

# SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS



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## EDITOR'S LETTER



**W**elcome to the January issue of Speciality Food.

I hope that you're reading this having enjoyed a successful festive season – with happy staff and customers, bustling shop floors and ringing tills (plus a good amount of your sanity still intact) – and are now enjoying a very well-earned rest, but I recognise that for many of you, starting the year with a breather may be the last item on your To Do list. After all, there's planning to do for the coming year and lots of exciting new ideas to action; the work of an independent shop owner is never done. But, you ignore the call of relaxation at your peril. It may seem a luxury to leave work at the door or take a spontaneous day off when your reserves are low, but giving yourself the time and space to switch off every now and then works wonders.

Deligate if you can. Some indies even go so far as to close their doors for the first month or two of the year, deciding that the season's lessened footfall makes the expense of staffing and overheads not worth it. Yes, these businesses are missing out on revenue, but imagine how you'd feel after a few weeks of recuperation – refreshed? Full of ideas and eager to put them into practice? Thought so. Of course, it may not be possible for you to take

a considerable amount of time away from the business, but the philosophy still stands: allowing yourself some

time to build up your reserves when needed reaps rewards. Even just leaving your work at the door of an evening will help. I'm not usually one for New Year's resolutions, but I'm certainly going to adopt this restorative approach for 2018.

In this issue, we've done some of the hard work for you: we've collated some of the best products for you to stock this year, from new releases (p. 10) to sparkling wine (p. 36), chocolate (p. 28) and delicious items to pair with cheese (p. 16), and we've shone a light on what's to come in food and drink in the coming months and years thanks to secretary of state, Michael Gove (p. 26) and cheese stars Morgan McGlynn (retail extraordinaire) and Dulcie Crickmore (maker of the renowned Baron Bigod) on page 13.

We also add Scotland's Speciality Food Show (p. 22) and Top Drawer (p. 31) to our list of must-attend events, and delve into the worlds of retail tourism (p. 34), Scottish food and drink (p. 23) and Gruyère (p. 18).

Onwards and upwards.

Holly

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

**HISTORIC DELI GETS FACELIFT**  
Panzer's Deli & Grocery, which has been serving locals and visitors to St John's Wood since 1944, has been refurbished to take its "décor and offerings into its next phase".

The new-look Panzer's now boasts a 1950s Europe-inspired décor with a food offering from more than 80 countries around the world.

It also boasts a new Coffee Bar, serving barista-quality coffee and pastries made in-house, and a Sushi Counter manned by Maido chefs.

David Josephs, owner said, "Panzer's hadn't been touched since 1944, so the store was in desperate need of a renovation to redefine our deli/grocer proposition. With this came new design whilst still keeping a distinct nod to keep its heritage."

### VEGANS FRUSTRATED BY LACK OF 'GRAB AND GO' OPTIONS

A new survey by The Vegan Society found that 91 per cent of vegans struggle to find 'grab and go' options, which prompted the charity to launch its Vegan on the Go campaign.

Food options for vegans have improved over the last few years but the research, which involved 2,500 UK-based vegans, suggests there is still room for improvement.

Elena Orde, communications officer at The Vegan Society said, "Offering vegan food options makes clear commercial sense – businesses are opening the potential market up to not only half a million vegans in Britain, but also to a million more vegetarians and others who enjoy vegan food from time to time."

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**JANUARY**

Kicking off the year with the popping of a cork, the UK Vineyard Association applied for protected geographical indication (PGI) status for the term 'British Fizz', to ensure that only sparkling winemakers with grapes grown in England, Wales or Scotland can use the name on their labels. One event that upset many was Tesco's £3.7bn swoop on wholesaler Booker, with suppliers worried that the group could further squeeze its suppliers on price.

**FEBRUARY**

Floods and storms damaged crops across the Mediterranean causing a major vegetable crisis at British supermarkets, with broccoli and iceberg lettuces the worst affected. On the subject of fruit and vegetables, young shoppers reportedly drove organic food sales to a ten-year high. Sales of organic from independent retailers grew by 6.3 per cent in 2016. "We're seeing consumers choose organic as a shortcut to a healthy lifestyle and this will continue," Clare McDermott of Soil Association Certification told us.

**MARCH**

Theresa May triggered Article 50, officially kick-starting Brexit. This was met with some apprehension among the industry, however many were just happy that there was now a time frame in place. The chancellor Philip Hammond also announced new measures to help small businesses in his Spring Budget. He unveiled that no business losing small business rate relief will see their bill increase in 2018 by more than £50 a month and a £300m fund will be organised for locals councils to offer discretionary relief for businesses hit hardest.

**APRIL**

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association (W TSA) noted that the number of distilleries in the UK had more than doubled since 2010,

# 2017: A Year in Fine Food

## From Brexit decisions to company mergers, a courgette crisis to contaminated eggs, we look back at an eventful year for the food and drink industry

up 135 per cent. This was mainly propelled by consumers' appetite for craft gin, with Miles Beale of W TSA stating, "We have seen how successful and in-demand British gin is to 139 countries around the world, but we believe with the right support the industry can go further to access more markets overseas." Category and regional winners of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2017 were announced, with Keelham Farm Shop scooping the coveted Retailer of the Year accolade.

**MAY**

Norfolk-based Winbirri Vineyard's Bacchus 2015 was named the best white wine in the world, beating off 17,200 other entries, as it won the Platinum Best in Show at the Decanter World Wine Awards 2017. In glummer news, EU butter prices continued to rise due to high global demand for milk fats and short supply.

**JUNE**

A general election resulted in an unexpected hung parliament, with Theresa May subsequently striking a deal with Northern Ireland's the Democratic Unionist Party to remain Prime Minister. This prompted a cabinet reshuffle, with Michael Gove making a political comeback as secretary of state for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. White Lake Cheese's sheep's milk cheese Pavé Cobble was named the overall Supreme Champion of the British Cheese Awards 2017.

**JULY**

The Government announced the release of £200m in grants which they stated will generate more than 6,000 new jobs and support growth of rural businesses. "This funding will make sure businesses in remote locations can get online, help farmers install cutting-edge technology, create new tourist hotspots and bring high quality jobs in rural communities," said Lord Gardiner, rural affairs minister. Roquefort Papillon Revelation, distributed by Bradburys Cheese, was awarded the accolade of Supreme Champion at the International Cheese Awards.

**AUGUST**

Around 700,000 contaminated eggs were said to have made their way to Britain, in a scare that mainly rocked the supermarkets. However,

this wasn't necessarily detrimental to the fine food industry, with many retailers feeling the benefits of consumers wishing to shop local. Robert Copley, owner of Farmer Copley told us, "Food scares, we love them! We see a considerable upturn in footfall and spend immediately."

**SEPTEMBER**

The British Retail Consortium announced that the cost of items like beef, cheese and vegetables could rise by as much as 30 per cent, comparing the impact of inflation after the UK leaves the EU to that of the oil crisis in 2009. Meanwhile, the British Coffee Association vowed to put sustainability at the heart of its strategy as it fights the war on waste created by the industry.

**OCTOBER**

Ethical coffee brand Change Please

was named the Supreme Champion of our inaugural New Producer Awards. Organiser of food, drink and hospitality events, Fresh Montgomery, also announced the acquisition of the Food & Drink Innovation Network.

