

SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS



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EDITOR'S LETTER

NEWS IN BRIEF



Welcome to the November/December issue of Speciality Food.

As the year draws to a close, we're thinking – as well as of how to make the most of the manic Christmas season (while not getting too overwrought) – of the knowledge and inspiration we've gained over the past 12 months, and how to incorporate them into our lives and work. With the festive months still very much ongoing, it's a lucky man who can spare much time to put these things into action just yet, but I highly recommend gathering all the inspiration you've come across and lessons you've learned so that you can approach the new year composed and prepared.

Speaking of inspiration, in this issue you'll find the stories of all seven of the Category Champions of the New Producer Awards 2017, as well as the inaugural Supreme Champion. While all distinctly different, each of these stories have three things at their heart: passion, determination, and the willpower to keep going despite ever-present obstacles. The Awards have inspired me from their very conception and continue to do so now, and I hope that by reading these producers' stories you'll come away with a new zest for our exciting industry.

Also in this issue you'll find our product picks and selling suggestions for a number of sectors,

“Gather inspiration from 2017 so you can approach the year ahead composed and prepared”

kickstarted by our Italian cuisine special (p. 29): blue cheese (p. 38), comfort food classics (p. 40), hot drinks (p. 42) and storecupboard essentials (p. 44). Plus, Darren Henaghan, managing director of Borough Market, explains just what it is that makes the establishment so iconic (p. 12), globetrotting cheese aficionado Tanny Gill tells his story (p. 35), and Michelin-starred chef Michael Wignall shares why he chooses to shop independent and the products he keeps an eye out for (p. 46).

Last but not least, be sure to take a look at the accompanying Stock Check book – a veritable feast of our favourite food and drink – so you can be sure you're heading into the new year fully-stocked and ready to tempt your customers' tastebuds.

Holly

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RETAILERS SIGN UP TO MASTERCHEF GIFT CARD

The MasterChef brand has launched its MasterChef Gift Card, allowing consumers to buy over 3,000 artisan food and drink products online from over 80 authorised retailers and producers.

MasterChef has compiled an array of artisan food and drink products, as well as its MasterChef own-brand products, which can be purchased via its 'Artisan Food & Drink Online Shop'.

The gift card can be spent with a list of different retailers and producers, including The Courtyard Dairy, The Mousetrap Cheese Shop, Hawkshead Relish and more.

Jenny Goddard, founder of the MasterChef Gift Card said, "The inspiration for the gift card was the brilliant food and drink that is produced in the UK, which we wanted to help make more accessible – what better way to do this than by teaming up with one of the best respected cooking brands there is!"

WAITROSE FOCUSES ON HALLOUMI OFFERING

Waitrose has launched its first organic Halloumi cheese, claiming to be the first multiple to do so.

The supermarket has noticed a growing demand for Halloumi, with sales of the Cypriot cheese up 24 per cent year-on-year. The new Organic Halloumi expands its Halloumi cheese range to include eight different varieties.

Chris Dawson, cheese buyer at Waitrose said, "Halloumi continues to have its moment in the limelight."



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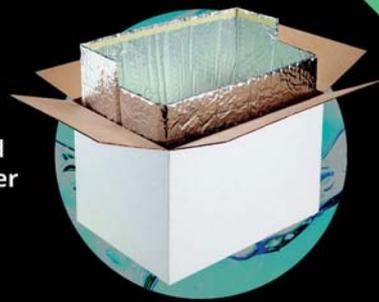
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Does Amazon's acquisition of Whole Foods Market threaten indie retailers?

With Amazon purchasing upmarket health and artisan food and drink retailer Whole Foods Market, plus the online behemoth recently teaming up with Booths to provide its gourmet goods to the south of England for the first time (flick to p.8 to find out more), could this potentially lead to consumers refraining from seeking out premium products in bricks-and-mortar shops?

Inevitably, the impetus will be on high street establishments highlighting the experiential and immersive shopping experiences they offer, with customer service, low food miles and in-store demonstrations services that need to be emphasised as options that the likes of Amazon can't offer its customers. However, it begs the question: does the increase in availability of premium fare at the click of a button step on the toes of delis, farm shops and other independent food and drink retailers?

MILLY STOKES, DIRECTOR OF FARNDON FIELDS FARM:

Here at Farndon Fields we offer a very, very short supply chain from our farm, which is only metres away. So, we offer a personal insight into the quality and growing experience of our fruit and vegetables – no internet service can do the same. The selection, freshness and seasonality is a real touch and feel experience for our customers. By visiting our shop, you can touch and smell the freshness and quality of the food and you can talk to the people who grow, make and produce the food. The display and presentation is amazing, and it's a joy that needs to be experienced.

We do not offer internet ordering,

other than that our customers can purchase an online voucher and visit us for the shopping experience. We offer a farm-to-fork experience for our customers once a season. We highlight a deeper understanding of what's good about supporting local food producers and how the farmers have diversified into artisan products.

JOHN SIDDALL, DIRECTOR AT THE FINE CHEESE CO.:

Amazon provides a service; it does not provide an experience. The small speciality retailer welcomes its guests and offers a very personal experience. The cheese shop, for example, will suggest pairings and offer tailored advice before the final purchase is made.

Where Amazon excels is in creating a community among its users to review and answer questions. While this works for consumer electronics, it cannot work for the speciality food shop that dedicates itself to creating a true gourmet experience for customers. You wouldn't want to ask another customer some questions about provenance and the taste profile of a raw milk Cheddar. Customers expect to hear

this type of information from a cheesemonger who is skilled and knowledgeable in their craft.

There is a place for both Amazon and the speciality retailer in the marketplace. They cater to a different clientele and to different occasions. For those who savour good food and who want to continue to discover new flavours and stories, the small independent retail shop will never disappoint.

CATHERINE SMITH, OWNER OF FOXHOLES FARM SHOP:

As a multi-award winning independent retailer, it's not always about price – we simply could not rely on price wars being the key factor as we would find ourselves consistently in competition with the bigger retailers. Also, we offer an 'experience' for our customers, with great face-to-face customer service, we are not about quantity, but quality. Our own grass-fed beef takes at least seven to 10 months to produce, so it's a very slow and natural process from field-to-fork.

Product knowledge, good customer interaction and being a part of a community, while also supporting other producers, are the important things that buying

with huge online retailers has not got to offer – it's up to us small independents to keep this tradition and to make sure we constantly keep rewarding our customers with great service.

VICTORIA HOLLAND, BUYER AT WASHINGPOOL FARM SHOP & RESTAURANT:

Our main focus is providing local food to local customers, whether they're residents or visitors to our region. The Whole Foods Market stores that we have visited in the past have always been inspiring in terms of merchandising – we can learn a lot by the way they present and display their fresh food and use their branding effectively. However, they are all such big businesses that we do not feel that the Amazon/Whole Foods Market deal will affect our business in any way. Bridport – our local town – is far removed, both physically and culturally, from businesses like Amazon and Booths, and the high street is packed with independents. We are fortunate to be part of this.

We have briefly looked into online ordering but have not found the balance between reducing food miles and offering mail order. The

ideal would be a click-and-collect type service, but we currently do not have enough staff to manage this. Also, AmazonFresh is not available in Dorset. Like many independents, we know our suppliers personally and their products well, so we can answer most questions that a customer can throw at us. We do not have layers of hierarchy in our business – owners, partners and staff all work alongside each other on the shop floor and behind the scenes – so our awareness of our business is from the ground and we are able to react to situations fairly quickly. This means we can stock start-up producers and bigger Dorset brands; we can react to supermarket competition such as special deals on items that we might also stock; we can sell a wider range of artisan items which are often more interesting for the customer.

In terms of what we can offer as opposed to the big online retailers, we can let customers taste something before they buy, especially with greengrocery, which makes up about half of our retail sales. We can order products in that a customer has requested (we always make sure that it isn't available in another independent in town before we do that), or offer an alternative. We can have a chat with our customers and get to know them – it sounds corny, but a smile can make a huge difference to someone's day. Also, I think that by buying and selling to a local market, we are able to maintain our competitive prices, whereas the larger food retailers will have a problem doing this after Brexit. We are generally perceived as being expensive, even though it is often cheaper to buy from us than from our local supermarket. High quality and low price is a difficult concept to sell!

“Where Amazon excels is in creating a community among its users to review and answer questions. While this works for consumer electronics, it cannot work for the speciality food shop that dedicates itself to creating a true gourmet experience for customers”

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JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



“The Goldilocks zone”

What has trading been like so far in 2017 at Partridges? The answer is on the whole not very good. Nothing to write home about or even an article about. There have been moments, of course. Easter was better this year and Saturday July 1st was possibly the best non-December Day we have ever had according to my records. However, apart from a few peaks there have been an unpleasant occurrence of troughs. The reason why July 1st hit the heights is not entirely clear. The weather was alright at first glance – partly cloudy and 22 degrees centigrade but not a scorcher. However, this time of the year is what we at Partridges now call the Goldilocks zone. A time with temperatures of between 20 degrees to 25 degrees centigrade without rain and with the key component of bursts of sunshine and national events to lift the spirit. It's also not Christmas but still all forms of speciality food can exist and thrive.

The Goldilocks effect is reflected in our food market too. Fish and chips, paella and burgers flourish but so do the chocolate artisans and the pastry chefs. Anything above 25 degrees and the desire to consume hot food diminishes as does the desire to consume chocolate. Anything below 20 degrees generally means the weather is on the dull side and there is less of an appetite to buy.

The timing of July 1st reflects this. The end of the school term is in sight. It is usually halfway through Wimbledon and several British players may still be in the competition. We tend to have a lot of catering orders and picnics to prepare. It is also not too hot for

tempers to get frayed or fridges to break down, nor too cold for alcohol and ice cream to lose their attraction. The problem with 2017 is that there have been not enough Goldilocks Days compared to last year.

For example, a recent visit to the Met Office website has revealed the following information. January was colder by 2 degrees and wetter than average. Our sales were 2% down. February was slightly warmer than average but with 79% less sunshine and our sales were 1% down. However, the Goldilocks effect then started to kick in. March brought a temperature above average, sunshine above average and rainfall below average and our sales were 5% up. April was one of the driest Aprils on record with half the average rainfall and increased average sunshine and our sales were 8% up. May was one of the warmest on record but rainfall was above average and our sales were 5% up. June had its hottest day since 1976 at 34.5 degrees but it was one of the wettest on record and our sales were up by 6%. July had twice the average rainfall with lower sunshine levels and an average temperature and our sales were 1% down. August was cloudy, cool and showery and our sales were 3% down. However, September had a lower than average temperature, lower than average sunshine and below average rainfall and we bucked the trend by being 2% up. Perhaps this is the exception that proves the rule.

It is also typical that whenever you think you've spotted a rule, trend or pattern, something annoying pops up to disprove it. Thank you September.

However, one thought remains – that speciality food shopping is often as much of an emotional decision as it is a rational one.

Coffee producer full of beans after being named Supreme Champion at New Producer Awards

Ethical coffee brand, Change Please, has been named the Supreme Champion of this year's New Producer Awards at the Bread & Jam Festival held at the Institute of Directors in London.

Founded by Cemal Ezel, Change Please is a social enterprise that provides homeless people with the skills, equipment and support required to become baristas, selling high-quality coffee from mobile carts.

Seven food and drink companies took part in a hotly-contested competition in which they impressed a panel of judges made up of some of the most prestigious names in fine food, including John Shepherd of Partridges, Paul Hargreaves and Ashton Marriott, chief executive and marketing manager of Cotswold Fayre, Michael Weber of Whole Foods, Adam Sopher of Joe & Seph's, Jason Gibb of Bread & Jam and Holly Shackleton of Speciality Food.

The candidates who took part were named winners of their categories earlier on in the competition, allowing them to go on to pitch their products at Bread & Jam.

The unveiling of the Supreme

Champion marks the conclusion of this year's New Producer Awards, which saw hundreds of start-up companies enter their products in the hope of getting their wares in front of industry buyers, shop proprietors and magazine editors.

Cemal Ezel, founder of Change Please said, "Some really amazing companies entered this year, and I didn't even expect us to get close, so to win it has just blown my mind. I think the judges really understood the environmental, social and financial sustainability factors that we focus on and I think that was the clinching element.

"In terms of what's next for Change Please – we're going to be opening new corporate sites where we'll be replacing more well-known brands with an ethical brand. We're also going to be opening sites in America as well, as the problem with homelessness in the US at the moment is obviously really bad."

John Shepherd, chair of judges and director of Partridges said, "I've seen a number of excellent producers with some outstanding stories. The overall winner was outstanding in every way.

It's an idea that has been developed and has been seen through to the end where he has helped 70-odd homeless people to embark on a new career and help them through that process - it's simply incredible."

Jason Gibb, judge and founder of Bread & Jam festival said, "I was so chuffed that Change Please won as I think what they're doing is mind-blowing in every aspect. They obviously have a great product, but the fact that it has a social mission behind it just blew us all away.

"People have been really excited about the New Producer Awards – it's a great way to recognise our community. So many people who came today entered, so they're really engaged with it. For its first year I think it did fantastically well and it's just going to grow and grow."

Holly Shackleton, editor for Speciality Food said, "I couldn't be happier to present Change Please as our Supreme Champion. They were deserving winners of our Sustainable category, and we're proud to have them as the face of our awards and the representative of today's young food and drink businesses."



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CHARLES CAMPION



“Breaking fast”

Next time you find yourself in a hotel breakfast room, take a look around at the other guests. This sensible folk will have got up early to tuck into double fried everything. Once upon a time everyone would have been breakfasting like this. A combination of the decline in manual labour reducing our need for fuel and constant battering from the health lobby has put a dent in the world of breakfast and now the “Seagull’s breakfast” rules supreme, (for non-mariners the components are “a look around and a drink of water”). What a pity that serious breakfasting is reserved for a treat, or those occasions when breakfast is already included in the hotel’s B&B tariff. Big breakfast is beleaguered.

In 1902 Miss M. L. Allen wrote a charming little book entitled Breakfast Dishes which was aimed at housekeepers and cooks. The listings in the book treat breakfast on a day by day basis and provide five dishes for each day. They ate well in 1902. Breakfast items for 4th January are set out: savoury omelette; kedgeree; potted pheasant; cold ham; scones; orange marmalade. Other days featured dishes like stewed jack pike; curried macaroni; sausages boiled with chestnuts. Somewhere along the centuries breakfast has changed from a table laden with often quite sophisticated dishes, to a plate laden with a pile of fried stuff.

One of the unexpected consequences of the increasing number of chefs setting up shop in hotel restaurants is that they often should cover the hotel’s breakfasts

as well as their restaurant’s lunch and dinner. Having the infrastructure in place and limiting the overhead makes these deals attractive, breakfast is the pay back. Theo Randall has been the “Name” restaurant at the Hotel InterContinental (off London’s Park Lane) for a decade and is remarkable as the restaurant offers top notch Italian dishes from a kitchen headed by an Englishman. He also has a way with breakfasts. As well as tables covered in baked goods, there are juices and a series of offers that come under the heading of “Theo’s Full Breakfast”. All the dishes have an Italian spin but just about fit neatly within breakfast. How about “Frittata – St Ewe Cornish free range eggs with zucchini, caprino fresco and marjoram”? Or “Rösti di patate – potato rösti with poached eggs, crisp pancetta and salsa pizzaiola”? Just when everything sounds a bit posh and rather Italian you come across the “Colazione all’Inglese”. Let’s hear it for the full English in Italian disguise. “Roast organic pork sausage, field mushrooms, potato rösti, crisp bacon, and your choice of poached, fried or scrambled eggs”.

Isn’t it time we all saw a decent breakfast as an opportunity – the kind of satisfying, robust meal that prepares people for a busy day ahead? Cooked breakfast will still be a treat, and we are unlikely to dash up some potted pheasant, but it can be a whole lot more than a bowl of suspect muesli looking rather like horse food. Let’s tempt serious breakfast out of its last stronghold in the hotel dining room and indulge ourselves at the start of the day.



5 MINUTES WITH... ALEX DOWER

director of food and restaurants at Harrods

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES YOU’D LIKE TO ACHIEVE WITH THIS PROJECT?

Harrods has been a pioneer in food retail since 1834 and our investment in the Food Halls is compelled by this history and our continued commitment to the food industry in London and around the world. We have re-imagined Harrods and this two-year modernisation project will see the historic halls transformed into an unrivalled combination of incredible products and experiences all under the roof of our beautiful grade II* listed building. Our specialist buyers have sourced the finest produce from around the world for sale on the shelf or as ingredients. Using these products our Master Baker, Master Roaster

and team of 150 in-house chefs have created beautiful desserts, pastries, breads and bespoke blends of herbs, spices and tea to ensure that Harrods is the number one destination for foodies in London.

HOW WILL THE NEW HALL DIFFER FROM ITS PREVIOUS LAYOUT AND DESIGN?

Our main aim is to create an environment where customers feel free to explore all the sensory elements of food. It is easy to do an online grocery shop, but when customers come to Harrods they can watch our experts at work and even smell the coffee roasting. We will have all our colourful teas and spices on display in caddies and a bell will ring every time anything

freshly baked is ready from the oven. Architecturally, the room has been taken back to its 1925 shape and size, with original features brought to life. The ceiling, cartouches and Carrara marble flooring have been exposed and fully restored and modern touches have been introduced, such as hand-embroidered leather bar stools. To oversee the design of the first room, we chose award-winning interior architect David Collins Studio.

WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT THE PROJECT?

Within the first room, I am most excited to launch the scratch bakery and coffee roaster. Our Master Baker and his team will hand-craft and bake fresh bread using the oven stone in front of customers throughout the day, while our Master Roaster creates bespoke blends of our coffee. Personalisation will also be a key focus and customers will be able to add their initials into Harrods’ signature sourdough and blend their own teas and coffee which can be packaged to take home or gift. Personally, I am most excited about being able to sit in the new coffee bar in between the roaster and bakery and enjoy the freshest coffee and pastry that were created in front of me an hour before.

HOW IS HARRODS PLANNING TO ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMER DEMOGRAPHICS?

The food industry, not only in London but worldwide, is fast paced and ever-changing, which requires continued innovation, development and investment. We absolutely need to ensure we achieve relevance for all our key customers whether they be local discerning foodies or international visitors and The Taste Revolution! will ensure Harrods does this in an unparalleled way.

“ Personalisation will be a key focus and customers will be able to add their initials into Harrods’ signature sourdough ”

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SKETCHES OF THE NEW FOOD HALLS BY DAVID COLLINS STUDIO



Harrods Food Hall undergoes 'momentous' redevelopment project

Historic London retailer Harrods has unveiled its newly-designed Food Halls, part of a two-year redevelopment project it is calling The Taste Revolution!

Due to launch in early November – with three further stages rolled out in 2018 and 2019 – the retailer's newly-designed Food Halls focus

on an immersive experience, with Harrods chef preparing fine food in front of customers, which will be available to take home or consume in one of the retailer's restaurants.

The department will also have a broad range of specialist products and will embrace personalisation, for instance allowing customers to create their own bespoke recipes

and blends of tea and coffee.

The interiors have been completely redesigned, taking the room back to its 1925 shape and size, with original features exposed and fully restored. New touches include luxurious hand-embroidered bar stools and tiles handmade to match the original designs.

Brits show loyalty to home-grown produce amidst rise in grocery prices

Eight out of 10 Brits report an increase in their grocery shopping bills over the past six months, according to a study conducted by market research and insight specialist Trinity McQueen.

The study shows that 60 per cent believe brands are using Brexit as an excuse to increase prices, with 71 per cent stating that food prices will increase after the UK leaves the EU and 21 per cent expect prices to increase by 'a lot'.

Feedback suggests that what shoppers voted influenced their stance on the rise in price of grocery goods. Those who voted remain are more likely to believe prices are generally rising; those who sided with leave are more likely to feel that prices haven't risen significantly and will stabilise soon.

Overall 66 per cent of Brits agree rising food prices will greatly impact them over the next year.

Despite the pinch on their purse strings, 78 per cent of UK shoppers say they are still loyal to British food brands, citing quality and freshness as their main appeal. 63 per cent of shoppers would most

likely pay more for British brands providing fresh produce, 60 per cent for fresh dairy and 59 per cent for fresh meat categories. However, 32 per cent said they would welcome cheaper food imports after Brexit, even if the production standards of those foodstuffs were lower than those in the UK.

Anna Cliffe, joint-managing director of Trinity McQueen said, "Our key finding is around uncertainty. Many of us feel unsure about what the future economy may bring and believe that prices will continue to increase once we leave the EU. We particularly see more pessimism and uncertainty amongst younger people, who were more likely to vote remain.

"And what's the impact of this on our grocery shopping? Well, unsurprisingly, we're seeing more shoppers flocking to Aldi and Lidl, and our data shows that shoppers – particularly the younger generation – are more likely to consider own label products and reject big name brands too. It's a warning for retailers and brands who need to deliver compelling products and lower prices to keep younger shoppers loyal."

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“The 7 new business rules”

It's 25 years since I started my first company as a keen twenty-something who thought they could set the business world alight. It was moderately successful but not quite what I imagined! It was probably a blessing that I didn't know what I was doing. I just ploughed on, made huge mistakes and quickly learnt from them. I launched my fourth company in April 2015 and how things have changed. This time I knew exactly what I was getting into, and that made it far more terrifying. So far, everything has gone to plan. More than half of new UK businesses fail in the first five years and it's notoriously difficult to make a decent long term living from the food sector. How can your company be among the minority that thrive? Sadly, there's a lot of bad business advice that is well past its sell by date. Things have changed dramatically and my observations of the new business world have led me to these seven golden rules:

- 1 Don't fall in love with your product. Everywhere entrepreneurs are being told "do what you love and success will follow", but that's nonsense. Don't stake your house on a product or service just because you love it. Test your idea first; it's not enough for customers to like what you're doing, they have to be willing to pay for it. Be passionate about your business but make dispassionate business decisions with your head and not your heart.
- 2 Make sure you're in a fast-growing sector. Does the market really need yet another gin brand, or are you going to make a successful living from selling chutneys? You'll have to be extraordinarily good at marketing, branding and distribution in these overcrowded categories where the

big boys have huge budgets. Instead hitch a ride in a new market where there is less competition.

- 3 Your people are everything. Recruit on personality, values and attitudes, and if someone turns out to be a prima donna or just not a 'people person', get rid of them quickly. Also, don't keep secrets; everyone should understand the company's ethos and goals so they're inspired and want to go on the journey with you.

