet won a gold star at the Great Taste Awards 2013 and its Margarita a gold in 2014.

WHAT ABOUT THE MORNING AFTER?

You should be safe. Many products contain flavouring rather than the real thing. Gourmet jelly bean maker Jelly Belly has beans flavoured like draught beer, Champagne and a selection box of five different cocktails. Brunch is back and two products to try are Levington Rebel Mary peanuts in Bloody Mary flavour and Stokes Bloody Mary Ketchup with Chase vodka, £3.10.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SALES?

Alcohol says 'party' and improbable new combinations create point-of-sale theatre. But don't overbuy. Some of these recipes are subtle and alcoholic crisps don't improve on keeping. Tip: if customers can't detect the fizz in crisps, tell them to suck a while, then munch. Where products are talking points, gifts or impulse purchases, display close to the till. Best case scenario: they fly out the door. Worst case scenario: news of a mad-sounding product gives you something to say on Twitter.

“ Best case scenario: they fly out the door. Worst case scenario: news of a mad-sounding product gives you something to say on Twitter ”



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'NDUJA (PRONOUNCED EN-DOO-YA):

A particularly spicy, spreadable pork salami you can put on bruschetta or pizza or even melt into pasta. It is typically made with parts of the pig such as the shoulder and belly, as well as tripe, roasted peppers and a mixture of spices

BRESAOLA:

Traditionally made from beef tenderloin that's been air-dried and salted. Recognise it by its dark red colour. Takes two to three months during which 40% of weight is lost which is why it's on the pricey side

LARDO:

Cured strips of fatback. Should taste sweet, not greasy. Fat is where the flavour is. Melt wafer-thin slices on toasts

LOMO:

Cured pork tenderloin, short for lomo de cerdo (pig). Takes four to six months

THE GREAT BRITISH CURE

A customer needs your help to put together an all-British cheeseboard. "No problem," you say. But what if you're asked to put together a sharing platter of all-British charcuterie – would you find it so easy? Sally-Jayne Wright explores the modern British charcuterie revival and meets the key players

Just as there's been a renaissance in noteworthy British cheeses in recent years, so there's been a rebirth in British charcuterie. Your customer's sharing platter could include air-dried beef cured with cumin, as well as salami made from duck, pork and Szechuan pepper, plus smoked lardo – all created by Trealy Farm, a producer based near Abergavenny, in Monmouthshire. Or how about a few slivers of the venison salami which won three stars for Jaquest Foods of Derbyshire, at the 2016 Great Taste Awards? A fine dry-cured lamb prosciutto – from Cornwall's Deli Farm – will surprise the foodies. The taste adventure starts here.

The French word charcuterie originally denoted products based on pork meat or offal. It has come to mean any product prepared using traditional curing, smoking, and sausage-making techniques including poultry, game, fish, seafood and other meats. You'll find hard charcuterie (salume, chorizo, air-dried hams and sausages) and soft charcuterie – pâtés, terrines, galantines, ballotines, confit and crepinettes (like faggots). Before the advent of refrigeration, charcuterie was how we preserved meat. Today, curers use preserving techniques and processes to add personality and flavour.

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What took us so long and why now?

The kindest explanation is that we've always had a charcuterie culture; we're world famous for sausages, haggis, black pudding and bacon. But with the Industrial Revolution there was a rapid exodus to the towns, and our rural traditions fell by the wayside. Eighth-generation butcher Colin Woodall, of Woodall's Charcuterie, Manchester, can trace methods and techniques he uses to his Cumbrian ancestors nearly 200 years ago. Woodall's is probably the only British charcuterie company which continuously has made products from heritage recipes, their Cumberland salami being one such example. Colin's late uncle tried selling his air-dried ham as a specific artisan product in the 1980s but the market wasn't ready.

So what changed? My theory is that the home-grown cured meat revival followed on logically from the move towards local food about 12 years ago. There was renewed interest in heritage breeds, provenance and nose-to-tail eating. Meat producers realised that if they didn't protect rare native breeds, they'd lose them. They had to come up with a plan to make these animals commercially viable.

Plus farmers desperately needed more ways to add value to existing products. Some of them were making losses on their pigs. There are many variables in farming, including feed and labour costs and animal welfare, but if you're lucky, a pig sold as jamon,

salami and rillettes can be worth up to five times the pig sold as fresh pork.

In the noughties, British consumers were travelling and eating out more. Restaurant chains such as Iberica, Brindisa and Barrafina were presenting them with platters of melt-in-the-mouth cured meats. In garages and sheds, chefs and do-it-yourself foodies were experimenting with home-smokes and cures. It was a revolution waiting to happen.

Who are the new British charcutiers?

They are an eclectic mix of chefs, geeks, farmers, butchers, entrepreneurs and mid-life career-changers. Ironically, many of them are based in some of the wettest parts of the United Kingdom, including Wales, Cornwall and Northern Ireland.

The entrepreneurs include Fionagh and Richard Harding of Cornish Charcuterie, near Bude. In 2006, then both aged 44, they left their jobs as City fund managers and decamped to the southwest to give their four children a better quality of life. They'd never farmed yet today they have their own cattle, sheep and pigs on a 350-acre holding. Fionagh – once screen and deskbound – has taught herself how to tackle every job on the farm including pregnancy-diagnosing cattle. By 2011, the Hardings had invested in livestock and food production facilities, learnt animal husbandry, passed a slew of food hygiene qualifications and developed award-winning



MIXED DELI FARM CHARCUTERIE SALAMI WITH GREEN SALAD AND PICKLES

charcuterie products. Richard is planning an artisan food village and also aspires to set up a federation of master charcutiers.

The butchers include the three founders of Cobble Lane Cured, north London, who met while working at Jamie Oliver's Barbecoa butchery, and set up in 2013. They use every part of the animal – including ox heart in their smoked pepperoni – and sell to numerous restaurants, markets, pubs and delis in London.

The farmers include Peter Hannan of Hannan Meats, Country Antrim. Italian restaurant owners challenged him to make guanciale – an authentic ingredient in many Umbrian and Lazio pasta dishes which is increasingly rare in Italy. Unsmoked pigs cheek is dry-cured with fennel and thyme, sugar, peppers, spices, garlic and red wine to produce a flavour that is stronger than pancetta but with a more delicate texture. In 2012, Hannan's Molloyan Guanciale made him Supreme Champion in the Great Taste Awards. "This is an exquisite example of a product that has its roots in Italy but has been made brilliantly in Great Britain," said

Guild of Fine Food chairman Bob Farrand, at the time.

Most of these artisan curers had to start from square one and there were many challenges. First, our damp, inconsistent climate is hardly ideal for air-dried meats. Then there's the fact that recipes take time to perfect and unlike the Germans, French, Spanish or Italians, we couldn't simply reproduce recipes handed down from our great-great grandfather.

Ian Whitehead of Lane Farm Suffolk Salami admitted: "It's not that easy. A fresh sausage you can taste and tweak right away, but it takes a couple of months to make salami. A lot can go wrong; it took about 18 months to two years to get it right." Quality meat is key. With air-dried products, what you put in is what you get out.

Jean Edwards of Deli Farm, Cornwall said: "There's no cooking involved to tenderize sinew, which is why with a lot of the cheaper salami, you end up with a mouthful of chewy bits." Deli Farm uses only hand-trimmed pork leg or shoulder in their salamis. "It does make them more expensive but gives them a superior

texture – we're not prepared to sacrifice quality for cost."

Crucially, novice British curers and smokers also had to learn how to handle the environmental health officer. Many EHOs were unfamiliar with charcuterie production, so sometimes objected to authentic, historical details like the use of wooden rather than stainless steel racks for drying.

Soft charcuterie

Our far more stringent (than the French) food safety regulations are the reason you'll find less soft charcuterie being made in Britain, according to Richard Harding of Cornish Charcuterie. But there are success stories. The owners of Newlyn Farm Shop, Hampshire reckon it was their award-winning ham hock terrine, which sells for £24.99 a kilo, which enabled them to save their pig herd.

Whose products should you stock?

If you fancy giving new British charcuterie products a go, it makes sense to explore the producers on your doorstep. You may like to follow the example of upmarket grocers, Melrose & Morgan, who aim to source two-thirds of what they sell from within a six-mile radius of their Primrose Hill and Hampstead shops. They worked closely with Cobble Lane Cured, Islington last year and as they don't slice meats at their shops, let Cobble prepare mixed platters for their picnic hampers.

Were customers suspicious of a charcuterie product not from Spain, France or Italy? Operations director Tracey Bellow said: "We're cautious in what we buy because our customers have classic tastes



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but it worked well. We source food on taste and our customers trust us. Many local producers approach us with new specialist products which are competitive when compared to the European equivalent, not only in terms of quality, but also flavour and often sourced from specific and rare breed British animals."

At Selfridges cured meats counter in central London, most of the British charcuterie I found was vacuum-packed and on a separate stand. There was however a good range of beef charcuterie by Highland Wagyu on the main counter.

A spokesman said: "We used to do a larger range (of British products) two years ago but they weren't selling. It's a question of perception. People think the Italian or Spanish version must be better." The week I visited, Selfridges London had just opened a dedicated Iberico ham

counter, so cured meat itself is as popular as ever.

Assembling charcuterie boards

If you'd as soon stock the best as the nearest, check out recent Great Taste Award winners. At least a dozen home-grown products took prizes in 2016; they ranged from Red Hill Farm's Lincolnshire haslet to Yorkshire-based Three Little Pigs' air-dried sausage with smoked pimenton.

The best charcuterie boards will offer diners a little bit of everything: cured hard sausages with a garlicky or peppery product contrasting with something sweeter; paper-thin shavings of lomo, bresaola, jamon or prosciutto; small pieces of a pâté or terrine plus some lardo to melt on little toasts. Customers not familiar with lardo could start with a product

like Deli Farm's new lardo salami.

Add value by selling good quality toasts, brioche or crunchy breadsticks. Spreadable chutney or jam is the best foil for fatty, salty meat and grainy mustard, piccalilli or cornichons add texture and tart, tangy flavour.

The nitrates issue

Nitrates give meat a more appetising colour (pink not grey). They help to drive salt in and water out to prevent botulism and ensure every part of the meat is safe. Some customers may seek out meat preserved using plant-derived nitrates such as celery or beetroot extract. It is legal to call such meat products 'nitrate-free' even if it's a tad misleading. Whole Foods Market sells 'nitrate-free' bacon from Devon Rose. Another Devon company, Good Game, claims to use no nitrates, saltpetre or curing

agents. There's no proven cause and effect between red meat, nitrate consumption and bowel cancer, though there may be an association.

The Department of Health advises people who eat more than 90g (cooked weight) of red and processed meat a day to cut down to 70g. As ever, moderation should be the watchword.

Where next?

If the last time you stocked unfamiliar British cured meats you were left with unsold stock, should you stick to the tried and trusted? This is a hard call but consider the success of chorizo. It went from a paprika-infused sausage product popular with foodies to an ingredient so commonplace it's in Asda ready meals. Trends can move fast and innovation keeps customers interested.

Many producers believe the ultimate breakthrough will be when we stop imitating Continental recipes – albeit competently – and create a product with a uniquely British flavour. The equivalent in the cheese world is Cheddar. Others think we should stay away from gimmicky ingredients and make one or two core products very well.

Ironically, the person who may achieve the Great British product is Canadian. Two years ago, a chef called Adrienne Eiser-Treeby set up Crowne & Queue, London. She felt our wonderful British pigs like

Tamworth and Gloucester Old Spot deserved to be made into something identifiably British. Her products include Plum Figgy, salami flavoured with Seville orange, dried figs, aniseed, Christmas spices and mead; and Lincoln Imp, dark red and rich with dried fruit and English beer, sage and lovage.

On Britain's side are creativity, enterprise, innovation and relative freedom. Because we are starting again, we are not yet hidebound by PDO-style regulations dictating what a Prosciutto di Parma or Milano salami must be. The world is our 'nduja.

HOW TO STORE CURED MEATS

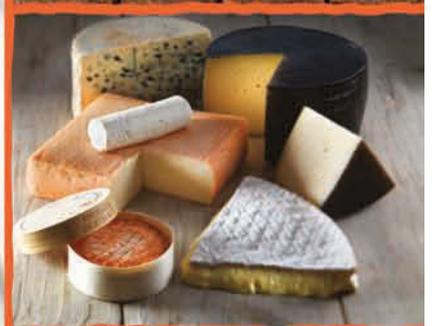
Whole hams and cuts such as coppa, chorizo and saucisson keep well in cool, dark, stable conditions ideally less than 12C and about 70% relative humidity. Traditionally, this is achieved by storing the products in a well ventilated larder wrapped in paper or muslin. Slices are best eaten straightaway as they dry out quickly. If you are pre-slicing them to serve that day, keep them ambient between sheets of greaseproof paper. If not, refrigerate or vacuum pack.

Once whole air-dried products are cut, treat them with care. They may not go mouldy but can easily go rancid, particularly if they have already been sliced.



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PRICING FOR PROFIT

Pricing is a fundamental aspect of running a retail business, but how do you ensure you're getting it right for both you and your customers? Paul Clapham explains

How much? That is probably the most fundamental element in any commercial activity. Until the buyer accepts the seller's price, everything else is candy floss. Your products can be fabulous, made with the best possible ingredients by passionate people who want to achieve excellence, but until the customer can see the value

in your price you haven't made a sale.

So setting prices is fundamental to being in business. To quote Sir Alan Sugar, "being in business without making a profit is not being in business". I would add to his comment that spending a lot of time getting your prices right is essential to making the sort of income you want from the business.

How to set prices

What then are the structural options for setting prices? There are essentially two: cost-plus and market pricing.

Cost plus is by far the easier. You know all the costs that go into your products, the overheads which you have to pay for and the gross profit you aim to achieve. So you arrive at a mark-up on sales which delivers the right figure.

This has the obvious benefit of being simple – setting prices could hardly be easier. You may well have a number of different mark-up percentages for different parts of your overall range, but even then it's still straightforward.

The question is, does it work? The weakness of cost plus is that it is essentially a rigid technique whilst pricing is hugely flexible. Which brings us to the alternative, market pricing. This is also referred to as 'what the market will bear'.

Let's take a case. Using cost-plus you might arrive at a price of £2 to £3.50 for takeaway sandwiches. But that leaves out a mass of factors in pricing. First, are sandwiches price sensitive? Second, how much competition for sandwich sales is there in your locality? Third (and

critically), what about all the added value you offer?

If you are offering a choice of 20 or 30 different fillings and four or more different types of bread, that demands a premium price-point. Your store ambience and customer service may equally justify higher prices; you may have dietary expertise that enables you to address people's needs for 'free-from' products. Above all, your sandwiches may stand out like a pearl in a dunghill as the best in town. Cost-plus pricing can never reflect all those added value

elements in your proposition. As a result you will inevitably be missing out on gross profits.

Who is your customer?

There are other aspects to market pricing. Firstly, what are your customers and prospective customers like? If they are typically well-heeled professionals, foodies or those with special dietary needs, price becomes far less important than quality and expertise.

Then there are your competitors. The prices they are charging are a key factor in where yours should be. However, you may be far ahead of them all on those added value factors. If you can set prices without checking the competition, good luck to you! Few people are in that position and it rarely lasts long.

So how does price influence the way people buy? Here are some stats from Manchester Business School. 18% of people always buy the cheapest; 0.5% of people always buy the most expensive. That leaves four out of five of the population choosing what they usually call 'best value'.

Let's just look at those figures. I am confident that the 18% of cheapskates take those decisions because they don't have any other parameters to work with. Use sampling as a regular marketing technique to win them over. Or you might say, 'I'll cope nicely with the other 82%, thanks'.

The 0.5% who always buy the most expensive are probably much nearer to your ideal customer. Interestingly, they are in many ways very like the cheapskates with the obvious difference that their lack of means to judge makes them pick top price. After all, they should be right: pay the most and you get the best. Logical, no? Some of this is down to straightforward snobbery, but I am convinced that it is mostly about ignorance.

Should you be price-led?

The above suggests that selling on price is a mug's game because it appeals to a small proportion of the market. And yet, no retailer could fail to have noticed that the big players in the market got big by selling at low, low prices.



“ If you don't stick to your prices, why should customers treat them as gospel, and, if you don't, the word will get around. If a customer says something like “the shop up the road is cheaper” offer to call them a taxi to go there. It should make the point ”



John Lewis Partnership (which includes Waitrose) is beloved of its regular customers. It's regarded as quite posh and most of us wouldn't call it a price-led business. But they have been pitching their 'never knowingly undersold' line since forever. Essentially, that's a posh way to say 'best prices'. If you can come up with another such, I recommend you use it.

Case two is Aldi. The finance pages invariably refer to them as a 'discounter'. That's a slur - they rarely do many discounts as this regular shopper can confirm. But they are certainly very price conscious. The CEO of Aldi UK was recently quoted in *The Times* business pages saying, "prices are more important than profits". He was making a commitment to maintaining prices, at the risk of losing overall profitability if necessary. Aldi is privately owned so he can say that with no risk to a share price. Nevertheless, it is an up-front commitment to maintaining their low prices which, I'd guess, will have other major multiples twitching.

A key factor in Aldi's success, one that the other big grocers fail to deliver and something that

There is an argument for *Speciality Food* readers to choose consciously to be the most expensive in their catchment area. First, you will be catnip to the above 0.5%. Second, your margin will be high so you will need fewer customers, reducing your advertising costs. Third, (if you get it right) word of mouth among your local smart set will bring you customers. They will

be demanding but loyal and they can't get what you offer elsewhere locally.