**NOVEMBER**

Philip Hammond's second budget of the year was largely met with relief, with the Chancellor announcing that the move from the RPI to the CPI will be brought forward by two years to April 2018. Business rates revaluations will now take place every three years rather than five. Also, Spain faced an Iberian ham shortage due to increased demand from China.

**DECEMBER**

The Prime Minister announced that there will be no hard border with Ireland after Brexit. Many in the industry expressed positive responses, with Ian Wright of the Food & Drink Federation stating, "We look forward to seeing the detail of what has been agreed on citizens' rights and on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; both issues of critical concern to food and drink manufacturing."

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## JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



### “The best day of the week”

**W**hat is the best day of the week for speciality food shops? Based on our own sales records for Partridges undoubtedly the best day is Saturday, followed by Sunday and then Friday. However a more interesting question is to ask what is the busiest midday week of the month which includes Mondays to Thursdays only? A straw poll of our shop staff revealed a split between those who thought Wednesdays or Thursdays were busiest. Nobody picked Mondays or Tuesdays. However it is worth looking at each month of the year to see what actually happened.

For January the busiest midweek day of the month was a Monday. Monday 30th January to be precise. This day is frequently described as Blue Monday – the most depressing day of the year based on the weather, levels of debt and time since the Christmas festivities. There is even a formula to support the theory. Perhaps we should celebrate Blue Monday a little more.

For February the busiest day was Valentine's Day, for us one of the most significant days of the year. Not necessarily in terms of footfall but customer awareness and online sales.

Step forward March 16th. I have no reason why this was the case. Perhaps spring was in the air but still sales were sadly 2% down on an average day throughout the year.

April's Maundy Thursday is the last working day before the Easter Holidays and therefore the day when most orders are collected, last-

minute Easter Eggs scooped up and panettone flies off the shelves. This day was 5% above our average day in terms of sales.

In May, Thursday 25th was the busiest day. It was right in the middle of Chelsea Flower Show week which for us is a major local event and we sold lots of bottles of Chelsea Flower Gin. The weather was good and sales were 11% above an average day.

In June the busiest day was Wednesday the 14th. June has claims to be the happiest month of the year according to different theories. However this Wednesday in question was actually 3% lower than the average days' takings.

In July it was Thursday 6th which is close of course to July 14th which is estimated to be the happiest day of the year by the same Professor who thought up the Blue Monday phenomenon. The weather is good, there are lots of uplifting events and celebrations, and this day was 16% above the average days takings.

In August another Thursday, but it actually saw nearly 20% below an average day's takings.

In September it was a Tuesday – the 19th and in October again not a Thursday but another Monday this time 30th October. A day after the return from Half Term but also very close to Halloween which like Valentine's Day is another significant special event day, and this Monday was 4% up on an average day.

Finally in November it was back to a Thursday with 23rd November being 36% up on an average day. This for us is the Big Daddy of special events (excluding Christmas of course).

## Top Drawer set to showcase New Producer Awards winners

**Supporting new emerging talent in the food industry, Top Drawer is proud to be showcasing the winners of the New Producer Awards within the Food Emporium at its S/S18 edition.**

The New Producer Awards was created by Speciality Food magazine, in association with Bread & Jam, to give new producers an opportunity to not only grace the pages of the market-leading magazine in the fine food industry but come face-to-face with some of the biggest names in food and drink today.

Winners of the New Producer Awards include: London-based coffee company Change Please; Tigg's range of naturally colourful condiments; Co-Created, delicious baked products with heart; World

of Zing, attractive and adventurous bottled spirits; Big Drop low alcohol craft beer; Eastgate Larder the brand on a mission to bring the medlar back to the tables of Britain, and Wignalls Yallo Cold Pressed Rapeseed oil.

All winners will be showcased within the Food Emporium at Top Drawer S/S18.

Top Drawer's Food Emporium introduces a mouth-watering array of the finest producers, artisans and brands, presenting visitors with a delectable collection of 'giftable' food products, from oils and condiments

to seasonal treats and confectionery. With over 1,500 expertly curated design-led brands across Home, Gift, Fashion and Craft, Top Drawer provides UK and overseas buyers with the opportunity to discover the latest trends for the new season, source the newest products from never-seen brands and the very best international brands alongside Britain's most loved labels.

Top Drawer will be held on 14th until 16th January 2018 at London Olympia. For more information visit [topdrawer.co.uk](http://topdrawer.co.uk).

“ The Food Emporium introduces a mouthwatering array of the finest producers, artisans and brands ”

## Organic food gets the spotlight at Biofach

**The organic industry is set to present an extensive range of certified products from all over the world at world-leading organic food trade fair, Biofach.**

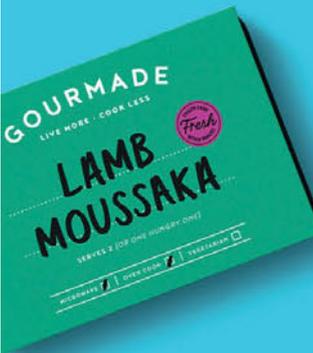
The event, which takes place on 14th until 17th February 2018 at the Exhibition Centre in Nuremberg, Germany, offers trade visitors the opportunity to discover trends, new products and a platform to network with industry professionals.

The focal theme for Biofach 2018 will be 'next generation', where the industry will be discussing which ideas the next generation of the organic industry should use to further develop the organic movement in production and on the market, and how the generational transition can be shaped.

Barbara Böck, public relations manager at NürnbergMesse said, “Buyers from the UK can expect the global variety of organic certified

food, from the UK of course, but also from more than 80 countries around the globe! In addition to current trends, Biofach will be offering an insight into the next generation of the organic industry. Biofach offers a broad range of networking opportunities such as guided tours as well as a special matchmaking event.”





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## CHARLES CAMPION



### “Happy New Year?”

**W**hat did you get for Christmas? As we rely more and more on the magic of the internet the processes involved in buying and selling get faster and faster. The first mince pies hit the supermarket shelves in mid-August last year and they will cling on into the start of the New Year. If there is no legitimate festival to make a fuss about, the marketers will make one up. Just before Christmas we were told that there were stellar bargains to be had on Black Friday. The nine day “Black” shopfest came hard on the heels of another import from America – dressing up to trick or treat for Halloween. Then, as with the January sales, which now crop up anywhere between November the 5th and the New Year, the received wisdom is that a spoonful of spurious feeding frenzy will keep the tills ringing. But hang on a minute, whether or not it is top of mind even the most ardent customers have a budget. The amount of money in the retail system is finite and shopkeepers cannot take money from customers if they have already spent it the week previously. Many retailers find themselves in January with customers nursing a maxed-out credit card and no real excuse to push things forward. It doesn't help that January can be gloomy, and when you have seen off the New Year's revels there isn't much to look forward to, unless you like haggis, whisky and tartan – Burns Night falls on January 25th.

It is no coincidence that a good many Restaurants set aside January for maintenance and refurb. Take the money on New Year's Eve then

close until Valentine's Day without missing much. The statistical boffins were alarmed when 2017 saw food prices rise and they developed all kinds of complicated explanations, but whatever the reason prices rarely slip down as smoothly as they go up. As we go into 2018 we must face the effects of 2017's 70% rise in the wholesale price of butter. As any classical chef will tell you that butter is king and the current shortage (some attribute the price rise to a growing demand for croissants and pastries in China) will have to be faced. It's a case of what can't be cured must be endured and the French are particularly hard hit with some empty shelves in the run up to Christmas. For shopkeepers of all sizes the target for the year must be to smooth out the peaks and troughs in the sales figures, it's no good relying on artificial stimulus such as the Black Friday, the customers must be helped through uncharted waters. It would be nice to think that the old adage “eat less but eat better” will come to the fore and that both retailers and customers will start to put more emphasis on quality.