- 4 The customer comes first. Don't work in a way that's convenient to your business rather than the client. Everything about your company, from processes to marketing, payment methods to delivery, should be customer-centric.

- 5 Hire the best advisers you can afford, then listen. Get the best accountant, lawyer and IT experts you can afford, then listen. They've seen it all before so don't decide you know best and ignore them, especially when they're pointing out where you're inefficient or going wrong.

- 6 Learn how to have difficult conversations. Think you can be a business owner and avoid tricky conversations with staff, clients or suppliers? Think again. Approach issues head on, with calmness but persistence and never put it off. You'll always have difficult conversations as an employer, so deal with them quickly, especially when you're owed money. If not, your business will fail because you'll simply run out of cash.

- 7 Forget the 'buzz' and focus on sales. Some business owners get obsessed with social media follower numbers and facebook 'likes', but it's just vanity and very time consuming. There's only one outcome that really matters and that's sales, so only use the marketing techniques that will get new business.

Fresh Montgomery acquires FDIN in hopes of expanding network

Fresh Montgomery, the UK's leading organiser of food, drink and hospitality events, has announced the acquisition of the Food & Drink Innovation Network (FDIN).

FDIN states that the change in ownership will help to double its high-level community over the next two years. Building on founder Jeffrey Hyman's legacy, Fresh Montgomery is keen to ensure that FDIN continues to be at the forefront of industry innovation and influence; ensuring a nurturing community remains at its core.

Fresh Montgomery is built on over 20 years' experience running events including IFE, Hotelympia and the Speciality & Fine Food Fair.

With a number of other acquisitions and launches in the pipeline, Fresh Montgomery has plans to grow both in the UK and overseas over the next two years. This acquisition will strengthen FDIN's position as a channel for industry insight and influence and Fresh Montgomery expects to increase the company's reach within the food and drink industry.

Jane Milton, food industry expert, will lead FDIN forward as chief inspiration officer. She said, "Fresh Montgomery and FDIN are a perfect match, as we're both built on similar beliefs and values. We're both industry leaders within the food and drink categories and are at the forefront

of innovation, influence and trends. Our insight is second to none, and our passion to drive the industry forward by supporting food and drink companies is at the core of everything we do."

Soraya Gadelrab, portfolio director at Fresh Montgomery who will take on the role of chief experience officer said, "The partnership will inject enormous value across the food, drink and hospitality categories, considerably enhancing the industry. FDIN's network is a key cornerstone of what makes it great, and adding this to the Fresh Montgomery portfolio will heighten its offering, making it a truly remarkable experience and a driving force for innovation and new product development for the industry. For Fresh Montgomery, the acquisition will increase its reach across the food and drink industry with many more touchpoints throughout the year and a much larger community of food and drink professionals."

Booths teams up with Amazon to sell down south

Northern upmarket supermarket Booths has signed a deal with AmazonFresh which will see its products become available to London and the South East for the first time in its history.

The 170-year-old family-owned and run business had eschewed expanding across the country

until penning the deal. The new AmazonFresh deal means that the company's range of ready meals, cheeses, deli items and coffee will be available in 302 postcodes across London, Surrey, Hampshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Customers of AmazonFresh have access to fast and efficient delivery,

with one-hour delivery slots available from 7am to 11pm, seven days a week.

Edwin Booth, chief executive and chairman of Booths said, "Booths has always been a Northern secret, but now our range of exceptional products will be available every day to a wider range of shoppers. This is good news for everyone. It's a win for Booths, as we have wider reach for our products, and it's a win for the customer, who can now have a taste of Booths country delivered to their doorstep."

“ It's a win for Booths, as we have wider reach for our products, and it's a win for the customer, who can now have a taste of Booths country delivered to their doorstep ”

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The nascent British food and drink industry is tricky to keep up with, what with the rapid pace with which new businesses are popping up. Whether it's an edible insect producer or a non-alcoholic craft beer company, it's safe to say that the UK food and drink industry is currently enjoying a purple patch. So much so that the sector has played a pivotal role in post-Brexit political dialogue, with the Conservative party keen to champion British-made produce and the strong export demand from overseas.

In fact, the number of companies setting up shop reached a record high in 2016 with more than 650,000 new businesses registered in the UK, according to the Centre for Entrepreneurs (CFE). The findings show that over 30% of these start-ups were registered in London, however cities north of the capital also showed growth, with Birmingham now home to more than 17,000 new businesses, followed by the likes of Manchester with 9,416 and Glasgow with 7,845. With 480,238 start-ups having launched in 2017 thus far according to Start Up Britain, we might even see 2016's total number usurped by the end of the year.

Start-up support

Online forums and networking hubs formed primarily for food

The food and drink industry is brimming with start-ups showcasing the latest in innovation and flavour. We look at the new businesses taking the sector by storm

and drink founders, such as The FoodHub, are now omnipresent and are helping budding business-owners navigate the sometimes frustrating system of starting a business. The crowdfunding route is also becoming an extremely popular one for food and drink endeavours, with Crowdrating – a ratings agency for equity crowd-funding – stating that there were 678 food or drink-focused campaigns on the top 12 crowdfunding websites from March 2015 to 2016. Some of the most successful crowdfunded ventures to date have been food or drink producers, with brewery Innis & Gun raising £2.4m via its Crowdcube campaign, West Berkshire Brewery's Seedrs campaign accumulating £1.7m and Chinese food producer Zing Zing making £1.6m through Crowdcube.

For a taste of the shape of things to come when it comes to the new crop of food producers hitting the scene, curious retailers should head over to the Enterprise Zone at Food Matters Live 2017 to see a showcase of the most cutting-edge and innovative solutions from start-up businesses promoting their latest food and drink products and services. Companies confirmed include the likes of F'it Beer, Spoon Guru, Brain Füd and many more. The sheer ambition and drive within the start-up sector is astounding, with many food and drink companies set up with the burning desire to fight issues like food waste and also as reactions to the lack of options for consumers suffering from food intolerances.

Meet the innovators

One company with a fascinating

origin is Brain Füd, which produces a range of alternative energy drinks that contain seven functional vitamins and minerals that contribute to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. The concept of the business came about due to founder Philip Udeh struggling with chronic fatigue due to a sickle cell. "I face daily challenges to live normally," he says. "However, I want to be extraordinary! Often, I need a helping hand. This is what Brain Füd is about. Providing the boost you need to be at your best, naturally!"

Following the theme of functional, flavoursome products is F'it Beer, a classic lager that's completely alcohol-free, contains only 66 calories (less than half of its alcoholic equivalent), and is vegan-friendly, rich in vitamin B12 and full of folic acid. The founders of the company

created FitBeer as an isotonic beverage, meaning it's good for hydrating after exercise. While it would appear absurd to some to witness someone swigging a beer-like beverage on the treadmill at the gym, the businesses spearheading the start-up food and drink movement aren't concerned with orthodox routines, with companies like Jimini's and its dried insect snacks an example of a producer successfully flipping norms on their heads.

One company that has defied conventions is Change Please, which was named the Supreme Champion of the New Producer Awards 2017. Backed by The Big Issue, Change Please is a social enterprise that provides homeless people with the skills, equipment and support required to become trained baristas, selling high quality coffee from mobile carts and shops. The vendors are paid the London Living Wage, giving them six months of life-changing experience. The coffee beans are sourced from regular suppliers, including Itende JKT in Tanzania, with the roasting done at the Old Spike Roastery in Peckham. Change Please is just one example of a food and drink industry that is not only creating innovative products, but striving to find solutions to life's bigger problems as well. Other sectors, take note.

“ The ambition and drive within the start-up sector is astounding, with many food and drink companies set-up with the burning desire to fight issues like food waste ”

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“Supermarkets are selling everything Cornish they can get their hands on,” tweeted retailer Darren Shuffle Botham this month. “I’ve gone from [bricks and mortar] to internet-based on the overheads of running a beautiful shop with artisan products.” Darren’s story is sobering; in 2015 he partnered with eco-champion James Strawbridge to open Lerryn River Stores, a village shop-cum-deli in a picturesque Cornish settlement selling artisan products and sustainable pork. “It just didn’t work and we lost a hell of a lot of money,” says Darren.

“We parted company and the shop focused in on Cornish produce but I just found I wasn’t getting realistic prices from suppliers. Some supermarkets were selling products cheaper than the producers were selling them to us. It snowballed with a local dairy selling us two litres of milk for £1.07 but letting it go into the pound shop. As a small shop you’re dealing with 20 or 30 suppliers and you’d think it’d be the producer that could do you the best price, but often it isn’t. Shopping around is a lot of work.”

Indie lookin’ chain

Darren’s experience will be familiar to many retailers who feel the multiples breathing down their necks. “The difficulty is that the consumer wants as bespoke a service as possible and the supermarkets realise that,” says Andrew Duncan, co-owner of Glasgow’s two Peckham’s delis. “They’re trying to make their products look bespoke, so things

HOW ‘CRAFT’ CAN YOU GO?

‘Craftwashing’ or not, the supermarkets’ drive for indie brands is encroaching on your turf. But how artisanal can you afford to take your offer, asks Anna Blewett

are basically getting more and more competitive.” The management at Peckham’s have found themselves squeezed as supermarkets venture onto deli turf: craft beers, local baked goods, specialty teas, and more. “Supermarkets are designing their systems to deal with smaller local producers, and sell some products into some stores but not others.”

So savvy multiples are fine-tuning their offer to be more responsive, more local, and more ‘artisan’. “I think there’ll be more of that,” says Andrew. “The supply chain problems small producers had even five years ago have been taken away. It’s so easy for them to get to larger wholesalers, who are

happy nowadays to do smaller drop shipments and not just very large deals.” Andrew has seen many of his small producers make a play for supermarket listings. “There are lots of producers around the Glasgow region doing their best to get in with Co-Op and Iceland all the way up to Waitrose and Whole Foods Market. But that’s their business; it’s good for them and their part of the economy. It makes life a bit harder for us but that’s the nature of business, isn’t it?”

Is ‘artisanal’ the answer?

But just how sustainable is embracing a more artisanal flavour for your business? Kitchen-table

producers might have the back story and quality to charm your customers, but the inconsistent supply and low marketing spend of true ‘craft’ suppliers have sent many into the arms of ‘quasi-craft’ producers. Brands with indie-style branding and high levels of consumer loyalty that are nonetheless owned by large multinationals – Green & Black’s, Steve’s Leaves et al – give retailers like Andrew a ‘buffer’ of products that meet his customer’s expectations whilst meeting his needs as a businessman. “It’s easier for us to get hold of that type of product; because they have the marketing power behind them they’re able to get out to a whole

range of suppliers that makes them more accessible to everyone. We seek to work with smaller local producers that typically wouldn’t get the chance to work with big players like Tesco, but we have to have a balance of both [models] because we can’t rely all the time on the small players being able to furnish us with everything we need. We need to give our customers what they want, so we have a balance of stuff from big and small brands.”

Not everyone’s feeling the squeeze. Yet. “Supermarkets, even the top-end ones, aren’t in our ‘space’ yet,” says Gaye Perry of The Real Macaron Company, a small retail-only bakery in Newbury. “Customers who really care about good macarons will search us out. Time is our big cost – we’re small and make everything by hand, plus we buy the best ingredients – so we have to offer our customers that little bit extra to hook the customer in.”

Darren Shuffle Botham agrees. Following the closure of Lerryn River Stores, his new venture goes live this month. Cornish Food Factory is an online shop showcasing handmade, unique products the multiples have yet to get to. “It’s really interesting to find these little artisan producers that are out there; when I was running the shop I didn’t have time to look,” says Darren. “I’ve found a honey farm with their own bees – that’s the kind of thing I’m going for now. I can give the producer a better price than they’d get from the supermarket and I can still make a bit of money on it.” Long may such mutual benefits continue.

“How sustainable is embracing a more artisanal flavour for your business? Kitchen-table producers may have the back story and quality to charm your customers, but the inconsistent supply and low marketing spend of true ‘craft’ suppliers have sent many into the arms of ‘quasi-craft’ producers”

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TURMERIC

The Indian spice that leaves annoying yellow stains on worktops is having a golden moment, says Sally-Jayne Wright. Never mind curry, it's in cookies, coffees and cocktails



APART FROM MAKING TOFU LOOK LIKE SCRAMBLED EGGS ON INSTAGRAM, WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT TURMERIC?

It's a super-ingredient which Asian families have been using for thousands of years as a home remedy. The active ingredient is curcumin – more effective if you consume it with piperine (found in black pepper) and fat. Turmeric appears to have powerful antioxidant and antibacterial properties; it may reduce inflammation and improve the immune, digestive and memory functions.

WHY IS IT SUDDENLY SO POPULAR?

In the West, turmeric has been gathering fans steadily over the last 10 years; as more and more studies were published in support of its many benefits, it took off. Trend Watch reported in September that millennials like food and drink products which solve a problem. So they're going to love the latest form of cold and flu prevention – a non-alcoholic turmeric spritz cocktail at The Book Club, a hip bar in London's Shoreditch.

CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT STARBUCKS IS DOING TURMERIC LATTES?

That's right, and Lakeland is selling instant turmeric latte mix (Lucy Bee, £4.99 for 125g). Taka is another instant turmeric drinks brand. Recipes for golden milk are all over the internet; for the uninitiated, this is a hot drink made of turmeric

powder, cinnamon, black pepper, coconut oil and dairy or nut milk.

Turmeric may even give you a gentle energy boost. James White Golden turmeric zinger shots contain apple, lemon and turmeric juices as well as chilli flavouring and black pepper extract, 70ml for £1.45. Spokesman Andy Dicken said: "Many drink it chilled in the mornings as a coffee alternative or as a mid-afternoon pick-me-up." Trend Watch enjoyed it as an after-meal palate cleanser.

Tea drinkers looking for a more soothing experience can sip Gareth Gates' Cuppanut Coconut, Ginger & Turmeric infusion with one of Rude Health's Ginger & Turmeric Oaties.

WHERE IS THE TREND AT ITS BEST?

At September's lunch! food-to-go show, we sampled Manoucher's delicious, bright yellow, turmeric bread seasoned with cumin (distributor: DJM Food Solutions); it made us wonder why this spice isn't used more in flatbreads and pittas. The Somerset company, JEAM, also uses turmeric in an award-winning, organic Turmeric and reishi mushroom bread mix.

Another product we liked is Hibiscus Lily Lemon and ginger with turmeric marmalade. The turmeric is there but it's subtle and leaves a warming back-note in the mouth. Former TV cookery show presenter, Kanwal Pattar, who makes it, grew up in the Punjab. She said: "I was inspired by a hot lemon, ginger and turmeric drink I

made when recovering from a cold. It seemed to be the perfect flavour combination for a marmalade." The Great Taste and Marmalade Awards judges agreed.

IS TURMERIC GOOD FOR SALES?

Absolutely. You can stock innovative and award-winning products such as Butter Nut's Cashew, Maple & Turmeric Butter, ChicP's perfectly-balanced Carrot, Ginger & Turmeric Hummus or Miss Daisy's Mummy's Carrot-top Chutney. The latter is flavoured with nigella seeds, star anise and turmeric, and scooped three stars in the Welsh Great Taste Awards 2017.

Make sure your latte mix and turmeric powder is super-fresh with a good percentage of curcumin, as that's what health-conscious customers will be looking for.

WILL THIS TREND LAST?

The vogue for adding super-ingredients to food and drink shows no signs of abating and the science looks very promising, so yes. To tackle those yellow stains, we recommend bicarb and lemon juice or vinegar. Act fast.

“ The vogue for adding super-ingredients to food and drink shows no signs of abating, and the science behind turmeric looks very promising ”

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THE INTERVIEW: DARREN HENAGHAN

Darren Henaghan, MD of Borough Market, talks people, passion and provenance

I grew up on a beef and dairy farm in Staffordshire at a time when the food industry was all about getting the greatest possible yield from the land, so the ethos that we have now – all about quality, identity and provenance – didn't really exist. The Milk Marketing Board bought our milk, and the beef when straight into the fat stock markets, so it all got a bit lost. My dad died when I was 18, and like lots of farmers had lots of debt, so we had to sell the land. I did engineering for a while then got into environmental health – I have a masters in Environmental Health and am a

chartered civil engineer – and did British Aid work abroad, in places like Nepal, Africa and India, then began working for the Government on things like regeneration and place shaping. I was working with anything to do with food safety and standards, plus climate change and pollution, jobs, skills and enterprise. I came to Borough Market just over a year ago, and it's a perfect fit.

I'm utterly dominated by the values and ethos that I put into my working life. I wear my heart on my sleeve and am very real and genuine, and it's the pursuit of excellence,

environmental sustainability and real provenance which makes me love this job so much. I really believe in what I do, and that's what gets me out of bed in the morning – coming into work to do something I really believe in makes the days go by very quickly! We've got five of the top 50 most influential people in the food industry in the market, and I only need to pop into Ginger Pig or Brindisa to hear stories about how their products came to be there to feel inspired. It reminds me of why Borough is so good, and what makes what we do so important. It's the whole story of why the food is so good that bring the place to life. Wandering around the market and speaking to the stallholders is a really inspiring thing to do. It's very important that I listen to and understand them.

If anyone in the food industry thinks they know everything there possibly is to know about food, they're deluding themselves. It's a constantly changing industry, and it's only by sharing someone's passion and stories that you really get to understand that. You're always discovering new things, largely thanks to us Brits doing something we've done for generations – being inspired by other nations

and bringing things back to the UK to call it our own.

We need to help consumers better understand what they're eating, to get them to value their food more. Too many people don't have a connection with their food – they do an online shop and just want to get it out of the way – but it's a really important part of our culture and who we are. It needs to be more widely recognised that eating the kind of food we sell here is not only better for an individual's health, but it's also better for the environment and aids the sustainability of the industry.

What I love most about the food and drink industry of today is the openness of the younger generation. They're so well informed – they use the phones in their pockets like portable encyclopaedias and access huge amounts of knowledge about the food they're eating. We talk to them about what makes the food we're selling them so special and they've already read up on it; they're aware of the value of food and are interested in what we do, and are willing to try new things. They see food as part of enjoying life, and see what and where they eat as an indication of who they are. Us older people need to embrace this engagement and share our knowledge with them because they seem to be genuinely interested. I see this group as being 18-25 years old, the consumers who see going out for something to eat as part of their social status – they are a real asset to us.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

HOW TO MAKE IT IN FOOD...

Be true to yourself. Understand what makes you tick and stick to it. Don't get swept away by fashions, but understand them and hold fast to what you believe in. When you find out what fits best with the person you are, really get behind it. It's about building relationships and really living your beliefs. All the stuff around brand, produce and reputation follows on from those genuine roots.

INSPIRATION...

I'm inspired by the stories of people who have succeeded after having been handed a difficult hand of cards. We have people visiting the market and need support in life, they could have mental health issues or physical disabilities, who are so passionate about food. Apart from that, I've learned so much from people throughout the food industry who have dug deep – I'm be eternally grateful to them.

PHILOSOPHIES...

I'm not someone who's charted out what I'm going to do throughout my life. I've never led my life by a plan, I've just gone with what feels like the right thing to do. I'm not sure if that's strictly a philosophy, but it's worked well for me thus far.

“ I've learned so much from people throughout the food industry who have dug deep – I will be eternally grateful to them ”

MAKING IT WORK

I've been at Borough Market for a year, and what a year it's been. We've run The Evening of Cheese – to which nearly 50,000 people turned up in less than two hours – and of course had the terror attacks in June. Leading the market through that has been a challenge, but we're healing. It's a great place, a really close knit community. All the traders know each other, and we do a lot of work with the

community around us. What came out of the attacks in June was that it made us stronger, and we've rebuilt some of the relationships we'd had with customers who'd last visited us years ago and had drifted away.

The market itself has been around for a thousand years and has been through a lot of models in that time. In its modern incarnation it's been about making the fine food sold into restaurants available to retail. The market has blossomed thanks to its dedication to excellence,

and has become the epicentre of London's food revolution over the past couple of decades. We have more visitors coming to us than ever before, and are very well regarded throughout the world. We receive filming requests from the Middle East, Australia and the US – we're a worldwide institution now, and I put that down to being clear about what we stand for.

We allow primary producers to trade for only a few days a week if, for example, they need to be milking

the goats at the beginning of the week in order to sell the cheese later in the week. We also don't open on Sundays and Bank Holidays, because we recognise that our stallholders need a rest, and appreciate seasonality. It's the right way to live, to understand that in this fast-paced culture you can't have products being made and sold 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and out of season. We have a dwell time of an hour and three quarters, which is very important. It shows that they enjoy

the space, and the environment we've created.

At the moment, we at Borough Market are having conversations about how we're going to move forward and catch the next wave. We're bringing all of the voices in the market together to create the next trend to wow the market as street food has recently done, and discuss how we're going to 'go forward by stepping back', by embracing the high quality produce Borough is most famous for.



CHEF'S TABLE

Japanese Wagyu beef is impressively versatile, but what dish Koichiro Uemura's favourite?

Sukiyaki – simmered beef with vegetables, dipped in beaten egg



AUTHENTIC WAGYU BEEF STEALS THE SHOW

Chefs and restaurateurs were wowed by authentic Japanese Wagyu beef at The Restaurant Show 2017

“More than just beef”

Koichiro Uemura, expert spokesperson for genuine Japanese Wagyu beef and managing director at Meat Companion, explains what makes the authentic meat ideal for discerning British palates

“We consider Wagyu to be more than just beef. It's similar to truffle – we don't see truffle as just another fungus, it's special. Foie gras is another example; it's more than just liver, it's a gastronomic treasure. In creating authentic Japanese Wagyu beef, we're doing what Olympians do: paying attention to the finer details so that we can continue to improve what is already the finest beef in the world.

“I look forward to working closely with the British food industry to bring fantastic Wagyu to discerning food lovers. People

in this country are happy to pay the proper amount for great food – Britons see the value in quality, tradition and expertise – so the UK represents an exciting growth area for Japanese Wagyu beef.

“The demand is there; Harrods occasionally buys a 20 kilo chunk of beef for one customer, who purchases it at 18,000 Japanese Yen per kilo, which works out at around £500 for the piece of meat! This shows that in the UK, there are customers who are willing to pay for truly great quality products.”