I referred above to major retailers. You don't have to be a City retail analyst to recognise that most major multiples sell on price. For plenty of them it's pretty much their only offer. But even then it has been proven that there are successful ways to deliver it. I will quote two examples.

“ Being in business without making a profit is not being in business ”

SIR ALAN SUGAR

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18%
OF PEOPLE
ALWAYS BUY THE
CHEAPEST

independents can certainly copy is continuity of pricing. When Tesco were getting a well deserved kicking by customers a major complaint was, 'they keep changing their prices'. The perception was that those price changes - sometimes linked to promotional offers - were for the benefit of Tesco and its shareholders, not its customers. Knowing what the price(s) will be before you walk through the door definitely does matter.

Keep an eye on competitors

Stay on top of competitors' prices. It's a good habit to shop their stores anyway, but it applies especially to prices. Follow their advertising by all means, but that will only tell part of the story. You should know where you can boast about good pricing or increase your prices. You also want to know about products that everybody else is discounting. You can follow them or delist brand x.

Do you use 99 pricing? It is after all a standard retail technique. So it must work, surely, if everybody does it. I'm not so sure, across the board. One issue here is the implication that you think you can pull the wool over a customer's eyes by presenting that 1p lower price. I doubt many adults are suckered by this and some may even think 'hey, treat me as a grown-up please'.

Many years ago when I was working in a Yorkshire ad agency I ran a 'Round Pound Sale' for a retail client. It was successful and popular. Several customers said they liked the open honesty of round numbers. You can't pull the wool over the eyes of Yorkshire folk. We ran it again several times, always successfully.

Tier your pricing

Having tiers of pricing is a good principle, subject to shelf space. If you have a standard product and a premium brand, as many people will trade up as down, at least on a trial basis - people don't like to be thought of as cheap. Your Epos system will soon tell you if you should be focusing on just one.

All the sales trainers I've heard have repeated two principles on price: number one, never cave in on price and, number two, price is just a number. In the retail sector, I agree entirely with number one. If you don't stick to your prices, why should customers treat them as gospel, and, if you don't, the word will get around. If a customer says something like "the shop up the road is cheaper" offer to call them a taxi to go there. It should make the point.

Number two is much trickier - it's part of a mindset. It's about selling the benefits of your products and service(s) and not all retailers are good at that. The principle is that once the customer knows those benefits, the price is indeed just a number. But it's a serious sales skill to do properly.

Finally, how do you present your prices to the customer? This is something of a personal bugbear. When I'm buying anything I want clarity about the deal, and that definitely includes price in a retail environment. Clear on-shelf price labelling is good, basic customer service. However, I notice that plenty of retailers don't follow that principle. To my mind, they are trying to hide their prices and what does that tell me about the business? Unless you're at the ultra premium end of the market where 'if you have to ask the price you can't afford it', price your products clearly.

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1 THE LITTLE HERB FARM, HOUMOUS AND DIPS

"Our houmous range is made traditionally and blended into a velvety smooth consistency," says Lindsey Anderson, owner of The Little Herb Farm. "They are perfect with crudités or breadsticks or as part of a canapé. Or why not toast some pitta, cut into strips and dip for a tasty snack? Our chunky dips are the UK's first dip range to add cashew nuts into yummy vegetable dips to add a bit of crunch!" thelittleherbfarm.co.uk



2 KIN VODKA, TOFFEE VODKA

This is a deliciously smooth spirit created in the English Lakes. Its subtle tones of caramel and vanilla, combined with smooth vodka, results in a very moreish drink. It also makes a great Kin Royal when added to a glass of Prosecco. "The versatility doesn't end there," says Judith Wren, founder. "If cocktail hour is your thing, then Kin Lemon Bon Bon (with limoncello) or Kin Jack (with whiskey) make some cracking alternative quaffs." kinvodka.co.uk



3 GREAT BRITISH BISCIOTTI CO, SAVOURY BISCIOTTI

"These are ideal as canapés, finger food bases or used with dips," says Paul Rostand, director of Great British Biscotti Co. "They come in three flavours: Parmesan & Fennel; Indian Spice and Chorizo & Parmesan, with another four delicious new flavours launching later in 2017! All of these are available in 100g retail packs from selected wholesalers." greatbritishbiscotti.co.uk





4 ESPUÑA, TAPAS ESSENTIALS

España has been handcrafting authentic charcuterie in Spain for over 60 years from carefully-selected cuts of meat using traditional recipes and long dry-curing periods. Fosters Traditional Foods is excited to exclusively launch this fully ambient range into the UK independent market, which include pre-sliced, cooking and snack products that are perfect for canapés, picnics and tapas. fosters-foods.co.uk



5 MICHAEL LEE FINE CHEESES, CHARCOAL CHEESE

"This is the first all-black curded Charcoal Cheddar in the world," says Connor Hunter, marketing executive at Michael Lee Fine Cheeses. "A deliciously creamy, mature Cheddar blended with sterilised charcoal to create a unique cheese. Made exclusively for us, it will put a unique twist on any cheeseboard and canapé selection." finecheesesltd.co.uk



6 FENTIMANS, PINK GRAPEFRUIT TONIC WATER

Fentimans has been making botanically-brewed drinks for over 100 years, with every bottle crafted for seven days using the finest natural ingredients. The latest addition is Pink Grapefruit Tonic Water, which is refreshingly light and dry on the palate, making it perfectly balanced to complement your canapé. fentimans.com



7 BALLANCOURT, WILD BOAR PÂTÉ

Ballancourt's best-selling Wild Boar Pâté is only one of a superb range of pâtés, rillettes and terrines which are sourced from small French artisan suppliers. All of the products have high meat content and no preservatives, stabilisers or E numbers. Presented in glass jars at ambient temperature, the products can be supplied under your own label at no extra cost. ballancourt.co.uk





SPECIALITY SPIRITS

The spirits sector is plump with new businesses and innovations, but what does 'craft' mean, and what makes these products perfect for independents?

'C'raft' spirits embody a number of the key touchstones of speciality food. Created using quality ingredients, time, expertise and often both traditional and contemporary methods, spirits are ideal for retailers wanting to explore fine food and drink beyond the conventional triad of chilled deli products, artisanal ambients and quality wine, teas and coffees. And yet, the term 'craft' has garnered its fair share of the limelight recently, with many within the industry and beyond questioning what the appellation really means. Here, distillers and a sector spokesperson come to a conclusion which should sit well with *Speciality Food* readers and their customers.

Alan Powell, founder of the British Distillers Alliance has helped many small spirits producers to obtain licences and approvals from HMRC and advises on compliance as well as international trade matters. He liberalized a lot of HMCE policy when an official in Customs' HQ, but explains "the message took ages to feed through and it took the first wave of small spirits producers – pioneers, really – far too long to obtain licences from HMRC when it was a relatively simple process. It became easier for others who were also inspired by the craft distillery movement in America." In Powell's view, the sector created its own 'big bang'.



A MODERN ICON

Meet Seedlip, a best-selling world first with a dedicated following. Founder Ben Branson talks us through his unique blend of old and new

Seedlip is a world first and to our knowledge still the only distilled non-alcoholic spirits in the market. We have created a new 'NA Spirits' category informed by the 17th century to meet a modern need. Our signature serve (a Seedlip & Tonic) gives those not drinking an adult and sophisticated alternative to both alcohol and soft drinks.

We don't refer to the word craft as sadly it seems to have truly lost

its meaning over the last five years, but in terms of the labour, time and skill required to make Seedlip we are certainly crafted. The peas from my farm that we distill to create Seedlip Garden 108 are handpicked and all the plants we work with are individually distilled using small batch copper stills which takes over six weeks.

Whether driving incremental spend for people who are perhaps buying for entertaining or gifting or

He explains, "There was minimal small-scale spirits production in the UK, so the new producers created their own space in the market from nothing, which continues to expand. It's amazing where the sector is today from just a few years ago. Obviously, there is a finite market for London Dry gin in the UK, but small independents have flexibility to create or recreate styles such as cask-aged gin as well as other compounds and cordials in a time frame that a large producer probably couldn't even begin to arrange an initial product development

meeting. Small producers can also make bespoke products in small batches for speciality retailers which is another aspect of their flexibility and ability to adapt, or fulfil alternative needs, such as The London Distillery Company making gin for Kew Gardens and Fortnum & Mason's own-brand by providing top quality goods in terms of both the product and the packaging."

Powell eschews the term 'craft' producer, explaining, "it's a word that has become numb in any real meaning – look how the major brewers have hijacked it to cash in

Lyme Bay Winery Reserve Liqueurs



Hand crafted in small batches, packed with whole fruit and beautifully presented in a unique bottle, our luxurious Reserve Liqueurs really are the best of the best. Fantastic on their own or add to your favourite mixer to extend the enjoyment.



because this simply meets a need for those seeking something more adult to drink when they aren't drinking, Seedlip offers independents a beautiful product with a strong story that meets a modern day need and supporting them to offer Seedlip to their customers is very important to us.

The future for us is to continue to lead the fight against poor mocktails and fruity sweet childish drinks and raise awareness about the potential of what can be done with drinks that don't contain alcohol. We have more world firsts in the pipeline, some experimentation to do on my farm and an exciting year ahead having been selected to have a dedicated Seedlip Artisan Garden at Chelsea Flower Show in May!

on the expansion of what we used to call micro-brewers. But having said that, it's easy and tempting for the term to trip off the tongue or a sort of shorthand for "small independent". Powell adds, "small spirits producers might best be described as artisans who perform the operations in full, including product and brand development, charging and operating the stills and washing the walls and floor down before locking up, as well as

dealing with HMRC accounts and records and paying the duty. It's a lot of work and responsibility and it takes dedication."

The power of a story

The fine food and drink world is rife with stories, both genuine and created with marketing in mind, so when a product comes along with an authentic excitement for doing things properly one can't help but sit up and take note. Brighton Gin is just such a spirit. Produced by a passionate and fun-loving team of proud Brightonians, this gin is proud to call itself 'craft'. "Brighton Gin is truly a 'craft gin'," says Ellie Dobing, production manager. "It's made with 100% British organic wheat spirit – super smooth, without any of the nasties that can give you a sore head – which we re-distill with juniper, fresh orange and lime peel (dried peel tasted too autumnal), locally-grown coriander seed (the first British commercially-grown coriander seed in over 200 years) and milk thistle, which is indigenous to the South Downs and renowned for its kindness to the liver function! Some gins have more than 100 botanical ingredients but we were keen to make every ingredient worthy of inclusion.

"It's not just the ingredients that have a local origin either," she continues, "the colour of the labels and wax are inspired by the blue of the Brighton seafront railings. Each bottle is filled by hand, we stick each label on and dip every one in wax ourselves: there are absolutely no factory production lines."

In Ellie's opinion, "the joy of 'craftiness' means that there is often a great story behind the product. We wanted to create a gin that embodied the spirit of Brighton: unusual, playful and fiercely independent."

In line with the sector's appreciation of 'playful' spirits and as the artisan spirit market continues to gather momentum, The Sweet Potato Spirit Company is gaining a strong following for its deliciously quirky range of sweet potato spirits and liqueurs. This quirkiness is echoed in the brand's highly successful outing with their distinctive mobile bar and roadshow – this unique service has seen interest in the brand expanding overseas, as well as a number of awards being presented closer to home: "There's nothing quite like a medal or award to boost consumer confidence," says Garry Smith, founding director.

FROM THE RETAILER



Speciality Food catches up with Terry Threlfall, Selfridges wine and spirits buying manager, to discover the value of 'craft' for the iconic retailer

HOW DOES SELFRIDGES DEFINE A 'CRAFT SPIRIT'?

A simple definition of craft spirits is they are made by a distiller who is actively involved in every aspect of the distillation of the spirit, from ingredient selection to bottling and labelling. They tend to be independently-owned and production is handmade and small batch with the raw materials going straight to bottle.

ARE THERE ANY AMAZING SPIRITS OUR READERS SHOULD KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR?

The craft category is booming, so there is a lot to choose from at Selfridges. Few Spirits, for example, produces small-batch spirits like bourbons aged in charred oak barrels, spicy rye and a citrusy whiskey-based spirits. Squadron Vodka which is made in Cambridge from British potatoes and distilled only once (a more traditional method) for extra smoothness. Marylebone Gin, which has also just launched exclusively with us, is made a just stone's throw away

from Selfridges and is a complex blend of over 13 botanicals so there's a great choice for gin aficionados looking to discover something different.

WHAT MAKES THEM SO WELL SUITED TO INDEPENDENTS?

As an independent business we want to offer our customers a wide range of choice and craft spirits enable us to offer products that carry extraordinary stories, limited releases and exclusive blends. At Selfridges we aim to create an offer which allows customers to discover something new and craft spirits make that experience more exciting and unique.

WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE FOR THE CRAFT SPIRIT INDUSTRY?

There is growing demand for craft spirits in Europe and North America so we're expecting to see more products coming from those areas. A few years ago, whisky was the spirit most associated with craft; gin and vodka have rapidly caught up with craft trends and there is currently no sign of the demand slowing down.

“ We have created a new 'NA Spirits' category informed by the 17th century to meet a modern need ”



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WHAT IS CRAFT BEER?

Craft beer is everywhere – in supermarket aisles, pubs and dedicated bars – but what does the term actually mean, asks Robin Goldsmith

The US Brewers Association defines a craft brewer as “small, independent and traditional” (the last of these terms refers to the use of malt). However, precise origins of the word ‘craft’ in relation to beer remain uncertain, but would appear to have evolved from the concept of small, boutique breweries. A rise in American home brewing, predominantly towards the end of the 1970s, led to the establishment of small ‘craft’ breweries over the following decade, before eventually exploding on to the UK beer scene some years later. Today, despite

uncertainty over its meaning, British drinkers have a positive attitude towards ‘craft beer’, associating it with being locally brewed, trendy, fashionable and traditional (Cask Report 2017). Even CAMRA, the UK’s beer consumer champion and protector of traditional styles, has felt compelled to question its own future direction as a result of the phenomenon. So given increasing

interest in craft beer, how should the speciality food and drink sector take advantage of this growing trend?

For Andre Birkett of the Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop, craft beer means “small volume producers using traditional brewing methods” and links with local breweries provide a significant and valued aspect of the farm shop’s strategy. “Craft beers have always been an important offering within our ‘Off Licence’ section and over the last decade, sales have increased by 12% year-on-year. We are very lucky to have a wide choice of craft breweries in our county and even more so, on our Estate. Both Peak Ales and Shottle Farm Brewery are situated within the Chatsworth Estate and are operated by tenants.” Similarly, at The Norfolk Deli, regional provenance is key and only beers made by small local breweries in Norfolk are stocked, a factor which matters more than the ‘craft’ label, as Mark Kacary explains. “Craft beer in our view is a marketing term created for use within urban environments to identify brewers or beers which are not manufactured by some of the beer giants. Our focus is on promoting local produce – ales made using local ingredients, local spring water and therefore with their own unique flavours. We do not see any specific reason to describe

these as craft beers.” Kacary notes further advantages to this approach: “Because we only stock local beers, we tend to know the people who make them. If a definition of a craft beer producer included the fact that the brewer was also likely to be the person who would deliver the beer, then this perfectly reflects the relationship with our producers.”

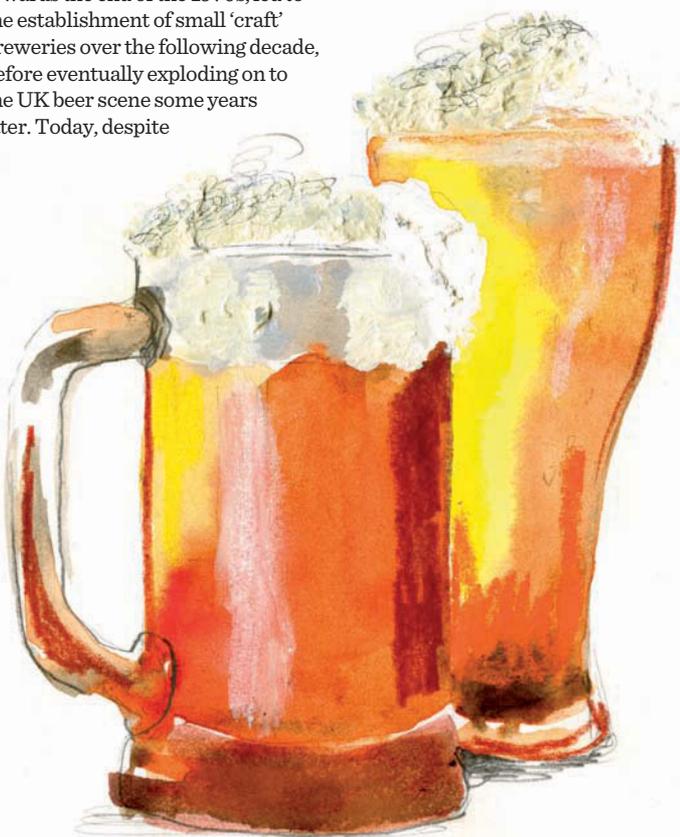
While differing attitudes exist over its usage and resultant price points, the appeal of the term ‘craft’ cannot be underestimated. Indeed, despite only 28% users believing that craft alcoholic beverages justify a price premium, at least 40% associate them with attributes including unique flavours, high quality ingredients, small production and handmade credentials (Mintel, February 2016), values integral to the speciality food and drink sector. Over to Ben Childs of Hertfordshire brewery, Pope’s Yard, for a brewer’s insight: “Craft is an overused term in the industry which has almost lost its original intention. For me, craft is exceptional quality beer made in small runs by hands-on brewers. Small breweries are thriving at the moment, leading the way with great niche appeal, like artisan bakers, butchers and coffee shops. I think consumers love buying from small, often local producers in general. It gives them the quality and variety

that mass production cannot successfully provide.”