Looking back on 2017 it's hard not to nominate an outstanding candidate for Politician of the year – Graziano Delrio, Italy's Transport Minister. In the autumn Mr Delrio was supposed to join his parliamentary colleagues on a symbolic hunger strike. But when he noticed that the dates clashed with the Alba truffle fair he put off the hunger strike. He sounds like the kind of chap who has his priorities right... I wonder if he could be seconded to the Brexit team?

# WTCE returns with expanded floor space and improved networking focus

**The World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo (WTCE) returns to Hamburg from 10th until 12th April 2018, spanning across four halls with more than 350 suppliers showcasing the latest products and services for the travel catering, passenger comfort and travel retail industries.**

The free-to-attend event attracts more than 3,700 onboard industry professionals who journey to Hamburg for the unrivalled insights and networking opportunities it presents. A wide range of new businesses are confirmed to exhibit at the event, the seventh edition of WTCE, with Avantgarde Spirits Company, BitesWeLove, Bridgehead Foods and Dlecta Foods joining the line-up.

2018 will not only see WTCE

span a larger floor space than ever before, but introduce new and improved networking facilities to ensure that attendees can easily initiate business discussions and maximise their time spent at the event. New features include a Business Meeting Hub, VIP Buyers Lounge, a My Event itinerary tool, New Exhibitor Villages and What's New Onboard showcase.

Following on from a successful launch in 2017, the Focus on World Travel Retail will also return. This dedicated showcase for the onboard travel retail industry will unveil the products and services available for in-flight purchases from exhibitors including Butlers Chocolates, Caffe di Artisan and St. Patrick's Distillery.

The Taste of Travel Theatre will also return to lead the debate at WTCE 2018 with

more presentations, live chef demonstrations and new product launches to inspire visitors.

Archana Sharma, exhibition director said, “Attendees at WTCE 2018 can find a wide range of exhibitors who will showcase the very best in artisanal and fine food products. Already confirmed for 2018, visitors will see handcrafted fresh pasta from Sabatelli Gastronomia using fresh ingredients from Puglia in Southern Italy; traditional Florentian chocolate cake from TortaPistocchi Firenze; a range of infused olive oils from Monte Vibiano including balsamic vinegar, chili, truffle, basil and oregano; and traditional cheeses from Brazzale – an Italian family business that has specialised in the dairy and cheese-making industry since the 18th century.”

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# Sparkling sales for premium mixers continue

**New figures from Kantar Worldpanel suggest take-home sales of tonic waters continued their impressive trajectory in 2017. Total year-on-year spend was up nearly 35 per cent (though volume rose a more modest 13 per cent), according to stats released for the 52 weeks up to November.**

For many it's more evidence that the category can continue to excel in 2018. "Gin and tonic have boomed together, and at the moment people seem very keen to try anything that's new," said Emile Ward, director of e-tailer Gin Kiosk. As one of the few selling tonic bottles individually online, Emile is benefitting from consumers' thirst for innovation. "New gin and tonic brands are launching all the time; we're seeing the category increase," he remarks. "It's not going anywhere; sales might

plateau or fade but many parts of the UK are playing catch up with cities like London and at-home consumption is growing."

Spearheading the trend for premiumisation in mixers is British manufacturer Fever-Tree. The company's share price, which spiked in November, has risen around 1,400% in the three years since it floated. Co-founder and chief executive Tim Warrilow thanks his brand's dominance of the UK market for the impressive figures, giving the Telegraph his own growth figures of 20 per cent for the category, 97 per cent of which he says were sales of Fever-Tree tonics.

But not everyone believes the

gin and tonic category can support its rapid growth. "The bubble's not bursting yet but I think it's pretty much at a tipping point," suggests Peter Fawcett, owner of York delicum-wine-merchant Field and Fawcett. Despite already stocking 200 gins Peter is hounded by start-ups keen to get their product on his shelves. "In 30-plus years in the wine trade I've never known a trend go as fast as gin has. It's just ridiculous."

Whilst dubious about the longevity of emerging gin brands ("I think a lot of them are marketing exercises dreamed up by admen") Peter admits that his business is benefitting from the G&T effect. "It's drawn in a much wider audience that is coming principally for the gin but then stays to see what else we're doing with our wines and as a deli," he said. "It's a completely different customer, so that's great. I'm not complaining at all. [The gin trend] is gimmicky but it's definitely driving sales." The industry will be watching closely for the next twist in premium tonic's rollercoaster ride.

“ The G&T effect is drawing in a wider audience and different customer to our deli ”

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## “Steps to being a sustainable retailer”

The New Year is a time when a lot of us are thinking about how to improve, often with a look at opportunities for how to be more environmentally friendly. With employees increasingly interested in what their businesses are doing to engage in a sustainable future and customers looking for products with a minimal ecological impact, practical information can help to develop the environmental policies of thousands of businesses across Britain.

What's good for the planet is also good for business – 61% of British people say they are more likely to shop with a brand based on good ethics and 45% of employees feel their business is not green or don't know anything about their business' green credentials, but do feel that their employer should have more green policies. Many independent retailers and health food shops are already well on the way to including sustainability as part of their business operating processes, but sometimes it's hard to know where to start and what easy first steps we can all take.

Food is one of the first places we can all make a significant impact. Stocking more organic products is a great step for being an eco-friendly business. For example, if everyone who currently buys carrots switched to organic, an extra 17,500 football pitches worth of land would provide a haven for wildlife, as there are around 30% more species living on farms used to produce organic carrots when compared to their conventional counterparts. Organic yoghurt also delivers a great eco-friendly food opportunity, as it ensures that no

manufactured or artificial fertilisers, herbicides or GM feed have been used on the farms which produced the milk, contributing to healthier ecosystems.

In addition to the products you stock, there are plenty of other ways to decrease your business's environmental footprint. Soil Association Certification have partnered with Ecotricity this year to help businesses learn more about sustainability and offer practical steps to become more eco-friendly. Together, we've produced a guide filled with practical tips and suggestions on how to improve your sustainability, including transport, energy, food and nature. Some easy things retailers can do include:

- Have a water filter available to staff and customers to eliminate plastic bottles
- Give teams the opportunity to address food waste in the workplace with compost and recycling bins
- Have a staff training session on ways to commute to work, encouraging walking or cycling and exploring strategies to reduce travel emissions (and save time!)
- Switch to a green energy supplier and remember to turn off all appliances when not in use, not just leave on standby
- Switch to LED lighting – just one LED lightbulb can save £7 a year

To download the complete guide and for even more on sustainability, going organic and free resources for your business, visit [soilassociation.org/independentretail](http://soilassociation.org/independentretail).

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# Is Twitter's expanded character limit a boon for retailers?

**When Twitter announced the introduction of a new 280-character format in November last year, opinion was split on how this extra capacity would benefit users. Analysts at the global tech company suggested few Tweeters would use up their new allowance; commentators bemoaned the end of the platform's raison d'être. A few months on the change may have been broadly vindicated – US research suggests tweets over 140 characters are more likely to be liked and retweeted – but has it worked for the food and drink industry?**

"We've been impressed with the increase to 280 characters, especially as that also now excludes links," said Kate Howell, director of

communications and development at London's Borough Market. "Our social media is all about getting across the stories behind our traders and produce, as well as being a voice for sustainability, seasonality and provenance. It was always a bit of a challenge being able to do that in 140 characters."