Wagyu around the world

To professionals across the food industry, from retailers to chefs and restaurateurs, the work that goes into producing the very best quality Japanese Wagyu beef

will come as no surprise. There are producers creating their own version of Wagyu beef in the UK, but these options should not be seen as a viable alternative to sourcing the real deal from Japan. It would be difficult to produce Wagyu beef of the same quality in the UK, even if we used the same breed of cattle, as the factors of how the cattle is raised and the nutrients it is developed on play such a huge part. The producers have to take care of the Wagyu beef from the very beginning – from when each cow is born to the way it's cared for, as well as the way the meat is produced and packaged – so you need the Japanese expertise which has been cultivated over generations to create the end product which is rightly famed for its quality.



The US imports the most Wagyu beef which it supplements with its own Wagyu beef made with cross-breeds, but the EU imports the best-quality Japanese Wagyu. Historically, Europeans have understood quality food – this appreciation is shared with the Japanese people – so, says Koichiro, Europe is the perfect market for authentic Japanese Wagyu beef.

For more information visit: jlec-pr.jp/beef/

NEED TO KNOW

Wagyu beef is very versatile. It has a very powerful flavour and aroma, so even if you use a tiny amount you can still create a wide range of dishes. The melting point of the fat in Wagyu beef is very low, which creates a melt-in-the-mouth texture – in other types of beef it's usually around 40°C, whereas in Wagyu beef it's closer to 27°C and can be as low as 17°C. This is why you can feel it melting in your mouth, even if you're eating it uncooked.

There are strict grading systems and criteria in place with Wagyu beef when it comes to the colour of the meat and fat, fineness, firmness and marbling. The beef fat contains oleic acid, which is something it shares with olive oil. Olive oil is known for its health properties and contains 70% oleic acid, but Wagyu beef contains 50%.

Breeding is incredibly important in the quest for high quality Wagyu beef. It counts for around 50% of the overall process, and control of nutrients counts for another 25%, and from when the cattle are 13 months of age, the production of marbling becomes key and so the cattle are looked after very well from that point onwards.

“ You need the Japanese expertise which has been cultivated over generations to create the end product which is rightly famed for its quality ”

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up



French fig chutney brought to the UK

French jam manufacturer Les Comtes de Provence has made its Fig Chutney available to UK retailers following a positive reception in France and Germany.

The Fig Chutney is cooked in a cauldron using quality ingredients and is said to pair well with white meat, foie gras and various cheeses.

The Fig Chutney completes the Les Comtes de Provence range of culinary chutneys (or confit, in French), including Onion, Shallots in Red Wine, Black Cherries, Provençal and Fig Olives.

Donatien Monod, international director of Les Comtes de Provence said, "Provence is all about figs and food, so we have crafted a recipe which makes our all-natural fig chutney very distinctive and elegant, hence our recent three star award from the Great Taste Awards. We only intend for the product to be available in high-end speciality stores, and we reward premium retailers who carry the brand with exclusivity and an item crafted by a French heritage company from Provence."

agronovae.com

Wild Drinks develops Sloe Spritz

Dorset-based Wild Drinks has launched a premium alcoholic Sloe Spritz in time for Christmas.

Jonathan Wallington, managing director of Wild Drinks said, "Mixing sloe with London Dry Gin and perry from Herefordshire gives a deliciously refreshing and mouth-filling experience. We are incredibly proud of the flavours of our unique range of drinks so introducing a new flavour is a real challenge, but our Sloe Spritz has surpassed our expectations, as highlighted by the response at the Speciality & Fine Food Fair."

The new flavour joins the range of award-winning Spritz drinks that include Elderflower, Plum and Ginger Wine. Wild Drinks claim to be the only drinks available on the market that combine fruit, perry and gin to create a premium selection of single serve alcoholic drinks. They are produced from all natural ingredients sourced in the UK. Each serve is in 275ml bottle and contains 1.5 units of alcohol and 5.4 percent ABV.

willdrinks.co.uk



Zeina rolls out larger packs of Delicious range

Snacking nuts and dried fruits producer Zeina Foods has launched its Zeina Delicious range in a larger pack, catering for the new demand of high quality sharing packs of snacks and nuts.

The range of new 170g packs bring together three of the range's best-selling products: Spicy Barbecue Cashews, Black Pepper Almonds and Sea Salt Pistachios.

Abigail Roberts, product development manager at Zeina said, "In recent years, consumers have started looking for products of real differentiation and quality, and this is evident in the premium crisps sector. Our Zeina Delicious range fills this gap in the premium snacking nuts."

"We have picked our three best-sellers from our 80g range and launched them in a larger pack size, which is ideal for sharing or to be bought as gifts."

zeinafoods.com

Field Fare launches new breakfast pastries

Supplier of frozen premium food field fare has launched three new bakery lines in the run-up to Christmas: Panettone Croissants, Blueberry Plait and a Cheese & Bacon Turnover.

The Panettone Croissant has a rich, buttery dough with a citrus hint, the Blueberry Plait has a light flaky pastry filled with blueberries and custard, and the Cheese & Bacon Turnover contains Danish bacon paired with West Country Mature Cheddar and pastry.

All three of the products are sold loose and ready-to-bake from frozen, with the company intending for them to be consumed as luxury breakfast items or convenient hand-held snacks.

Karen Deans, managing director of field fare said, "These three new additions taste amazing and really complement our existing bakery range. We are expecting high sales volume over the festive period as customers treat the family to an indulgent breakfast."

field-fare.com



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European popcorn producer sets sights on UK market

Dutch popcorn producer Jimmy's has announced the launch of its Pure Popcorn range in the UK, with the company stating that it is the healthiest popcorn available on the market.

A range of three flavours – Sea Salt, Sweet and Sweet & Salty – will spearhead the brand's entry to the sector. According to the producer, each bag contains less than 100 calories and less sugar and salt compared to regular popcorn and no aromatic substances, colourings, flavourings or sweeteners.

Jimmy's currently holds a market share in 17 countries, supplying major cinema chains around Europe and is one of the only popcorn producers in the world to own its own state-of-the-art factory in Rotterdam, designed and built to produce Jimmy's products exclusively.

Initially supplying UK cinemas, the brand has built on its success and will now offer its consumer snacking range to the UK retail market.

Steve Seddon, director at Jimmy's UK said, "Popcorn sales are soaring in the UK market, which can in part be accredited to the shift in consumer habits from traditional, generally

spud-based snacks to 'good-for-you' alternatives.

"What really sets the brand apart is the innovation behind the product that we have engaged in order to create a healthier alternative for consumers to enjoy without compromising on flavour. As a natural alternative to sugar, we use chicory root fibre that gives a subtly sweet flavour and is completely new to the market.

"Popcorn has seen exponential growth in a few short years from microwavable packs and kernels to one of the grocery's biggest success stories, and we are proud to be offering a range of products at the forefront of this sector, offering consumers a product that combines healthy snacking and on-the-go convenience without compromising on taste."

purepopcorn.co.uk



Tastemiths joins Cotswold Fayre's portfolio

Tastemiths, producer of home-cooking curry kits, is now working with fine food distributor Cotswold Fayre.

Tastemiths' range of curry kits are designed to make it simple for home cooks to put together authentic-tasting curries from hand-picked quality ingredients.

Becky Hancock, marketing manager at Tastemiths said, "We're excited to be working with Cotswold Fayre and believe that Tastemiths' commitment to quality and authenticity means our brand fits perfectly in Cotswold's portfolio. Tastemiths' kits offer something a bit different to the curry sauces or dry spice kits available on the market – many of our ingredients, such as chilli, garlic and ginger are fresh and all the spices mixes and blends are

freshly ground by us so retain as much of their natural aromas as possible."

Paul Hargreaves, managing director of Cotswold Fayre said, "We are pleased to include Tastemiths within our new rapidly growing chilled range. These innovative and unusual products help those who want to home cook quality meals, but are not quite sure where to start, and create a very high quality meal. We look forward to rolling them out to farm shops, delis and upmarket convenience stores."

Seven of Tastemiths most popular kits are now available via Cotswold Fayre: Balti Masala, Persian Khoreh, Madras, Goan Fish/Prawn Curry, Rogan Josh, Makhani and Korma Masala. tastemiths.com

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NEW PRODUCER AWARDS CHAMPIONS 2017

They came, they impressed, they won. Meet this year's crop of award-winners

When the idea came to the Speciality Food team to create an awards scheme, it was only natural that the basis of this would be in new businesses – the start ups and freshly launched brands which are changing the face of fine food and drink. This corner of the sector is a buzzing microcosm of the industry, where innovation is rife and the challenges faced by young businesses are met with a supportive hand and willingly-given advice. It's this warmth and openness which inspired us to bring together the brightest new businesses and some of the biggest names in food today. We're so happy to announce that as a result of this, multiple Category Champions are in talks with judges and, just weeks after they met at the final, one of the producers has added a renowned retailer who was on the panel to their distribution list.

On these pages you'll find a myriad of stories, all with passion and dedication at their heart. These are the stories of the inaugural Category Champions of the New Producer Awards and we're proud to present them as stand-out examples of businesses in their field. While the winner of the Sustainable category winner, Change Please, stole the

show at the final presentations held at Bread & Jam Festival in early October, every producer telling their story in the coming pages has impressed an esteemed panel of retailers, distributors, buyers, journalists and food experts throughout 2017 to get to this point. Hundreds of entries were painstakingly whittled down to seven, and those seven to just one – the business we feel represents the pinnacle of today's changing fine food industry.

Change Please stood out to the judges because of its unique blend of kindness, quality and a passion which meant that they have left no stone unturned in their mission. On the next page you'll find out more about this mission, and how it is that they came to not only challenge the mainstream brands but surpass them in terms of sales, business partnerships and popularity.

We speak to World of Zing, a thoroughly modern business which is turning popular products on their head to the surprise and delight of their customers – which just so happen to include the venerable Jamie Oliver – and tell the story of Co-Created, a community-focused venture which sources the very best recipes from the local area to produce



some of the very best sweet treats we've had the pleasure of eating. We also hear from Rob Fink, who founded Big Drop Brewing Co in a successful attempt to fill the growing hole in the industry for moreish low-alcohol beer; Tigg's, a partnership

of two brothers who are bringing generations of their family's recipes to market, creating a genuinely new format in the process; Wignalls Yallo, a family venture which has seen a farm transformed from an unloved piece of land and tumbledown

buildings to a vibrant and sustainable enterprise producing a truly delicious range of cold pressed rapeseed oils; and Eastgate Larder, a homegrown endeavour which is bringing a previously unloved fruit back onto British tables.

“ Our industry's warmth and openness inspired us to bring together the brightest new businesses and some of the biggest names in food today ”

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“If we can just get a small proportion of coffee drinkers to simply change where they buy their coffee, we could really change the world.”
Cemal Ezel, Change Please, Founder.



WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND CHANGE PLEASE?

We launched in November 2015 in partnership with The Big Issue, and set out to tackle homelessness through selling great coffee and provide an ethical alternative to the coffee available in coffee shops and retailers. We find people who are homeless, they tend to be rough sleeping, and we train each person to be a speciality-level coffee roasters and baristas. We roast our own coffee and provide each of those people with housing, a London Living Wage job, bank account, therapy support and support into onward employment. We found that because we were paying well and weren't setting goals with regards to how they should be using their money and what they should be aiming for, they were spending their money on old vices – so while most people would go into a job looking to be able to afford a house, family or other big investment, these homeless people didn't have the same goals as their main goal day-to-day was survival. We employed an occupational therapist who set goals with them.

WHERE DO YOU SOURCE YOUR COFFEE?

We find farms which are reinvesting income back into doing good within their community – including a farm in Peru which helps women who are victims of domestic abuse, and one in Tanzania that supports landmine victims. We purchase Direct Trade coffee so we know exactly where our coffee is coming from and the farmers and communities who are producing it. We've recently won two Great Taste Awards,

which goes to show that we're not compromising on quality in order to have a story and help people. We realised that if we're not producing coffee which tastes good, consumers won't purchase it and therefore the help we're giving to the communities we work with won't be sustainable.

WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT TO OTHER COFFEE BRANDS?

The majority of people at the moment are only seeing their coffee in two dimensions – its branding and flavour – whereas we present it to them in three dimensions by adding a social,

helping element, which Millennials in particular connect with. Why would consumers and retailers choose just a good-tasting coffee, when they could have a good-tasting, quality coffee which also takes eight people a year off the streets and gives them the key to their own home?

We run our own coffee shops,

and have seen huge sales rises from whoever had the site before us – when we replaced Starbucks and Costa in the Bank of New York sites across the country, there was an 11% increase in sales. We carried out tastings with the bank's employees, 93% of which preferred our coffee to the high street brands'. It's very easy to walk past a homeless person on the street and not know how to help them, but if you can purchase something which you would purchase anyway and benefit them, why would you not?

We've got our own coffee vans which are in Canary Wharf, Stratford, Borough Market and outside The Shard, which we use as a way of providing people who were formerly homeless with training before they go into our main retail sites, and have a relationship with TFL – our commitment is that 50% of our employees will have come from sleeping on TFL trains, buses and in stations. We're using empty TFL retail sites to train them as baristas, and give them a route out of homelessness.

WHAT'S IN THE RANGE?

We have three retail products and another type of coffee which we use in corporate environments and foodservice, which is in kilogram bags. All of the retail coffees were chosen by people who were formerly homeless, who we trained to recognise good coffee and different notes and levels of acidity. These people selected their own flavour profiles so we've got one which tastes of chocolate, hazelnut and caramel (Lucy's blend), an Ethiopian single origin coffee with floral notes (Marianne's blend), and one which tastes of dark chocolate, honeyed plum and marischino cherry (Tom's blend).

WHAT'S NEXT?

We're looking to find more distributors and supply more retailers, and are actively looking for more sites across the country as well as in San Francisco – homelessness is so much more visible in the US, and we want to do our bit to help.



CHANGE PLEASE

We catch up with Cemal Ezel, founder of Change Please, to find out more about the award-winning coffee brand with heart

“ Why would consumers and retailers choose just a good-tasting coffee, when they could have a good-tasting, quality coffee which also takes eight people a year off the streets and gives them the key to their own home? ”

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WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE BUSINESS? HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

Like many others, I reached a stage where life started to change and I started making different choices. I'd just become a father and wanted my lifestyle to reflect my new responsibilities including, sometimes, choosing something other than alcohol when I went out for a drink.

I still fancied a beer but when I looked around, realised just how little choice there was in low or no alcohol beers. It didn't feel as if much had changed over the last 40 years or so. Yes, new brands had emerged but there wasn't much evidence of innovation. I recognised a gap in the market for a craft brewery dedicated solely to production of excellent quality, full-flavoured low alcohol beers.

I joined forces with design supremo, James Kindred, and we soon signed up Johnny Clayton as our Master Brewer. Johnny had worked at Wild Beer and was one of the finest experimental brewers in the business, so we knew we had the right man!

WHAT'S IN THE RANGE, AND HOW DO YOUR BEERS COMPARE TO ALCOHOLIC VERSIONS?

Big Drop is all about great tasting 0.5%ABV beers with genuine depth of flavour. We've developed four beers which give beer lovers a credible choice, in whatever kind of beer style they prefer.

• **Stout** - With notes of coffee, cocoa nibs and a lingering hint of sweet vanilla this beer is dark, rich and indulgent. We keep ours in the fridge but take it out about an hour

or so before we drink it as all that decadence needs a bit of warming up. We pour it fast into a tulip glass so the gorgeous coffee aromas can stretch their legs.

• **Pale Ale** - A deliciously refreshing dry-hopped pale ale. The nose has hints of pine and honey. Packed full of flavour from citrus-heavy hops with a twist of fresh lime to create a crisp, zesty beer. We serve it cold from the fridge in a straight sided half pint glass.

• **Lager** - Aromas of cracker, light honey and pepper this lager is crisp, balanced with a suitable level of bitterness to ensure it has a dry, refreshing bite. Keep it nice and chilled. We drink it straight from the bottle. Feel free to pour yours into a glass if you want.

• **Spiced Ale** - Aromas of ginger and cinnamon balance out warm malts. The palate is a mixture of malt, spice with a sweet berry aftertaste. One to warm up a little before serving

in an old-school beer glass. You can enjoy this delicious beer at any time of year, but it's better if there's a bit of a chill in the air and you've roasted something in the oven for a couple of hours.

WHAT MAKES THE BRAND RELEVANT TO TODAY'S INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMER?

There's always been a market for lower ABV beers – people have always, for whatever reason, not been able, or not wanted, to drink – it's just been woefully underserved

in terms of quality and choice. Craft brewers haven't been willing, or able, to challenge the dominance of a couple of brewers and people haven't made a fuss.

However, there has been a surge in interest for any number of reasons, with up to a third of Britons moderating alcohol consumption in the last year, and people are no longer prepared to compromise. They're more aware of the impact alcohol has on health, the implications of drink-driving and even how negative social media posts on a night out can influence family, friends and job prospects.

WHO'S YOUR CUSTOMER?

Big Drop simply positions itself as providing a great beer for those wanting to moderate their alcohol intake for whatever reason and giving them a credible alternative that doesn't compromise on flavour.

YOU CLEARLY STAND OUT IN THE WIDER BEER MARKET, BUT WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE IN THE NO/LOW ALCOHOL SECTOR?

Alcohol free beer requires artificial processes to remove the alcohol and extraction can strip out a lot of the aroma and taste. By retaining a little alcohol (0.5% ABV – around the same level as an over-ripe banana) Big Drop manages the brewing process carefully to brew up to that level rather than having to remove alcohol and, with it, the recognisable flavours.

And, of course, Pale Ale was named World's Best Pale Beer (low strength) in the World Beer Awards 2017 whilst Stout was awarded a Gold Medal at the International Beer Challenge 2017.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We'll continue to brew the same great tasting beers and experiment with new flavours and styles to add seasonal variations to the range.

We're also working on extending our distribution and listings, working with retailers who share our ambition of providing high quality, great tasting drinks to consumers who are no longer prepared to settle for mediocrity.

“ Our ambition is to provide high quality, great tasting drinks to consumers who are no longer prepared to settle for mediocrity ”

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“Most food brands today seem to have a very simple story behind them, whereas I think Co-Created is the outcome of many diverse experiences,” explains Katarina Tencor, founder of community-driven baking company Co-Created. “My mother is Swedish and my father is Jewish. We have a family bakery in Scotland called Soderberg, and my father is one of the co-founders behind Peter’s Yard, which are both very Swedish brands with their base in the UK. Whilst I’ve lived in England my whole life, my sister and I were brought up on Scandi food. Food to me has always been a form of transportation: a reminder of summers spent in Sweden, memories from brief travels to India and so on.”

While studying anthropology and psychology at university, Katarina became obsessively curious about people and how their behaviours and experiences are shaped by the culture around them. This amalgam of culture, place and people pushed her to devise the concept behind the Co-Created project. “It was only when I started working in the advertising and branding world that the idea came about,” she says. “I loved the creativity of the industry and the ambitiousness of the people who work in it, but I got frustrated by the clients. More often than not, big food and drink brands would create stories, because stories sell. What also frustrated me was the fact that major brands were beginning to co-create temporary products in their range as a marketing ploy to generate ‘noise’ – no one in the business really seemed to care about the people behind the ideas, or the food.”

Katarina got to work on devising a business plan that steered clear of the cynical strategies she encountered in her former job. One that fosters collaboration and creativity. The outcome: Co-Created. Built entirely around the notion of co-creation, every cake or sweet treat that the company



CO-CREATED

With baking in her lineage and collaborating with people one of her passions, Katarina Tencor formed community baking project Co-Created

launches is made in partnership with real people – devout home cooks predominantly – putting the very best of the community’s recipes and ideas onto shop shelves. The co-creators aren’t just contributors, either, as the company strives to make sure that their ideas and personalities shine through every product that the company releases, and most importantly, they share in the success of their recipe.

“The wonderful thing is that food

has stories,” explains Katarina, “We don’t need to fabricate ‘big brand ideas’. There are over 65m people in the UK, and each and everyone of us has memories linked to recipes we’ve cooked at home or recipes that have been cooked by family or friends. What’s even more wonderful is that many of these have been passed down by generations of families. Food isn’t just food: it’s a reminder of our childhood; it’s a shared experience

across generations; an expression of culture. My ambition with Co-Created is to pioneer a new business model and create a little bit of unexpected happiness for normal people with amazing recipes that really deserve to be shared!”

The range currently consists of an Alpine Muffin co-created with Charlotte from Edinburgh, Crater Muffins co-created with Anna and a Mud Cake co-created with mother-of-two Cina. Edward’s

childhood inspired Vanilla Buns, with a Zemetsuka by Denby is soon to join the ranks. “It’s a cinnamon shortbread cake from a French Jewish family made from ingredients that were available as rations during the First World War,” says Katarina. In order for the recipe to make it into the confirmed roster, it needs to go through a vetting system. “We find the best-of-the-best recipes and they have to make it through two taste tests,” she says. “They have to wow people on first bite, or alternatively, if you leave 20 of them in an office of five people, they need to all go by the end of the day.”

What’s next for Co-Created? “We’re going to develop beautiful packaging that tells the story better,” says Katarina. “We’re also going to focus on new products and we’re working to tell the stories of people who’ve been displaced and come to the UK for refuge. We also properly want to roll out into retail, and we want to create a referral system to find the best-of-the-best hidden treasures in the UK. Another thing we’re hoping to do is create a short film – we’re keen to launch into one of the London cinemas – to tell the stories behind some of the products.”

The whole business exists to nurture a sense of community, states Katarina. “So much so that when it came to the Co-Created branding, I’ve made a conscious decision to keep everything really simple – the logo, the colour, the name – so that the people in our community shine through with their words and photos,” she explains. “We’re still working on nailing this, but it’s getting there. I really do believe that both the brand and business model have the power to make a positive change in our country, either by providing fair and remunerated opportunities to the members of our community who we collaborate with or through highlighting a selection of stories and recipes that represent the diversity amongst us.” Watch this space.

“ I really do believe that both the brand and business model have the power to make a positive change in our country ”

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WORLD OF ZING

Pritesh Mody, founder of World of Zing, talks flavour, innovation and worldwide opportunities



We have quite a unique story: before launching World of Zing I was marketing director of a number of drinks companies, and my family were the founders of one of the UK's oldest spice merchants. They've been in East London since the sixties and have a classic story – they started with no money, running a corner shop, and since there it's grown and grown. Growing up in that environment has taught me things that are at the centre of everything I know and do. A little while ago I was sitting in my dad's office and thinking of legacy projects – if I was to do what they did now, what would it look like? World of Zing is just that. Back in the sixties they catered to a new consumer demand for spices and exotic ingredients, and that's what I'm doing today – although a bit less virtuous, and a bit more gluttonous. I'm finding and creating products which people can enjoy at home that they'd normally only eat at restaurants and street food vendors. For me, 'zing' is simply flavour, and I didn't want to be pigeonholed into a particular cuisine or type of product – we wanted to be able to do whatever took our fancy and not be weighed down by what is traditionally a 'food ingredient' or 'drink ingredient'. People have asked how we can put cocktails and sauces under the same umbrella, but we see them as being symbiotic; we've just relaunched our drinks range under Spirit of Zing, so it's still within the World of Zing family but has its own identity.