Changing tastes

Tom Maule of Northamptonshire’s Maule Brewing Company stresses the importance of having a diverse choice of craft beer attracting people who have not traditionally been beer drinkers or who simply want something different. “I think the wider choice of styles has given cider and wine drinkers something to dip into as well. Across the board, there are some more adventurous drinkers. People definitely want ‘new’ all the time and long gone are the days where a core range will do.” However, he believes that craft beer’s appeal may often be dependent on location: “I get the impression that some traditional shops would like to stock our beer, but prefer to avoid upsetting customers with more traditional views. We sell most of our beer in towns and cities with a younger demographic and booming social scene.”

Sandy Kirkpatrick, of Scottish craft brewer Savour, sees changing consumer preferences increasing the popularity of craft beer. “While customers are becoming more knowledgeable and inquisitive about their beer and more adventurous in seeking out new flavours, we are seeing a demand for quality, consistency and drinkability. It’s easy enough to produce an extreme or exotic beer that adventurous consumers will try once, but will it make them come back for more? Consumer demand for independent, quality, full flavoured local products with provenance is on the up and craft beer is a perfect fit. It’s now a global phenomenon with young and female drinkers particularly becoming much more engaged.” Harvey Nichols’ Ivan Dixon sees



“CAMRA, the UK’s beer consumer champion and protector of traditional styles, has felt compelled to question its own future direction as a result of the craft beer phenomenon”



advantages in stocking non-UK beers. “Some of our biggest selling brands are from all over the world. Undoubtedly our customers show interest in locally produced beer, but they love trying innovative, quality products. We have recently listed a number of interesting new craft Italian beers, which have been greeted enthusiastically by our customers.”

Childs observes a difference in today’s drinking habits which speciality stores can use to educate and inform their customers, especially given the extensive choice of beers now available for matching with food. “People who drink our beers don’t simply want the alcohol effect. They are much more interested in experiencing the broad range of flavours and

styles and are therefore willing to pay more. So the best retailers are highly knowledgeable about their range and can suggest beers specific to their customers’ tastes, including information on food pairings.”

Indeed, themed events like food and beer matching sessions can help engage consumers, as Birkett explains. “We invite all our brewers to the shop and to our spring and summer food fairs to offer our customers tastings and to listen to the stories behind the products.” Birkett also recommends ways of displaying and enticing customers to particular craft beers. “We have a large beer section that gives a striking presence, using storyboards throughout the shop to briefly explain, through text and images, the unique story behind the supplier.

Additionally, we display beers in various locations to match up with other products and recipes and our chefs use our beers in their recipes.” Childs gives some useful advice on storage and display: “Bottles are best kept out of direct sunlight to avoid them becoming light struck. We use brown bottles as this helps to avoid the problem, while clear glass is the worst container for beer.”

What’s next?

What are the next trends in this sector? “Customers are always looking for the next big thing”, comments Childs. “When we started out in 2012, big IPAs were all the rage, but now we find that sour beers and wild fermentations are the new cutting edge.” Maule adds some further insights: “A good guide

is to observe what’s happening in the US market. Although we have a great scene here, they still rule on this. However, I’d like to see a focus on styles that have been devalued, such as lagers. They still have such a bad reputation and pubs treat them as the common denominator to satisfy the masses. We continue to experiment with various unfiltered and unfiltered lagers and would love to raise the profile of this style with both trade and consumer.” Kirkpatrick adds a note of caution: “Although I think the popularity of independent lager is increasing as consumers seek out products with provenance, the stranglehold the big lager producers have on the market makes it an increasingly difficult one to conquer.”

Gluten-free and organic beers, while having a limited audience, can provide extra options for the speciality market, as does a choice of packaging formats, i.e. bottles, cans, growlers, kegs, gift packs. However, seasonality remains a crucial factor in stock control, as Dixon explains. “Our range consists of a broad spread of styles and is reviewed continuously with a degree of seasonality in mind. Whilst there is a natural pattern of darker ales selling better in the colder months, and lighter styles selling better in the warm months, our customers appears to be less tied to perceived rules and willing to break from convention. We have increased

the canned range dramatically and have listed a considerable range of bottles in 750ml format.” Birkett also notes seasonal effects: “We have had a huge sales increase in five litre kegs, especially at this time of the year, with six different craft beers available. These are great value for money starting at £18.50 which is only £2.10 a pint.”

So in summary, why should farm shops, delis and independent food halls stock craft beer? Maule believes that potentially it could encourage additional footfall from a younger clientele in more rural areas where speciality shops are often located. Moreover, according to Childs, discerning beer drinker will go out of their way to find good quality craft beers: “Once through the door”, he adds, “it is likely that they will be interested in other products that high-end independents have to offer.” Kacary has the last words: “The question is why wouldn’t they stock local craft beer? If you’re a deli or farm shop, you should be looking at what is produced in the local vicinity and that should include beer as much as anything else.”



“ British drinkers have a positive attitude towards ‘craft beer’, associating it with being locally brewed, trendy, fashionable and traditional ”

CASK REPORT 2017

SHOW PREVIEW: NATURAL FOOD SHOW 2017

Thousands of retailers and foodservice buyers will be out in force at London ExCeL on 2nd–3rd April. Here's a preview of what's in store at the UK's only dedicated trade event for natural and organic food and drink

Part of Natural & Organic Products Europe, which attracts over 10,000 attendees annually, the Natural Food Show 2017 is a vibrant showcase of the best choice of natural and certified organic products from around the world. Many of the companies confirmed for 2017 won't be exhibiting at any other event in

the UK this year, making it a 'must attend' for discovering innovative new ideas and emerging trends that you won't see – or sample – anywhere else.

Differentiation is key

Almost half of consumers (47%) now want food to be all-natural (up from 44% in 2015), according to

recent findings by Euromonitor. Growing consumer awareness in sustainability, provenance, authenticity, artisan methods and local sourcing has been a big driving force behind the rise in natural, organic, and special diet food producers entering the UK market in recent years. Greater choice has, in turn, only further increased people's



expectations for high quality, good value all-natural food and drink (that matches their lifestyle needs). And it's far from a passing food fad.

Such numbers – catering to almost half the population – make the natural food sector a hugely lucrative, if competitive, marketplace. The importance of stocking a 'market-leading natural food and drink offer' that attracts consumer spend and differentiates from the competition shouldn't be underestimated.

Hundreds of new launches (UK and international) are timed specifically to coincide with the Natural Food Show. It is this broad mix of new products that attracts buyers to the show, year after year.

"Newness is crucial to our business, and nowhere in the UK is there more innovation that is relevant to my business than this show," says Al Overton, head of buying at Planet Organic.

Organic is bigger than ever

The UK's organic sector is thriving, reporting its fifth consecutive year of growth. That's just one of the findings in the recently published Soil Association Organic Market Report 2017. Thanks to a 7.1% increase in total sales of organic products, the market is now worth a significant £2.09 billion. That growth is certainly reflected at the show, which is on track to feature a record number of certified organic products.

The returning Growing Organic Together pavilion – hosted by the Soil Association & Organic Trade Board, is good starting point for visitors to see what's new. It's 65% bigger – featuring 30 organic brands for 2017 – and boasts a prominent new location at the front of the show.

Dash Organics, Carley's, Booja Booja, Queenswood Natural Foods, Yogi Tea, Alpro, Cocofina, One Earth Organics, Mr Organic, Atlantic Kitchen, The Raw Chocolate Company, Riverfood Organic Dairy, Jeam Super Mixes and Infinity Foods are among the pavilion participants.

Pukka Herbs, Biona, Clearspring and Suma Wholefoods – recently named by the Soil Association as the top-selling organic brands in UK independent stores – are also exhibiting at the show.

"Natural & Organic Products Europe is a fantastic opportunity for demonstrating the range and innovation within the organic sector and has to be the main event on every organic manufacturer's and retailer's calendars," says Clare McDermott, business development director at Soil Association Certification.

As in previous years, the Soil Association will also host two

exclusive presentations in the Natural Products Talks Theatre discussing market trends and opportunities: 'Capitalise on the growing organic market – selling organic in independent retail' featuring the Soil Association, the OTB and Queenswood Natural Foods (Sunday 2nd April); and 'A Healthy Organic Market in the UK – the facts and the latest consumer research from Soil Association' including a comprehensive overview of the 2017 Organic Market Report (Monday 3rd April).

What's hot for 2017?

Product trends to look out for include plant-based foods, according to Jim Manson, editor-in-chief at Diversified Communications UK, organiser of the show and publisher of *Natural Products News*. He's also speaking at the show, revealing the latest trends in health food retailing and chairing an exclusive Brexit Question Time panel debate.

"Perhaps the biggest story is in plant-based foods – and I think we can expect plant-based to be a big feature of new product development in 2017," says Manson.

"'Healthy convenience' is also a phrase that we'll be hearing more of as consumers demand on-the-go foods made from healthier ingredients. Fermented foods are still firmly on-trend, and 'slow release energy' is an increasingly seen claim. Low-sugar products are also still on the rise," he says.

"One of the most striking features of recent shows, and 2017 confirms the trend, is the way we've been moving rapidly away from having one dominant 'big idea' about natural food – organic or wholefoods, for example – to something more pluralistic. So we have seen an explosion of food and nutrition trends and ideas – think 'clean', raw, gluten-free, Paleo, alkaline, vegan and so on," comments Manson.

All of the above and more will be available at the show. The New Product Showcase is home to hundreds of the best new products launched over the last twelve months. While a world of flavours awaits at international pavilions from Italy, Mezzogiorno – Southern Italian Food, Demeter Italy, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Turkey, Greece, France and the USA.

"The Natural Food Show is an exciting event that Pret's food team always looks forward to attending. It's always brimming with ideas and inspiration," says Caroline Cromar, group director of food at Pret A Manger.

Vegan World

Good vegan-friendly food can appeal to just about any customer, that's


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the message from this year's new Vegan World feature, hosted by the Vegan Society, which will showcase 45 UK and international brands in a dedicated show area.

Veganism is one of Britain's fastest growing lifestyle movements. There are now over half a million vegans in the UK, three and a half times as many as there were 10 years ago. Add vegetarians, flexitarians and consumers looking to avoid common allergens (dairy/lactose, for example) into the mix, and vegan products have the potential to reach an increasingly wide and diverse buying audience.

Vegan World exhibitors include Bravura Foods (Captain Kombucha fermented and organic probiotic health drinks and Vegan Bakery dairy free biscuits); Gusto Nero (pasta made from 100% organic black jasmine rice); Belvas (organic and Fairtrade chocolates); Pep & Lekker (high plant protein, gluten-free soups); Nature & Moi (French cheeses, spreads, dressings and desserts); Raw Gorilla (organic, grain-free cereals and snacks); Halo Coco (coconut milk-based fruit drinks); Upton's Naturals (meat alternatives from Jackfruit); Vegus Foods (unique Broccoli Sprout Juice), and Follow Your Heart UK (VeganEgg, dairy-free smoked Gouda and pepper jack slices).

Retailers looking for new vegan and vegetarian ranges, should also check out Essential Trading, Alara Wholefoods, Rainforest Foods,

Riverside Natural Foods, The Nut Roastery, Beendhi, Almaverde Bio Ambiente, Eat Wholesome, Cicioni, Rainbow Wholefoods, Snact, Sun & Seed plus many more.

New speakers confirmed

It's not just the exhibitors at the Natural Food Show that promise to draw in the crowds for 2017. The newest additions to the Natural Food Kitchen line-up include celebrated Italian chefs and restaurateurs Francesco Mazzei and Aldo Zilli, plus Gill Meller, head chef at River Cottage, who'll be appearing alongside Madeleine Shaw (author of bestselling cookbook Ready Steady Glow).

Icelandic chef Solla Eiríksdóttir and Dr Rupy Aujla from The Doctor's Kitchen (the show's first GP chef), will also be making their kitchen debuts. As will *Speciality Food's* editor and trend spotter Holly Shackleton. She'll be discussing some of her favourite new product picks from the show at 4pm on Sunday 2nd April.

Returning names include 'The Medicinal Chef' Dale Pinnock, and leading nutritionists Christine Bailey, Oliver McCabe and Nicky Clinch.

Over in the show's Natural Products Talks Theatre, Ella Mills, founder of the popular food blog Deliciously Ella, will be appearing in an exclusive 'in conversation' session. She'll be discussing her

story - from her blog's inception to how the Deliciously Ella brand has now expanded into retailing/catering and product manufacturing.

Register for a free trade pass

The Natural Food Show at Natural & Organic Products Europe returns to London ExCeL on 2nd-3rd April 2017. For more information and to register for a free ticket, please visit naturalproducts.co.uk and quote priority code NPF47.



ELLA WOODWARD, ALSO KNOWN AS DELICIOUSLY ELLA

NEW LAUNCHES FOR 2017

Just a taste of some of the latest NPD on offer this year:

- Cofresh Snack Foods is launching its first certified organic range of Eat Real lentil chips, hummus chips and veggie straws

- Githiga Lennermark AB is launching Purple Tea, which even surpasses green tea in antioxidant composition

- ZenPasta is launching ZenPasta Penne 40%, which has 40% less calories, 50% less carbs and five times more fibre than its traditional counterpart

- Gregory's Tree is launching its organic and gluten-free Blueberry & Raspberry Double Fruit Twists snack bars

- Clearspring is sampling its new, naturally concentrated, Organic 100% Matcha Shot, and Organic 100% Buckwheat Pasta

- The Good Crisp Company is showcasing its new natural and gluten-free alternative to the popular Pringles canister crisp

- Omnivita, the sole UK supplier of Bragg health foods, is showcasing Bragg's new Organic Apple Cider Vinegar & Honey Blend (473ml)

- Pure Nature is showcasing The Heart of Nature range of 100% natural Pure Grain bread (baked without flour or yeast)

- BioNaturae, distributed by Sacla, is showcasing its new organic and vegan range of deli slices, burgers, filled pasta and pasta sauces

- granoVita UK is sampling its new organic Drink Bouillons, available in Hot Ginger, Rockin Veggie and Hot Curry

There will also be plenty of new innovations to see and sample from market-leading brands like Tree of Life UK, Community Foods, Meridian Foods, Marigold Health Foods, Creative Nature, Windmill Organics, Planet Organic, Rude Health, Inspiral Visionary Products, James White Drinks, Bounce Energy Balls, The Metropolitan Tea Co, Gusto Organic, Heath & Heather and more.

“ Many of the companies confirmed for 2017 won't be exhibiting at any other event in the UK this year, making it a 'must-attend' for discovering innovative new ideas and emerging trends that you won't see - or sample - anywhere else ”



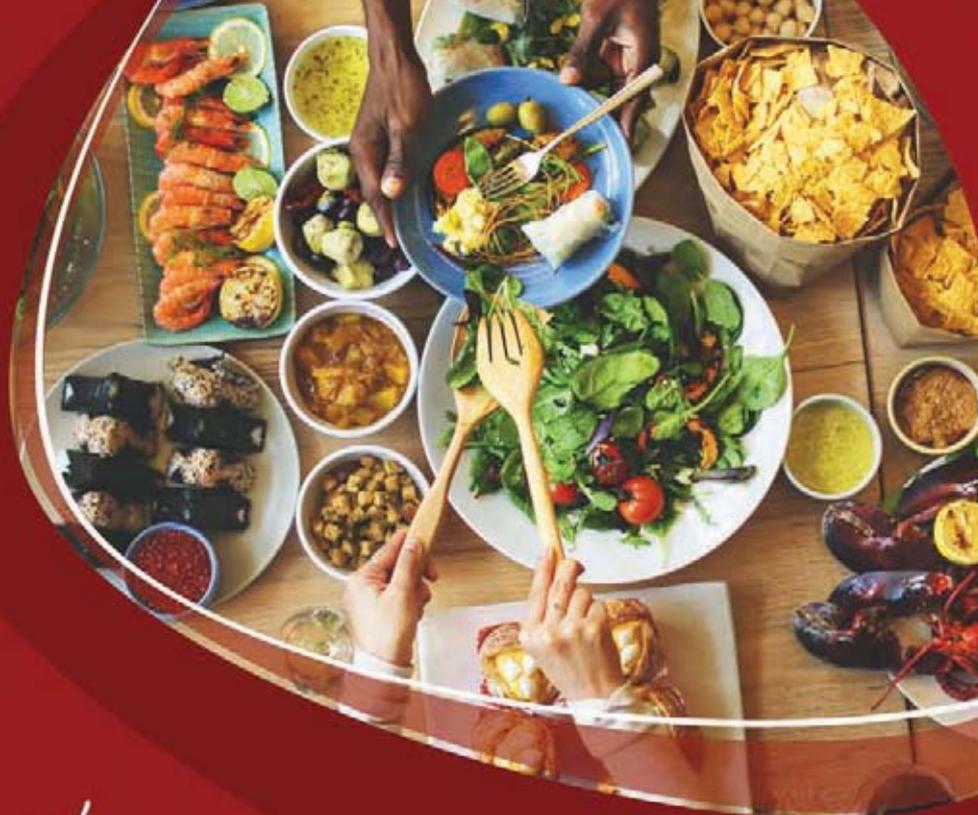


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I've always worked in food. I obtained a food science degree many years ago from Nottingham University, and started out as a graduate trainee with Cadbury Schweppes which is a lovely company – not as lovely as Wilkin & Sons, but not bad at all! At that point they owned Chivers Hartley in Cambridge, which is where I started my career. As the factory manager told me, it was time to get some jam on my boots! This was in 1975, and little did I know that I'd have jam on my boots for the rest of my life. It's true what they say: you get stuck with jam!