Kate and her team treat the market's 68,300 Twitter followers to regular updates about its activities; retweets of customer and trader posts – all revelling in the market's niche produce – draw in a wider audience and make for easy content. "As well as celebrating the produce and skills of our traders at the Market, we also run a number of seasonal events throughout the year, pop-ups, cooking demos, food debates, and even brew our own

beer," continues Kate. "Being able to give our followers a bit more background, context and colour to all of these has been beneficial."

And it's not just metropolitan businesses that are winning on social media. Broadway Deli in the Cotswolds is an active user, posting at least twice daily. "We use Twitter and Instagram, and they serve us much better than any advertising would," said proprietor Louise Hunt. So have the extra characters made her job easier? "Not especially," says Louise. "We focus on the pictures, which is why Instagram is our preferred site. With Twitter, though, you can be very responsive. You can get instant feedback, and using hashtags you can reach a much broader audience so you're actually able to widen the target."

There are those who feel Twitter isn't the place to tell the stories behind products. "Personally I'm not keen on 280 characters," says Annie Wray of Food Marketing Expert. "Attention spans are limited in a crowded platform. Also, less is more with a great product, and imagery is still king. My advice? Always keep key points short." So does Annie feel words are being left behind in an increasingly visual medium? "I wouldn't say text is less relevant, but it needs to be more apt to work," she offers. "It's about catching the mood both in posting and replying, because engagement is vital – no-one wants to feel they are shouting into a headwind! Good visuals really matter for attention grabbing, and text for engagement – with the right triggers for the right response. As a communicator I think Twitter does have a value; we know for every 'follower' there are probably three times more 'watchers' so the reach is indeterminable really. You can't force people to respond, but you can

capture their attention, and even their imagination."

Whatever benefits longer tweets might bring your followers, for businesses the longer-form format means agonising (and time-consuming) edits are largely a thing of the past. And awkward customer service communications? "Facebook is the friendly platform and, especially for small artisan businesses, works well. So does Instagram, which is a feast for the eyes. Twitter is a bit of both, and possibly more likely to attract negative commenters, but sometimes that's good! Any brand should be able to hold their own if they believe in their product." Because handling a tricky complaint on a public forum? Those extra characters may just become an invaluable asset.

**Does your shop find social media beneficial? Let us know your thoughts by emailing james.fell@aceville.co.uk or tweeting us @SpecialityFood**

## "Some businesses might not have been given the full picture"

**Think Lewis Hamilton's got tax problems? Short-sighted advice has been rife and it's SMEs, not celebs, who could carry the can, says Huw Sheppard, director of Silver Mountain Accountancy**

"Anyone who runs a business will understand the need to minimise tax expenditure. After all, there are plenty of legitimate tax incentives and planning opportunities by which you might reduce the taxman's take. But you might have been shocked by the kind of aggressive avoidance that has recently made headlines. Negative publicity for those involved has followed, and rightly so, but ultimately it's not the inhabitants of Monaco who should be sweating.

As any realist knows, the kind of avoidance tricks revealed in the Paradise Papers – the ones with household names attached – have long existed. What is less widely understood is that in the last decade a lot of 'schemes' have sprung up to mass market the idea to SMEs.

Often these arrangements are sold as legitimate tax avoidance, something that 'everyone's doing'. On these terms you might feel 'getting clever' with your accounting makes financial sense, but some businesses might not have been given the full picture. In fact the schemes are usually 'opinion based' – seeking to take advantage of perceived loop-holes in complicated areas of legislation – and HMRC will inevitably offer a strong challenge to their legitimacy.

The big shake-up will come when these artificial, poorly-advised, mass-marketed schemes begin to move through HMRC's legal challenges. A main selling point to the schemes is the availability of a 'fighting fund' to counter HMRC but what happens if the scheme provider is no longer around at this point? Many SMEs will also be unaware that a win by HMRC means backdated taxes, interest, and penalties. Worrying indeed when combining this with the

pressures of running a business. SMEs that have already paid considerable non-refundable fees to enter these schemes could find them, in the long run, an extremely costly strategy!

Reputable accountants would never dream of exposing their clients without full and frank discussions of all the risks and disclosure of introductory commissions they will be receiving. But there are – as we know from the shamefaced statements of celebrities – less scrupulous advisors who have been happy to tell their trusting clients 'We know how you can pay less money'. In reality these headline-grabbing schemes are just the tip of the iceberg. It's those sold on a much wider basis to smaller players that I believe have been the bigger issue, and SME stake-holders will be the ones to get held to account by HMRC. The reality is there is no substitute for honest, proper advice. Those risk-free silver bullets to save tax simply don't exist."

### REMINDER

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# THE BREXIT EFFECT

Food and drink with protected status could be at risk, say legal experts Withers LLP

**A**mongst the great number of issues that Brexit is raising, attention has been recently drawn towards the protection of geographical indications. The European Commission Task Force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article

50 issued a position paper on 6th September, in which it discussed intellectual property rights, including geographical indications.

The withdrawal of the United Kingdom will create uncertainty both for British and for other EU food products, which are currently protected by EU Regulation

No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ("Regulation"). Such regulation provides for three schemes known as Protected Designation of Origin ("PDO"), Protected Geographical Indication ("PGI") and Traditional Specialities Guaranteed ("TSG") in order to help consumers to identify the origin of products and recognize their authenticity.

The United Kingdom's lack of domestic legislation on such matters will create a legal vacuum, which would need to be filled as soon as possible. First of all, British products registered with the PDO, PGI and TSG schemes will not have the right to use the relevant European labels, which currently ensure their authenticity.

By ignoring this issue, not only would Britain not offer protection to its own original products – such as Stilton cheese and Cornish pasties – but it would not protect food products imported by other European Countries. This could deeply affect the import-export relationship with other European

Countries, which provide for a large amount of food products consumed in the UK (according to the Food and Drink Federation, 27% of food consumed in the UK in 2014 was imported from the European Union).

Lack of regulation might indeed increase counterfeiting of goods that are protected under European law or commercialisation of products that imitate protected foodstuffs, using names and symbols that recall specific geographical traditions. This is a very damaging phenomenon for countries that have strong traditional food products. With particular reference to Italy, this phenomenon is called "Italian sounding" and – according to a report by Assocamerestero – is worth over 54 billion Euros. This clearly shows that Italian-sounding products are a real threat to original and genuine Made in Italy brands. While at the moment this is mainly a problem affecting the extra-European markets (e.g. the wide spread of "parmesan" cheese in the United States), if the United Kingdom decides not to adopt systems of protection equivalent to those in Europe, Italian producers will certainly fear for Italian sounding products affecting the British market too.

A possible solution would be for the United Kingdom to enact specific domestic legislation, following the example of countries with a long agricultural history and a wide variety of food products, such as Italy and France. Italy, in particular, has comprehensive domestic legislation – other than the European provisions – and extensive case law protecting geographical indications.