Innovation is what helps us to stand out. It's incredibly exciting for me to do things like cook chillies for long enough that they lose their

heat and you can really appreciate their flavour. I want to use an ingredient for its best qualities, not its most notorious. For example, in our Manhattan drink we use a combination of peppercorns and the idea is that the peppercorns flip the flavour in your mouth, turning

the classic cocktail on its head. This isn't about innovation for the sake of it, it's about adding another level of enjoyment. We're determined to not pigeonhole flavours, choose to use them either in food or in drink. We use Persian dried limes in our Margerita which is a popular

cooking ingredient in the Middle East, as well as Nori seaweed – we're the only people who have put these ingredients into a drink. The idea of using the seaweed is that instead of putting salt around the rim of the glass, we're putting it within the drink itself. We're

inspired by all kinds of things – there's coffee in our barbecue sauce, as the umami in the coffee acts as the building blocks of the sauce. We don't shout about it, whereas other producers may have turned it into a novelty.

I'm very proud of our drinks range, and it was our Bordeaux Cask Aged Negroni, made with our own bitters, which started it all off and led to a lot of private developments for businesses including Rosa's Thai Cafe and Jamie Oliver – we've just launched a drink into his restaurants: Jamie's Winter Spritz. We've worked very hard to be the best at bottling cocktails, and this helps with wastage issues in bars and beyond – if you're not using fresh ingredients, like lemon slices, every time you make up a cocktail, and are getting a kick of lemon from the oil or dried peel instead, you don't have to worry about shelf life.

We're doing everything by hand, which taps into the consumer demand for 'handmade' – this sets us apart from the brands which came before us in the bottled cocktail sphere. We're not cutting corners and are using fantastic ingredients; our price isn't that much above other bottled cocktail brands, but our quality is head and shoulders above theirs.

It's an exciting time for World of Zing – we've just relaunched our new website and all the products are officially going live. We have a handful of products launching within the next year, but for the moment we're relishing having found our space and fine-tuning everything we do. As a country there's so much uncertainty, a lot of which is due to Brexit, and the reality is that more than ever the speciality sector is crucial to the success of this country; I truly believe in the phrase 'innovate or die', and it's the innovators who will continue to impress people within the UK and beyond. You've got to fight hard for consumer expenditure, but if you do it with sincerity and genuine innovation, that will see you succeed.



“ You've got to fight hard for consumer expenditure, but if you do it with sincerity and genuine innovation, that will see you succeed ”

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The first time I'd ever seen medlars was when I met my husband and saw the medlar tree his father had given him years before. I was curious and embarked on a journey of discovery, but my first attempts at medlar cheese were pretty poor as there weren't any recipes to be found. Three or four years on, we moved to Norfolk and planted a small avenue of medlars. I was making all sorts of things from the garden at that stage, including medlar cheese and jelly. I'd found some recipes – Nigel Slater was a particular inspiration – and was enjoying experimenting.

A couple of years later I was successfully treated for an early cancer, and the emotional impact of that diagnosis sent me into the garden to dig and into the kitchen to make. These reactions brought me to the conclusion that I needed to make something new with my life, and so I closed my executive coaching company which felt like the right thing to do. My family and friends encouraged me to do something in the making space, and the market segment that seemed to be calling to me was the medlar. A little bit of research showed that there were two or three notable producers of medlar jelly in the UK but nobody was producing medlar cheese in any great quantity, and that there was no single fruit specialist dedicated to the medlar. It was about producing a legacy for Norfolk, and a new business which I would find satisfying and rewarding.

My sense is that Norfolk has a very collaborative, energetic and creative food producer culture. One of the key things about medlar fruit preserves is that they're not something you'd eat on their own,

unlike lots of preserves. They partner perfectly with a whole host of foods which are either produced or grown here – the county's famous turkey; game that's reared here such as pheasant, partridge, venison or duck, charcuterie, pâtés, sausages and pork pies; plus both hard and soft cheeses which have been produced in and around where I'm based. These products feature in an ongoing basis on all

the tastings I do, whether that's a tasting in-store or at a farmers market, I always want to be pairing what I make with things which can be bought elsewhere at the market. People often describe the flavour as a combination of honey, apple and guava, without the tannic flavour which quince jelly has – it tastes like autumn in a jar.

My middle daughter came up with the look and feel of the brand,

then I waited until autumn last year for my first proper harvest. I went to my first outing with a very small quantity of stock and an order book, and last year embarked on a frenzy of fruit gathering and making in order to get my very first proper sales. This year has been about developing a range of stockists and becoming a maker on a regular basis, as well as being nominated as a Norfolk Food Hero. This isn't

quite what I was expecting when I started 15 months ago – I thought it would be a very low key, special interest thing – but feedback from people like John Shepherd, who judged at the New Producer Awards, has shown that there is appetite for the medlar to be back on the table.

From a fruit-gathering point of view, a lot of the medlars I use come from private gardens including high profile ones such as from those of National Trust properties Holkham Hall and Blickling – the model there is that in recognition of the value of the fruit to me, the owner of the trees I source from will identify a charity they want Eastgate Larder to donate to. It's a 'doing well by doing good' kind of approach, which works very well. It's also about forging new relationships as well as saving a fruit which would otherwise be unappreciated from going to waste. I blend this fruit with my own, so I can say hand on heart that there's an Eastgate medlar in each jar.

The fact that Eastgate Larder products are not only traceable and have a wonderful story behind them but avoid great natural produce from going to waste make them well suited to today's market. They bring together the current interests in food miles, integrity and naturalness to create something which is new and has an eye to the future but also casting the mind back to a period when the medlar was a prominent feature in our diet before sugar and confectionery were affordable.

I'm forever looking forward while being inspired by the past; a spicy medlar chutney will be launched in September 2018, which is beautiful with strong cheese, cold meat and also with a curry. I'm also in conversation with a craft brewer in Norfolk, with whom I'd like to develop a flavoured beer – I hope that a flavoured gin will be part of our longer-term story, too – so the aim to revive the medlar and broaden its appeal to all generations continues to keep me picking, making and championing the medlar.



EASTGATE LARDER

Jane Steward, founder, tells the story of Eastgate Larder – champion of Norfolk, ambassador of the medlar and all-round British food hero

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The story of Tigg's begins long before brothers Jacob and Sam James launched it into the speciality sector. "There's a bit of history behind us thanks to Granny Tigg," explains Jacob, "who was Miss New Zealand in 1948. As a result of that she had the opportunity to travel so came over to the UK on a six-week boat trip, and ended up living in Herefordshire and then Shropshire, which is where she met our grandfather." The brothers' grandmother brought with them the recipe which would ignite in them a love of food, and a business idea which would lead them to be pioneers in the fine food sector. "She brought the recipe with her which she'd created in New Zealand, Sweet Original, and this was a much-loved family favourite throughout out childhood."

In time, their grandmother's love of gardening brought with it the development of three other flavours, which went on to become fellow flagstones in the Tigg's range: Beetroot, Basil & Pea and Pepper & Mustard. A family venture sowed the seeds of an idea in the brothers' minds. "Our mother had a café in Herefordshire, and she was looking for something to make her salads a little more interesting. She asked Granny for the original recipe, and the sauce started getting a slightly bigger audience – as well as using it as an ingredient in the café, she'd be selling around 10 bottles of the dressing every week."

In time, the brothers went to university, bringing a few bottles of the original sauce with them to jazz up simple recipes. Jacob explains, "As we weren't particularly strong cooks we decided to take some with



TIGG'S

Old family recipes and a modern spirit come together to create Tigg's unique brand of flavourful fun

us. It was smothered over late-night cheese toasties and used as a marinade, all the while becoming very popular with our friends, too. We asked Granny to tell us how to make it, and soon found that the ingredients it required were quite expensive for students to buy – it requires extra virgin olive oil, for a start – and so our friends started chipping in so they could enjoy it with us." The seeds were beginning to grow. "We thought that if we

could persuade our friends to contribute towards ingredients and then buy the finished bottles, other people may be interested in buying them too."

In a leap of faith post-university, Jacob turned away from a graduate opportunity with Aldi in order to focus on Tigg's. The next year was spent creating strong branding and cutting the company teeth on the food festival circuit. "From there," says Jacob, "it's never

really stopped." From the strong foundations of the original recipe, the brothers introduced the three other flavours created by their grandmother, before launching Smokin' Tomato & Chilli, the first recipe created by Jacob and Sam themselves.

The brand shows strong promise in today's industry, ticking a lot of the boxes when it comes to what consumers want. "Containing apple cider vinegar helps, as it's getting

a lot of good press at the moment as one of the healthier vinegars to consume." As well as containing a buzzword ingredient each product is free-from, as well as lower in calories than other dressings on the market – without the questionable additives on the ingredients lists of more mass market brands. "We're a potential leader in that regard," says Jacob.

Retailers should be equally excited: "The brand's youthful and fun, with a bit of cheeky personality thanks to our 'perfect match' concept, and is something a little different on shelf – particularly when it comes to our Tiny Tigg's concept." This eye-catching branding and unique personality has led to a great reception, as have the flavours in the range. "A step away from the more traditional caesar, balsamic and French dressings," according to Jacob, Tigg's bold flavours are helping them to stand out in what is quite a saturated market.

The focus for Jacob and Sam over the coming months is their new innovation: Tiny Tigg's. "They sit perfectly within the on-the-go trend, being delicious with salads, pastas and all manner of other foods which people pick up from the chiller cabinet. We're even in talks about including them within the packaging of boxed products, which we're very excited about." The brothers are keen to keep this innovation within the realms of speciality food. "Our focus is on independents," Jacob says. "We're also working with Co-Op as a local producer in about 35 stores across our region, maintaining our artisanal approach, and are looking forward to adding more independent customers to our books as time goes on."

With more colourful tricks up their sleeves – "an aunt makes incredible classic and beetroot piccillilli, and a grandfather makes wonderful preserves and chutneys" – the future's looking bright for Tigg's.

“ The brand's youthful and fun, with a bit of cheeky personality. It shows strong promise in today's industry, ticking a lot of boxes when it comes to what consumers want ”

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WIGNALLS YALLO

Supporting the environment and tempting discerning foodies is all in a day's work for the team at Wignalls Yallo



Bought by Derek Wignall in 2011 when it was not much more than a neglected grouping of dilapidated farm buildings, Standish Hall Farm has since become home to some of the best rapeseed oil available in the UK. A passion for sustainability saw Derek and John Wignall work tirelessly to renew the buildings and farmland to working order, and once this task was complete, Clare – wife of John – stepped in to help the farm to diversify. So began Wignalls Yallo, a farm project dedicated to educating Britain about the benefits of cold pressed rapeseed oil.

Sown, grown, harvested and pressed into oil on-site – resulting in a much-applauded food mile count of zero – Wignalls Yallo is a valuable example of how a natural approach can reap dividends. With a dedicated team of just five, the brand shouts louder than most about the plus points of this oil which is oft-overlooked in favour of olive or sunflower oils. As well as an impressive farm-to-fork provenance, Wignalls Yallo's rapeseed oil can boast cold pressed credentials. Naturally processed without heat or chemicals, resulting in an oil which retains its full natural flavour and goodness, this oil is made using single seed – a decision which gives the oil better flavour than its blended counterparts.

With a rich golden colour which stands out on-shelf and is framed in Wignalls Yallo's bold packaging plus a nutty flavour and silky feeling on the palate, this rapeseed oil has a number of benefits to its name.



Health-conscious consumers would be interested to know that this oil is half the fat of olive oil as well as having 10 times as much omega 3, plus it's a rich source of vitamin E,

while food lovers would be excited by the flavourful range of infused Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil on offer: Cornish Sea Salt & Rosemary, Habanero Chilli, Garlic & Garden

Herb, and Lemon & Thyme (a one star Great Taste Award-winner).

At Standish Farm, flavour meets sustainable farming – the effects of which only improve the oil further.

Efforts include a minimum tillage soil conservation system, where the soil isn't ploughed and so there are more worms present in the soil to improve it naturally. This is another step towards a reduced carbon footprint as it means that few machines are working the land; fewer machines, less fuel. Rain water is collected and used across the farm, and the bi-products from the seeds being pressed for oil are made into pellets and used to feed the animals at nearby beef, dairy and sheep farms. Finally, conservationists will be pleased by the producer's dedication to keeping the local bee population thriving: for the bees helping to pollinate the rapeseed plants – around half a million, pollination strips are prepared to maintain a good pollen source once the rapeseed has finished flowering – plus the team is proud that the wildlife population has dramatically increased as a direct result of their farming methods.

What's next for Wignalls Yallo? Firstly, to continue to build a farming business with a reduced carbon footprint and use of chemicals. Secondly, to extend its product range and continue to impress retailers, restaurants and the end consumer with an ever-expanding range of cold pressed rapeseed oil products – currently in the pipeline is a mayonnaise, and the Wignalls are also considering branching out into hummus made from the farm's fava beans.

Of great importance to the Wignalls Yallo team is that they maintain and improve the condition of their land for future generations. As stewards of it, they've succeeded in their mission to boost the sustainability of their farm – and bring food products with genuine quality and provenance onto the shelves of retailers, chefs and discerning consumers.

“ Wignalls Yallo is a valuable example of how a natural approach can reap dividends. At Standish Farm, flavour meets sustainable farming - efforts include a minimum tillage soil conservation system, which improves the quality of the land naturally and minimises carbon footprint, collecting rainwater, and supporting the local bee population ”



CALLING ALL START-UPS

To find out more about the
New Producer Awards register

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IS HIDA BEEF JAPAN'S BEST KEPT SECRET?

It's a mark of excellence among chefs, and the pinnacle of Japanese Wagyu, but what is it that makes Hida-gyu (Hida beef) so special?

What is Hida-gyu?

Gifu prefecture is located in the centre of Japan and is rich in nature – full of towering mountains, lush forests and pure water. Explore a little deeper and you'll discover an area surrounding the city of Hida where farmers have toiled for generations, working with the land and passing down knowledge over time to develop what we call Hida-gyu; produce that receives worldwide acclaim as top-class Wagyu. Thanks to the abundant natural gifts in the surrounding area, the farmers of Hida-gyu are able to consistently rear this high-quality meat. As well as nature, the farmers' dedication to their livestock's pedigree and feed, hard work and love through every season make Hida-gyu a much sought-after produce.

Hida-gyu isn't your run-of-the-mill Wagyu. Hida-gyu, as it is known in Japan, is the very best Wagyu available and qualifies for the top-brand of Wagyu in Japan.

However, before we explore the mouth-watering world of Hida-gyu, we first need to look at what genuine Japanese Wagyu actually is, because it isn't as clear-cut as you might think.

Wagyu branding has become big business in recent years and you can now find Wagyu-style beef produced in countries like Australia, Scotland and Wales. However, in these countries, the name listed on the resulting beef only refers to the father of the animal, which means that unless the product distinctly tells you it's pure-bred, the beef is most likely cross-bred.

This might not sound like a big issue, but with up to 50% of Wagyu characteristics – marbling, flavour and more – being derived from breed, the difference between cross-bred Wagyu stock and those that are pure-bred, is substantial.

As we have all come to know from countless celebrity chefs, fat is where the flavour is, and intrinsic to this trait is diet. True Japanese Wagyu is fed on a diet high in rice straw, which in turn delivers a unique flavour profile vastly different to animals reared exclusively on corn or grass.

The Japanese are renowned for their fastidious approach and Wagyu is no exception. To carry the Wagyu name, beef must come from a pure-bred cow from one of four distinct breeds: Japanese Black Cattle,



Japanese Brown Cattle, Japanese Shorthorn and Japanese Polled. In Japan, from birth, Wagyu calves are given an identity number and entered into a sophisticated system, which allows full traceability of the animal.

By ensuring the breeding credentials combined with meticulous meat grading, genuine Japanese Wagyu remains one of the world's most sought-after foods. The Universal Wagyu Mark is used in 43 countries and is a sign that the meat not only hails from Japan, but also meets exacting criteria, giving both consumers and retailers security in the quality and provenance of the product.

So far, so tasty, but once we get into the realm of genuine Japanese Wagyu; there are variations within it. Hida-gyu has become known as perhaps the highest quality Wagyu available.

Hida-gyu is produced mainly in the northern part of Gifu prefecture, the Hida region. The cattle are all said to have originated from a black





bull in 1981 named Yasufuku, who is believed to have produced around 40,000 offspring in his lifetime.

Japanese Wagyu grading is done in a very specific way, inspecting criteria such as texture, shine, meat colour, fat colour and marbling as well as a yield score. To be certified as Hida-gyu, the meat must sit at the very top of grading, hitting a firmness and texture grade of 5-3 by the Japanese Meat Grading Association, marking it as the best of the best.

Evaluations from the chefs in London

Interest from UK chefs is on the rise, with restaurants in the city such as Yashin Ocean House, The Square, and Hackney's Pidgin utilising this impressive ingredient on their menus in a number of innovative ways.

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

The market's continued enthusiasm for Asian cuisine such as Hong Kong cuisine and Thai food has allowed chefs to look deeper into regional produce.

Research trips are becoming ever more common when sourcing for both food service and food procurement and Gifu prefecture sees its fair share of gastronomic visitors.



COURTESY SHIRAKAWA VILLAGE OFFICE

Situated around five hours drive or train from Tokyo, the surrounds of Hida provide a rural contrast to the bright lights and bustling nature of the capital and an insight into some of Japan's captivating traditions. The town of Takayama has become a particular hub for those seeking to sample Hida-gyu. Known as 'Little Kyoto', this small mountain town is home to a collection of well-respected restaurants that specialize in Hida-gyu preparation such as shabu-shabu and nigiri.

Shabu-shabu is where a plate of raw sliced beef is delivered to the table alongside a bubbling vessel of broth known as a hotpot. The diner

places pieces of meat in the broth with chopsticks and removes once cooked to their liking.

Hida-gyu nigiri, on the other hand, is where similarly thin slices of the fat marbled meat are draped over seasoned sushi rice. In most instances the Hida-gyu is sliced from a larger roasted, or grilled section of meat, but it is not uncommon to see paper thin slices of raw Hida-gyu atop the rice, often anointed with a smear of dressing.

Yakitori-style skewers are another delicious way you'll find this exuberant meat prepared and whilst the portions may be on the smaller side, it's important to remember that

due to the richness of the fat, a little can go a long way.

Another town that draws seekers of Hida-gyu is Hida Furukawa-cho. This small town has a more relaxed environment than nearby Takayama, and sits just 15 minutes away by train. Both offer a retreat for those looking for an authentic rural experience, and are ideal to explore another Gifu delicacy, Japanese sake.

Visit Gifu – where Hida-gyu is bred

Visiting Gifu prefecture for the lure of Hida-gyu also happens to place travellers in some of Japan's most idyllic rural landscapes and Shirakawa-gō where is UNESCO World Heritage sites. This collection of tiny historic mountain villages offers a window into old Japan where traditional gasshō-zukuri farmhouses are abundant. This type of building has been architecturally developed over centuries to stand up to the heavy snowfalls the region endures in winter and here you'll find many minshukus, small family run bed and breakfasts, where you can stay during your trip to Gifu prefecture.

Gifu prefecture is also home to more than its fair share of hot springs. In the northern area of Okuhida hot spring district you'll find the largest collection of open air hot springs in Japan. Meanwhile, in the town of Gero which is located in the south, you can relax in one of the most famous hot springs in the country.

In an area that boasts such a relaxing way of life, it's little wonder that the Hida cattle herds live out such a pampered existence. They will always be fattened for a minimum of 14 months, sometimes longer, to ensure the beef hits peak maturity and develops that intricate lacing of marbled fat.

Back in London, chef Yasuhiro Mineno of Kensington's Yashin Ocean House places thin slices of



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

Wagyu is a high-ticket luxury food item that sits alongside foie gras, Bresse chicken and caviar, yet the knowledge behind what true Wagyu is needs to be transparent in order to protect both the retailer and consumer from similar products. In Japan, Hida-gyu carries a seal that holds a ten-digit identification number, so you can check the grade and quality on the website.

It's through meticulous breeding programs and a dedication by famers to rearing cattle to a consistently high standard that makes Hida-gyu so revered. The meat delivers a refined, complex and unique depth of flavour paired with a mesmerizing, slow-melting texture. It's no wonder this is the kind of Wagyu the Japanese want to keep for themselves.

Visit the official Hida-gyu website for more information
hidagyu-gifu.com/eng/



FOOD MATTERS LIVE 2017

Food innovation as you've never seen it before: get a taste for the next big thing at the world-class forum for the future of food at London's ExCeL 21st-23rd November

From influential start-ups to iconic household names, no-one brings together a cross-sector of innovative food specialists quite like Food Matters Live.

Discover the latest trends, diets and newest ingredients impacting your industry in the Food Matters Live exhibition, and as consumers

take a more 'flexitarian' approach to food by pushing animal-based protein off the plate in favour of innovative meat replacers, vegetables, grains and pulses, explore the latest products to whet the appetite of today's ardent foodie.

More than 16,000 influential professionals are expected to attend this year's Food Matters Live

exhibition, featuring over 800 leading organisations – which together highlight the important role every part of the food, drink and nutrition sectors play in developing healthy and 'better for you' products.

With Brexit presenting the sector with a number of complex challenges – could it also open up the UK to untapped markets and offer greater opportunities for food and drink in the UK? How is the industry tackling obesity? And are attempts to reduce sugar, fat and salt in products working?

The Food Matters Live education programme provides a timely forum to discuss these and many other complex issues. More than 400 experts from across the sector will take part in 15 lively conference debates and 80 practical and applied seminars.

At the same time, a series of live attractions, demonstrations and tastings will apply the learning with insight into eating behaviours, product development and the way we think about the future of food and wellbeing.

In addition, a unique series of special events present visitors and exhibitors with the chance to meet, do business and navigate new trends.