My grandmother used to make jam and let me eat it hot out of the pot, and my father was a foodie – he didn't work in the food industry, but he cooked a lot. It was unusual to see green peppers in the Fifties, but he experimented and we ate a lot of food that was considered unconventional in those days. Good food was appreciated in my household growing up; as a family we used to travel to a restaurant in Piccadilly called Casa Pepe. It was unusual to have a Spanish restaurant in London those days, but it inspired my dad to cook paella which was highly rare in the sixties.

I put my professional development down to a love of food. It's coincidence, really, that I have worked in the jam sector throughout my career, and it's a lovely industry to be in. I like the feel of working for a family business, and am glad that I went to a big company first – it means that I really appreciate the feeling of 'coming home'.

I also appreciate that we at Wilkin & Sons can hold our heads high, as the quality of our ingredients and products speak for themselves. Wherever one goes in the world, people know of Tiptree – they've seen the products, eaten them, or even come to pick fruit on our farm. We had the Croatian ambassador here last year, because he'd picked strawberries here as a student in the sixties and wanted to see if anything had changed since then. The experience he had here stuck with him for all those years, which just goes to show that this is a special place.

The fine food and drink industry can only get stronger as the years go on. Some of the publicity about donkey meat in burgers and the like has done great harm to the 'pile it high, sell it cheap' market, so quality is the future.

Education will continue to increase, and something authentic with provenance and quality will always sell. A lot of the recipes we use are very simple, and it's great to be able to say that. It's the simple things which will win out in the end. As a chef would say, if you don't start off with the right ingredients you can't get a decent product. A lot of manufacturers buy drums of bitter orange pulp and peel to make their marmalade, but we choose our fresh Spanish oranges from specific orchards.

It's always been important to me to do things properly. My grandmother had an old recipe book by Countess Morphy from the



THE INTERVIEW: WALTER SCOTT

Meet Walter Scott, the man at the helm of homegrown icon Wilkin & Sons

1930s. That book is now in my possession, however I recently needed to make pastry and couldn't find it so had to look online. I was disappointed to find that all the recipes online are for quick fixes, the cheat's way – nobody wants to make food properly, the traditional way, any more.

It's nice to be making something in this country at the moment, as that was lost for a while as people focused more on service, industry or finance. I enjoy making something tangible which you can feel and see... all over the world!

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

INSPIRATION...

I love reading old cookery books, and I'm inspired by Mrs Beeton and people like her who do so much when they're young. Sir Clive Sinclair who had a paper mill in St Ives in Cambridgeshire when I was growing up inspires me – he was a man who didn't want to take money for himself, instead he wanted to make sure that his employees had a part to play in the strength and future of the business. As did John Spedan Lewis of the John Lewis Partnership, a great man. The people who don't inspire me are those who chop and change, who aren't dedicated and don't see something through, and are only interested in lining their own pockets.

PHILOSOPHIES...

Always treat people as you would like to be treated. There's no other way to do it in my book. I never say 'I', it's always 'we'. Here we don't work for one individual, nobody works for me except me – we all work for the company. You hear people using the term 'my staff', which I don't like at all. We're all in it together and have to make it as enjoyable as possible.

LESSONS LEARNED...

As you get older you become more tolerant when things go wrong, as you see things go round so many times. You also become more able to accept innovation; when you're new to something you are very protective and as you grow you're more open to changes. I've also learned that a career is a long-distance marathon, not a short sprint. You start off thinking it's the latter – you want to go here then move onto the next thing – but you learn as you go along. It feels like I'm staring into the abyss when I think about retiring, as throughout one's life you know what the next step is – school, university, first job, promotion and so on – but all of a sudden your life isn't planned out for you any more.

“ At Tiptree we don't work for one individual, nobody works for me except me – we all work for the company. We're all in it together and have to make it as enjoyable as possible ”

MAKING IT WORK

I started here as factory manager in the business's centenary year, 1985, and am proud to have celebrated that with them. I've held a few positions at Wilkin & Sons – factory manager, production directory, joint MD and chairman. Thanks to this I know the business inside out and back to front, plus most of the people and most of the families. For example, I went into the factory recently, saw a face I didn't recognise and was told she

was a Spooner; I remember working her mother years ago. I know the people and their stories, not just the processes and procedures. There are people in the factory whose parents and grandparents I remember working with. I recall pacing the crate room with a colleague, who was saying "the baby's going to be born today". That baby is now 30 years old and working in the accounts department! One goes through their whole lives with people, and it is a pleasure to be supporting and encouraging them. In most places

people move on so quickly, but here they don't. When I first joined Wilkin & Sons, it was like joining a family; it was a family business through and through.

A lot of the people who work here live in the surrounding villages. The company has a number of properties for employees, in the same way as Cadbury built Bourneville for its workers. We share a similar philosophy – a non-conformist, paternal, liberal type of thinking – as the Cadburys, Frys and Chivers.

Wilkin has protected and grown its business and employees since it began; I remember John Wilkin, who was 70-something when I arrived, telling me that the business had made "steady progress" throughout the years, which I love. I really value his modesty, and the attitude that everything should be done for the long term – a rarity these days. The company now has about 70 properties for its workers, including retirement homes, houses for families and flats for younger workers.

We're delighted to be turning ourselves into an Employee Benefit Trust, whereby every employee who has been here for over a year owns shares in the business and so plays a big part in it. In order to play the long game, to ensure Wilkin & Sons is here to stay, we must put great emphasis on our core business – jams and marmalade. Without these items, we wouldn't have all the other things we produce: the gins, candles and the like. We need to stay true to ourselves and our heritage.

SHOW PREVIEW: IFE

Welcome to IFE, a food and drink extravaganza taking place 19th-22nd March at London's ExCeL

Back for its 20th edition, IFE 2017 (The International Food & Drink Event) is getting ready to open its doors to a fantastic, vibrant four-day food and drink extravaganza.

Bursting with NPD, product launches and category innovation, IFE 2017 at ExCeL London is the perfect playground for industry buyers from around the world. Featuring more than 1,350 global food and drink suppliers, IFE provides the tools to stay one step ahead of industry trends and hear 'hot off the press' category insight.

Inspiring buyers and suppliers alike, IFE 2017 is expected to welcome more than 29,000 attendees from 108 countries, over 35 industry leading speakers as well as top chefs from a diverse range of culinary backgrounds

and channels. With so many of the industry's leading names in one place, attendees should take full advantage of the new Networking Hubs which will enable buyers to create new contacts, and develop existing ones whilst still being in the heart of the action.

The vanguard of innovation

Building on its reputation for being in the vanguard of innovation, IFE 2017 will showcase products that genuinely lead the way in the wider market. If you're interested in snacks and confectionary, look out for Emily Crisps (stand N1648) exhibiting their delicious snacks combining the goodness of real fruit and vegetables with the satisfying crunch of a crisp. Whilst Abakus Foods (stand N2263) will introduce

their dried snack made from jujube fruit, which has a naturally sweet, aromatic flavour. If you'd like something a little sweeter, Buttermilk (stand N2742) have a range of artisan treats including honeycomb, brittle, chocolate clusters and fudge, which have been lovingly handmade in the kitchens of Cornwall since 1964.

Home grown produce

The Great British & Irish Food section at IFE 2017 promises a variety of home grown produce from exhibitors including Barbers Farmhouse Cheesemakers (stand N2628), who have made cheese using only West Country milk since 1833. Whilst Biddenden Vineyards (stand N2748), a family run commercial vineyard since 1969,



produces 11 varieties of grapes that go into their award-winning Rosé, White, Red and Sparkling English wines. Irish exhibitors Celtic Pure (stand N2102) source their award-winning still and sparkling water from the ancient Drumlin Hills in rural Ireland, providing the purest water possible. Finally, as one of the largest cake manufacturers in Ireland, Coolmoore Foods (stand N1718) will showcase their seasonal cakes, loaf cakes, muffins and frozen fruit pies.



PROMOTION

ITA - ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY AT IFE 2017

The Italian Trade Agency is involved in "Piano Sud", an initiative designed to enable enterprises and research systems of South Italy's so-called "Convergence Regions" - Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily - to express their full potential for innovation and excellence.

For this reason ITA is pleased to present, more than 50 food producing companies from Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily in the Italian pavilion.

The focus is on Southern Italy, as its cuisine is full of delicate raw materials, distinctive flavours provided by extra-virgin olive oil and the country's finest vegetables. Strong aromas and flavours, perfectly go with dishes based on fish, pasta, meat, fine bakery and fresh fruit, full of the colours of the Mediterranean landscape.

More specifically, you will find a good selection of products from extra virgin olive oils, to charcuterie, coffee, preserved vegetables, jams, fruit preserves, cheeses, pasta, chocolate, dried fruit, organic delicacies, dried vegetables, sauces, wines and many more.

Come and visit our stands to discover the best of Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicily.



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COMPANY	NAME	WEBSITE
S2620f	Agricola Caputi Jambrenghi Grazia	www.oliobioterlizzi.it
S2670o	Agriconserve Rega	www.agriconserverega.com
S2620b	AgriGenus	www.agriGenus.com
S2640e	Aida Bio SRL Unipersonale	www.aidagiangreco.it
S2604e	Antica Sicilia SRL	www.anticasicilia.it
S2670e	Apulia Food SRL	www.itesordicanusium.it
S2670n	Artibel SRL	www.artibel.com
S2604d	Az. Agr. Berlingerì	www.aziendaagricolaberlingerì.it
S2640m	Az. Agr. di Micco Pasqua	www.olioidimicco.it
S2604m	Bio Organica Italia SRL	www.biorganicanuova.it
S1604c	Caffe' Cavaliere SRL	www.caffecavaliere.it
S2640s	Caffen SRL	www.caffen.it
S2604	Campo d'Oro Villa Reale	www.campodoro.eu
S260k	Carlino SRL	www.carlino-sciacca.it
S2640k	Casa Primis	www.primisvini.com
S2670a	Campania Alimentare	www.campaniaalimentare.it
S2640o	D'Amico-D&D Italia SRL	www.damico.it
S2640a	Davia SPA	www.davia.it
S2670k	DO.DA.CO. SRL	www.dodaco.eu
S2620k	D'Orazio SRL	www.frantoiodorazio.it
S2620g	Farris SRL	www.farrisnet.it
S2640h	Fiasconaro SRL	www.fiasconaro.com
S2620n	Frantoio Galantino SRL	www.galantino.it
S2620e	Gargan'OK	www.garganosapori.com
S2640f	Gusti Italia	www.gusti-italia.it
S2670p	Industria Alimentare Tanagrina SRL	www.tanagrina.com
S2670h	Italians - Traditional Temptations	www.italians.store
S2620c	Labbate SRL	www.labbateolio.com
S2620a	M.G.M.	www.mgmalimentari.com
S2670c	Maglio-Italian Chocolate Since 1875	www.cioccolatomaglio.it
S2640c	Masiello Food	www.masiellofood.it
S2670g	Oleificio San Calogero	www.regnodelgliulivi.it
S2620d	Oliveti d'Italia SCPA	www.oliveti.it
S2620o	P.a.p. s.r.l. "Cara Nonna"	www.caranonna.it
S2640q	Paska' s.r.l. "Intenso Aroma di Caffè"	www.intenso.biz
S2670m	Pastificio Riscossa SPA	www.riscossa.it
S2604g	Principio SRL	www.principiofood.it
S2620m	Puglia Conserve SRL	www.pugliaconserve.it
S2604f	Puglia Selection	www.pugliaselection.it
S2620h	Renna SRL	www.rennasrl.com
S2640n	Riso Ellebi SAS	www.risoellebi.com
S2670d	Rispoli Luigi & C. SRL	www.conserverispoli.it
S2604h	Sagi SRL	www.sagisrl.com
S2620d	Sai Sali Alimentari e Industriali SRL	www.saisali.it
S2670b	Salumificio Rosotta	www.rosotta.com
S2604n	Silarus, Italian Food Specialties	www.silarus.it
S2640g	Sweet Club SRL	www.sweetclub.eu
S2620p	Tenuta Bianchi Conserve	www.tenutabianchi.it
S2640r	UniBrands - Baked products specialist	www.primoforno.com
S2640b	Valle Fiorita SRL	www.vallefiorita.it
S2670f	Vincenzo Caputo SRL	www.vincenzocaputosrl.it
S3640p	Zappala' SPA	www.zappala.it
S2604b	Zarotti SPA	www.zarotti.it

PROMOTION

SNACKS FROM THE SOUTH WEST

Burts Chips tells *Speciality Food* what to look out for at IFE 2017

Hand-cooked for quality

Burts Chips is an award-winning premium crisp brand from the South West that inspires the snacking category with its innovative and delicious crisps. Prepared and cooked in small batches at its South West kitchen, all of Burts Chips use the finest, British grown potatoes, offering maximum flavour and crunch with every bite.

Alongside consumers demand for tasty, premium ingredients, regional provenance is also an important selling point, particularly in today's global market. In line with this, the company supports regional producers to ensure the delicious flavours of the South West are available for everyone to try, including high-quality chorizo from local manufacturer the Good Game Company and perfectly fiery chillies locally-sourced from South Devon Chilli Farm.



Burts Chips core range

Burts has maintained strong relationships with iconic and established on-trade brands such as Guinness. After the launch and success of the original Guinness flavour, Burts extended the range with its Rich Chilli in 2015 and Guinness Toasted Cheddar in late December 2015.

Burts also brought inspiration to the snacking category by teaming up with the acclaimed Wychwood Brewery to create a new flavour: Hobgoblin Spit Roast Steak Chips. As the first launch to the UK snack market for the Wychwood brewery, the product was introduced in 2015 as part of the Hobgoblin's 21st Century crusade to 'Bring Taste to the Nation' and has grown rapidly in popularity since. The product was carefully crafted with meaty flavours of roasted steak combined with Hobgoblin premium ale to create a smoky barbeque finish. Now Hobgoblin is back with a unique and unexpected flavour that combines roasted ham, Hobgoblin Gold premium beer and pickle: Hamageddon.

The partnership with Levi Roots allows Burts Chips to harness Levi's unrivalled knowledge of Jamaican cuisine, which combined with the brands snacking expertise created two authentic groove cut crisp flavours – Reggae Reggae and Caribbean Coconut Curry. Combining the unique flavours of Jamaica with the finest quality potatoes and artisan methods of cooking, Levi Roots Reggae Reggae Groove cut crisps provide a crazy Caribbean crunch in every mouthful.

'Better For You'

Responding to the demand for healthier, pulse-based snacks, Burts Chips launched its 'Better For You' range, Lentil Waves, a pioneering alternative snacking format, daring consumers to be different and leading this budding trend with a lentil-based treat. With consumers becoming increasingly aware of food intolerances and many opting to go free-from as a lifestyle choice, Burts is proud to shout about its free-from credentials.

The Lentil Waves have a crunchy bite, contain 40% less fat than Burts Sea Salt Potato Chips, and boast a low glycaemic index and less than 99 calories per bag. Lentil Waves are available in Sour Cream & Chive, Thai Sweet Chilli and Lightly Salted flavours, complete with the taste and crunch of Burts' traditional chips, leaving the consumer with the same satisfaction as enjoying a packet of crisps, minus the guilt.

Following the successful 'Better For You' Lentil Waves range, Burts has recently extended its healthy snacking range to include new Quinoa Crinkles, available in two enticing flavours: Sweet Pepper & Chorizo and West Country Cream Cheese. With less than 90 calories per packet, and seasoned with natural flavours, the Crinkles feature 45% less fat than Burts Sea Salt Potato Chips, plus are gluten-free and a source of fibre.

Latest innovation

Back by popular demand, Burts is bringing home the bacon in 2017. It will be showcasing two new flavours that will sit inside its existing core range: Burts Smoked Crispy Bacon and limited-edition Burts Fish 'N' Chips. Burts Chips has continued to use ingredients with strong South West provenance credentials to reflect its Devonshire heritage, such as high-quality bacon from local manufacturer Spoilt Pig.



International highlights

Whilst international exhibitors such as Sacoma (stand N1448) will showcase their latest sweet potato treats direct from the farms of Kenya, as well as Donatantonio (stand N1520) who will bring a taste of Italy to ExCeL with their Lupetta portfolio offering authentic Italian options using the finest quality raw ingredients from Italy. For younger consumers, Surgital (stand S3748) brings to IFE 2017 The Aimchetti – organic, filled fresh animal shaped pasta that are a fun and nutritious alternative for little ones. For buyers looking for more spice in their cuisine, visit Authentic Curries & World Foods (stand N2839/a) who will introduce homemade food dishes from spicy chicken jalfrezi to tantalising chilli con carne.



Bakery

For 2017, the Bakery section will be made up of over 40 exhibitors, including the finest artisan sourdough gluten-free bread mixes from Rana's Bakery (N2367), who produce a range of sourdough breads, crackers and pizza bases. While Van Strien (stand N2301) brings guilt-free cookies that satisfy taste buds whilst being full of ingredients that are 100% natural, with no artificial ingredients or preservatives.