In fact, the Italian Code of Intellectual Property (D. lgs. 10 February 2005, no. 30) provides for protection of denominations of

Withers' Milan IP team



IDA PALOMBELLA,  
SPECIAL COUNSEL



VALENTINA FAVERO,  
ASSOCIATE

origin and geographical indications, pursuant to Articles 29 and 30. According to consistent case law, the use of counterfeit geographical indications represents an unfair trade practice and is treated as unfair competition. Also, the sale of products with fake trademarks or geographical indications is prosecuted pursuant to art. 517 of Italian Criminal Code.

In general, over the years, European and domestic legislation has enhanced the protection of geographical indications pursuant to those principles that govern trademark law. As suggested by the European Commission Task Force, it would be advisable that the United Kingdom issue the necessary domestic legislation in order to apply the same protection to food products that is ensured by European legislation, bearing in mind that any misuse of geographical indications should be avoided, since it might mislead consumers and affect fair competition between producers.

“ British products registered with the PDO, PGI and TSG schemes will not have the right to use the relevant European labels which currently ensure their authenticity ”

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Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

## The Bay Tree unveils Slow Cook Sauces

Condiment producer The Bay Tree has developed a range of Slow Cook Sauces to ensure home cooks can deliver scratch-cooked meals without the fuss.

The 350g ambient pouches come in four flavours: Hearty Beef Bourguignon, Zesty Orange Casserole, Classic Minted Hotpot, Rustic Cider and Apple Stew and Comforting Cacciatore.

Emma Macdonald, founder of The Bay Tree said, "Convenience is such a huge driving force in the food sector at the moment. However much we like to watch people creating or posting online about their amazing meals, there is often little time to replicate this at home for our families.

"Realistically, we all need a fall-back option from time to time. I firmly believe that this doesn't mean having to rely on popping a pizza in the oven. I hope that the Slow Cook Sauces encourage people to indulge in truly hearty, nourishing food. That's the aim of the range - to take things slow and squeeze out a little more enjoyment from our meals."

[thebaytree.co.uk](http://thebaytree.co.uk)



## Touch of gold for Burren Balsamics

Northern Ireland's Burren Balsamics has added a new gold addition to its range of Italian-influenced white balsamic oils.

The Gold Leaf vinegar features 24-carat gold leaf in a classic 200ml bottle and is available in an exclusive gift box containing LED lighting at RRP £20.

Susie Hamilton Stubber, founder and managing director of Burren Balsamics said, "I wanted to do something really different for the festive season - a delicious product with a bit of sparkle. It's a great way to bring colour to festive dishes."

The company's white vinegar range was introduced last year and features Original, Blood Orange & Cardamom, Wild Garlic and Tarragon.

[burrenbalsamics.com](http://burrenbalsamics.com)

## All-natural low-calorie spritz enters premium drinks market

Kold Group has announced the launch of Kalosa Natural Spritz, a light and refreshing alcoholic drink with only 99 calories per bottle.

The range was developed with the intention of creating a ready-to-drink alternative to wine, fruit cider, spirit and mixers and a product that will appeal to the modern drinker.

The flavours are Elderflower & Gin and Pink Grapefruit & Vodka, which are both 4% ABV. The drinks are premium pure-distilled spirits and feature no artificial sweeteners, flavourings or preservatives.

Nick Sotiropoulos, founder of Kold Group said, "We saw a gap in the market for a premium all-natural spritz, one that still delivers on flavour but you don't feel guilty about afterwards. So many of today's ready-to-serve drinks are laden with unnecessary amounts of sugar, calories and artificial ingredients. Kalosa Natural Spritz is a breath of fresh air: light, refreshing and delicious in every sip."

The carbonated drink is packaged in single serve 275ml bottles and designed to be consumed either straight from the bottle or poured over ice.

[kalospritz.com](http://kalospritz.com)



## Kallø launches new Protein-Packed Lentil Cakes

Natural food brand Kallø has launched the UK's first lentil-based rice and corn cake to help retailers fulfil the rising consumer demand for protein-rich snacks.

The Rice & Corn Cakes contain lentils, chick peas, sprouting peas, rice and corn; ingredients that are all naturally high in protein.

The launch comes as the popularity for protein continues to rise - Brits are eating an average of 25.1kg of protein at home in a year, states the brand.

The flavoursome rice cakes, sold in a jumbo roll format, offer a low-calorie snack to fill the gap between meal times.

Each one contains slow-release energy to help consumers feel fuller for longer and has only 30 calories per cake. Gluten and wheat-free, the vegetarian and vegan-friendly lentil cakes offer a healthy option for those with specific dietary requirements.

Hayley Murgett, Kallø Brand Controller at Wessanen UK said, "Consumers are increasingly making purchasing decisions based on health needs and are looking for snacks that have a higher nutritional value.

"We're proud of this latest addition to our healthy snack portfolio that offers the perfect solution to support consumer needs. Whereas some brands will add protein through artificial means, we're committed to using only natural processes and ingredients to bring something fresh and new to the snack aisle.

"We are continuing to innovate in the snack category and will continue to bolster our portfolio with more exciting new product launches in 2018".

[kallo.com](http://kallo.com)



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## Redesign and new product for Thai Taste



**Thai Taste has updated its visual identity and packaging design to reinforce its Thai authenticity and reflect a new positioning of “bringing restaurant-quality to UK shoppers’ kitchens”.**

The brand’s redesign features a new logo, which shows the head of

an elephant – the official animal of Thailand – as well as a colour change from yellow gold to vibrant pink.

The Thai Taste range comprises over 50 products, ranging from specialist ingredients such as Pea Aubergines and Kaffir Lime Leaves, to storecupboard staples, rice noodles, coconut milk, dipping sauces and meal kits.

The newest addition to the range is an Easy Thai Yellow Curry. A fragrant southern Thailand favourite, Gang Garee yellow curry is made in Thailand using an authentic recipe and fresh local ingredients, including turmeric, cardamom, ginger, lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime and star anise.

The pack contains the three key components of a Thai yellow curry: yellow curry paste, coconut milk and Thai spices. The ingredients are all

portion controlled and individually wrapped, with the dish going from pouch to plate in 15 minutes with step-by-step instructions available and a recipe provided on back of pack.

Jodie Cavaye, marketing manager at Empire Bespoke Foods, the distributor behind Thai Taste, said, “The new design was shared with both new and existing shoppers at each stage of the design process for feedback on its appeal. We wanted to retain all the vibrance and authenticity of Thai culture, while stripping back from too much detail to reflect the health credentials and allow key messages to resonate.

“Meal kits are the ultimate ‘meal for tonight’ solution – they’re great for add-on sales at the meat counter or for inspiration when merchandised next to seasonal vegetables. The kits are also a fantastic storecupboard staple, so make sure customers know to take one for their evening meal and one for future use with Sunday roast leftovers.”

[thaitaste.co.uk](http://thaitaste.co.uk)



## Tastesmiths launches authentic Tikka Masala kit

**Home cooking curry kits producer Tastesmiths has introduced a new option to address the demand for an authentic Tikka Masala for food fans seeking natural ingredients and full flavour.**

As with the rest of the range, the Tikka Masala kit is designed to make it simple to enjoy a restaurant-grade curry at home with specially-selected ingredients including fresh chillies, whole spices and freshly ground spices.

The kit includes the essential ingredients needed to serve two to three people, along with flexible step-by-step cooking instructions.