Food Matters Live is free to attend. It's easy to register – simply go online at foodmatterslive.co.uk

INNOVATION IS OUR SIGNATURE DISH: FIND NEW PRODUCTS, NEW TRENDS AND INSPIRATION AT FOOD MATTERS LIVE

The Food Matters Live exhibition is fast becoming the pivotal event of the year for showcasing innovation from ingredients suppliers, multinational food manufacturers and small and enterprising producers.

Arranged in themed areas – such as Free-from, Natural & Organic, International Innovation and

Innovative Ingredients – buyers, foodservice providers and caterers will have an unparalleled opportunity to experience new innovation in the market first hand.

With the UK's food-to-go sector set to be worth £23.5bn by 2022 – up from £17.4bn in 2017, according to IGD – uncover the newest 'better for you' snack food and confectionary in the Healthy Snacking zone. On display will be Lovemore's range of wheat and gluten free oat crunch, stem ginger, double choc and choc chip cookies; Wish Snacks' chocolate and plum natural energy bars with no added sugar, and Jimini's fruity curry grasshoppers and Imperial Soy mealworms.

NATURAL SELECTION

Visitors to the Natural and Organic zone will have a chance to sample hundreds of new products, such as LioBites fruit crisps and smoothie squares in apple and mango, banana and passionfruit flavours, Meet the Alternative beef-style pieces made from healthy high quality protein, and Linwoods' milled organic flaxseed, sunflower and pumpkin seeds with essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals.

With the market for 'free from' food rising by 30% to over £500m in 2016 – and predicted to hit £673m by 2020, according to Mintel – the dedicated zone has doubled in size and houses Mr Kipling's gluten free range of lemon and ginger loaf and mini cherry bakewells; Suma Wholefoods' baked beans and meat-free sausages; the Vegetarian Butcher's fish free tuna – a tasty addition to pasta sauce or fish cakes – and Samosaco's gluten-free green or red onion pakoras and minted pea tikki.

FRESH TO MARKET

As consumers seek out increasingly healthy and functional drinks, the Drink Well zone showcases the latest in 'better for you' beverages, such as ACTIPH Water, the first alkaline, ionised bottled water in Europe, and Isoline EU's Escalate Acai, an energising non-carbonated drink, with extracts from ginseng, guarana, schisandra, ginkgo and matcha green tea – all served in a refillable bottle.

Elsewhere, visitors can sample Brain fūd, a revitalizing energy water with real fruits juices, vitamins and minerals to boost mental performance in intriguingly named flavours of berry clever, smart citrus and fresh thinking, and purH2O – bottled water from protected natural



springs, micro-filtered, ozonated and purified with oxygen molecules, not chlorine.

FROM FREE-FROM TO FOOD ON THE MOVE

For cutting edge innovation, head for the Enterprise zone to discover Manna Eating's range of luscious, chewy energy snack balls – containing medjool dates, super seeds and berries – or salted hazelnut chai brownies, made with coconut oil, chai tea leaves and freshly grated cocoa powder. Also try the Autumn Brewing Company's Bavarian-style pilsner, English pale ale and dark roast stout – a range of high quality gluten-free beers and lagers made from grains, rice, millet and quinoa.

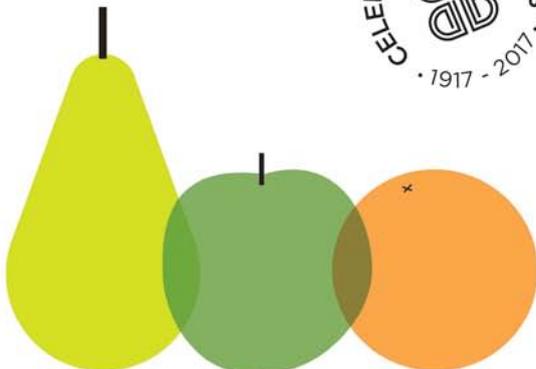
A sneak preview of the products and ingredients that will be on display can be found in the new online directory at foodmatterslive.com

15 LIVELY CONFERENCE DEBATES

Alongside the exhibition, chef Heston Blumenthal, former Sainsbury's CEO Justin King and neuroscientist Baroness Susan Greenfield will head an all-star cast of 400 influential speakers taking part in the CPD-accredited Food Matters Live education programme, which will include ministers from the Department of Health and business leaders from Tesco, Mars, Greggs, Hellmann's and many more.

Hosted by BBC journalists Anita Anand, Simon Jack and Timandra Harkness, the three-day conference

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delve further into consumer beliefs about provenance, sustainability, menu design and how food is prepared, take your place at the Experimental Café, which returns to Food Matters Live 2017 in association with Institut Paul Bocuse and Levy Restaurants.

Live demonstrations will give visitors the chance to experience the very latest in international cuisine, with Brazilian chef Luciana Berry sharing the treasures of Amazonian food and drink, while Lima-based chef Robert Ortiz highlights the benefits of Peruvian super foods on health and nutrition.

MATCHMAKING – MEET THE BUYER PROGRAMME

To help promote business links, a new matchmaking service will give visitors and exhibitors a huge opportunity to identify potential partners, with a dedicated Meet the Buyer programme connecting retail buyers and foodservice providers with innovative companies.

Food Matters Live is working with the Department of International Trade to bring a swathe of international buyers to the three-day event. To find out more and book your place, go to foodmatterslive.com

Food Matters Live is expected to attract record numbers. Already signed up are procurement and buying experts from companies including: Not On the High Street, Organic Health Market, Good & Green, Grace Foods UK, Harrods, M&S, Whole foods Market, Daylesford Organic, Harvey Nichols, Rail Gourmet, Jamie Oliver Restaurant Group and Doves Farm.

Food Matters Live is free to attend, including entry to the conference, seminars and all visitor attractions. Simply register at foodmatterslive.com



In the Future of Food retail stream, Spar Parkfoot's David Charmann will discuss how retailers and foodservice providers can capture a larger share of the growing food-to-go opportunity, while Simply Fresh's Kash Khera will join experts from MMR Research, Graze and Spoon Guru in a buyer panel discussion on consumers of the future, what is important to them and what this means for purchasing.

British Sandwich & Food-To-Go Association's Jim Winship and Pret A Manger's Clare Clough will debate innovation and opportunities in the food-to-go sector, while in the Marketing Matters programme Foodscape Group's Dr Rachel Cheatham will explain how to capitalise on demand for healthy food options.

And with the food-to-go sector trying to encourage shoppers to buy breakfast, drinks, lunch and snack products, the Packaging programme will hear how innovative packaging designs can influence consumer purchases. Little Miracles International's Laura Petrauskaitė, Bloom London's Ed Hayes and

Little Dish's Charlotte Tisdall will assess how visual, structural and functional packaging design can change behaviour and influence healthier food choices.

COSMOPOLITAN CUISINE

International innovation will be showcased in a number of country-themed pavilions, such as Denmark, France, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Peru, Wales and the Netherlands.

Greek companies, like Odysea, Chios Fruits' beverages and Three Hearts cereal bars will highlight the benefits of a Mediterranean diet and healthy snacking, while the Belgian Pavilion will focus on innovation through ingredients and healthy finished products such as Cosucra, Chalo Indian chai lattes, THT probiotics, and Kreglinger.

And the Italian Chamber of Commerce will host two pavilions, one for halal and one for innovative start-ups. Companies that will feature include: Rachelli ice cream and Ill Pane di Anna bread, pizzas, cakes and pasta.

To find out what influences our food choices when we eat out and

will also hear Prue Leith, the Sustainable Restaurant Association's vice-president and new face of The Great British Bake Off, discuss what more can be done to tackle obesity in the out-of-home sector – while food historian Dr Annie Gray will look at what influences healthy food choices.

The British Dietetic Association's Louise Lam and Googly Fruit's Natacha Neumann will join a panel discussion to assess whether the year-old childhood obesity plan has made a difference to the health and wellbeing of young people, while Public Health England's Duncan Selbie and British Soft Drinks Association's Gavin Partington will debate the sugar reduction programme.

300 EXPERT SEMINAR SPEAKERS

At the same time, Food Matters Live offers a case-study rich seminar

programme, giving visitors an unparalleled opportunity to gain practical advice from 300 experts on seven key themes, including Future of Food Retail, Food Futures, Tackling Obesity and Packaging: Innovating Through Design.

Speakers will use the sessions to consider the latest food tech innovations set to change the face of industry, how to engage tech-savvy, time-poor customers through voice-activated technology or augmented or virtual reality, how the media has influenced the growth in free-from products, and what role packaging plays in helping to reduce sugar consumption.

BRIONY MANSELL-LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF FOOD MATTERS LIVE

“ Food Matters Live is fast becoming an annual business opportunity for many in the industry, providing a platform to explore, taste and experience the latest trends and innovations shaping the future of food and drink. We're delighted once again to welcome so many experts to share best practice, forge collaborative relationships, find solutions to challenges and explore new ways of working with colleagues across the food, nutrition and health sectors

IN DETAIL

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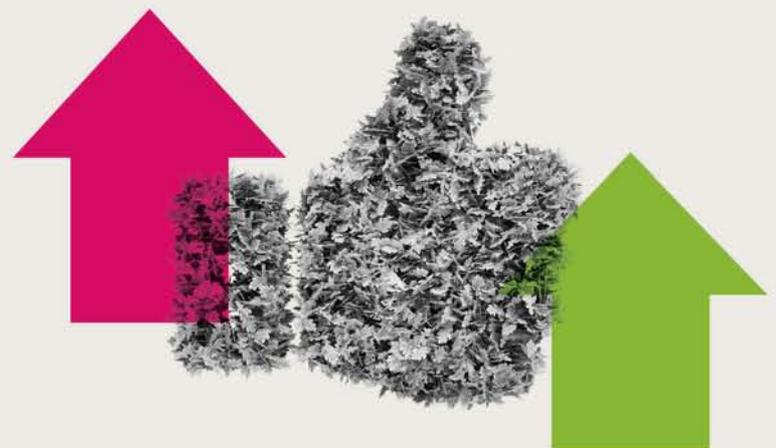
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THAT'S AMORE

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SELLING ITALIAN CUISINE

We talk to Italian retailers, distributors and producers to discover the ultimate Italian products to source and how best to sell them. Bellissimo!

Walk down any high street in Britain and you'll notice the ineffable influence that Italian cuisine has had on our food culture. From the proliferation of Italian restaurants like Pizza Express and Prezzo to a crop of gelato establishments popping up, Italian cuisine has been woven into the fabric of British food and drink culture. In fact, according to a 2015 report compiled by grocery industry analysts IGD, Italian is now the most popular international

cuisine in the UK, surpassing the likes of Chinese, Indian and American. Most interestingly, the shoppers surveyed said that they wanted more choice of international foods in their local supermarkets, with people under 35 years old stating they would like to see more Italian food in particular.

What with it being championed by food-focused social media accounts and celebrity chefs, and more speciality-style ingredients making an appearance on restaurant

menus, the UK shopper is keen to expand their Italian food repertoire. Foods that were once deemed more specialist, for example oozy burrata cheese and flavoursome capocollo, are now firmly part of foodies' lexicons. So, what is it about Italian cuisine that makes it never seem to cease to captivate the British palate?

Viva L'Italia

"Italian gastronomy can combine good taste and simplicity. People are looking increasingly at Italian



products to follow a healthy diet without giving up on the pleasure of a good meal," believes Antonio Prezioso, director of Bellavita, an ambassador of Italian food and drink most well-known for its trade shows. "Customers are becoming more discerning about authenticity and protected origin certifications. They also understand the importance of elevated ingredients and raw materials, for example amazing extra virgin olive oil, soft prosciutto and high-quality vegetables, which all make the difference to any dish. Street food is an area where Italian foodservice concepts and formats are becoming very popular, what with paninis, piadinas and fried appetizers. Also, the Italian industry has progressed a lot in the natural, organic, free-from, vegetarian and vegan segments. Consumers can now buy amazing

lactose-free and vegan cheeses, gluten and sugar-free cookies. They can even buy a vegan prosciutto!"

Not only does Bellavita operate successful trade events, but the brand also runs an online shop and bricks-and-mortar deli in Dock Street, London, making it an expert in retailing Italian food and drink, too. In terms of must-stock food, Antonio lists, "Our core selection of products includes excellent pasta, evergreen cheeses like Parmigiano Reggiano and Mozzarella, popular cured meat products and our most popular wines, including Brunello and Prosecco. We then like to keep looking for innovative products. We have amazing juices with no preservatives, halal 'nduja and salami from SUPPA in Calabria, artisanal beers and chocolates, wines from small artisanal producers and high-quality sauces. Not to mention, our dairy-free pesto is unbeatable! Our customers want to find the most popular Italian products, but they



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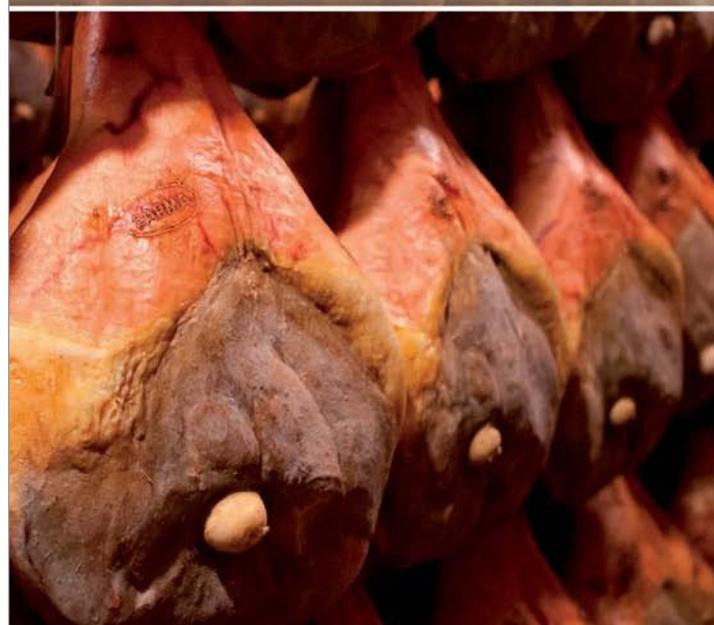
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also like to be seduced with some innovative and never-seen-before items.”

What with the British consumer constantly seeking the most artisanal of products it begs the question: what smaller producers should retailers keep their eyes out for? “Biodiversity in Italy is so significant that each region has amazing products and has developed its own culinary tradition,” says Antonio. “There are 453 different types of grape and 538 different types of olive. There is just a huge amount to discover. If I had to suggest lesser-known products I would go with Breadsticks 5-Grains to dip into Buffalo Ricotta with a glass of Falanghina, a white wine from Campania.”

Classic institution

There’s no denying that if you’re looking for a concentrated area of top class Italian delis, London is undoubtedly the place to go. And most foodies know to head to Soho, where you’ll find traditional Italian delis steeped in history. From the widely adored delicacies on the shelves of Lina Stores to I Camisa & Son, the favourite haunt of top chefs like St. John Restaurant’s Fergus Henderson, you could spend a day perusing the shops, scouting out the fine foods on offer and

talking to the passionate, amiable and incredibly knowledgeable staff on hand.

“Running the shop is not the easiest at the moment, due to difficult times and what with Soho going through so many changes, but we’re still here” proudly proclaims Cristina Onuta, manager of I Camisa & Son. “We sell fresh pasta, dry pasta, cheese, salami, hams and ambient items like biscuits, homemade fresh sauces and sausages. We have an Italian butcher who has been making the sausages for us for the last 30 years – I like to keep my suppliers and don’t tend to like changing them!”

I Camisa & Son was set up in 1961, living through both turbulent and prosperous times to make it one of the most renowned Italian delis around today. “The quality of the products is what makes a good Italian deli,” Cristina explains. “I won’t buy products unless they’re top quality. These days you go to the supermarket and find plenty of Italian products, but the quality is not exactly the same – I aim to keep stocking a superior quality to what they offer to make sure I still have customers. All of the products we have come directly from Italy. Even in Italy, we’ve been dealing with the same suppliers for years and years.” Christina puts the popularity of

the shop down to them stocking precisely what the British consumers are craving. “Parmesan and Parma ham are the products that the British public love the most,” she says. “However, we also have homemade fresh pasta which they love. We have a huge old-style machine which we use to produce the pasta in our kitchen downstairs. We make it on a daily basis – I’m here at 6:30am most mornings and we open at 8:30am, so I have two hours to prepare everything! If it’s an essential part of the business, you just have to do it.”



DISTRIBUTOR PERSPECTIVE



Antonio Zoccolo, managing director of Guidetti Fine Foods

WHAT ARE YOUR MUST-STOCK PRODUCTS?

Definitely Pasta Mancini. The Mancini family produces top-quality pasta from wheat they grow on their own fields in Le Marche, central Italy. They harvest the grain in June and July, and rotate the fields with other crops like sunflowers and fava beans. Their custom-designed, small factory is right in the middle of the wheat fields so they can control the quality of the wheat and every stage of the pasta production. Paolo Pettrilli Organic Tomatoes as well. They’re the tomato of choice for Italian chefs at some of the best Italian restaurants across the UK, such as River Café. The tomatoes are grown in an ancient settlement near Lucera in the region of Puglia, famous for its climate and tomatoes. The long San Marzano-style tomatoes are preserved using traditional, organic methods. The tomatoes are hand-picked, peeled and packed into jars with a few basil leaves all on Paolo Pettrilli’s land.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP-SELLING FRESH PRODUCTS?

I’d have to say Zuarina Salame Finocchiona, which originated in the Renaissance and possibly even before, in the late Middle Ages. The use of fennel was an alternative to pepper – a key ingredient of the standard salami – which was very expensive at the time while fennel grew wild and abundant in the Tuscan countryside.

Also, fennel is rich in menthol, and because of its aesthetic qualities Finocchiona was regularly offered by the winemakers of the Chianti area to their customers before tasting their lower quality wines to mask their taste. Also, Zuarina Prosciutto di Parma DOP (24 month). Cured in Langhirano, it is ready only after a slow and patient curing process and the only ingredients are pigs bred in the Po Valley, sea salt and a lot of time.

HOW DO YOU SOURCE YOUR ITALIAN PRODUCTS?

For us sourcing never really stops. We like to keep up with trends and search for new ones, whilst always keeping as close to tradition and provenance when possible. My colleagues and I travel frequently to Italy, whether it be for business or pleasure (it’s usually both). A fair few of our suppliers are family-owned and have been with us for a long time, which helps to create a closeness and bond, which has helped us a lot over the years.

WHAT ITALIAN DRINKS WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

Amara Sicilian Amaro. Only the best blood oranges, which are grown at the foot of Mount Etna, herbs and sugar are used to produce this natural digestif. It has a unique and strong flavour and is golden and crystal clear. Amara is produced in small quantities with tradition in mind and uses no additives.

“ These days you go to the supermarket and find plenty of Italian products, but the quality is not the same - I am to keep stocking a superior quality to what they offer to make sure I still have customers ”

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RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

Elisabetta Iudica, managing director of The Italian Delicatessen of Walthamstow



WHAT ARE YOUR MUST-STOCK PRODUCTS?

One product is definitely the Guanciale. It's a piece of cold meat not widely available – customers jump for joy when they ask for it and I tell them I stock it!

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP-SELLERS WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR FRESH FOOD COUNTERS?

It's got to be our cold meats, selection of cheeses, olives and the crudités.

HOW DOES CHRISTMAS INFLUENCE WHAT YOUR SHOP STOCKS?

Christmas will only affect the shop positively. We make sure to stock more giftable products for hampers, as well as panettone.

WHICH REGION IN ITALY IS YOUR FAVOURITE FOR ITS FOOD OUTPUT?

Sicily, with its wide variety of products including cream of pistachio, wild fennel pesto, Nocellara olives, the most beautiful

extra virgin olive oils and Pecorino cheeses. Although I was born and raised in Milano, my grandfather was Sicilian and I have an innate love for all things Sicily.

WHAT ITALIAN CHEESE WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

The king of my cheeses is without a doubt the Aged Truffle Pecorino.

DELI INSIGHT



Giovanna Eusebi, owner of Eusebi Deli

WHAT TO STOCK

Good storecupboard essentials are an absolute must. Our own-brand Passata and Oil from a small holding in Calabria are excellent value and quality. Teamed with our own fresh pasta produced daily in our kitchen, it's a quick, easy and nutritious meal. Our savoury eats are also winners, including Sicilian panzerotti, arancini and bombolone.

SEASONALITY

Seasonality runs through all that we do in both our restaurant and deli. I grew up with Italian grandparents who celebrated and worked with nature. Our deli salads and food are created to showcase the best flavours of the season. Our dry goods also reflect the seasonal changes. From chestnut flour, truffle hams and cheeses in autumn to festive Franciacorta and Umbrian panettone in winter. In summer we celebrate with Piennolo tomatoes from Vesuvian territory and incorporate these ingredients into our deli and restaurant.

CHAMPIONING SMALLER ITALIAN PRODUCERS

What makes Italy amazing is its regionality and diversity. We are all about showcasing this and stripping away the stereotypical preconceptions of what Italian food is. We recently found an amazing craft beer called LABI – I highly recommend it!



AUTHENTIC AT ORIGIN



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CIN CIN

From gorgeous wines and Negronis to espressos and artisanal craft beer, the Italian drink scene is deservedly revered. We find out what heavenly Italian elixirs shops need to be stocking next



BUYER'S INSIGHT...

Edward Gerard, buying manager of wines, spirits and cigars at Harrods, talks to us about what Italian wines are currently going down well at its food hall

TELL US ABOUT HARRODS' CURRENT ITALIAN WINE SELECTION. WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?

Our Italian wine selection is hugely diverse, with a large majority from Tuscany and Piedmont. We also have particularly strong Brunello and Barolo ranges.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT SOURCING YOUR ARRAY OF ITALIAN WINES?

The majority of our wine is shipped direct from the estates. We always look to offer wines that are ready to drink, so wineries have to dig into their library stocks and release special stock for our shelves.

WHY DO YOU THINK ITALIAN WINES ARE SO REVERED AMONGST THE WINE-DRINKING GENERAL PUBLIC?

Italy and France produce more wine than any other country. It is this high volume production that allowed Italian wines to be distributed around the world, giving them high visibility in restaurants and supermarkets. This in turn led to more investment in marketing and a growing number of loyal consumers who view Italian brands and wineries as the pinnacle of quality, from single wines like Tignanello and Sassicaia to whole regions such as Chianti or Piedmont.