Drinks

The ever-popular Drinks section will showcase products from a range of exhibitors such as T plus Drinks (stand N2350), a new generation of healthy, hot drinks made by blending herbs, green tea, natural fruit and daily essential vitamins. All the way from Australia, Up&Go (stand N1926) is the UK's fastest growing breakfast drink. In a handy on-the-go carton format, the oat-based breakfast drink is packed full of everything needed to start the day. For those at the other end of the day, alcoholic drink options will be offered by companies such as KOLD Group



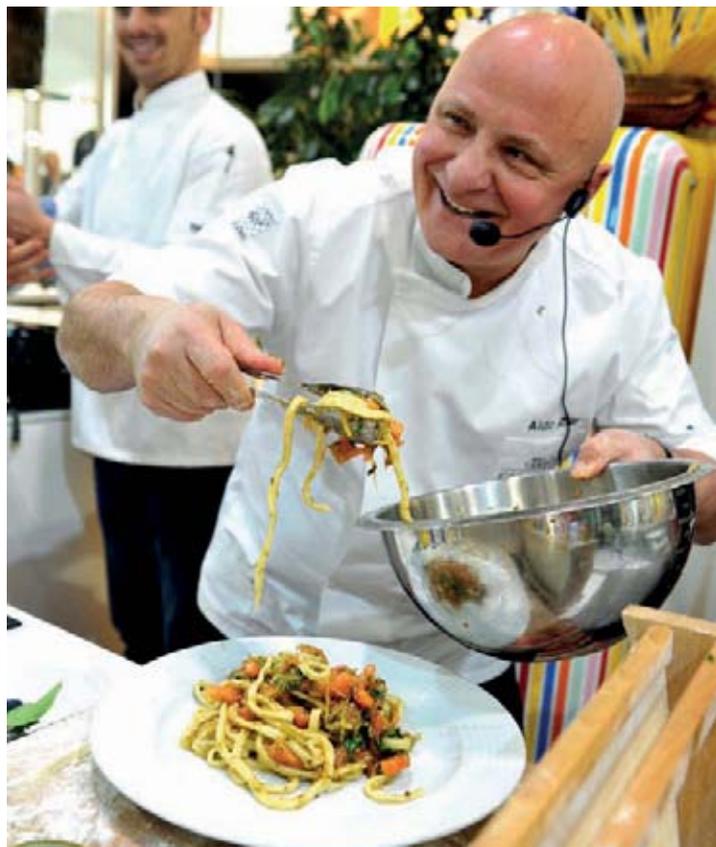
(stand N2143) who will exhibit a creative premium alcoholic drinks range designed for cocktail lovers who want to enjoy the perfect cocktail at home.

Health and wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing exhibitors will appeal to buyers looking for on-trend healthy products. Soupologie (stand N2835), the UK's only superfood, vegan and free-from soup collection, is a must-see for buyers searching for that better-for-you option. The healthy plant-based soups bring the best blends of healthy goodness without comprising on taste. The Nude Spoon (stand N2271) will exhibit their organic, dairy-

free ice cream sweetened with coconut sugar and packed full of nutritious ingredients to create a range of flavours such as creamy coffee, salted caramel and rich chocolate. For more cooking-focused essentials, look out for The DressQuerade Sauce Co.'s (stand N2343) range of versatile and delicious sauces, dressings and marinades made from raw blends of 70%+ fresh fruit and vegetables. Additionally, Crofts Avocado Oil (stand N2525) will exhibit their 100% natural and gluten free oil, which is ideal for general healthy living and a great ingredient for cooking nutritious dishes.

Innovative suppliers will excite with a great range of NPD products.



“ IFE 2017 is the perfect playground for industry buyers from around the world. Featuring more than 1,350 global food and drink suppliers, it provides the tools to stay one step ahead of industry trends and hear ‘hot off the press’ category insight ”

Protein remains a key area as Fori (stand N1544) introduces the UK's debut all natural meat protein bars made only from meat, fruit and seeds. Gato & Co (stand N2260) intend to revolutionise desserts with a range of puddings that are less than 220 calories per pot, made with natural, nutrient-rich ingredients and free from gluten, dairy and refined sugar. Buyers looking to better cater for their vegetarian customers absolutely must visit Cerreto Bio (stand S3240/g) to discover a brand new line of organic, soy-based and gluten free veggie burgers.

What's new

The 2017 edition of IFE will see many new attractions including The Ice Café, sponsored by Bidvest and run in association with the Craft Guild of Chefs (CGC) and British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF). The pop-up café will challenge perceptions of frozen food across both the foodservice and retail markets at stand 2750, located opposite BFFF's Lounge in the Grocery Section. Some of

the CGC's top chefs, including Lee Maycock (National Chairman of CGC), Jason Gordon and Steve Walpole will cook a range of authentic, great tasting recipes daily between 11:30am and 3:00pm for the audience to sample. Using some ingredients that would have been delivered frozen, the Ice café chefs will prepare meals while encouraging discussions about how caterers, chefs and retailers can create tasty and nutrient rich cuisine that creates less waste.

IFE is also proud to unveil two brand new speaker stages – the Talking Trends stage and the Big Picture theatre.

Hosted by Saturday Kitchen wine critic, Jane Parkinson, the Talking Trends stage will see the likes of Jay Morjaria, chef consultant and restaurateur, imparting his knowledge of Japanese and Korean food trends with a focus on dishes great for gut health such as kimchi and other fermented foods. Attendees will discover the wide range of emerging East Asian food as well as the benefits of a Japanese and Korean-style diet for

those health conscious consumers. Amelia Boothman, director of Brand Strategy Insight from 1HQ, will discuss what the big food and drink trends of 2017 will be. Focusing purely on the consumer-behaviour driven trends rather than the short-lived ‘fads’, attendees can learn what innovations can be tapped into that will refresh retail offerings and maintain relevance with consumers. The Talking Trends stage will also shine a spotlight on the newest NPD entering the market, with an enlightening talk by Maria Antidormi, research director at Redblue Research, who will discuss the three steps to successful new product development.

In these changing and challenging times, the Big Picture theatre, hosted by Andrew D Scott MIH, owner of Victus Consultancy, will tackle the hard-hitting issues facing the industry. The theatre's stellar line up includes Dr Rupy Aujla, medical doctor at The Doctor's Kitchen, who will explore the evolution of lifestyle medicines from complementary to

EMMA FINN, CANADIAN TRADE COMMISSIONER



“Something for everyone”

Speciality Food speaks to Emma Finn, trade commissioner at the High Commission of Canada, for an exclusive insight into Canadian food in the UK

TELL ME ABOUT CANADIAN FOOD IN THE UK – IS IT A GROWING MARKET?

As the second-largest country in the world, Canada is lucky to have a diverse climate and landscape, from the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines, to the orchards and vineyards of BC and Ontario, the farmland of the Prairies and the Arctic north. Canada's main exports to the UK are fish and seafood (cold water prawns, lobster, canned salmon, scallops), maple syrup and bulk commodities such as wheat and pulses (such as the strong Canadian flour you can buy in shops). Other less obvious exports include fruit, wine, beers and spirits, beef and bison, free-from products and other prepared treats such as maple water, crackers, snack bars and juices.

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS?

Canada has a great reputation as a beautiful and resource-rich country, and consumers are interested in learning more about what we have to offer. Often Canadian exports are used as ingredients, so consumers don't always know they are eating Canadian food.

ARE THERE ANY GREAT CANADIAN FOODS INDEPENDENT RETAILERS SHOULD BE STOCKING?

Have you ever tried maple sugar, maple butter or maple candy? Retailers should also look out for some of the ways Canadian producers are being really innovative – like creating nut-free peanut butter, nutrient-packed hemp products or maple water. We are creating some amazing healthy foods at the moment.

WHAT ARE CANADA'S EXPORT PLANS WITH THE UK?

We really value our traditional relationships exporting ingredients such as wheat and pulses, but we are hoping to introduce British retailers and consumers to some of the great ready-made products that are coming out of Canada right now. They may be surprised!

HAVE YOU COME ACROSS ANY CHALLENGES WHEN IMPORTING?

Tariffs can be an issue for everyone, but the new Canada / EU trade agreement, CETA, which is on the verge of being introduced, will help with this. Almost 94% of EU agriculture tariffs will be removed and many others will be phased out over a period of seven years. This is great news for both Canadian and British food producers, as well as consumers.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN FOOD IN THE UK?

With CETA we hope to see a wider range of retail-ready products coming to the UK – snow crab clusters for example – and more chefs and operators experimenting with Canadian ingredients on their menus and in their cooking. Canada's food and drink offer is so diverse, there is something for everyone.

HOW CAN SPECIALITY FOOD RETAILERS FIND OUT MORE?

We have a stand at IFE (S3050) and there will be products on display from across Canada including maple syrup, maple water, dried fruit, snack bars, sauces and dips, so bring your appetite!

Gerald McDonald & Co. Celebrate Landmark Year

Gerald McDonald & Co., a leading supplier of ingredients to the food and drink industry, is celebrating 2017 as it marks 100 years of serving the sector.

The fourth generation family company supplies shops with quality ingredients including juice concentrates, purées, herbs and spices, as well as offering dry spice blends and juice compounding.

The company was originally founded by Gerald J. W. McDonald, grandfather of the current managing director. Based in Basildon, east of London, it has convenient access to the UK ports of Felixstowe, Tilbury and the London Gateway.

Maxim McDonald, Director at Gerald McDonald & Co. said, “Since 1917 our mission has remained the same; to source the finest quality ingredients. We blend, grind or mill to our customers' specifications,

with promptness and efficiency being paramount to the service we provide. We deliver juices, concentrates, herbs, spices and essential oils from our purpose-built blending facilities and warehouses to customers in the UK and worldwide. We are also BRC-approved, hold stock and ensure that all of our products are carefully controlled and produced to the highest quality.”

Gerald McDonald & Co. will be exhibiting at IFE 2017, running from 19th – 22nd March at London's ExCel, where it will be displaying its range of herbs and spices, including the curries it blends in-house using a recipe that was created 100 years ago. New products being showcased at the event are Seaweed Purée, Flakes and Powder, Yuzu Juice and Sansho Pepper from Japan, and Pennyroyal Oil.



conventional. Believing the food we eat is the most powerful health intervention anyone can make, Dr Aujla will reveal the possible future of conventional medicine and how food has the potential to become a medicinal tool.

Also new for this year, IFE 2017 has introduced 'Trend Trails'. The simple to follow Trend Trail maps will highlight relevant stands to source new and popular produce. The Trend Trails will help buyers walk a dedicated path allowing them to discover the latest products and suppliers in specific categories such as free from foods.

The all-new The Staff Canteen Live is an exciting demo area where top chefs will cook with on-trend ingredients. Focusing on helping retailers, caterers and chefs develop their skills, audiences will learn practical advice, trending

ingredient combinations and top trade tips. This highly interactive platform will give attendees the opportunity to engage with the chefs as they cook. So far confirmed for The Staff Canteen Live are Galton Blackiston, chef owner of Morston Hall in north Norfolk; Robert Ortiz, executive chef at LIMA; Alex Craciun, executive chef at Sosharu; Sarah Barber, executive pastry chef at Café Royal; Matt Worswick, head chef at The Latymer; Paul Ainsworth, owner of Paul Ainsworth at No 6 and Anna Haugh, executive chef at Bob Bob Ricard.

World Innovation Food Awards

As well as new products from exhibiting suppliers, innovation will be formally rewarded at IFE by the World Innovation Food

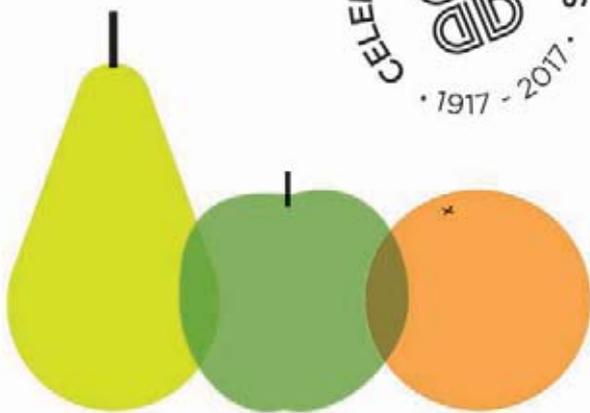
Awards hosted by FoodBev Media. The awards, which celebrate excellence across the global food and drink industry, have 24 categories covering food innovation of every kind as well as packaging, manufacturing, ingredients, waste and sustainability. The winners will be announced during IFE 2017 on the Big Picture theatre on Monday 20th March.

IFE 2017 is co-located with Waste-Works, the UK's only waste and sustainability event for the food industry and Pro2Pac, the UK's only food and drink packaging event. Together the three events cover the entire supply chain; from Farm to Fork to Fertiliser and Fuel.

The one stop shop, IFE, only happens once every two years – don't miss your chance to be a part

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of this food and drink spectacular.

As the industry prepares to descend on ExCeL London for the UK's biggest food and drink event, we look at top reasons why IFE 2017 is the place to be.

Why attend IFE 2017?

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE INDUSTRY CURVE

Arm yourself with the right knowledge and keep a step ahead of emerging industry trends. Food is becoming about more than just fuel and continues to be shaped by the political landscape, consumer behaviour, price and our carbon footprint. Attendees visiting IFE 2017 can be sure that they will be among the first to witness the industry's emerging trends as well as innovative responses to the current challenges that our food and drink industry faces. From alternative proteins including insect, whey, hemp and algae, to convenient snacking on-the-go concepts in answer to the increasing fast paced lifestyle of today's consumer.

SEE FIRST-HAND THE LATEST CATEGORY NPD

Buyers can also be one of the first to see the latest NPD, which will be showcased daily as IFE continues its exclusive partnership with The Grocery Accelerator. The Grocery Accelerator sessions will take place everyday on the Talking Trends stage and shine a spotlight on 20 of the most promising start-up food and drink companies, giving buyers the opportunity to taste, meet and discover.

A LOOK AT THE ISSUES INFLUENCING THE INDUSTRY

While for most businesses in the industry the latest political developments mean business as usual, there remain questions around UK imports and exports. With UK wholesalers and distributors supplying and supporting more than 400,000 retail and foodservice businesses, it is vital they truly understand current market conditions. As the UK government officially triggers the Brexit process, there are many areas of uncertainty for

businesses. IFE 2017 has lined up bespoke seminars to address these issues including forecasting potential changes to import tariffs, the availability of ingredients and access to labour.

UNRIVALLED NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

IFE 2017 provides an unrivalled opportunity to network with suppliers and potential new customers as well as keep up-to-date with competitor activity. The new show floor networking hubs will give wholesalers the chance to build relationships with the industry's finest whilst being in the heart of the action.

IFE ONLINE

Register now via the IFE website (ife.co.uk) for your free entrance badge and save paying £25 on-the-door

Don't forget to follow the action on Twitter @IFEexhibition using #IFE17 and #IFEIntro

SORAYA GADELRAH EVENT DIRECTOR



"Running for 40 years, IFE is proud to have established its reputation for showcasing the most innovative products entering the market. IFE brings together buyers and suppliers from across the globe and offers a unique networking opportunity. Each year we have 100s of repeat exhibitors and we believe that is testament to the event's standing within the industry. We are proud of IFE's ability to cover such a broad cross section of the food and drink sector – from emerging artisan products that are new to the market through to familiar and well-established brand names.

IFE is truly an international show with visitors originating from around 60 different countries. Visiting buyers come from every background, from multiple grocers to independent retailers and everything in-between. We also attract a strong out of home audience from foodservice and hospitality to more mainstream cost sector caterers. Importers and exporters as well as manufacturers also attend as

visitors. As it's a trade only event, suppliers can have confidence in the calibre of buyer visiting their stands.

Every year, we listen to both exhibitor and visitor feedback. We want to make sure that everyone feels that they have gained something from their IFE experience whether its developing new sales leads, finding the latest, most innovative product or to keeping up to date with the latest category insight.

Additionally, the co-location of IFE, Pro2Pac and Waste-Works means that our exhibitors benefit from their increased footfall. The shows also benefit from extended industry knowledge and a time effective opportunity to view first hand the latest innovation from across the industry. Whether that's handy food-to-go packaging, the newest waste reduction solution or the most interesting way to add alternative proteins into your diet, IFE, Pro2Pac and Waste-Works have it covered."

“ Building on its reputation for being in the vanguard of innovation, IFE 2017 will showcase products that genuinely lead the way in the wider market. Inspiring buyers and suppliers alike, it is expected to welcome more than 29,000 attendees from 108 countries ”

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EMERGING FROM THE EAST

From quality curry kits to aromatic jars of pastes, the Asian food and drink market continues to deliver on innovation, flavour and convenience

The UK seems captivated by the cuisine of Asia, with many reaching for the wok or bamboo steamer basket to recreate the aromatic, flavour-forward cuisine at home. It's through visiting Asian-focused restaurants, street food stands and pop-up cafés that the British consumer is whetting its appetite for the diverse flavours that the countries of the continent are famous for.

In fact, myriad examples of Asian food and drink were listed in nearly every food publication or website's trend forecast for 2017. Examples range from Filipino food to Japanese edamame noodles,

from kombucha fermented tea to bibimbap from Korea – consumers are constantly looking to expand their gastronomical horizons and Asian cuisine caters for this ever-growing demand.