Becky Hancock, marketing

manager at Tastesmiths said, “We’ve long been asked by our customers to apply our philosophy for fresh kits to a Tikka Masala, so we are delighted with this new addition to our existing range of seven kits. We seek to provide an alternative to the many ready made sauces laden with preservatives and additives which detract from the true taste that only a fresh curry will give due to the depth in flavour from our in-house spice formulations.”

During February Tastesmiths will be participating in Speciality Food’s online Taste Direct, giving trade customers the opportunity to sample the kits.

[tastesmiths.com](http://tastesmiths.com)

## Tideford Organic extends range of soups and miso pastes

**Soup producer Tideford Organic has added three new soups and three new miso pastes to its award-winning range.**

The new soups are Sweet Potato Quinoa, Tomato & Basil Soup with Red Peppers & Miso and Red Pepper, Coriander, Lime & Coconut.

The miso flavours are 3 Year Aged Miso, Saikyo Sweet Miso and Fresh Haccho Miso. The new options come off the back of Tideford launching the UK’s first range of organic, unpasteurised miso pastes last year.

Lynette Sinclair, managing director of Tideford Organic said, “Tideford’s miso pastes are sourced in the Nagano region at the base of the Central Alps in Japan, an area renowned for making some of the highest quality miso in the world. They are packed full of incredible health benefits; as well as being an excellent source of protein and antioxidants, miso is known to lower cholesterol and blood pressure,

support digestion and strengthen the immune system.”

The soups were developed with the intention of expanding the range of organic, vegan and gluten-free food. Lynette continued, “These soups use the finest ingredients and represent classic flavours with a modern twist. Ethically, they have excellent credentials, all being organic, vegan and gluten-free with no added sugar, plus our Sweet Potato & Quinoa Soup uses organic British-grown quinoa rather

importing from abroad. These recipes also offer an opportunity to attract new customers, from people looking to complement an active lifestyle with a high protein plant-based soup to IBS sufferers looking for a convenient FODMAP-friendly offering.”

[tidefordorganics.com](http://tidefordorganics.com)



## New smaller pots for ManiLife’s peanut butters

**Peanut butter specialist ManiLife has revealed that it will be housing its range in smaller 30g pod packaging, alongside its standard-sized jars.**

Stuart Macdonald, founder of ManiLife said, “The first run of 9,000 was literally filled using piping bags with the help of about 16 friends – I’m ridiculously grateful to all that helped.”

With a packaging partnership now in place, the company hopes to expand sales of its mini-pots in 2018.

Stuart continued, “Our biggest challenge has always been to get people to have that first time; from there most become lifelong fans. These wee pots are going to make that a lot easier.”

[mani-life.com](http://mani-life.com)



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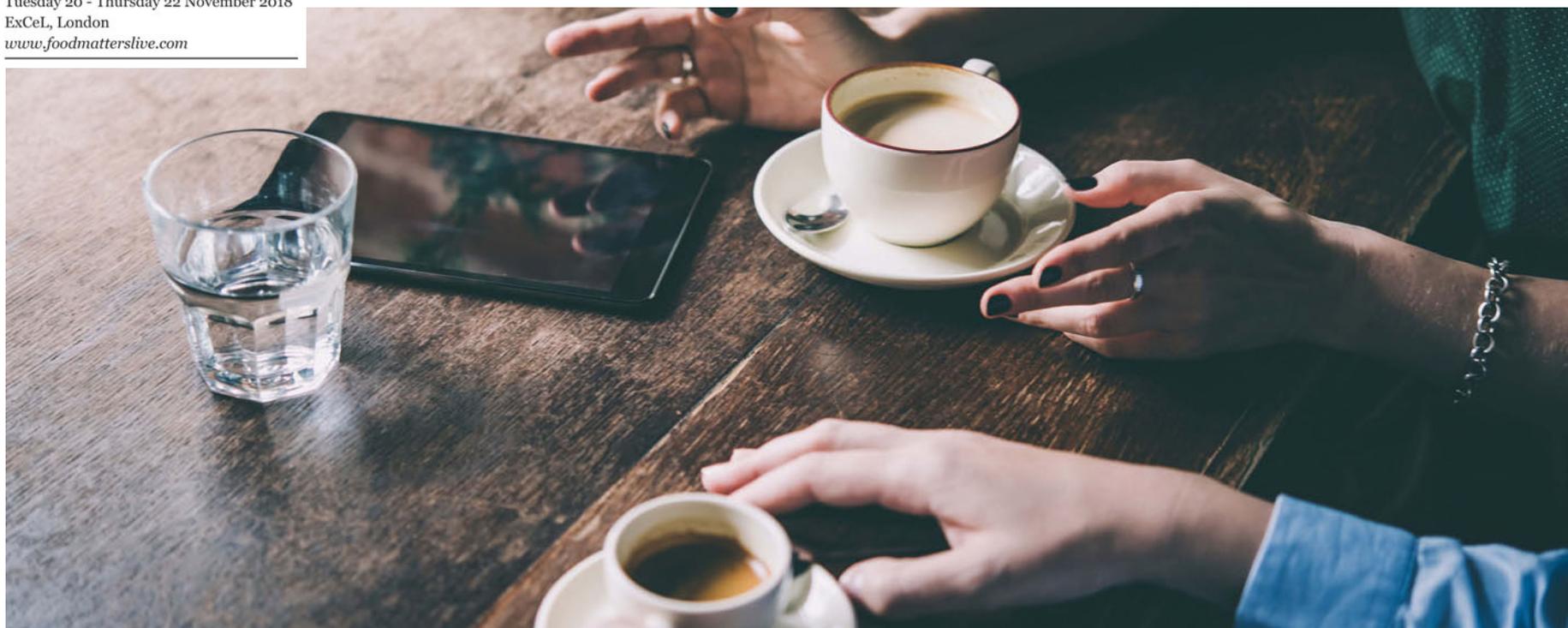
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It's often said that spotting your product on the shelf of a retail outlet is one of the most rewarding elements of running a food and drink venture. It is the tangible result of all of your blood, sweat and tears finally being realised. Once your product makes it to the coveted shelf of a shop, you can hash out plans of extending its presence in other stores, maximising brand visibility, customer awareness and of course, increasing turnover.

You will obviously receive knock-backs on the road to success – in what walk of life do you not? – but clinching that first listing with a buyer will instil confidence and ensure that you're better equipped for your next pitch. The following checklist will help you to be thoroughly prepped and ready to knock the socks off the buyer you're set to meet.

### Securing that meeting

Always ensure that you can meet face-to-face. An exchange via email or LinkedIn won't cut the mustard – you need to get your buyer to be your next biggest fan, and the only way to do this is to get them to properly experience your product and absorb your passion in person. Don't be dissuaded by a knock-back or two – this line of business isn't for the faint hearted and there is no room for pessimists. On the flip side,

## Pitching a product to a food buyer is one of the most exciting stages of running a business. We take a look at the best ways to nail this game-changing event

don't hound your contact. A buyer is likely to be inundated by requests constantly, and their shelf space is at a premium. Don't burn any bridges with influential buyers because you've berated them night and day to respond to your calls or emails.

### Know your product inside-out

Chances are that if you're running a start-up, you don't have a team of experienced sales staff to do your selling for you. But don't worry, the product is your brainchild so you should be able to espouse the virtues of your creation in your sleep. Make sure you can clearly and concisely convey its USP, that you have identified any potential competitors, that you've noted a gap in the market, its commercial viability, the cost price, that you can reel off the list of every single intricate ingredient it

features, why you believe the product will perform well in their store and why people who have tasted it won't stop singing its praises. Arming yourself with social media and website analytics can work to your advantage as well, but make sure you don't get bogged down in this – remember, everyone knows that you can just pay for followers on social media these days.