“The likes of Gaia & Rey, Beyond the Clouds and Batar deserve to be considered amongst the world's best wines but rarely capture the headlines as they are such small productions”

WHAT ARE THE LATEST TRENDS EMERGING FROM THE ITALIAN WINE SCENE?

It's been a few years coming but I think the wines of Etna are really starting to catch the consumer's attention. Beyond that, I believe we are about to see some long overdue recognition that there are exceptional white wines in Italy. The likes of Gaia & Rey, Beyond the Clouds and Batar deserve to be considered amongst the world's best wines but rarely capture the headlines as they are such small productions.

WHAT LESSER-KNOWN ITALIAN WINES DO YOU THINK OUR READERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AND WHY?

The wines of Etna are superstars in waiting, their red grape Nerello Mascalese “nair-relo mask-ah-lay-say” can produce wines as exceptional as the best Nebbiolo in Piedmont. With the calibre of winemakers in the area and the exceptional lava soils on the slopes of Etna, I think it's only a matter of time before we see consistent critic scores in the high 90s.



Crema of the crop

When most people think coffee, they think Italy. Synonymous with quality, tradition and prestige, any retailer worth its salt will know that when selling the much-loved beverage, there needs to be an Italian presence on the shelves. The espresso, or ‘un caffè’ in Italy, is one of the most popular Italian coffee imports, and by serving it you will put your establishment in good stead with caffeine fanatics. It's also important to bolster your coffee menu with some other well-known and less intimidating varieties, like the cappuccino, caffè macchiato or latte. Make sure you're sourcing quality products, too - there are plenty of fantastic Italian roasters out there.



Christian Ward, head of brand at Aromistico, lets us in on why Italian coffee

is considered the pinnacle of its field:

“In Italy, coffee is simply ‘a must’; it is a way of life. There is no morning without a coffee, there is no meal that does not finish with a coffee and if you are socialising – which Italians love to do – you are doing it over a coffee. We live, breathe, and, of course, drink coffee! Ultimately, we must remember that it is through Italy, in particular the port of Venice, that coffee was first introduced to the rest of the world.”

“The Aromistico brand was conceived in April 2016 after extensive research of the UK coffee market. The research detected a growing evolution in the UK towards consumption of artisan fresh coffee at home, brewed with a variety of methods. The Pelliconi family, producers of Aromistico, have been in the coffee trading, making and roasting business in Italy since 1987.”

Aromistico is just one producer that epitomises the heritage, tradition and forward-thinking attitude of Italian coffee producers today.



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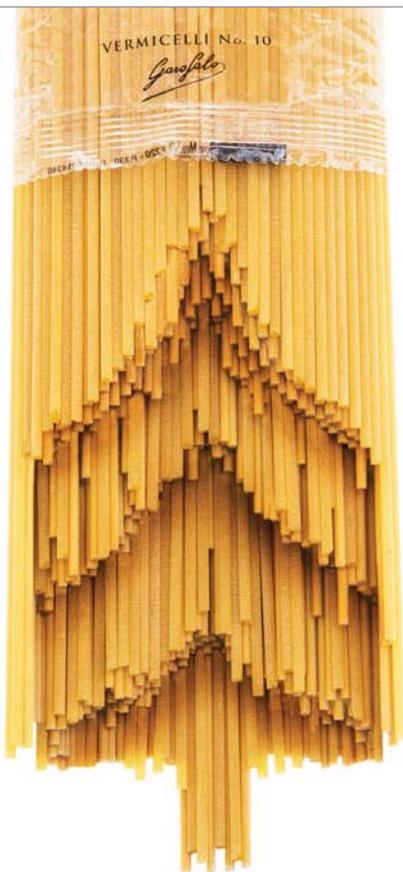
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ANEYE-CATCHING FESTIVE DISPLAY AT LUDLOW FOOD CENTRE

LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS IDEAS

Two retailers of repute tell us how they make sure their business pulls out all the stops ahead of the most profitable time of year

The festive trading period is a pivotal part of most retailers' overall turnover, so it makes sense to work towards the big day with a detailed plan in place. From looking at whether you need to account for more seasonal staff to ensuring you've ordered enough products for your fresh food counters, it's important not to underestimate how many factors need to be taken into consideration in the run-up to the festive season. It's key to survey whether your Christmas displays are attractive or enticing enough, what samples should be handed out on what day, and perhaps one of the most important factors of all, evaluating your cheese orders to ensure that you have a star-studded Christmas dairy counter.

Ludlow Food Centre boasts many fresh food sections that prove popular during the festive season. "We stock a huge range of fresh foods all year round but when it comes to Christmas, fresh foods that are popular tend to be our fresh meats, all of which are reared on our farms," explains Amy Willmet, public relations officer. "Our handmade cheeses are massively popular as most people love a cheeseboard at Christmas – we make 12 of our own cheeses in our dairy production kitchen and also have 70 other cheeses sourced from within the UK and Europe, giving our customers optimum choice. We have a superb delicatessen which many Christmas shoppers flock to over the festive season. You can buy our fresh handmade Pork Pies, Pheasant & Bacon Pies and award-winning Turkey & Ham Cutting Pie to name just a few. As most of our fresh food is produced on-site, we have the flexibility to produce as much or as little and in fresh

batches to ensure premium quality at all times."

When it comes to decorating the store, Amy states that Ludlow opts for a pared down aesthetic. "We decorate our shop in a very tasteful and traditional way which integrates seasonal produce into displays to keep them visually innovative and interesting," she explains. "Once all retail Christmas stock arrives, from Christmas biscuit tins, unique festive confectionery, traditional Turkish Delight to authentic Italian panettones, we design a dedicated section in the centre of the store

that houses all of these wonderful festive luxuries."

Staffing is of the utmost importance during the festive season, says Amy. "We have returning students from college and university that support us over the festive period. "We also have employees who like to work longer hours throughout December, so it mutually benefits the business and staff."

Another part of the Ludlow Food Centre Christmas experience is the array of events it hosts. "December is a very busy month for us and we like to host a



STEFANO CUOMO, MACKNADE FINE FOODS

Stefano Cuomo, managing director of Macknade Fine Foods, discusses how the renowned food hall preps ahead of Christmas craziness:

We Brits are mad for cheese. In the days leading to Christmas all manner of cheese goes flying out of the shop – the obvious big seller would be Blue Stilton. Ours is from the stunning Colston Basset Creamery (a personal favourite!) but year-on-year we are seeing Kentish Blue becoming the blue of choice. All in all, we will shift well over half a tonne of blue cheese alone in the Christmas period! Butchery is another key fresh area, from local turkeys through to ribs of beef and mince. Of course, our green grocery has always been a key department with sprouts and all root veg sales rocketing. It is not unusual for Tesco etcetera to come in and ask for veg as they've got their orders wrong!

Merchandising product is key and the joy of Christmas stock is that it is attractive and bountiful. As a business we are all about product and service, so we do not go overboard on any extravagant bejewelling! Volume is crucial and the sense of fun and homeliness is key – we want our customer to come in and be excited

as soon as their eyes adjust to the shop – it is a magical family time of year and we want to add to that sense at every touch point.

When it comes to staffing over the festive period, our part time staff will flex up on hours and in Christmas week everyone will increase hours as we start earlier and finish later. Furthermore, we will have some seasonal recruitment, usually made up of our regular students coming back for the holidays.

Our overall best-selling Christmas products have got to be cheese and European fare, such as panettone and stollen, Christmas puds, key vegetables and meats. To be honest, as an offer with thousands of lines we see our clients just increasing their shops as they entertain and share with family. We also see new customers who will upgrade to us during the Christmas period to treat themselves.

We continually have tastings in store and we will have some evening events such as mini beer festivals and pop-up supper clubs. One of our favourite events is having the local primary schools come in and sing Christmas carols around the Christmas tree in our café, which all supports Macknade as the Christmas hub.

range of exciting festive events," explains Amy. "Throughout the whole of December customers can book festive afternoon teas, lunches and dinners at our on-site restaurant The Clive. Our Dine & Disco evenings are very popular at Ludlow Kitchen: our café and restaurant by day and party venue by night! Following the success of last year's Festive Wine Tasting Evening, we are holding it again. A new event is our Christmas Food & Craft Fair. We have a fantastic selection of exhibitors joining us for the day where people can pick up some quality, unique Christmas

gifts. Many of our wonderful suppliers are taking to the stage at our Meet the Suppliers weekend, where customers will be able to browse the extensive range of products available and finish off that last bit of Christmas shopping. We also have an exclusive late-night Christmas shopping evening where our loyal customers can enjoy a complimentary glass of mulled wine and mince pie on arrival, stock up on Christmas essentials, appreciate delicious tastings, beat the queues and quiz our knowledgeable staff on any Christmas queries they have."

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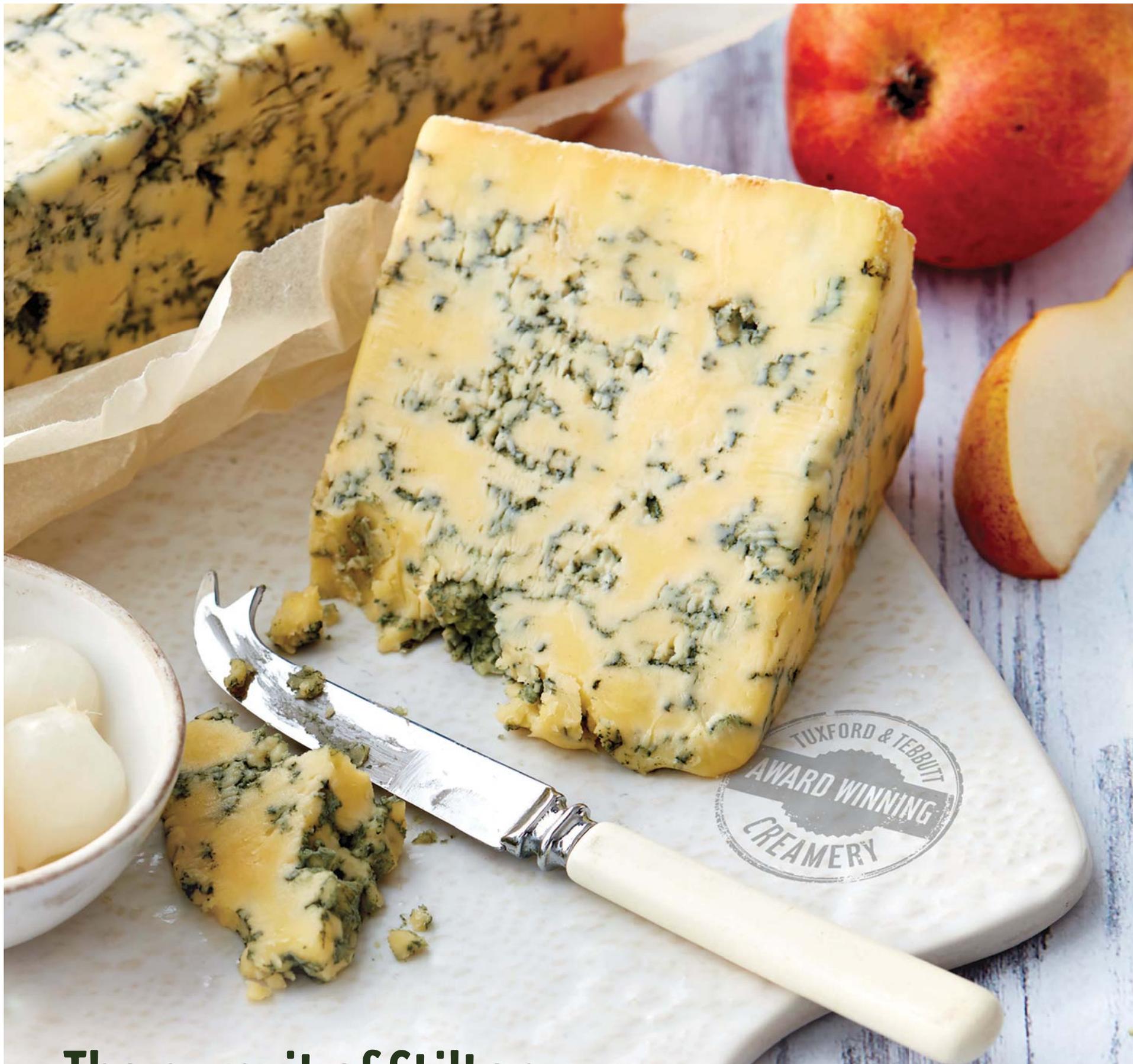
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GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”

Literary lovers will know this is the opening lines of *The Tale of Two Cities*, from that Charles Dickens classic, set in revolutionary times.

Cheese is having its own revolution of kinds, some of it almost imperceptible, with a whole range of shifting positions whose outcomes are hard to predict.

The usual rollercoaster of milk price and availability goes on unabated, as it has these past 23 years since the demise of the Milk Marketing Board and its balancing influence for milk producer, cheesemaker and consumer, another victim of our wise EEC masters.

Now I believe we see milk reaching its heights as we close 2017, and possibly on a downward trajectory in the second quarter of 2018, normal weather conditions permitting.

That's just the day to day reality of the dairy trade, which now operates in two streams, really. The big, the well-equipped and fully engineered who, with a few specialist exceptions, seek to streamline and create volume efficiency, and tick box the burgeoning technical web with its various add-ons. They meet the varied needs of individual

customers, export markets, and a litany of best practice bolt-ons, that now see one day audits stretched to four days, and all that despite a revolving door of separate unannounced visits and substantial expense to someone.

The slow lane of makers, the real artisan backbone of British heritage, find themselves frequently disenfranchised from access to that sector, often despite sweet words from the commercial world, albeit frequently sincere from those at the highest echelons who see it as a form of corporate social responsibility that also earns the recognition of supporting local makers.

Those chosen to deliver it, however, often lack depth of knowledge and passion for food, and in turn are under pressure on other commercial metrics to deliver volume, profitability and no waste – frankly, staying mainstream is often more comfortable.

Ironically, those with strong positions of difference now seem to give it up, whilst those with less history in this specialist sector, such as the discount sector, seem enthusiastic to take this up, recognising the opportunity. They sometimes show a preference to dip in and out on high days and holidays, and maybe miss the long

term commitment necessary in this market.

The larger scale makers will become less in number over the coming years, and more consolidation is bound to be on the menu in the next five years, whereas the independent maker will have some interesting decisions to make. Investment in this sector will take bold thinking and a different approach to catch the mood.

The independent retail market will continue to be as vibrant as it is now I feel sure, providing as it does the right mood for the discerning customer who seeks provenance, speciality and local. However, we should prepare for some limited addition to that aspirational premium food sector ranks, as the recent years have seen a squeeze on incomes and, illogical as it is, food is the usual whipping boy whilst mobile phones, TV and a raft of other lifestyle essentials escape limitation in people's minds.

Foodservice will see its own challenges in serving cheese, as the availability of staff, minimum and living wage demands, the cost accuracy of portioning, waste reduction, cost and margin pressures will all stress this last in line meal contribution, and that at a time when it had shown fashionable growth.

No article is complete without Brexit being woven in, and this too challenges thinking, even if its nearly 18 months away at the earliest. Whatever side of the argument the consumer sits on this divisive issue, it's likely that British-made cheese will get some dividend, especially when the insults fly from wounded EEC politicians, and indeed there are some remarkably good replicas of classic Continental cheese types now firmly established

in a number of innovative family makers.

If driven to World Trade rules, we could see tariffs of 40-47% on the import and export of cheese, and this will be payable on entry into the UK, challenging the cash flow of many in the trade.

Exchange rate is also well known, and published, with Sterling slumping from €1.30+ to a recent low of €1.07, a considerable 25% change already. Of course it provides a potential boost for exports.

The golden quarter of the last three months of the year comes around with predictable opportunity, and the coming nine-12 weeks will be vital to so many in the trade as the real earning moment – all wonder if the shopper will show the same confidence and resilience of the last few Christmas times that have beaten predictions for many. There is so much gloom being talked by the media that we are all in danger of being dragged into that mood. Experience has usually shown the shopper kicks off the mood to have a great Christmas, lets hope it's the same again.

That being the case, the wise men might already plan for the dark months of January and February, when money becomes tighter, waistlines are stretched, and simplicity and value rule. Value and vigorous promotion might keep the tills clicking in this time.

This is a mere canter through the realities of the current cheese market complexity. I personally have supreme faith in our ability as a trade to manage challenge, and ultimately find a route to success, but it's as much for others as for me to decide whether it's the best or worst of times.



TANNY GILL OF CLARK'S SPECIALITY FOODS

“Cheese is always something to be excited about”

When I first made the journey to the UK from Pune, near Mumbai in India over 15 years ago, I never imagined that I would become so immersed in the British cheese industry and gain such satisfaction from it. I was in London doing some bar work when I applied for a job working with Jeff and Chris Reade on the Isle of Mull off the west coast of Scotland. There, on a farm just outside Tobermory, they make the iconic Isle of Mull Cheddar as well as Hebridean Blue. I was hooked and I will always be grateful to the Reades for sharing their passion for cheesemaking with me.

After five years on Mull, meeting my future wife in the

process, I felt I wanted to broaden my cheese knowledge and so I returned to London to take up a job at La Fromagerie. This was an opportunity to work with Patricia Michelson and an amazing team of people from both the UK and around Europe, picking up experience in cheesemaking, affinage and retailing. Everyone I worked with shared a love of cheese, and as we enter potentially different times post-Brexit I can't help but think of those I worked with at La Fromagerie. Anything which inhibits us working with passionate individuals with so many rich experiences from different cultures has to leave a void in our industry.

In 2011 I returned to Scotland, initially working with Clarks

Speciality Foods in wholesale but also developing my own business selling to the public. Earlier this year I returned to Clarks under their new management team with a brief to engage with both cheesemakers and our wide range of customers encompassing retailers, chefs and consumers. Cheese is the largest and most important category for us at Clarks and drives the whole business strategy. I'm relishing the opportunity of working with top delis and farm shops on one day and Michelin-starred chefs the next. Engaging with the best hotels and restaurants to create the best cheese boards, sharing and exchanging ideas with chefs and front of house staff – it's something I never tire of.

There's no doubt that in the 15 years I've been involved in cheese in the UK the demand for good quality artisan cheese has grown and that the consumer has become more knowledgeable. There's an awareness of local, regional cheese making in Scotland as well as of the quality cheeses being made elsewhere in the UK, and folk are really discerning about classic continental cheeses such as a Brie de Meaux, aged Comté or a top quality Gorgonzola. That said,

I'm very proud that at Clarks we recently exported five Scottish cheeses to a wholesaler in France (reported in a previous edition of Speciality Food). Three of the five were smoked hard cheeses while the other two were raw milk Farmhouse Cheddars.

While the demand for raw milk cheese has stayed fairly constant within our customer base the supply of raw milk cheese has reduced, with a number of cheesemakers coming to the conclusion that they have to pasteurise to get contracts with larger retailers or export opportunities, or simply because it means an easier life with their local environmental health inspectors. One complaint I do hear from raw milk cheesemakers is that there appear to be inconsistencies in how cheesemakers are treated in different regions of the UK. I feel it's critical that the authorities and cheesemakers agree and communicate a transparent framework which is consistent across the UK and also shares best practice from other countries.

Despite the challenges, however, cheese is always something to be excited about.

Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

Leeds cheesemonger celebrates anniversary with larger premises

Leeds-based specialist cheesemonger **George & Joseph** has marked the fourth anniversary of the opening of its Chapel Allerton store by moving to a larger “more prominent” premises.



The bigger shop is located on Harrogate Road alongside other food businesses including The Fruit Stall, Neil Smith Butchers and Tarbetts Fishmongers.

Founded by Stephen Fleming in 2012, the business initially focused



on farmers' markets. After a short spell in Leeds' Kirkgate Market, George & Joseph opened the doors to its first shop on Regent Street in August 2013. Turnover has more than doubled year-on-year, states Stephen, and the business now employs four part-time staff.

Stephen said, “This is a very exciting move for us. The prominent location on the Harrogate Road, next door to the other successful food businesses, gives us access to a larger audience and customer base. The new premises gives us room for a larger cheese counter, as well as more space for complementary delicatessen products such as bread, charcuterie, olives, beers and wines. We have already seen a dramatic increase in trade since moving a few weeks ago.

“We are starting to gear up for Christmas, and the larger shop means we can offer more cheese than ever. We also have plans for a dedicated events space and tasting room.”

Cheeses of Muswell Hill eyes expansion with crowdfunding campaign



Award-winning London cheesemonger **Cheeses of Muswell Hill** is hoping to extend its 250-plus cheese offering by building a cheese maturing room at the end of its current premises.

The new walk-in refrigerated cheese room will enable the owners to increase the volume and variety of the cheese the shop stocks while also acting as a tasting area for customers.

The crowdfunding campaign will run until 4th December 2017, with the owners hoping for it to reach a target of £28,600. Those who donate are rewarded with various prizes determined by how much they contribute, for example donating £50 is rewarded with a hamper and £300 a monthly cheese box. The crowdfunding page can be found at crowdfunder.co.uk/help-us-build-a-cheese-cave-at-cheeses-of-muswell-hill.

A new cheese room is expected to grow the business and increase profits, with the shop expecting to take on more wholesale customers, build new relationships with cheesemakers, stock more complementary local produce and

also create a job for a cheese room manager.

Morgan McGlynn, owner of Cheeses of Muswell Hill said, “I believe entering a room full of incredible cheeses and having the freedom to try as many as you like freely, with guidance from our expert cheesemongers, is any cheese lover's dream! Also, I think being able to stock a larger range of British and artisan cheeses will encourage new customers and offer something our regular customers haven't tried before. Not to mention the benefit of having the cheese at a perfect ready-to-eat temperature.

“If we are able to raise the funding for the cheese room we would hope to start work in the first week of January, and we are aiming to have an opening party – with lots of cheese and wine for all of those who have helped – at the beginning of February.”

Ludlow Food Centre resurrects territorial cheese

Shropshire-based Ludlow Food Centre has announced the launch of the once-extinct Shropshire cheese, which has been resurrected by the company's dairy manager, **Dudley Martin**.

The last known reference to the cheese was over 100 years ago, with the production ending just after the First World War, but Dudley has recreated the recipe by combining archive research and his own cheese-making expertise.