That's why it's important that your Asian food and drink section is well-stocked and able to entice the most unenterprising of home cooks. The Asian food sector is one of the best for supplying weary or time-constrained shoppers with all that they need to cook up a curry, broth or noodle dish in no time. This needn't be a section that dominates your shop's space, but it's well worth providing varied items to appeal to curious foodies.

Taste of Thailand

Wales-based The Coconut Company started selling its range of Thai curry pastes, sauces, marinades and cooking kits after the husband and wife team behind the brand experienced a strong demand from customers wanting to take dishes from their Thai restaurant back home with them. "All of our sauces and pastes are basically replicas of what we serve in the restaurant," says Paul Withington, director of The Coconut Company. "That has always been our aim; to make it as easy as possible for people to replicate the food we serve at the restaurant at home. I guess the product development started 10 years ago when we opened the restaurant. We then slowly worked our way through the the restaurant's menu launching the pastes and sauces. We're proud of the fact that although our brand is Thai, all of our products are made here in Wales."

The range includes curry pastes, stir-fry sauces, dipping sauces, a Pad Thai cooking kit and a newly-launched Miso, Sesame & Lemon Dressing, all of which were produced with the intention to offer high-end restaurant-quality products for customers craving the authentic flavours of Thailand. "We have recently rebranded and updated our packaging, which we're really pleased with as they have a great shelf presence," explains Paul. "The great feedback we receive from

consumers and shops spurs us on to keep producing the sauces and launching brand new products – our sales seem to have taken a leap in the last six months, which is really encouraging."

Another brand that aims to satisfy the British public's craving for food from Thailand is Thai Taste, which sells a range of over 50 easy-to-use and authentic products. The company developed its products with the time-poor British consumer in mind, so popular dishes like Thai red curry, green curry and Pad Thai can easily be cooked at home using the brand's meal kits, ingredients, pastes, sauces and condiments.

Consumer demand for Asian foods coupled with keeping tabs on emerging trends is what influences the brand when developing new products. "We review both Asian flavours and trends, local shopping habits and consumer behaviours – such as street food and the rise of free-from cuisine – on an ongoing basis and feed these insights into an innovation pipeline of continuous development of new products for the UK consumers," explains Nick Thomas, sales and marketing director at Empire Bespoke Foods, owner of Thai Taste. "On a recent trip to Bangkok, we identified many flavours and traditional dishes that will complement the diverse Thai flavours in our core product range and provide inspiration for



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“World cuisines are booming due to long distance travel destinations becoming more common, global street food increasingly appearing in British food markets and celebrity chefs helping to expand the multicultural tastes in the UK”

mealtimes. We work closely with our manufacturers in Thailand to develop products that align with UK trends. As consumers get even more familiar and confident with Thai food and the healthy lifestyle aspects it taps into, Thai Taste aims to lead the way in welcoming the next phase of Thai cuisine, while bringing new shoppers to the category.”

With the range being predominantly vegan and vegetarian and completely free-from, as well as free of artificial colours, flavourings or preservatives, Nick believes that the brand can help independent retailers to attract health-conscious consumers and people with intolerances. “Especially those who are embracing international cuisines and want to avoid potentially high fat and salt ready-meal solutions, but need a little support when it comes to cooking and preparing at home,” explains Nick. “World cuisines are booming due to long distance travel destinations becoming more common, global street food increasingly appearing in British food markets and celebrity chefs helping to expand the multicultural tastes in the UK. Brands within the category must look to develop their products’ flavour profiles and availability of harder-to-find authentic ingredients to appeal to the modern consumer with a more sophisticated palate.”

Individual ingredients

EHL Ingredients is an importer, blender and packer of international ingredients, with an extensive range consisting of 300 ingredients, including ground and whole spices, mixed seasonings, herbs, seeds, dried fruits, nuts, lentils and dehydrated vegetables. Tasneem



Backhouse, joint managing director of the business, understands the demand for Asian ingredients in the UK. “From our own

sales patterns we can tell that the Asian food market is still booming,” she says. “We’ve seen a steady increase in demand for key Asian spices and ingredients; such as coriander, chillies, cardamom and lemongrass over the last two years, with overall demand for Asian ingredients increasing by 10% since 2015.”

With that steady growth within the sector taken into consideration, Tasneem believes there are also trends within the Asian food trend to pay close attention to, starting with free-from. “The gluten-free trend shows no signs of slowing down in 2017,” she says. “As more people turn to alternative grains and flours, more and more options are popping up on shelves. Among the great grains gathering steam this year is Teff, a gluten-free grain which is ground into a flour that can be used for baking and thickening.

It is higher in protein than regular wheat flour and has plenty of calcium, fibre and iron. This new ‘super grain’ hails from the plains of Ethiopia and ranks as the smallest known grain in the world – even smaller than a poppy seed.”

When quizzed on how retailers can entice customers who aren’t very responsive when it comes to Asian ingredients, Tasneem offers some sage advice. “It’s all about samples, samples and more samples,” she explains. “The best way to get people to try new and exotic herbs and spices is to show them how they can be used in everyday cooking and give them the opportunity to taste them. We think it’s incredibly important to introduce as many people as possible to new flavours from Asia and around the world. Not only will this broaden horizons and tastes, but it will also greatly enhance simple ingredients and meals. Couscous and quinoa, for example, can be spiced up with a touch of chilli powder, and plain vegetables can be made much more exciting with just a sprinkle of spices – all it takes is a little experimentation and a willingness to try something new.”

Dim sum is a style of Chinese cuisine that has become hugely popular across the nation over the last few years thanks to its sharing-sized portions. Royal Gourmet’s extensive collection of dim sum is manufactured for wholesale distribution and also specially

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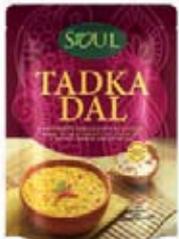
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produced for catering, includes best-sellers such as Aromatic Duck, Boneless Roast Duck, Barbecue Pork and Prawn Dumplings. "With our consistent innovation and unwavering commitment to producing the finest quality dim sum, the company has been growing from strength-to-strength since we established," says Andrew Gosh, technical manager at Royal Gourmet. "The brand has grown into being commonly and widely known within the dim sum producing industry and has become a familiar and trusted household name for unique, quality and freshly-made produce."

The ubiquitousness of Chinese food has impacted Royal Gourmet in a fruitful way, explains Andrew. "Chinese food remains very popular with people in the west," he says. "Think of the popular word 'takeaway' – the first thing that comes to mind is Chinese. This is very beneficial to us, and we always aim to introduce more options. With over 30 different types of products, we hope that many of our customers get to taste the real side

of Chinese food, which has much more of an eastern flavour."

Straight from Singapore

A brand that is currently gathering momentum in food-loving circles is Nonya Secrets, due to its eclectic array of flavoursome sauces, oils and curry mixes that all come in colourfully-labelled jars. Founder of



the brand, Maureen Suan Neo, spent her childhood in Singapore discovering the flavours of the

country through her family's cooking. "My mother was the perfect teacher," she says. "I learnt the full and varied repertoire of Nonya specialities that had been handed down through generations of my female descendants."

Much like other oriental food brands, Maureen originally sold restaurant-cooked food to hungry diners. "During the 1980s and 90s my husband and I opened five restaurants in London, serving classic Nonya cuisine," she explains. "When we decided to

look for a new challenge away from hospitality, adapting our handmade recipes into ready-to-use cooking sauces made perfect sense."

Maureen believes that the Nonya style of cooking is new to the British palate. "There are many Southeast Asian products now widely available on the market," she says. "However, authentic Nonya cuisine is still under-represented. It is a six centuries old fusion of Chinese ingredients, with various spices and cooking techniques used by Malay and Indonesian communities."

Maureen lists four key selling points that makes Nonya Secrets a great item to stock for independent retailers. "Firstly, our products are made to entirely authentic recipes using natural ingredients," she explains. "Secondly, they offer customers a convenient solution that doesn't compromise on quality. Thirdly, the branding looks great in a retail environment. Lastly, and most importantly, they taste incredible! I have been honing my skills for many years and now all the hard work is done for you."

“We’ve seen a steady increase in demand for key Asian spices and ingredients such as coriander, chillies, cardamom and lemongrass over the last two years, with overall demand for Asian ingredients increasing by 10% since 2015”

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Britain's high streets have transformed over the last few years. Whether you're strolling down a quaint cobbled street or tackling a bustling town centre, a coffee shop (or three) tends to be in near sight wherever you go. In fact, figures released by the Local Data Company show that between 2011 and 2016 there was a 31% increase in the number of coffee shops on UK high streets, and this doesn't just comprise of the chains like Starbucks and Costa Coffee, but independent coffee shops, too.

Although coffeehouses were prevalent in Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries, experts have traced the start of the modern-day movement back to the 1990s, when programmes such as *Seinfeld* and *Friends* presented UK viewers with a more sophisticated 'café culture'. This movement caused coffee shops to overtake the pub as the new go-to meet-up location – especially amongst millennials – with Jeffrey Young, chief executive of Allegra Strategies, deeming them “the new local”.

However, it was not until the last few years that speciality coffee has become such a booming sector. In fact, the current era has been named ‘the third wave of coffee’. This is a movement that acknowledges coffee as an artisanal foodstuff, eschewing its reputation as a commodity, and eliciting respect for its foodie characteristics in the same way as wine or fine cheeses do.

Embrace the third wave

One company that has seen the demand for independent coffee shops grow is Climpson & Sons, an independent, speciality coffee retail and wholesale business which sources, roasts and sells craft coffee in Hackney. The Climpson & Sons



café is regarded as a pioneer in the independent coffee shop scene and Nicole Ferris, managing director of the company, has

seen the café-cum-roastery-cum-wholesaler blossom. “We take our work pretty seriously,” she explains. “With an ever-expanding range of brew methods out there, we are constantly searching for the best flavour profiles and extraction techniques to understand how our roasts react in coffee-making equipment. Over the years our knowledge, practice and passion as a business have grown alongside the coffee industry itself, but we have been mindful to keep our community spirit alive. We supply our flagship café and have a market stall on Hackney's Broadway market, which has been a key link to get feedback first-hand from our customers.”

While the coffee industry has been growing exponentially, Nicole acknowledges that this comes down to consumers craving more information about their coffee beans, whether that be roast type or origin. “The coffee market is becoming more defined by discerning individuals who place high value on taste and distinction,” she says. “Just like the increase in popularity for craft beer, natural wines and fine foods, people are turning to independent, speciality



PICKING UP STEAM

We take a look at how harnessing the popularity of artisanal coffee can pay dividends to your business

coffee shops. They are spending more time at cafés and there is an evident shift for the home user to seek out quality beans. Subscription coffee services and more independents offering quality beans gives the home barista a chance to experiment with different coffee origins and methods.”

Nicole believes that a more discerning customer in turn warrants a highly knowledgeable seller. With Climpson's considered production methods – from sourcing to roasting to selling beans – it's important to the company to transfer the time and dedication that the coffee took to produce to the customer. “We want to create an experience that reflects our sourcing philosophy, which is primarily directed at flavour and quality,” Nicole emphasises. “Without ranting, it is important to continue the conversation with consumers about coffee sourcing and sustainability. We know where and how we bought our coffee; we know where our milk is from. We want to ensure the coffee we roast and sell not only has character, but a transparent story – they are important stories to tell.”

When it comes to a speciality food retailer wishing to expand its own coffee offering – from the varieties it stocks to professional serving

methods – Nicole offers a multitude of tips. “The key is to have interest!” she says. “Just buying great beans is not going to suddenly mean that you produce great coffee. The first step is to ‘respect the bean’ – from origin to café, each step along the way is important and, whilst we are just one step in the chain, in order to finish off the great work that has come before us our customer needs a specific set of skills and knowledge. Training is fundamental, as is using the right equipment. Brewing coffee is a very important part of the chain and we want our products to



We catch up with Jeremy Torz, founder of Union Hand-Roasted Coffee, to get his take on the developments in the speciality coffee sector:

“Being a coffee seller is not about having a huge range of coffee or offering the latest brewing gadget, it's about being able to communicate a passion and make it infectious. There are so many avenues of interest in the subject, from the simple drinking pleasure to the whole gamut of socioeconomics and politics. Coffee has the inherent ability to bring people together and spark conversation and debate, so a good food retailer can answer questions around many of these and leave the person wanting to know more.

Guest coffees are becoming a noticeable trend in speciality cafés, and we expect to see this branch out into delis and other coffee-selling retailers. Much like a pub may host a guest craft beer, we think it's a great idea to offer different single origins or micro-lots, alongside the usual blends to offer variety and choice. It's also a good idea to keep up with additional trends, for example the return of filter coffee, to make sure there is always new options for coffee drinkers to try.”

“Finally people are regarding coffee as more than just a cup to wake them up”

be showcased in the best possible light. For example, at Climpson's all of our wholesale customers will receive complimentary barista training, so that they too can revel in sharing the coffee love! We have award-winning, experienced barista trainers that help with this process. Being interested in developing knowledge and understanding how to taste coffee is important. We host regular cuppings to help with this. We are also expanding our Training Academy, so the home barista can increase their skill set and learn about alternative brewing methods.”

Catering for home baristas

Damian Blackburn, founder of Dark Woods Coffee, is another fan of the newly-fervent appreciation for speciality coffee. “Speciality coffee is everywhere – independent cafés, ‘from the source’ roastery outlets, farm shops, craft beer bars, barbers, art galleries, drive-throughs, the list is endless,” he says. “There's always an opportunity for a taste fix, and coffee is very much a way of adding value to a business that you wouldn't traditionally associate with coffee. But, sadly, the flip side is that bad coffee is lurking everywhere, too, as businesses see a cheap coffee offer as a means of drawing in more potential customers. There's also a definite shift in lifestyle choice that fits in nicely with the way coffee is enjoyed and the places it's served in. Coffee shops and cafés with a high-quality coffee offer have become the natural daytime hangout or the office away from home.”

Damian notes an explosion in the number of micro-roasteries popping up across the UK as another key reason as to why the coffee scene is so buoyant. “They're offering their own, unique coffee range to either a localised or national audience,” he said. “This is particularly noticeable in populated urban areas, and with



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greater concentrations in the South East and South West of the UK. Add that to established brands upping their game, or larger companies looking for a slice of the market, and there's far greater choice for stockists and consumers."

He also believes that drinking quality coffee is no longer confined to the best coffee shops, as consumers can easily recreate the experience at home. "The days of instant versus ground coffee are long gone," he explains. "Today we have a far greater selection of coffee beans being offered as opposed to the pre-ground, Nespresso-compatible coffee capsules, and we have an accessible selection of coffee-making equipment, too. This choice also incorporates a spectrum of price points and larger independent retailers, and even supermarkets have a far better coffee range than in the past. But there's also more competition for retailers, as coffee is being retailed in more places than ever before. Speciality coffee shops and online retailers have become the places to shop for the very best, seasonal ranges of coffee beans."

New flavours

Whether it is the latest piece of brewing kit or an intriguing roast, innovation will always remain an exciting prospect in the world of coffee. One company that continues to push the boundaries is Cherizena, a small specialist producer of premium and flavoured coffee. The company produces 30 different flavoured coffees, all available decaffeinated, while also offering an extensive non-flavoured range including organic, Fairtrade, single



origin and speciality coffee. This output has forged a loyal bean-loving customer base, says Tanith Wesson, director. She explains, "Many of our customers have been with Cherizena for years – some know what they like and stick to it, while some like to

experiment with different flavours, roasts and origins. We are quite often asked how we flavour the coffee, which is something we've been doing since the company started in 1996, infusing the beans with flavour and not relying on coatings or syrups."

The company sources its beans from all across the world and has around 35 different varieties from America, India, Africa, and single origin options from destinations including Panama, Galapagos and Santo Domingo. Tanith says that fans of Cherizena can be grouped into two camps. "Our customers are fairly equally split in their preferences between our range of flavour-infused beans and those of the non-flavoured premium variety," she says. "Caramel Fudge, Irish Whiskey Cream and Rich Hazelnut are incredibly popular, as are Italian Roast, Continental and Espresso."

It's not just the intriguing flavours of Cherizena coffee that can boost a retailer's coffee offering, as many turn to the company for a personalised service. "For farm shops and delis that are looking to extend their range we offer a superb service and flavour to order, which maintains a high level of freshness," Tanith says. "A particularly well-received service is that of our white label and bespoke blends. As an independent company we offer our customers a no minimum order policy and are delighted to meet and discuss requirements with future customers. Samples can be sent on request. For independent drink shops, their very own bespoke blend can be created to really make them stand out in the marketplace."

COFFEE GLOSSARY

MICRO-LOT: Beans from a small, particular area, or section of an estate, developed for certain characteristics

CUPPING: A procedure used to evaluate the characteristics of coffee beans. Tasters' criteria covers aroma, acidity, body and flavour

HARD: A trade term for poor quality coffee

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SPECIALITY COFFEE RETAILER?