### Build rapport

Developing a relationship with the buyer you meet can pay dividends. Chances are, if you've struck up a conversation with them and have bonded on a personal level your brand will stick in their memory. A sense that you could work well together could clinch the deal if the buyer was initially on the fence about your brand. Also, a quick research trip to the store they look after and making some notes of brands they stock can

go down well. Kick things off with a compliment concerning their latest lines – everyone likes it when their hard work has been recognised.

### Ironing out the deal

You've briefed them on your company and its story, wowed them with the quality of your product, enlightened them on the positive feedback you've already received, and they're bowled over by your top-notch pitch. Up next is the final hurdle and the most important part of the process: talking money. If your brand is truly innovative and different from anything else out there, and they've made it clear they're a fan, this will obviously give you some serious firing power. Don't expect to finalise plans there and then. Once you've discussed numbers feel free to make plans to reconvene once you've both spent some time to do the maths – you don't want to commit to something that isn't sustainable.

“A sense that you could work well together could clinch the deal if the buyer was initially on the fence about your brand”

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

● **Don't put all of your eggs in one basket:** An exclusive listing with a big retailer may sound flash, but depending on one retailer for your revenue can prove risky. You want the added insurance that should they drop your product, it's still stocked in other outlets

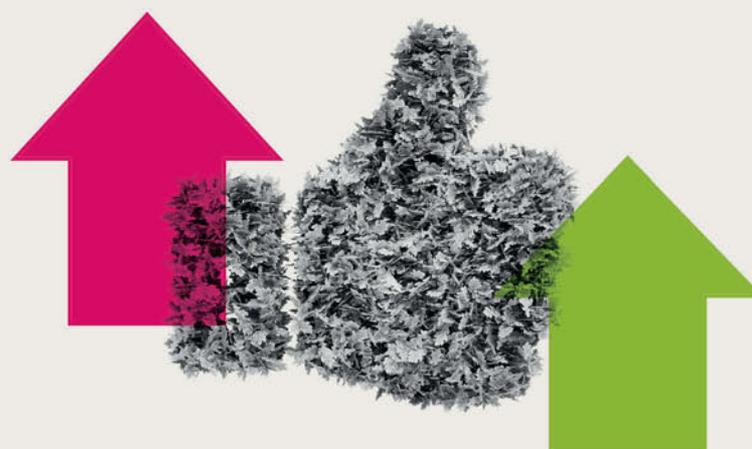
● **Network and research:** The food and drink founders community is a friendly place, with events like the Bread & Jam festival in London proving a popular platform to meet other entrepreneurs to discuss the trials and joys of running a business. Don't be scared to ask your peers about how they aced a meeting with a buyer and whether they have any tips they're willing to share

● **Show you mean business:** Make sure that you have researched all of the food safety documents required and you have them to hand during your meeting – you don't want something so minute and easy to avoid to scupper your chances. Also, have clear product launch times and details on NPD – this can go a long way in terms of them perceiving you as the complete package

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## DULCIE CRICKMORE OF FEN FARM DAIRY



### “A very British revolution”

**W**hen we were first approached by Speciality Food to write a piece about our cheese, Baron Bigod, being a “Modern British Classic”, I was taken aback. Thinking about it, I felt more than a little fraudulent. I mean, our recipe is French, our cows are French... even Roger de Bigod, the namesake of our cheese, arrived here from France with William the Conqueror. “I don’t think I can write it!” I told Jonny. “I’m not sure that we qualify!” On further reflection though, I realised that perhaps we are beginning to qualify, in a quiet sort of way. This year has swallowed us up in a cyclone of to-do-lists. The non-stop juggling act of learning to make one of the most difficult cheeses in existence (we know now why nobody else in the UK makes a raw milk Brie...they all have more good sense than us), and

navigating the fragile early years of a new business and growing a young family, have left little time for reflection. On stepping back to write this column however, I realised that while we have been heads-into-the-wind, The Baron (as we affectionately call it) has been leading a small and very British revolution. It has quietly booted the french Brie-de-Meaux off the counters at Neals Yard Dairy. It has snuck onto the in-flight platters of the well-heeled on the British Airways First Class menu. It has shimmied onto cheeseboards in the VIP areas of Royal Ascott, Wimbledon and Silverstone. It has bagged itself several prestigious awards and earned us an invitation to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. The Prince of Wales, no less, says he “likes it best when it oozes.”

All of this is very exciting, when I step back and think about it. But

the problem for us has not been in obtaining publicity or selling our cheese, but rather in learning how to be business people. How to recruit and manage a team. How to grow a business from nothing to “I think this has legs” within a handful of years, with no experience, with a young family in the balance, whilst maintaining some semblance of sanity. And this is what I really want to talk about, because I know we are not alone in this juggling act.

Many of our long standing (and thankfully all-forgiving) customers will remember us as we started out. It was just me and Jonny running the cheese business, plus Jonny’s parents and a couple of hardcore loyal employees on the farm. We had blithely borrowed a quarter of a million pounds to build a state of the art cheesemaking building, but we were clueless and inexperienced. The cheese was crazy and unpredictable, the office HQ was our kitchen table, and anyone who dared to phone was likely to hear the refrain “Mummy, my done a pool!” In the background. We did have a few things on our side though. A few die hard loyal customers, blind optimism, and the font of support that is Neals Yard Dairy. Those guys have let us camp out in their warehouse almost every month for four years,

force feeding them our (sometimes terrible) samples of cheese and eagerly hanging on their every piece of feedback. Having people who believed in us gave us the confidence to keep going, but we effectively now had two businesses; the dairy farm and the cheese. Jonny would be up at 3:30am to milk the cows, make the cheese and keep the whole operation afloat. I was on the phone, on the computer, with the kids. Then come the evening, we would take one laptop each on the sofa, split the emails in half and work silently side by side until 11pm. Sleep and repeat.

It was at this point in 2014 that we approached business coach Stephen Unwin, who helped us to get the business in shape. Employ some fantastic people. Dare to let somebody else take some of the work. Now in our 4th year, with a new, larger production facility on the horizon and a great team coming together around us, it is beginning to feel like a “real” business, with a plan. The most important part though, is that at the heart of it all, there is a herd of happy, well cared for cows. If we have learned one thing over the years (apart from not mixing kids and phones) it is that happy, healthy cows + home grown feed = great milk = sublime cheese.

“ The problem for us has not been in obtaining publicity or selling our cheese, but rather in learning how to be business people ”

## MORGAN McGLYNN OF CHEESES OF MUSWELL HILL



### “A modern approach to cheese-selling”

**F**or the last 10 years my life has been consumed by cheese, in the best possible way. At the age of 21 I bought a small cheese shop. Working in the shop has cemented my love of all things cheese, and since then I have come across hundreds of cheeses on my travels; in the shop we now have over 250 different kinds of cheeses, all tasted and hand-picked by myself.

Over the last couple of years the cheese industry in Britain has changed a great deal. The UK now makes more than 800 types of cheese, with a new wave of artisan producers, urban cheesemakers and small micro dairies popping up all over the place.