Broadly described as a crumbly cheese, Dudley states that it is tricky to compare the Shropshire to other varieties due to modern incarnations evolving away from their traditional flavours. He said, “Its closest cousin was the long-ripened Cheshire – itself extinct: a rich, buttery, soft and crumbly cheese aged for a year, sometimes more – which bears little resemblance to most dry, high-acid, quick-ripened Cheshires of today. Perhaps contemporary Tasty Lancashire is a better match, but again there are differences – Shropshire is gentler and more subtle. We hope Shropshire can find its niche within this wider group of crumbly cheeses, whilst displaying a richness and old-fashioned character all of its own.”

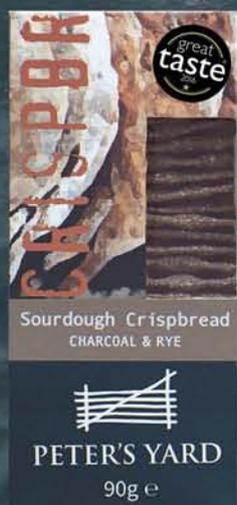
In order to create the cheese, Dudley had to pin together numerous sources of research. He said, “In an ideal world we might have unearthed an old recipe for Shropshire cheese which showed us exactly the way to go. No such luck.



Hundreds of hours of research yielded no definitive blueprint. Instead, I have spent the past two years piecing together clues, titbits of information, like a historical jigsaw puzzle, until we had a picture which made sense in cheesemaking terms.”

Dudley explains that a combination of curiosity and local pride pushed him to resurrect the cheese. He continues, “We are very proud of this region and its food, so when we discovered Shropshire had its own forgotten cheese variety with a 350-year history, we were keen to learn about it as best we could, to see if it would be possible to recreate this food from the past. Modern British cheese is fantastic, but I'm most passionate about classic territorial cheese – here we had an exciting opportunity to reclaim a lost variety, part of our cheesemaking heritage.”

“Modern British cheese is fantastic, but I'm most passionate about classic territorial cheese – here we had an exciting opportunity to reclaim a lost variety, part of our cheesemaking heritage”



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PETER'S YARD



UK cheeses to be championed at international trade show

The fifteenth edition of The Cheese & Dairy Products show will see UK cheeses get the spotlight at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles on 25th to 28th February 2018.

The Cheese & Dairy Products Show has established itself as one of the leading events in the dairy sector dedicated to traditional cheeses. The event is intended as a platform where cheesemongers, restaurateurs and distributors meet producers and equipment manufacturers from across Europe.

Neal's Yard Dairy, Wyke Farms, The Fine Cheese Co. and Bradburys Cheese are amongst a few of the confirmed names that will be representing the UK cheese industry contingent.

The show's organisers state that there is to be 20 per cent more new businesses expected at this year's event, with the show expanding its offer by welcoming a number of exhibitors specialising in shop fitting and equipment for retailers.

There is also a Discovery Zone for producers exhibiting for the first

time. The exhibitors will be grouped together in the same stall and will receive a discounted price package. The Discovery Zone is intended to be a springboard for artisan cheesemakers, enabling them to acquire leads and grow their businesses.

Céline Glineur, director of the Cheese & Dairy Products Show said, "The fifteenth edition promises to be an unmissable event with a wealth of new features. The UK, with such a variety of cheeses undiscovered beyond its shores, was an obvious choice for the show's first guest country."

Alain Dubois, chairman of the Cheese & Dairy Products Show said, "This year we want to promote traditional cheesemaking and the excellence of our French and European producers. The exhibition will focus primarily on traditional cheeses but also on related services including cheesemaking equipment and cheese gastronomy. Our visitors come from all four corners of the world and we want to provide them with plenty of diversity."



JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



"Diminishing returns"

There's an adage that it's easier to sell to an existing customer than to convert a new one. It is in our best interests that we ensure that once a prospect becomes ours, they stay ours – through thick and thin.

Last week I left two shops that had enjoyed my repeated custom with a feeling that I'd prefer not to go back. In both instances, I'd returned items that had fallen short of my expectations: a shower caddy that had rusted, and bespoke insoles that had come apart. While the vendors refunded my money or replaced the item, they both did so saying that they were doing me a favour. My feeling was that I'd been sold goods that weren't fit for purpose and was annoyed both by that and the inconvenience of making a 60-mile round trip to right matters. The lack of apology and agreement that this shouldn't have happened meant that I left their shops with restitution, but not satisfaction.

I considered how I, and my staff, had responded to returns in the cheese and deli range that we offered. Unlike M&S, we didn't have a generous returns policy as part of our trading proposition, but we were keen to gain a reputation as fair dealers. The first return we received was from a woman who had bought a trio of cheeses with which to dazzle her friends at a picnic. She'd chosen a soft goat's tower that was one of our featured 'cheeses of the month' – the florid prose with which the wholesaler had supplied us clearly set up expectations that hadn't been met. She declared the cheese ok, but lifeless and ultimately disappointing, rather than the piece de resistance that she had envisaged. What to

do? The cheese was fine, but the customer was unhappy.

A management consultant's first task is often to answer the question: "What business are we in?" A simple answer might be that we are in the business of selling cheese; a more nuanced view would be that a specialist shop like ours was in the business of delighting customers (via cheese). In this case, we fulfilled the first, but failed at the second. I took the remains of the cheese back and spent the next 10 minutes or so tasting cheeses with her to find something of roughly equivalent value that she really enjoyed. A customer was saved, and indeed may have become somewhat of an ambassador for the shop.

I'm still annoyed with myself for not dealing with one return in a better fashion. Some visitors had bought unpackaged salami from us. They made the effort to come back to the shop and ask whether it was supposed to be as dry and hard as they had experienced it. The staff member who dealt with them phoned me at home. She asked what the salami was supposed to be like – I stated that it sounded ok. I should have asked what they were hoping for and either refunded or found something that they would love. I missed an opportunity.

When customers come back to complain or express disappointment with their purchases, at least they're not blogging about it, going on Tripadvisor or bad-mouthing us to friends. It's a chance for us to put things right for them, and the occasional unmerited return is a small price to pay for having continued to delight the customer (via cheese).

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A cheeseboard without a blue is a rare sight, particularly at Christmas, but which of the myriad of options out there should you stock? On the one hand, a rich, spicy blue will delight aficionados and likely prove to be particularly popular during the upcoming season of indulgence, but equally, Christmas offers an annual opportunity to engage non-fans of blue with a lighter, mellower option.

It's all too easy to stick to what you know and personally like, but branching out and giving your customers a say will always reap rewards. Why not host a cheese tasting evening, serving a range of blues alongside wines and accompaniments, in order to get an idea of what tempts your customers' tastebuds? Some may be pleasantly surprised by their preferences – newcomers to blue may discover a penchant for a heavier cheese, while those who claim to only eat the boldest could come away with an appreciation of a more delicate flavour profile. As well as providing some valuable insight into the tastes of your customer base, this event could gain you a reputation as a go-to destination for foodie enjoyment both during the day and after hours.

It may seem counterintuitive, but try educating your customers about the joys of blue throughout the seasons as well as just at Christmas. It could be that their only annual visit to your cheesecounter is in preparation for party season – in that case, by extolling the virtues of different types of blue and their different uses (from partnering with crackers and chutneys to soups and summer salads) you could tempt them to return throughout the year.

Hero Hirsh, manager of cheesemonger Paxton & Whitfield's flagship London shop in Piccadilly, dispels the myth that blue cheese is just for Christmas:

Consumers often think that blue cheese is only for the winter months but that really isn't the case. Today, with the renaissance in the artisan British cheese industry that started in the late 1980s, there is a great range of blue cheese being made that uses different types of milk that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

Blue cheese has traditionally been



BLUE CHRISTMAS

A good blue has long been a mainstay of the festive cheeseboard, but which should you stock this year – and is blue really only for winter? Speciality Food investigates

associated with the winter, as at Christmas time we all love a piece of Stilton on our cheeseboards. One reason for this is that the Stilton available in December has often been made using the rich, end of summer milk produced in August/September. This milk gives the Stilton a delicious, full flavour – a real treat to savour over the festive season.

People often tend to think of blues being very rich, heavy and/or spicy, and whilst that can be the case, there are many blues that are light, honeyed and floral. Two great examples are Harbourne Blue (a goats' milk cheese) and Crozier Blue (a sheep's milk cheese). These are particularly delicious when the new season's milk is used to make them. For example, the Crozier Blue we had in our shops in September was made

from spring milk produced in May. It tasted absolutely superb. When the cheese has this much flavour without being heavy, it is perfect to eat in the late summer.

In terms of what to match with blue cheeses through the year I'd suggest the following:

- **For spring** When looking to enjoy blue cheeses in the warmer months it's good to use a few, fresh ingredients to complement them. I enjoy eating Cornish Blue at this time of year and often pair it with crunchy spring peas or other fresh greens in salads or side dishes
- **For summer** Blue cheese works really well in savoury dishes and one of my favourite things to cook in the summer is a blue cheese soufflé – using Harbourne Blue or Roquefort
- **For autumn** Fresh seasonal

products like chicory, apples, walnuts and pumpkins work well with blue cheeses in warm salads, soups or risottos

● **For winter** Don't forget that blue cheese makes a great addition to sauces, adding richness and flavour. Also at this time of year there is an abundance of dried fruit and nuts that go well with any blue cheese

A fresh take on blue

Award-winning cheesemaker Cornish Cheese have built upon the success of their classic blue – it has recently been awarded the title of People's Choice at the British Cheese Awards for the second time, and has a number of other awards to its name, too – to launch two Cornish Blue-led pâtés: Pear & Walnut and Fig.

Founder Philip Stansfield takes

up the story: "We were thinking how we could offer another product to go alongside Cornish Blue when the idea of a pâté emerged. After trying several recipes we settled on the Pear & Walnut and the Fig. We took some with us to the shows we exhibit at so we could gather some feedback. We got a big thumbs up and so production began, and we now offer both frozen via our online shop."

Philip adds: "It's funny how when you offer visitors to our stand the two pâtés to sample they feel as though they have to choose which one they prefer and why. This gives us some great market research feedback." So is there usually an outright winner? "I don't count the 'votes'", says Philip, "but I suspect it's an even contest!"

Will there be additional choices to the pâté range? "I don't see why not" says Philip. "We are always considering ideas as to how we can utilise Cornish Blue so adding to the pâté range is certainly an option. At the shows we often take with us a good amount of pies which have Cornish Blue as a key ingredient. These are made by local brand Helluva who based close to us on the edge of Bodmin Moor, and are always a terrific seller."

A classic blue

With only four dairy managers in the last 104 years, Colston Bassett has maintained a tradition respected throughout the Stilton world. Today's dairy manager, Billy Kevan, has been in the role since 1999. In that time Billy has secured multiple awards for his cheese including winning two Supreme Champion titles in 2014. He explains what makes his cheese so special: "We're very proud of our long heritage and traditional hand-ladling methods, yet the exciting part for me is that dairy continues to evolve and grow in a sustainable way. We still operate as a co-operative, with families of farmers supplying their milk from within a 1.5 mile radius of the dairy, and use a recipe that have been handed down through generations. There have been plenty of new British Blues emerging over the past few years. However, Colston Bassett's Stilton remains an absolute classic that has been perfected since the dairy's inception in 1913. For me, as you'd expect, our Stilton will always be 'King of English Cheese'."

“ There have been plenty of new British Blues emerging over the past few years ”

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Perl Las: A blue cheese from a family of cheesemakers in West Wales. Creamy with slight saltiness, followed by the delicate lingering blue flavours. (Cow, pasteurised, organic)



MONTAGNOLO
Stilton Colston Bassett: An iconic stilton from one of the traditional makers. Rich cream colour with blue veining throughout. The texture is smooth, creamy and melts in the mouth (cow, pasteurised)
Shropshire Blue: A superb blue cheese alternative to the Stilton, with a rich orange curd, blue veining and a golden crust. Good with a rich fortified wine (cow, pasteurised)
Beauvale: An outstanding award-winning soft, mild blue English cheese

— subtle, creamy and delicious. (cow, pasteurised)

CONTINENTAL
Roquefort: A French cheese made with unpasteurised milk from sheep grazing in Les Causses mountains. It's matured in the caves of Cambalou, in a village called Roquefort-sur-Soulzon. The result is a semi-soft, crumbly, white cheese with blue-green veins (ewes, unpasteurised)
Gorgonzola Piccante: Gorgonzola 'Piccante' DOP is a soft, sharp, aged blue cheese. Flavours are intense, pungent and spicy. It has a pale yellow compact, speckled with bluish-green marbling (cow, pasteurised)
Montagnolo: A rich, 'triple cream' soft cheese, surface-ripened from Germany. Aged at low temperature and cold maturation, it has a sweet aroma and a spicy rich flavour. Winner of World Cheese awards (cow, pasteurised, vegan)



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As the temperatures drop and the nights draw in, there are few dishes that provide the warming satisfaction needed than piping hot stew, flavoursome beef bourguignon, an oozing cheese and onion pie, a satisfying lasagne and other comfort food favourites. Although the winter months elicit intense cravings for heartier fare, the fact of the matter is, most modern and busy Brits are too time-deprived to spend a weekday evening booting up the slow cooker or cooking a pie from scratch. Hence the formidable popularity of Jamie Oliver's 15 Minute Meals, Joe Wick's Lean In 15 and other quick-fix dinner recipe books.

The modern consumer is far from averse to picking up a quality frozen ready meal or pie, though. Game-changing premium brands like Cook and Pimminister have diminished the 'lesser-quality' stigma that frozen or convenient products used to be tarnished with, and consumers are taking note. No longer is it considered taboo to pop into a local shop to pick up a frozen shepherd's pie for the entire family to enjoy, with shoppers acknowledging the recent evolution from the gulf in quality frozen meals, soups and pies of days gone by.

Retailers with the appropriate facilities are also producing their own takes on convenient food options after being encouraged by this growing demand. Weetons Food Hall in Harrogate has gone one step

further in developing its own-brand Chef To Go premium ready meal range for wholesale. The ready meal range uses quality locally-sourced ingredients that are all made in-house by the food hall's team of skilled chefs. Building on the success of the company's in-store ready meals, Weetons invested in a new state-of-the-art production facility near Harrogate to allow them to offer the products for wholesale to farm shops, delis and independent food stores nationwide. "Our ready meals are increasingly popular with customers who want easy, convenient meal solutions that are both nutritious and locally-sourced," says Philip Sands, general manager at Weetons Food Hall. "We are keen to extend our reach across the region and are developing both local and national distribution networks."

Featuring ingredients from Weeton's food hall, plus meat sourced from within 15 miles of Harrogate, the Chef To Go range consists of eight main dishes and eight side dishes, with the brand to develop puddings imminently. Mains include classics such as Lasagne and Cottage Pie, as well as new favourites such as Chicken & Bacon Pie and Chickpea & Vegetable Tagine. "We ensure that all of the Chef To Go meals contain locally-sourced meat and are freshly made using only the very best seasonal ingredients," adds Kevin Ingham, executive chef of Weetons Food Hall. "Our team of skilled

chefs work hard to innovate and inspire, developing new dishes to complement the old favourites."

Revered ready meals

A producer that cooks and sells flavoursome and quality ready meals is Surrey Spice, which produces upper-tier restaurant-quality Indian dishes. Its current range comprises nine dishes, including Kaju Dhania Murgh (cashew and coriander chicken), Palak Paneer (Indian cottage cheese with baby spinach) and Meen Moilee (fish curry). "When I moved to England from India, I spent the next 17 years working as a management consultant, where I learned to cook, but also spent the time bitterly complaining about the food that was passed off as Indian until an exasperated friend asked me to put my money where my mouth is and cook it better; so in 2015 Surrey Spice was born," explains Mandira Sarkar, owner of Surrey Spice. "Originally intended as supper clubs and catering services, I released the frozen meal line after more and more people wanted to buy the food."

All of the Surrey Spice products are indisputably high quality, with each dish made from scratch using fresh produce and spices. Every ingredient is chopped, peeled, grated and ground exactly the same as it would be in a traditional Indian kitchen, and then cooked on the hob in small batches before being



environment, they include only British beef and chicken, all natural ingredients, no preservatives and a pastry made of rice, tapioca, chickpea and potato flours. The range consists of Gluten-free Steak & Ale Pie, Gluten-free Chicken, Ham & Leek Pie and Gluten-free Roasted Veg & Goats Cheese Pie – all ready to bake from frozen for a crisp, piping hot, freshly homemade quality.

As well as launching its gluten-free range of pies, field fare's ready meals and pies have recently had a brand refresh with contemporary new branding for its packaging and in-store freezers. The new premium look stands out in store, attracts customers to the freezers and the company states that it has a positive impact on sales. One happy purveyor of field fare frozen foods is James Pennel of Pennell's Garden Centre in Lincoln. He said, "The field fare branding on the freezers is clear and helps entice customers to our frozen and chilled area. The redesigned packaging is also clear with a strong focus on showing the great food inside. The choice and quality of the ready meals are second-to-none and we are continuing to see strong repeat sales." Since the brand relaunch, field fare has taken on a number of new customers, as well as a number of existing customers taking on additional freezers and expanding their existing frozen food section. "The recent rebranding and move around of our freezers has seen an immediate boost to the turnover of that area," explains Dan Hunt of Calcott Farm Shop in Essex. "It looks fresh, modern, professional and really stands out in the shop."

packed, sealed and frozen. "Unlike lots of other frozen meals that are generally sold in the UK, our dishes comprise of family and regional speciality recipes cooked exactly as they would be in your home," says Mandira. "Every dish is gluten-free and cooked in our homemade ghee with no added sugar. Compared to some Indian ready meals which use 11% chicken, our meals use between 66% and 76% chicken depending on the recipe."

skimp-not policy that you would find in your own kitchen – whether that is in the tenderising length of slow-cooking times or that all important red wine measure."

Never one to rest on its laurels, field fare has released a range of well-received gluten-free pies to ensure that nobody misses out. All produced on a Shropshire farm in a completely gluten-free

Fine food favourite

One company that has spent years converting customers to appreciate how good high-quality frozen food can be is field fare. It's a reputation that has also garnered lots of plaudits for its sensational winter warmer options, including premium ready meals and delicious pies. Its ready meal range consists of 50 one and two-portion meals which stretch from authentically spiced international cuisines and gluten-free meals to sophisticated vegetarian options and tempting desserts. There are also classic comfort food Cottage Pies, Lancashire Hotpots, Deep-filled Pies, Steak & Kidney Pies, Coquilles St Jacques, Asparagus & Gruyere Crowns and Mushroom, Stilton & Pine Nut Parcels, to name but a few.

"Provenance, quality and authenticity of recipes, ingredients and our producers is paramount for field fare," says Karen Deans, managing director. "We work closely with a long established clutch of trusted, independent manufacturers and producers to create dishes that are worthy of the field fare name. Each dish is cooked in small batches, using the same quality of ingredients, the same richness of flavours, the same methods, the same generous portions, the same



RETAILER INSIGHT

Ben Deme, owner of Chegworth Farm Shop

WHAT WINTER WARMERS DO YOU STOCK?

We're currently stocking Pegotty Hedge ready meals at our Chegworth Farm Shop. However, we will be opening another shop in Tenterden towards the end of the year and are looking to extend our offering within this category to also include pies from Tom's Pies, soups, stews and Soulful Food pots.

WHICH PRODUCTS WITHIN THE CATEGORY PROVE THE MOST POPULAR?

Ready meals are definitely our most popular products, though with our customer-base who have a keen interest in their food and on the whole will cook for themselves, we have found that ready meals must always contain the very best quality ingredients, not just offer a time-saving alternative to cooking at home.

HOW IMPORTANT TO THE BUSINESS ARE YOUR WINTER WARMER-STYLE FOOD AND DRINKS?

As we come into the colder months, these styles of food are really

important, hence the reason we are looking to expand on the offering when we open in Tenterden. Our customers come and visit us for our fresh produce first and foremost, but we find that there is always demand for this style of food as people are always looking for ways to save time spent cooking without compromising on quality.

WHAT OTHER WINTER FAVOURITE FOOD AND DRINK ITEMS DO YOU SERVE?

We also stock products such as sausage rolls and bhajis for on-the-go, and one of our best-sellers over the winter months is our Winter Warmer Apple Juice, which we serve hot as an alternative to tea or coffee. As well as by the cup, it's available by the bottle for customers to take home – it flies off the shelf when the weather starts to become colder! On the fresh produce side of things, squashes are some of our best sellers during the winter months with many people using them for soups, as well as root vegetables to use in stews.



From Brie to Stilton, we've swept the board at award shows across the country. With results like this it really has been a vintage year.



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“ We have found that ready meals must always contain the very best quality ingredients, not just offer a time-saving alternative to cooking at home ”



HOT TOPIC

Classic teas, coffees and hot chocolates are all well and good, but here's what you should stock to bring new clientele through your doors

A green approach

With superfoods taking over our storecupboards, it was only a matter of time before our hot drinks menu was affected, too. Matcha is one of the most versatile of these ingredients, and its inclusion in hot drinks has proven particularly popular over the past couple of years.

It is very seldom you go into a café or coffee shop these days and not find matcha on the menu. In fact, it has quickly become a household ingredient and Matcha Bars are popping up all over the globe to meet demand. A recent

Google survey places Matcha in the top three hottest beverage trends, along with 'cold-brewing' and ginger drinks.

Bloom Teas' premium 'ceremonial-grade' matcha is made by slowly grinding organic green tea leaves and a selection of superfoods into a very fine powder that's ingested whole, which makes it nutrient-rich compared with green tea leaves infused in hot water. It's delicious blended with hot dairy or alternative milk into a latte, and while unlikely to replace coffee, it's the perfect swap for health conscious consumers

wanting to drop their coffee fix and is trending with vegans and vegetarians across the country. Bloom supplies a number of London's leading health food-to-go chains offering matcha lattes and delis who mix the matcha into fruit and veggie smoothies for a 'booster' post workout, which is the ideal drink to offer a fast growing fitness culture.

THE VALUE OF HOT DRINKS



John Shepherd, MD of Partridges, explains how hot drinks have boosted his business

Hot drinks can be an important part of a speciality food shop's offering. However to be successful – like most things in life – it takes a lot of hard work.

It is very important to have very good quality products such as espresso, hot chocolate and English Breakfast tea, and in this department speciality food shops can strike a point of difference with conventional coffee shops by offering niche brands and own label. It is also very important to plan the layout of the hot drinks counter so that different aspects are not competing with each other for space. A badly designed counter will

seriously interfere with sales. It is similarly crucial to have well trained barristas to dispense the hot drinks efficiently.