Damian Blackburn from Dark Woods Coffee identifies the key attributes coffee-selling shops should offer its customers:

- The desire to engage and learn from the roaster and pass that enthusiasm on to their customers
- Freshness is key in speciality coffee – it should be treated more as a grocery item with a short shelf life and rotated quickly
- Offer a varied choice that's carefully curated
- Balancing the seasonally new with keeping those week-on-week customer favourites
- Engage further with customers with tastings, strong shelf information, supplier events and having well-informed staff that can comfortably chat about the coffee
- Stocking coffee making equipment, like coffee grinders or brewing equipment, to add value for the customer



CREMA: The initial light coloured liquid that comes out during espresso extraction

HIGH-GROWN: Arabica coffee grown at altitudes over 3,000 feet

MATURE COFFEE: Coffee that has been stored in a warehouse for two to three years

SOFT BEAN: Coffee grown at lower altitudes



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MEET THE PRODUCER

For generations, Pellini has been renowned for its dedication to quality, taste and expertise. Here, find out more about this Italian espresso icon



It's clear to see that across the UK the coffee market is booming. Coffee shops are springing up on high streets like never before, and an impressive number of coffee brands of all shapes, sizes and philosophies are being founded to cash in on the British shopper's desire for quality coffee. Not so long ago, Britain was known for its laissez-faire approach to the quality of the coffee it drank – with instant varieties proving much more popular than the higher quality, fresh options appreciated by their continental counterparts – but this is changing. Thanks to brands like Pellini, which has been feeding the Italian consumer's desire for fine coffee for nearly a century, your customers are becoming more educated than ever when it comes to what constitutes great coffee.

"The passion for high quality coffee of the Pellini family is behind the origin of the company founded in Verona in 1922," explains Canio Pappadà, Pellini's commercial and marketing director. "The rigorous approach of Pellini, and the desire to give only excellence to its customers, allowed the company to grow rapidly in reputation and develop its own history based on tradition and expertise, constantly listening to customers and in tune with the evolution of taste."

Pellini invested primarily in the Italian foodservice sector, and in doing so gained a leading role in the espresso coffee premium segment, but it was with the launch of Pellini Top that the brand became popular nationwide. Canio Pappadà explains, "Its quality and aromas seduced Italy so much that Pellini was identified as the icon of a 'dream coffee', helped along by major investments in communication focusing on the dreamlike and multisensory experience of tasting Pellini Top."

He puts the brand's success in Italy down to the brand's "attitude to continuous improvement, loyalty

to higher quality and attention to the satisfaction of increasingly demanding consumers." Indeed, "These are the reasons why we are now introducing our products to the UK," he continues.

Pellini is always looking forward, and took a great step in 2005 with the building of a new cutting-edge manufacturing plant, which covers 30,000 square metres. "It is at the forefront in terms of technology and ensures a completely automated manufacturing process", Canio explains.

On top of this, Pellini is one of the first Italian roasting companies

to implement a precise method of sensory analysis as part of its quality control system. "Thus," Canio explains, "each Pellini espresso coffee offers precise visual, olfactory and taste sensations: the promise of a sensory experience."

This modern approach has not overshadowed Pellini's long-established values, however. Dedicated to both its historical traditions and quality, the Pellini family actively participates in supervising each stage of manufacturing, from the choice of beans to the cup of espresso coffee through to the control of

cream, aroma and flavour. Canio explains, "The desire for continuous improvement, the continuous and uncompromising loyalty to an outstanding quality system and the special attention given to the achievement of the desired taste are the values that both the Pellini family and its partners pursue every day."

The journeys of Pellini's coffee products all begin with the selection of the best varieties of Arabica or Robusta, taken exclusively from crops which are directly selected by the Pellini family. From there, they are taken to Italy and processed at

the Pellini factory near Verona, where, "to enhance all the aromas, every variety of coffee is roasted separately with the utmost care, by following a specific temperature-controlled method and exclusive recipe for each variety of coffee," says Canio.

At the heart of Pellini's decades-long success – which it enjoys in over 30 countries worldwide – is the breadth of its product range. The variety of tastes showcased in the brand's offering and, in Canio's words, "the unequalled quality of a rich and sophisticated aroma in every product", are key to the business's ethos. Pellini's range now includes ground and whole bean coffee, both caffeinated and decaffeinated, tins of organic coffee, and an extensive range of coffee pods for use in domestic coffee machines. "Thanks to its know-how," Canio explains, "Pellini is able to create superior blends and was able to offer the same high quality Italian espresso also in Nespresso compatible capsules, a segment which is having a double digit growth in the UK market. In doing this the brand is supporting the evolution of the coffee market and satisfying today's demanding coffee customer."

It's fair to say that Pellini shares a lot of values with independent retailers – an appreciation of traditional skills and expertise, attention to quality and pride in sourcing the best possible raw ingredients. Its packaging is ideally suited to high end retailers thanks to its elegant and distinctive appearance and emphasis on traditional Italian espresso of enviable quality, and that's not to mention the promotional, sampling and information support offered by Pellini's dedicated UK sales and marketing team.

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EATING ON-THE-GO

Convenient, easily consumed foods are a must-buy in a world of busy working lives. John Bensalhia looks at some of the most notable examples

Eating isn't just about sitting down at the table for a luxurious three-course meal. In our time-hungry world, many of us find that it's a case of eating on-the-go.

Whether in the office or in the home, there's plenty of work to be done. Too much to do and not enough hours in the day. So as a result, you may have a phone or duster in one hand, leaving the other free for a crafty on-the-go snack in between the relentless toil.

Food retailers and farm shops have taken this into account. On-the-go foods are very much part and parcel of today's offerings. Savoury and sweet choices are available which manage to cater for all tastes.

Meat for go

When it comes to a lunchtime choice, on-the-go savoury foods

are just as vital. For that special home-made touch, farm shops stock a selection of freshly made goodies. A wide range is available at Uncle Henry's Farm Shop, Butchery & Café, as Emma Green, PR & event manager explains.

"Our deli counter features a delicious range of homemade savoury snacks using our own home-reared pork and locally-sourced ingredients. The range includes cheese and onion pasties, chicken tikka pasties, Lincolnshire sausage rolls, scotch eggs with various sausage flavours (Lincolnshire/Red Arrow/Caramelised Onion) and most recently we introduced steak slices."

But which of these is the most popular product? (Quick clue: It's a starring roll). "Our most popular product from this selection with

customers is our Lincolnshire sausage roll," says Emma. "Due to these being so popular, we also offer them as an uncooked sausage roll on the butchery or as a frozen uncooked sausage roll in the freezer!"

The Uncle Henry's specially-flavoured homemade scotch eggs are also popular. "These are definitely different," says Emma. "Especially the Red Arrow, as the sausage meat is flavoured with sun-dried tomato, sweet chilli and garlic. It sounds like an unusual flavour combination but it really works and tastes great!"

Scotch Eggs are also big news at The Food Company. While crisps and nuts have been big sellers lately, there has been an increase in sales of artisan scotch eggs. The range of flavours includes bacon, blue cheese, black pudding, red onion relish, chorizo and the classic.

Also popular at the moment are The Food Company's ready-to-eat snacking meats, which range from a snacking salami to genuine South African biltong. "All have attractive packaging and appeal to the popular high protein/paleo diet trends at the moment," says Lindsey.

Brindisa's chorizo roll has also received massive acclaim, both from customers and the press. "Our enduringly popular take away roll has been voted one of the best Street Eats in London by Time Out," says Monika Linton, Brindisa founder. "For over 10 years, come rain or shine we have been making our world-famous Brindisa chorizo rolls outside our shop in Borough Market.



UNCLE HENRY'S SAUSAGE ROLLS

It has proven to be such a successful formula that we're now developing a new addition to our food-to-go range."

Out of this world

Healthy eating on-the-go is a notable factor of today's food offerings. "Healthy eating is a key consideration," says Monika Linton. "More people are reducing their meat intake and taking up flexitarianism as part of their ethical lifestyle choices. For a Spanish food business that is famed for its chorizo and cured meats, overall 20% of Brindisa's offering is actually vegetarian."

The Uncle Henry's chiller deck features a selection of products that can be eaten straight away like mixed olive pots and locally-smoked mackerel fillets and salmon. "With all the recent focus on healthy eating, these items have proved to be quite popular with customers as an easy snack option," says Emma Green.

The Food Company's Lindsey Grey says, "We are always listening to our customers about what they are seeking, and combining health with snacking is a top priority for many. We have a range of freshly-made salads on our deli counter made from ingredients such as quinoa, chickpea, kale, pomegranate seeds."

The new Take A Bite bars are popular choices for healthy on-the-go snacks. "Developed in Russia by men in lab coats, Bite does not contain any chemical additives, colourings, flavourings and only naturally occurring sugars," says Lindsey. "Gluten, dairy and soy-free, it's the ideal snack for vegans, vegetarians and, apparently, astronauts."

Meanwhile, Brindisa is launching a new range of Marcona and Catalan almonds. "Larger than their Californian counterparts, our Spanish almonds are a delicious source of vitamin E, protein and magnesium and are available in



UNCLE HENRY'S SCOTCH EGGS

Whether buying a slice of cake to enjoy as a crafty treat at work or a welcome snack while waiting for that bus or train at the end of the day, there are many kinds of delicious cakes available at Uncle Henry's Farm Shop's Bakery, including chocolate cake and more unique flavours such as coconut and lime. While the most popular kind of cake tends to change in accordance with the seasons, at the time of writing, a particular kind is proving to receive a rapturous welcome. "The most popular cake variety tends to change throughout the year (weather dependent)," says Emma. "But at present, I would say our homemade coffee and walnut cake is our best-seller."

Chilli out

Sometimes, a bit of energy can be provided by a quick bar of chocolate for elevenses. Providing an extra kick to on the go chocolate (and one that earns the Gregg Wallace seal of approval) is South Devon Chilli Farm's Honeycomb Chilli Chocolate.

Not only does Honeycomb Chilli Chocolate contain plenty of taste, it offers the perfect balance of chilli tolerance levels. It's slightly milder than the rest of South Devon Chilli Farm's chocolate offerings as a result of the extra sugar addition from the honeycomb.

"Gregg Wallace referred to it as 'lush'" says Kaz Lobendhan of the South Devon Chilli Farm. "Our best-selling chocolate (out of all nine chilli chocolate flavours) is honeycomb chilli chocolate flavour and was developed with a local primary school." Because of its milder flavour, it's a good one for children to enjoy on-the-go, although it's equally popular with adults.

150g bags in salted, smoked and paprika varieties," says Monika. "With an intense nuttiness and pleasing crunch, Brindisa's almonds are hand processed by Joseph Maria Termens who has been running his nut business for more than 50 years."

Exotic essence

Another healthy option on-the-go food type comes from America. "Our American confectionery is still as popular as ever and we only stock genuine products imported direct from the USA," says Lindsey Grey. "Health conscious snackers love the antioxidant-rich Nourish coconut macaroons which come in a range of flavours such as Raspberry White Chocolate, Red Velvet and Strawberry Carob. Naturally gluten, dairy and refined sugar-free, these moreish mouthfuls are also popular with vegan and paleo diet followers."

The Food Company has also introduced a brand new range of coconut jerky from Mighty Bee, which is made from young Thai coconuts. "Made by a gentle dehydration process, the Coconut

Jerky, free from gluten, refined sugar, dairy and preservatives, provides a delicious alternative to everyday snacking"

Meanwhile, an 'ultimate foodie treat', Duck Crackling from Wilding's is another must-have. Lindsey Grey comments: "Wilding's is the world's first Duck Crackling, skilfully seasoned with a special blend of spices to deliver a crisp, light textured snack, full of amazing flavour. Triple-cooked by hand, this duck crackling is available in handy 25g pouches and has a 'melt in the mouth' crunch that is perfect with a glass of wine, a beer or a G&T."

Have your cake and eat it

A slice of cake could well be just the ticket if you have a sweet tooth while you're on the go. Uncle Henry's Farm Shop, Butchery & Café has its very own bakery team, which as Emma Green explains, produces "the most amazing array of fresh cakes, traybakes and scones which can be enjoyed in our café or purchased in the shop to take home."



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“ We are always listening to our customers about what they are seeking, and combining health with snacking is a top priority for many ”

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A CASE FOR CAKE

Although boundary-pushing health products are constantly grabbing the headlines, comforting cakes and puddings are as popular as ever

Whether your cakes, tarts and puddings are sold via your on-site café or over the counter for customers to enjoy at home, a sweet treats section is a solid source of revenue for most independent retailers. This ever-dependable category isn't just the stomping ground of traditional, quintessentially British products any more, with buccaneering brands captivating customers, especially in the free-from field. In fact, while some of us might harbour the judgement that the younger generation would rather be

reaching for a kale and cucumber juice than a Bakewell tart, this might not actually be the case.

According to food marketing agency Kindred, there has been a baking explosion amongst millennials fuelled by the popularity of The Great British Bake Off, with it proving more popular amongst 25 to 35-year-olds than any other age group. The sector as a whole appears to be in rude health, too, thanks to this Bake Off influence, with the research indicating that baking ingredient sales rose by £31m during the 10 weeks that the programme aired

in 2016. This surge in demand also transfers over to shop-bought options, with £3m extra spent on cakes during that period.

Bake Off boom

Nikki Castley, buyer at Fife-based fine food distributor The Cress Co., has noticed the increase in sales of cakes and desserts over the last couple of years. "The Great British Bake Off has produced a much greater interest and demand for baked goods,"



Nikki Castley, buyer at Fife-based fine food distributor The Cress Co., has noticed the increase in sales of cakes and desserts over the last couple of years. "The Great British Bake Off has produced a much greater interest and demand for baked goods,"

“The Great British Bake Off has produced a much great interest and demand for baked goods, but people are not necessarily baking more, but buying more cakes and puddings to enjoy at home!”

she explains. "But people are not necessarily baking more, but buying more cakes and puddings to enjoy at home! Having said that, shortcuts like easy cake mixes are increasingly popular."

The Cress Co. stocks a wide choice of ambient and chilled cakes and puddings. As well as traditional loaf cakes and staple lines like lemon drizzle cake and Swiss rolls, its output includes a range of steamed puddings, continental bakes, gluten-free cakes, puddings and meringues, as well as accompaniments to add value to the shopping basket, for example long life creams, Belgian chocolate and toffee sauces and compotes. Also aiming to appeal to those wishing to bake at home, the company stocks a wide range of cake mixes, sweet tartlets and chocolate cups.

Nikki lists the company's most popular products as giant meringues, loaf cakes and oat cakes, but she also believes that there are other key areas that are currently driving sales. "The free-from trend shows no signs of slowing down," she explains. "Our chilled offering continues to grow quickly and is popular. We are continually looking for innovation and new ranges to add to our catalogue, and we attend national and international trade shows to ensure that we are offering an interesting and comprehensive range to our valued customers."

Look for locally-made



Berkshire-based Cobbs Farm Shop's manager, Esther Wheble, names Cartmel Sticky Toffee

puddings as its top-seller in the pudding department, but the shop is also passionate about selling items from lesser-known producers to offer a point of difference. "We have a local cake baker, Sue Tucker from Aldbourne, who is located just eight food miles from Cobbs, she makes all of our traditional cakes," says Esther. "Her apple tarts and pear & almond tarts are also our best-selling puddings – they've become a weekend essential for our customers! We also sell Vicarage Lane Cakes from Pewsey and make our own treacle tarts in our commercial kitchen, which have proven popular in our shop and also on our café menu."

It is interesting to learn that the considerable cupcake trend of yesteryear seems to have passed. "The most popular cakes now have got to be substantial sponges," she says. "Something you can really get your teeth into. Cupcakes used to sell well for us but our sponges have overtaken them in popularity, and sales for cupcakes have really dropped off."

Esther states that lemon drizzle and cherry & almond are currently the most popular flavours in Cobbs' cake section. In fact, in one month the shop can sell up to 200 sponge cakes from a supplier. With these numbers taken into consideration, it raises the question: how important is the cakes and pudding section to Cobbs' overall operation? "It's massive," she replies. "We do our best to make sure we don't run out of cakes, and we even have loyal customers who come in for their regular cakes. Each of our cake suppliers have their own dedicated following who come to Cobbs especially for their products."

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HOW TO: SOURCE CAKES AND PUDDINGS

Nikki Castley, buyer at The Cress Co., shares her tips for stocking a strong seller:

QUALITY:

Fundamentally, it has to taste good!

PRICING:

Ensure that the product is priced so that once all margins are added it remains commercially viable

PACKAGING:

Is the packaging robust? Will it stand out on the shelf and will the consumer easily identify what they are buying?

USP:

Is there anything unique or special, such as does it cater for special diets, is it a secret family recipe or a regional speciality? 'Me-too' products don't always have much appeal

Make sure your treat section continues to drive sales with these top choices

1 GINGER BAKERS: Gluten Free Lemon & Polenta Tray Cake



This can be served as either a stand-alone cake or works well as a dessert, especially with raspberries and a dollop of crème fraîche. The lusciously moist cake proves popular during the more warmer months.

"We currently sell this product as a whole tray bake for cutting and serving in

cafés, delis and farm shops," says Lisa Smith, founder of Ginger Bakers. "We are launching our retail ready product at the beginning of March, available in a box of four individual portions. We're looking to extend our gluten-free offering, which will include six varieties of tray bakes and two round celebration cakes."

gingerbakers.co.uk

2 POTS & CO: Spiced Apple & Ginger Pudding



"This is a delicious winter pud that complements our existing cake range of Sticky Toffee Pudding and Chocolate Fudge Pudding beautifully," explains Julian Dyer, CEO of Pots & Co.. "We're all about making timeless classics, and given the increasing popularity of spiced desserts both in the UK and internationally, we thought it would be a great opportunity to bring back the traditional spiced ginger cake. Our head chef always puts his own spin on any classic – the addition of apples and spiced toffee separates this pud from the rest."

potsandco.com

3 CARTMEL VILLAGE SHOP: Sticky Toffee Pudding



An iconic, traditional pudding that many gourmands will immediately affiliate the entire village of Cartmel with. Its indulgent flavours make it a firm favourite with dessert fans, and it makes for a popular addition to dinner parties.