If there is a degree of quality interaction between staff and loyal customers, the benefits will permeate around the shop and not just in the café as can be seen from the multiple sales that beverages can stimulate.

The real value of hot drinks does not just lie in the amount you actually sell but the other products that can also be sold alongside. For example, at glance at our customer basket analysis shows that the top sellers with Americano take outs are: pain aux

Sustainability sells

Fairtrade has done more than any other organisation to drive understanding and boost awareness of how the food and drink we consume ends up on our table. Yet while Fairtrade has undoubtedly been a vital initiative, it's no longer the only sustainable sourcing method around today.

Steven Macatonia, coffee expert and Co-founder of Union Hand-Roasted Coffee, believes that while Fairtrade has been integral to raising awareness and understanding of the idea of ethical sourcing, newer models have emerged which go above and beyond. He says, "Fairtrade has been a vital initiative, but one thing it doesn't do is link the price of coffee to its quality. As such, the minimum price guaranteed doesn't give farmers a reason to

improve the quality of their coffee as a means to achieving sustainable, long-term security."

Union Hand-Roasted Coffee introduced the concept of direct trade to the UK coffee sector in 2001. Dissimilarly to Fairtrade, Union Direct Trade incentivises farmers by paying higher rates for higher quality coffee. Furthermore, Union Direct Trade allows Union to work directly with diverse producers; from individual small-scale farmers, estates that employs labour, through to organised cooperatives. Union Direct Trade also goes one step further by removing the costs associated with becoming Fairtrade certified – which can otherwise be a significant barrier for subsistence farmers.

Crucially, Union Direct Trade provides the advice, technical

“ While unlikely to replace coffee, matcha lattes are the perfect swap for health conscious consumers wanting to drop their coffee fix and are trending with vegans and vegetarians across the country ”

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raisins, croissants, pain au chocolat, Olly bars, Hildon and Evian mineral water, scones, brownies and lo and behold, strawberry Twizzlers. These actually reside at possibly the furthest point in the shop from the café as the crow flies. It is important to note the presence of Olly bars on the list. These delicious wholemeal energy bars were slow sellers in the energy bar section but strategically merchandised on the coffee counter they are born again popular snacks for time pressured caffeine lovers. In the cappuccino to go basket Olly Bars are still there, but so are Levoni Milano salami snacks and hot dog rolls. In the café latte basic the Daily Mail is to be found.

The bottom line is that hot drinks provide not only high sales and high profit margins in their own department but also can provide a very positive vibe around the shop that spreads to other products.



knowledge and trusted route to market needed for farmers to plan for the long-term future. Union works closely with farmers across the world to help them improve the quality of the coffee they grow, and then to pay them fairly for it. Macatonia says: "Contrary to popular opinion, a sustainable approach to business can actually facilitate growth, rather than hinder it. The coffee industry has taken huge strides towards sustainability in recent years, but there's still plenty more to do and we want to remain at the forefront."

As well as impressing customers with the sustainable credentials of your coffee, to earn a reputation as a coffee specialist it's well worth looking into the provenance of the coffee you sell, and what this means for its flavours.

TOP TREND: TURMERIC

The demand for hot/non-caffeinated/non-dairy and healthy elixirs has mushroomed and the interest in turmeric lattes has shot through the roof – both for cafés and retail. Turmeric has had great press this year as a superfood and is known to have anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties, and to be great for arthritis. "Ultimately," says Kristina Locke, founder of Wholebeing Health Foods, "it's all very well offering healthy drinks, but at the end of the day they've got to taste good as well."



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PARTNER CONTENT



TAYLORS OF HARROGATE

Open the door to a world of extraordinary flavour

At Taylors of Harrogate, we've been deeply fascinated with flavour for 130 years. There's no big secret to creating teas, infusions and coffees that taste extraordinary – it's about extremely good ingredients and clever blends.

We believe that revisiting and reinvigorating our product lines is key to making sure that we help our customers deliver on what their customers want and so we have recently unveiled a full rebrand across our tea and coffee portfolio to bring to life our focus on 'extraordinary flavour'.

Earlier this year, we created four exciting new green teas and infusions in partnership with the botanical experts at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, crafted using only natural ingredients. The delicious new variations include an on-trend Mandarin & Ginger infusion, which adds a twist to the popular citrus and ginger combination, and three new green teas blended with Lychee & Lime, White Hibiscus & Peach, and Mango & Cardamom. Each new blend has been expertly crafted and has been subject to rigorous taste testing to ensure they all exemplify the new Taylors brand proposition of 'extraordinary flavour'.

This range also includes our well-known flavours such as Peppermint Leaf, Rose Lemonade and, our best-selling infusion, Sweet Rhubarb – a flavour we were first to develop. We've also focused on seasonal-inspired teas such as the rich and festive Spiced Apple for winter.

Our exciting new blends give consumers something different to try and enjoy. The demand for green teas and fruit and herbal infusions is growing, as flavour-seeking consumers expand their tea drinking repertoires but refuse to accept anything less than top quality.

As part of the relaunch, the packaging has been redesigned with illustrations by Colorado-based illustrator David Bates. The bold on-pack illustrations bring the extraordinary flavours within each blend to life.

Single origin coffees are a growing trend and create mouth-watering menu appeal. Our exceptional single origins showcase the flavours of the world's best growing regions. All coffees in this range are brand new for Taylors and have been roasted to accentuate the unique flavours and aromas of each origin. The roast and ground range consists of three variants – Rare Blossom from Ethiopia, Cacao Superior from Colombia and Praline Especial from Brazil – the latter two of which are available in whole bean format as well.

The range features redesigned packaging with illustrations from Bangkok-based illustrator and artist, Suthipha Kamyam, whose designs hero the specialness of an element of flavour specific to the region where the coffee is grown. A simple, new flavour wheel infographic helps consumers understand the flavour profiles of each coffee.

Taylors' Nespresso® Compatible Single Origin Coffee Capsules have also been completely revamped in line with Taylors single origin roasts. The variants are Cacao Superior Colombia, Praline Especial Brazil, Citrus Gold Kenya and Spice Kautaka India.

For customers looking for a simple way to make great coffee, our clever individually-wrapped Coffee Bags mean that making real coffee has never been easier. The bags brew directly in your cup for two minutes, making real coffee with no fuss. The Coffee Bags are available in three blends: Rich Italian, Decaffé and Hot Lava Java.

Our blends, including Rich Italian and Lazy Sunday which are our most popular, were originally launched 21 years ago with the idea that blending and roasting coffees that match to a moment in time, emotion or feeling, rather than an origin or roast, would make the world of coffee easier to navigate. As Taylors celebrates its 7th year as the number one brand in filter/cafétière in retail this year, it is not standing still and continues to introduce new blends. The latest range includes two new blends – Fika and Degraives – inspired by the coffee drinking traditions of Scandinavia and Australia.

taylorsofharrogate.co.uk

STOPECUPBOARD STAPLES

Make sure your customers' storecupboards and pantries are lined with products that are tried and true with these quality essentials

The pantry is the Aladdin's cave of any keen cook. Like flicking through a music lover's vinyl collection or browsing a book worm's library, it's a personal showcase of a home cook's repertoire: the likes of tinned tomatoes and dried chickpeas used for everyday cooking sit alongside top grade saffron and black truffle oil for those opportune

moments of culinary pizzazz. The storecupboard is also the superhero of the household; if it's pouring down with rain or the shops are closed, there's more than likely some pre-made cooking sauces and rice lurking on the shelves and raring to be used in a satisfying impromptu feast.

These storecupboard essentials are not only the backbone of most

households, but undoubtedly provide a steady revenue stream for your establishment, too. Although oils, rubs, marinades, cooking sauces and other ambient-centric items are easy to generalise as stalwarts of the shop, it's well worth refreshing and rotating this stock to keep your customers excited. What is the point of selling expertly sourced meat, cheese and dairy, and then let your customers search elsewhere for the other accompaniments to the meal? Keep the options invigorating and premium; there are lots of superlative products to choose from, after all.

Viva vinegar



One reliable item that can be found in store-cupboards across the nation is vinegar, but nowadays consumers are looking for more than your bog-standard malt vinegar to season their fish and chips. "All of the vinegars that I stock have diverse culinary uses, so make great additions to the store-cupboard," explains Andy Harris, owner of the Vinegar Shed, a purveyor of high quality vinegars, speciality oils, herbs and spices. "Every pantry needs top quality red wine, white wine and cider vinegars for everyday use. Add some of our exciting fruit and herb-flavoured vinegars and you can really add some amazing flavours to your dishes. For example, I love to use our Fleuriet Citrus Vinegar with seafood salads,

Pineau de Charentes Rose Vinegar drizzled over strawberries and Aged Banyuls Vinegar for stews."

Andy, a food writer and erstwhile editor of Jamie magazine, started the Vinegar Shed as: "I've always been frustrated by the limited range of vinegars available in the UK – well, apart from a few decent artisan fruit and cider vinegars that are around". He also believes that the phenomenal popularity of balsamic has meant that people have forgotten about the diversity and quality of wine vinegars. "So, I decided to start a business devoted to amazing vinegars, speciality oils, rare herbs and spices from around the world," he says.

Andy's career travelling the world searching for the next gastronomic story has heavily influenced the direction of the Vinegar Shed. "As a food writer, I've been collecting and using vinegars bought on my travels around Europe for many years," he explains. "I visited some of my favourite artisan vinegar producers to get them on-board. I also go on sourcing trips to find new products, and I'm now being approached by

vinegar-makers keen for me to sell their wares."

The expertly-selected range of gourmet vinegars have garnered a legion of famous foodie fans, from the likes of Jamie Oliver to Nathan Outlaw. "They've all been excited by the sheer range of vinegars we stock and are now using them on their menus on a regular basis," says Andy. "When I do tastings in the delis that stock our vinegars, the response has been amazing as people try our incredible treacly prune vinegar or sweet and sour Aigre Doux vinegar made with cider, vinegar, honey and apple ice wine. I'm so happy when people join our vinegar revolution!"

Quick curry



Another company that was formed through a voracious enthusiasm for a particular style of food or cuisine is Hari Ghotra, who honed her extensive experience cooking Indian dishes to kick-start her eponymous business. What



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Restaurant-quality sauces

One ubiquitous item of fine food fans' cooking arsenal is the ever-faithful cooking sauce. A far-cry from saccharine supermarket-ready versions, delis and farm shops are recognised as bastions of quality cooking sauces that are as fresh as retail packs come. One recognisable name that's a favourite in speciality food circles is family business Atkins & Potts, which sells a diverse range of cooking sauces. "Our cooking sauces range includes World Sauces, Finishing Sauces, Pasta Sauces and Classic Sauces, all coming in our new-look pouches," explains Caroline Westlake of Atkins & Potts. "Our most popular products in our cooking sauces ranges are the classic sauces – we make them to a traditional recipe but add our own contemporary twist. I think customers like the fact that they recognise the name of the sauce, but they contain something a little different. For example, we add three different types of pepper to our Brandy & Three Peppercorn Sauce, making it a little more special, and our Kashmiri Korma has a loyal following thanks to our delicious spice blend, creamy sweetness and slight chilli kick."

In a saturated marketplace, Atkins & Potts rises above the lacklustre varieties due to its authentic home-cooked credentials and the abundance of flavour the products contain. "We are finding that more and more people want to use ready-made sauces, but they don't want to compromise on quality," explains Caroline. "That's where our range fits in perfectly: we make everything ourselves in our kitchens, so we know exactly what goes into our products and where it comes from."

No-fuss flavours



Another company that pays close attention to the quality of ingredients that go into its products is Anila's Sauces, which creates a range of quality convenient jars of curry sauces. "We have a range of eight curry sauces and one pasta sauce," explains Anila Vaghela, managing director of Anila's Sauces. "From mild like a Tikka gradually getting warmer to a Vindaloo-type sauce, there's something for everyone, each with its own unique flavour."

Anila firmly believes that her range of quality sauces have become a fixture of many speciality shops due to the easy-to-use nature of the products. "Consumers are looking at using curry sauces for convenience in their busy lives," she explains. "However, they're searching for that extra mile of freshness with a clean, pure and authentic taste which our sauces offer, but without any E numbers or complicated ingredients, giving them that home-cooked taste but out of a jar to make curries easily without any of the fuss."

Flour power

A storecupboard stalwart that every cupboard or pantry couldn't do without is flour. However, most foodies won't be satisfied with any nondescript flour product, with millers like family-run Marriage's in Essex building a huge following since it was founded nearly 200 years ago. "Our automated flour mill is a unique mix of very high tech milling machinery – like equipment that sorts wheat by colour and the computer system controlling the mill – and the traditional, such as the French Burr stones used to produce the stoneground wholemeal flour," explains Elisa Powell of Marriage's. "These stones have been used for milling flour for over a hundred years and play a vital part in the 'nutty' taste and texture of the flour – ideal for making healthy, nutritious bread and rolls." Most of the wheat is still sourced from local Essex farmers, including the Marriage family's own farms only a few miles from Chelmer Mills.

British customers have a long-held affinity with the company, primarily due to its reputation for top quality flour. "When taking the time to bake at home, people want to ensure that they have good, consistent results, so they want ingredients that they can trust," says Elisa. "Our range has won 42 Great Taste awards, another sign of quality, and is recommended by bakers such as Paul Hollywood. People also like it as our flour is only sold in independent retailers and we don't supply the supermarkets, and we've also got a range of flours – 18, in fact – which means that there is something for every customer, whether they want to bake bread, cakes, pastry or pizza. We mill a range of organic flours, as well as speciality seeded bread flour and ancient grain flours, like spelt and rye, which are currently popular."



originally started as cookery classes at budding cook's homes quickly morphed into a digital community of recipe sharing, and now boasts a retail arm selling handy curry kits and individual spice packs. "The Hari Ghotra kits are all about getting you to cook Indian food, so you are able to use spices in the correct way and make the most out of them," explains Hari. "The kits are a natural extension to my cookery classes because they help to teach you put Indian dishes together at home."

Containing an array of spices and flavours to form the basis of a flavourful curry, all consumers are left to buy are the fresh ingredients, which are handily noted on the pack, too. Kits range from Dhal to Goan Curry, Rogan Josh to Xacuti, with the "Tikka and Bhuna kits being the most popular". Hari believes it's because they're the dishes people have heard of, however, "The Xacuti and Goan kits are also very popular but for the opposite reason – people pick them when they want to try something different," she explains.

Hari states that the kits are developing a strong following, with home cooks citing the achievement of cooking a quality Indian dish from scratch as a pivotal reason for purchasing them. "They're becoming increasingly popular because people are more and more interested in cooking healthy Indian food at home rather than opting for a jar, which is fantastic," she explains.



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Last Words

The final word
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THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Michael Wignall, Michelin-starred head chef at Gidleigh Park, tells us about his relationship with his local independent shops:



I'm a regular at the renowned Darts Farm, which was awarded Best Farm Shop in the UK at the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2016. It's full of fresh, good quality produce from award-winning artisan producers from the local area, so it's great to be able to support them.

I'm also a fan of Farmer Luxton's in Okehampton which sells brilliant quality meat. They are both family businesses which is reflected in the warm reception you get when you walk through the door.

If we don't support independent retailers, we'll begin to see the mainstream supermarkets

dictating the produce we have access to, which could mean it's less likely you'll buy what is in season.

As people move towards doing their food shopping solely online, they're losing the education that comes with speaking to the local grocer or butcher and learning about what they're eating and where it originates.

Particularly where I live in Devon, there is a lovely community

feel which has come as a result of the local producers and retailers. I try to choose independent retailers whenever possible, but I will happily shop in a supermarket occasionally as long as there's no sacrifice in quality.

When I shop in an independent store, I'm more inclined to cook

traditional British dishes. Exploring new ingredients and using seasonal produce brings its own challenges, but often keeping it simple is best, as locally grown produce usually has flavours that speak for themselves.

My latest exciting discovery is Yuzu. We've successfully grown it in our kitchen garden, but it originates in Japan. It's quite bizarre as they usually fruit in October, but ours have been ready since August despite Devon's unpredictable weather!

We grow as much as we can in the gardens at Gidleigh Park, but there's always some challenges with cultivating home grown produce, so naturally our dishes change on a regular basis. I encourage my team to work with what they have as part of the creative process is trial and error.

“ If we don't support independent retailers, we'll begin to see the mainstream supermarkets dictating the produce we have access to ”

TWITTER POLL

Have you needed to develop your online offering in order to keep up with the modern marketplace?

Yes
55%

No
22%

We intend to
23%

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

Inside the next issue of Speciality Food:

- Taste Direct 2018
- Scottish Food & Drink Special
- Scotland Speciality Show Preview
- Chocolate - Valentines, Mother's Day & Easter
- Refurbishment & Business Expansion
- Cheese Pairing



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SPECIALITY BITES

Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre



“Perhaps we cannot all be as radical as employing the homeless, but we can, as employers, all change society for the better”

There are two types of employers in this world. There are those companies who try and get as much as they can for as little as they can from their employees, and others who use the privilege of employing people as an opportunity to improve their employees' lives and help solve problems in today's society.

I am feeling particularly challenged as I write this article. I have just returned from the International B Corp Retreat in Toronto where I met several bosses of companies, who are changing their staff's lives through being remarkable employers. Arriving back in the UK I went straight to the Bread & Jam Festival where I presented the award of Supreme Champion of the New Producer Awards to 'Change Please'. This is a coffee company taking homeless people off the streets by training them to be baristas, and setting them up in mobile coffee points around London. As part of

the judging process I spoke to one of these new baristas and he has had his life completely turned around by this innovative company.

I am humbled by stories like this. In the early days of Cotswold Fayre, I employed ex-drug addicts and an ex-alcoholic, but I have not given enough opportunities to people with little opportunity in society more recently. Yes, there will be challenges and at one time the percentage of under-served people within the company was too high, which was almost catastrophic! It is important to ensure the balance is right. But what greater privilege is there to give people a chance in life. What's more – the loyalty from people like this is

often repaid in spades, meaning that you receive back much of what you give out.

“But Paul,” I hear you say, “We are too busy already and have too many demands to employ people who will likely need more of my time.” This may be true, but people will buy further into your brand, whether you are a retailer or consumer. In their heart of hearts, consumers know our society is broken and appreciate companies that are trying to fix it. Given the choice of buying coffee from Change Please or a multinational, I know which one I would choose.

Perhaps we cannot all be as radical as employing the homeless, but we

can, as employers, all change society for the better. One area we were exploring in Toronto was in finance. Sometimes people have unexpected bills arrive which can bring them into debt, particularly if they borrow money from the sharks in the payday loan world. A positive solution would be lending emergency funds from the company and taking the money back every month out of their wages.

On a larger scale, there is a housing crisis in the UK at present, particularly amongst the young. How wonderful it would be if financial institutions would work with employers to facilitate loans for deposits on houses! This is happening in some parts of the business world already and we should be challenged in the UK to catch up.

These are challenging times, but always more challenging and difficult for the disempowered in our society. It is time for us to reach out and do our small part to fix what is broken.

5 MINUTES WITH... HUGH THOMAS co-founder of Ugly Drinks



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

I love brands – especially love brands that connect with people – so hopefully something within that space!

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I worked as a waiter in a fancy hotel – it was stressful with long hours!

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Lots of things inspire me, but I've always loved chefs and restaurants. I think at the high-end chefs combine skills from business, art, taste, theatre and design to genuinely create things that haven't been seen or tasted before.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

Where do I start?! I've done litter picking and worked in a factory that made exhausts for trucks!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

I absolutely love working with our young and energetic team. Watching them grow and develop is incredibly rewarding.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

Being a founder means getting stuck in across the business. I enjoy this,

but sometimes I'd much rather avoid spreadsheets!

TEA OR COFFEE?

Coffee, every time.

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

Ugly Drinks is all about the ugly truth. We're tired of food and drink brands over-promising in their branding and under delivering to consumers. Brands should be transparent.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

A cheese and pickle sandwich.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.

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

I had a still alive squid tentacle in Japan once – it attached itself to my tongue and I ate it!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

One that has inspired our journey is The Obstacle Is The Way by Ryan Holiday.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Savoury.

DIARY DATES

November

10th-12th
BBC GOOD FOOD LONDON
Olympia, London
bbcgoodfoodshowlondon.com

15th-16th
THE EUROPEAN PIZZA & PASTA SHOW
Olympia, London
pizzapastashow.com

21st-23rd
FOOD MATTERS LIVE
Excel, London
foodmatterslive.com

22nd-26th
Eat & Drink Festival
Olympia, London
eatanddrinkfestival.com

22nd-26th
BBC Good Food Winter
NEC, Birmingham
goodfoodshowwinter.com

December

4th-5th
ALLERGY & FREE FROM SHOW NORTH
ECL, Liverpool
allergyshow.co.uk

10th-12th
BBC GOOD FOOD LONDON
Olympia, London
bbcgoodfoodshowlondon.com

January

14th-16th
TOP DRAWER
Olympia, London
topdrawer.co.uk

21st-23rd
SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW
SEC, Glasgow
scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com

specialityfoodmagazine.com

COTSWOLD FAYRE*

New Chilled Product Ranges

Our chilled offering is continually being updated. Visit our website for the very latest products from both new and existing suppliers; The Dip Society, Golfera, Macneil's, Mash Direct, Tideford Organics, Watmuff & Beckett, Jones Pies, Freaks of Nature, Hesper Farm Skyr, Glenilen Farm, Biemel, Tom Parker Creamery and Yorlife Kefir.



Chilled Christmas Range 2017

Fill your fridges with our Chilled Christmas offering; from festive pies to puddings and all the trimmings.



Pre-order now to avoid disappointment.

To view all our chilled products, visit our website:

www.cotswold-fayre.co.uk

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

Award Winning Cheeses

to captivate your customers and boost your sales over the festive season



Waxed Tree Shaped Cheese

Popular individually waxed favourite:
Applewood® Smoky Cheddar.



Half Wheel

A delicious crumbly half wheel of
Wensleydale Cheese with Chocolate & Orange.



Tipplers Crate

Three tasty cheddar cheese truckles each with
a favourite tittle added including port, whisky and beer.



Ilchester Cheese Board

Quality wooden cheese board with five lovely
regional and blended cheeses.

Variant	Item No.	Weight	Case Size
Applewood® Christmas Tree	32104	90g	36
Wensleydale Cheese with Chocolate & Orange	30519	1.5kg	2
Ilchester Cheese Board	32092	436g	12
Tipplers Crate	21914	300g	12

FOR SALES ENQUIRIES, please contact:

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