"Cartmel has been

making Sticky Toffee Pudding for over 25 years and is still made to the same recipe using all the best ingredients," says Jo Wolsey-Fell, head of sales at Cartmel Sticky Toffee Company. "It's sold in over 2,000 independent retailers across the UK, including farm shops, delis and butchers."

cartmelvillageshop.co.uk



4 MRS CRIMBLE'S: Classic Madeleine

"We know that the farm and deli shopper is often a foodie," says Rebecca Vercoe, brand controller for Mrs Crimble's. "Someone who is motivated by quality and provenance, which makes them a great fit for Mrs Crimble's. The Authentically French Madeleines are baked in France using only the finest ingredients. With a gluten and a dairy-free option available, they are ideal for those looking to enjoy fine foods but have intolerances."

mrskrimbles.com



5 COLE'S PUDDINGS: Clooatie Dumpling

This eye-catching pudding is made to a Scottish recipe that counts spiced fruit, orange marmalade and whisky amongst its ingredients. These rich flavours don't limit its potential though, in fact it's a versatile dessert that can be enjoyed on many different occasions. "Cole's is always keen to develop classic recipes into a commercial product for today's consumers," says Simon Hatcher, director of Cole's Puddings. "Clooatie Dumpling is a pudding that is perfect with hot custard on cold nights and with cream or ice cream during hot days."

colespuddings.com

6 THE SIMPLY DELICIOUS CAKE CO: Lemon & Lime Marmalade Fruit Cake

"This is one of three gluten-free loaf cakes we make, the others being a standard light cake and Ginger & Orange Fruit Cake," says Archie Hunter, partner at The Simply Delicious Cake Co. "The Lemon & Lime Marmalade Fruit Cake is made with award-winning marmalade made by the Ludlow Food Centre in Shropshire. The cake is made with rice flour to make it gluten-free and the marmalade gives it a wonderfully fresh and zingy taste."

simplydeliciouscake.co.uk



7 TIPTREE PATISSERIE: Victoria Sponge

"Victoria Sponge is our best seller," says Daren McGrath, MD of Tiptree Patisserie. "Its light vanilla sponge is filled with a rich butter cream and Tiptree raspberry seedless jam. We believe that our customers buy the product because of its consistency, the rise of the sponge, the fact that it looks homemade, and that we use our own jam."

tiptreecakes.com



8 BOTHAM'S OF WHITBY: Yorkshire Brack

"Being craft bakers since 1865, Elizabeth Botham & Sons have built up a wealth of knowledge for producing the finest products," says Mike Jarman, managing director of Botham's of Whitby. "Our Tea Brack is a prime example. The choicest fruits infused with Botham's own blend tea, produces a moist and irresistible tea loaf – it's delicious with cheese, preserves, sliced, buttered or even just eaten on its own."

botham.co.uk



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TASTE OF SUMMER

We get the scoop on the latest ice creams, sorbets and frozen desserts that will captivate your customers

With spring in full swing and the sun making its presence (ever-so-slightly) felt, now is a good time to start planning your summer stock assortment. Big sellers in this area are of course ice creams, sorbets, frozen desserts and summer berries, and it's easy to understand why. Not only can they keep your regulars satisfied, but will draw in casual customers as well. Clear signage that really promotes your range of seasonal goods always works well, and when paired with a display that presents customers with interesting new products will boost cross and up-selling.

Hesitant inland retailers needn't fret, as ice cream isn't just the preserve of coastal-based delis or farm shops. Take Billington's of Lenzie in Glasgow for example, which is a deli based in a major city that has managed to generate a genuine buzz around its ice cream offering. "We wanted our deli to have a European feel," explains Mark Billington, owner. "We're aware that in Scotland we don't have the best weather, but feel that every day should be an ice cream day."

Mark made the decision to offer a style of ice cream that isn't found everywhere, in order to make the deli stand out. "Cold Stone is a way

of mixing ice creams with different toppings – we discovered the procedure in America," he explains. "A Cold Stone unit has a frozen marble slab, on which the desired ice cream can be mixed with different toppings to make your own creation. One favourite is to mix wild berries with meringue and combine it with vanilla and strawberry ice cream to make an Eton Mess-style product. We have lots of combinations, but the most fun thing is that customers get to choose their own. We chose Cold Stone as at the time we were the only establishment in Glasgow offering that kind of experience"

This bespoke approach of

sprinkling a mixture of toppings on ice creams and sorbets is an area that frozen food specialist field fare knows very well. The company has an extensive range of frozen 'scoop-your-own' fruit packs, which include Bramley Apple Slices, Strawberries, Cherry Berry Delicious and Californian Fruit mixes, to name but a few. "The range is the perfect choice for summer desserts," says Karen Deans, owner of field fare. "The fruits are freshly frozen, ensuring all the nutritional goodness is locked in, and this approach provides a year-round supply for more seasonal fruits like rhubarb and mango. Our frozen fruits and berries are the perfect high-quality, healthy ingredients to eat in a fruit salad or add to crumbles, pies, cakes and puddings."

Frozen fruits

Another company that specialises in providing fresh fruit and berries is A.J. & C.I. Snell. A family partnership, the business initially focussed on arable, potato and vegetable production, but in the late 1990s the owners noticed the growing market for healthy British soft fruit. Over the next few years packing, storage and distribution facilities were built, and more recently freezer storage with mobile racking systems have been added to cater for this increasing sector.

"Freezing fruit means it can be picked at its optimum ripeness," explains Anthony Snell. "The mature sun-ripened fruit is then quickly frozen within hours of being picked to lock in the bursting flavour. Freezing fruit neither adds or takes anything away – when defrosted it is still as healthy and nutritious as the day it was picked and frozen. This means customers can enjoy British fruit all year round."

There's a whole host of serving suggestions which combine the fruits and berries with summery fare, says Anthony. "They can be used on pies, crumbles, muffins and smoothies," he explains. "They can be used as toppings for porridge and cereals, ice cream or desserts. Other uses include jam making and infusing alcohol – the possibilities are endless! Our most popular product is probably the British Summer Fruits mix, which consists of blackberries, raspberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants. It provides a selection of seasonal berries full of essential nutrients that are often under-consumed."

Eccentric ice cream

If you thought that ice cream products tend to err on the side of caution when it comes to flavours, you have probably not stumbled across Beckleberry's boundary-pushing ice creams. The company produces varieties including Passion Fruit & Tarragon, Espresso & English Breakfast Marmalade, Liquorice & Blackcurrant and Sour Cherry & Amaretto. Another flavour the producers experimented with is Parsnip & Balsamic Vinegar, which co-founder of Beckleberry's, Peter Craig, admits he's rather pleased never saw the light of day. "We sit very much in the indulgent camp," he explains. "With a gentle adult-leaning opting for bold flavour liaisons, all-natural ingredients and a stubborn refusal to entertain any artificial nasties and nominal added sugar. Our northern heritage and commitment



to local ingredient sourcing has also played to our strengths, because as the north's only discerning ice cream provider, it's always nice to dispel any urban myth that the UK's finest ice cream only comes from the south-west and home counties!"

Peter believes that taste is paramount when choosing the brand's inventive flavours, however ingredients of a healthier nature are something the team pays close attention to. "We are certainly seeing a growing appetite for superfood flavours," he says. "Our new Blackcurrant & Liquorice is gaining rave reviews in taste trials and it's no fluke that blackcurrants are the hot fruit of 2017. They're high in potassium, iron and B vitamins and brimming with antioxidants that assist inflammation, heart disease and muscle recovery, while liquorice is known for countering fatigue and exhaustion. We're continuing to be an antidote to those traditional ice cream operations that deploy sugar as a masking ingredient – we want our ingredients to shout out from the roof tops and not be subdued."

Another company that is forward-thinking when it comes to ice cream is Dartington Dairy, which uses goat's milk to create its range. "Our goat's milk has a truly rich, clean and fresh taste and is a bright white, denoting its purity," explains Martin Davidson, commercial director of Dartington Dairy. "We use an innovative method of separating curds to make our ice cream, which gives it an extremely creamy texture and taste, but naturally reduces the fat content without the need for additives. There are not many goat's milk ice cream producers nationally, not to mention locally, so we saw a niche and opportunity to give the discerning consumer something different."

Dartington Dairy manages to walk the line between being a traditional family-run operation, and one that doesn't shy from pushing the culinary boundaries. "We believe that consumers are looking for a change in how we enjoy ice cream," says Martin. "With an increase in awareness of lactose intolerance, we have found that people are keen to explore alternatives to mainstream

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MAGAZINE

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loseleybakery.co.uk



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purbeckicecream.co.uk



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beckleberrys.co.uk

BILLINGTON'S



LITTLE MOONS

dairy. Delis and farm shops are frequented by people who want to shop for tangible produce from trusted local suppliers. Together with our principled farming practices, authentic milking experience and having the finest-tasting ice cream, we will satisfy the most discerning of clientele."

Internationally inspired

Another rising star in the desserts sector is Little Moons and its distinctive mochi ice creams. The small, spherical balls have an outside coating of chewy pounded rice flour that wraps around a gelato ice cream centre. Launched by siblings Vivien and Howard Wong, Little Moons' range comes in six flavours, such as Mango and Matcha Green Tea, and are served in high-end restaurants like London's Nobu. "Our family has been making mochi for over 30 years, but they were making the traditional type that is with red bean paste," explains Howard. "We always knew that was a bit of an alien thing for the British palate, but when we were travelling in New York we came across mochi ice cream for the first time. We were blown away by the combination of taste and texture, but at the same time knew we could do it better as the ice cream quality wasn't as good in America - we thought it would be perfect for the UK market. That was seven years ago, but it took us two years to develop the product, we then started selling to restaurants in 2010, and launched for retail last year."

Since rolling out its retail options, Little Moons has experienced a surge

of interest. "When we launched in Whole Foods Market, we weren't expecting how quickly they'd be adopted by a large audience," says Howard. "Within three months we became Whole Foods Market's best-selling ice cream." The duo believe that this popularity could be propelled by a current demand for Japanese fare that's prominent in UK foodie circles. "Yuzu is very on-

trend and producers are doing lots of things with chestnut," says Howard. "There are quite a few Japanese patisseries opening up around London, too. We heard that Marks & Spencer literally just sent off their innovation team to Japan. Japanese patisserie is at the forefront of high end patisserie along with France - I believe it is coming over to Europe in a big way."

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Last Words

Jimmy Doherty

“Exciting times”



March on the farm is when things start to really get exciting. Spring is upon us, which means lambing season and long nights for our stockman. So far we've had no orphan lambs, which is a great result, and they're all frolicking about – a real favourite with our visitors, so joyful to watch!

The Farm Park Zoo continues to go from strength to strength, with the newer arrivals really settling in well. In addition to our domestic species, the coatis who arrived earlier in the year have proven to be a real hit. These raccoon-like creatures from Central America are incredible to watch and are very sociable. The February half-term was our first chance to show off these very sociable animals and, along with many of the other creatures, we provided daily talks and feeding sessions. It doesn't end there – raccoons will be joining them around Easter which will add

even more to the Farm Park Zoo offering.

Mothering Sunday is one of our biggest days. We've thought long and hard about how to make the whole site an experience that anyone can enjoy, and a Mother's Day jaunt to the farm really is a day that people make the most of! A stroll around the Farm Park and adventure in the woods is topped or tailed by a hearty breakfast or incredible lunch in the restaurant. This is the time of year the chefs get really excited, as soon foraging can begin again in earnest and the vegetable garden really starts to spring into life. We have two full-time gardeners who work closely with our head chef all year round to plan continuous

production of fresh produce which can be added to the daily-changing menu. A dynamic menu reliant on local sources is a brave step, but a challenge we've taken on and are succeeding with. It's a very important string to the Jimmy's Farm bow as it proves that sustainability in a commercial setting IS possible. It takes years to build up to and you need a well-shaped plan and team to deliver it, but the rewards at the end of the day truly are rewarding – for both the farm and the customer.

Our next big steps will be the reopening of our butterfly house which will happen as soon as it's warm enough, hopefully by the end of the month, and the build

of our aviary – another piece of investment that will add even more to the visitor experience and our education offering. Jimmy's Farm has a long-standing and robust education programme which is enhanced with every addition we make to the farm, and it's a real joy to share my passions with the next generation – the rare-breeds, the exotic animals and the butterflies. We offer educational experiences for schools and community groups which can encompass anything the farm offers, from butchery to woodcraft, and it brings in an entirely new crowd of people who always come back.

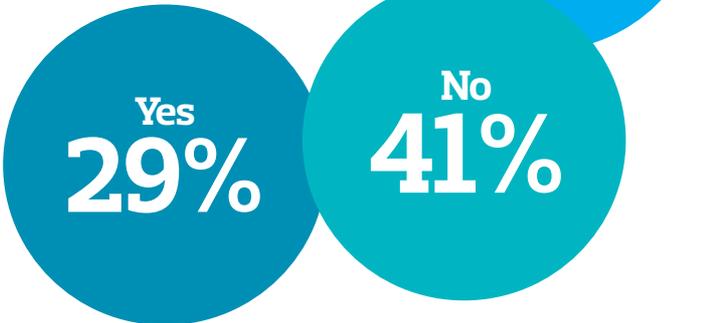
The year is flying by and we still have so much more to come! Weddings will start again soon, the breeding plan is well underway and of course the Festival in July. Diversification is something we take very seriously at the Farm and makes for some very exciting times!

“ This is the time of year the chefs get really excited, as soon foraging can begin again in earnest and the vegetable garden really starts to spring into life ”



TWITTER POLL

Will you lose staff as a result of brexit?



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It may well be a function of my age, now being well into the second half-century of my life, but increasingly I can feel the clock ticking, which leads to being hungrier than ever to make a difference in this world before I leave it! I had an email from one of my cousins last night trying to organise a skiing trip for next season. His reason for reaching out, he said, was because all his skiing buddies were either injured or dead. He added, "Don't let that put you off!"

I am not a great believer in looking back on life and saying, "what if?" or "if only that hadn't happened". It is worth learning lessons for the future, but those that continue to blame their past for their present and future are well and truly stuck in the past, and will never move on and make the most of their lives in the future. It can be easy to do this and then find yourself counting the days until

SPECIALITY BITES

Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre



“View each day as an opportunity to achieve, make someone happy or simply enjoy living”

your next holiday or, even worse, your retirement.

Much better to view each day as an opportunity to achieve something, make someone else happy or simply just enjoy living. I remember reading a story of a man who lived like this. His job was taking driver's money in a toll booth on the Golden Gate Bridge. However, he saw his job as something much larger than this. He wanted to bring happiness into his customer's days by being cheery, fun, and even, I remember, singing songs to them! Soon, drivers were queuing up at his booth rather than going to the emptier booths along the line, these drivers happy to take

longer to get over the bridge just to have an encounter with this man. Last time I drove over the Golden Gate, they had changed to automated toll booths – I wonder what this wonderful man is doing now?

Imagine if we all went about our daily tasks with this attitude! The world would be changed for the better very quickly. The desire to reach out to others profoundly changes the way we live our lives, and is the direct opposite of the disturbing changes in western world attitudes that are currently manifest. Not welcoming refugees and countries closing their borders is the opposite of the open and free

spiritedness I am talking about here, and is motivated by fear. Having the latent attitude that others are out to get us or get something off us destroys society and will destroy us unless we take steps to go in the opposite spirit.

It is easy to think reading a column like this that the person writing it has got everything sorted. Be very assured that I haven't. Anything I write along these lines I am writing as much to myself as my audience.

Remember one of my favourite quotes used in this column before from Steven Furtick: "The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel". You only need to ask those that work for me who will confirm this is true. They know if I am in the office early in the morning not to talk to me until after 9am or two cups of coffee, whichever comes earliest.

5 MINUTES WITH... BEN BRANSON

Founder of Seedlip



WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T WORKING IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

Struggling artist

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

Door to door salesman for British Gas.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Nature and Roald Dahl.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

Door to door salesman for British Gas.

DO YOU LIKE TO COOK?

Love to. I studied at Prue Leith when I left school.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

Working with nature.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

VAT.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY – IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO CHANGE?

More help and resources for start-ups.

TEA OR COFFEE?

Double espresso.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SNACK?

Carrots and hummous.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

Roast Lamb with all the trimmings.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

Make it simple.

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?

Roadkill grey squirrel.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

Charlie & The Chocolate Factory.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Savoury.

DIARY DATES

March

14th-15th

HOTEL & CATERING SHOW
Bournemouth International Centre
hotelcateringretailshow.co.uk

19th-22nd

IFE
ExCeL, London
ife.co.uk

20th-22nd

PRO2PAC
ExCeL, London
pro2pac.co.uk

20th-22nd

WASTEWORKS
ExCeL, London
wasteworks.co.uk

April

2nd-3rd

NATURAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTS EUROPE
ExCeL, London
naturalproducts.co.uk

4th-6th

WORLD TRAVEL CATERING & ONBOARD SERVICES EXPO
Hamburg Messe
worldtravelcateringexpo.com

6th-9th

LONDON COFFEE FESTIVAL
Old Truman Brewery, London
londoncoffeefestival.com

24th-26th

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW
NEC, Birmingham
farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

24th-26th

NATIONAL CONVENIENCE SHOW
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nationalconvenienceshow.co.uk

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