My customers have changed dramatically too. It is not only

the older generation treating themselves to good cheese, younger generations are fascinated by anything cheesy, too – which has resulted in us gaining a huge fan base across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Interest in British cheese has snowballed to the point that newspapers and TV shows regularly run cheese articles; I do a slot on Sunday Brunch on Channel 4 and TimeOut London Online talking all about new and exciting cheeses in the UK.

The British cheese industry is so strong at the moment and we are producing some outstanding cheeses. Also, British cheese exports have reached an all-time high – we have seen overseas demand grow rapidly in recent years and are getting regular requests to export cheese to Spain,

Hong Kong and the US.

Following the success of the shop, and after working on the retail side for 10 years, I have now started a cheese wholesale business.

With the wholesale business I was not looking to sell huge quantities of block Cheddar, I wanted to sell a range of cheeses hand-selected by me personally, concentrating on smaller, less known cheesemakers in the UK.

One example of my exclusive Urban cheese range is Mario Olianias, who originally comes from Italy. He makes Yorkshire Pecorino, a full fat sheep’s milk cheese, using his traditional family recipe. Yorkshire Pecorino has been picking up awards all over the UK, including a Super Gold at last month’s World Cheese Awards.

The most fantastic thing about Mario is that he started producing cheese as a hobby and has now gone on to convert the

spare room in his family home in Leeds for the sole purpose of making cheese. Alongside the Yorkshire Pecorino is the Leeds Blue, another delicious urban cheese now being featured in top restaurants all over London.

I have found having a wholesale business alongside the shop has worked brilliantly, as customers of ours love to visit the shop, try the cheeses and learn all about the cheese they are buying. This way I can put together a cheeseboard with them, instead of them just looking in a faceless cheese brochure.

I love having a close relationship with the people we supply. I spend my time visiting restaurants, cafés and delis to train the staff and do cheese tastings. This gives me a great insight into the business and makes sure the customer is armed with as much knowledge as possible.

“ I love having a close relationship with the people we supply. This gives me a great insight into the business and makes sure the customer is armed with as much knowledge as possible ”

# Talk Cheese

New retail perspectives from industry experts

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders



## Brindisa enlists Spanish cheese guru to design new cheese rooms

**Spanish food retailer and wholesaler Brindisa has built new cheese rooms at its Balham headquarters so that the company can moderate its stock to help it reach optimum condition.**

By having specially designed cheese storage facilities, Brindisa can now import unwrapped cheeses from suppliers. As well as cutting down packaging it enables the team to work with the cheeses' natural rinds. The supplier states that only when product reaches peak condition will it be made available to its retail and foodservice customers.

Designed with the help of Jose Luis Martin – one of Spain's most respected cheese gurus and famed for building traditional cheese caves across the country – the rooms are lined with authentic Spanish terracotta bricks to help control humidity. The bricks are set with breathable lime mortar that has insect-repelling properties.

The new cheese rooms provide a

stable environment for curing and maturing a range of cheese varieties, currently including raw goat's milk cheese Luna Negra, raw cow's milk Mahón DOP and raw cow's milk cheese from Asturias, Rey Silo. Alongside these are classic cheeses Cadra del Tiétar, Garrotxa, Campos Góticos semi-curado, La Peral, Penoco and Payoyo semi-curado.

Monika Linton, founder of Brindisa said, "Having our own dedicated cheese storage facilities has been a long-term ambition. Rupert and I have derived so much pleasure over the years from our travels to dairies all over Spain.

"With design help from Jose Luis Martin, Brindisa now has the opportunity to give something back to our incredible suppliers. By creating an environment that mirrors conditions in Spain we can nurture their cheeses to ensure they reach our UK customers in peak condition. Not only that, a cheese cave is the best 30th birthday present that I've ever heard of!"



[www.snowdoniachese.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniachese.co.uk)



## Village Maid develops IPA-washed cheese

**Village Maid Cheese, producer of Wigmore, Waterloo and Spenwood, has released a new cheese named Maida Vale.**

It is described by the company as a semi-soft, Channel Island cow's milk cheese that is washed with Treason IPA from Uprising Brewery in Windsor. Washing the cheese with the ale produces a tangy, washed-rind flavour with hints of hoppy IPA coming through.

Jake Wigmore, associate director said, "Anne Wigmore, founder and director, began experimenting with rind-washing with a brine solution

in November 2016, but wanted something more different than the well-known washed-rind cheeses that are already on the market. When myself and my partner Kayleigh joined the business in April, we all decided to play around with washing the rind in ale due to our love of craft ales as well as our curiosity in the traditional art of Trappist cheese."

Selecting a beer with local Berkshire credentials was important to the team, and after trialling 14 different beers ranging from stouts to blondes, they landed on the

Treason IPA produced by Uprising Brewer in Windsor.

Jake continued, "It's hoppy and fruity, and we knew it paired nicely with our other semi-soft Channel Island cow's milk cheese, Waterloo, so decided to give it a go. Treason IPA just gave the cheese such a distinctive flavour compared to others."

Maida Vale not only differs from the cheesemaker's other varieties because of it being their first experiment with washed-rind cheese, but it also comes in individual boxes with clear packaging while the others come wrapped in white wax paper. Jake said, "We want everybody to see the deep-orange colour of the rind and the aim is to encourage customers to bake it in the box."

## Thyme is of the essence for new Whalesborough cheese

**Whalesborough Cheese from Bude in Cornwall has rolled out a new washed curd cheese featuring Lemon & Thyme Cornish Sea Salt, which the cheesemaker is calling Miss Thymed.**

The company is keen to highlight the provenance-driven aspects of the cheese, alongside its inclusion of vegetarian rennet and pasteurised cows' milk.

The idea for the cheese came about when The Cheese Shed reached out to Whalesborough Cheese about flavour-added cheese, which prompted Sue Proudfoot, owner of the business, to experiment with Lemon & Thyme Cornish Sea Salt in the recipe of the Miss Muffet variety.

The cheesemakers state that Miss Muffet's texture absorbed the salt's delicate, herby and citrus flavours

successfully due to it being creamy and not too acidic.

Sue Proudfoot, owner and cheesemaker said, "The new cheese was taken on holiday with us and our friends to Exmoor where the verdict was unanimous: it was a real winner and so Miss Thymed was born.

"We will be launching Miss Thymed in the New Year both in a 1.2kg truckle and a baby 350g truckle."

*Best French cheese  
Super gold award 2017*



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<http://bit.ly/Sodiaal> Info@[candia.co.uk](http://candia.co.uk)

# Kern 'best in the world' accolade beckons promising future for British cheese

**Cornwall-based Lynher Dairy, the producer behind popular Cornish Yarg, has seen its new cheese Kern named Supreme Champion at the World Cheese Awards in London.**

The accolade has secured Lynher Dairies' position as one of the leading artisan cheese producers in the world, further solidifying Britain's standing as a top cheese-producing region.

The last two Supreme Champions were Norway's Kraftkar blue cheese and the German-hailing Montagnolo Affiné.

Catherine Mead, owner of Lynher Dairies said, "The Kern style of cheese is particularly popular at the moment as people are enjoying Alpine-style cheeses; they are really setting a new trend. What we've managed to do with Kern is develop the combination of sweet and savoury that gives complexity and profundity that people are looking for in that style

of cheese, but it still remains very smooth and rounded.

"We are now getting much greater credit for our cheesemaking in the UK. 10 years ago we were still fighting our corner and saying: have you seen how good we are at cheesemaking? I think we have much greater presence now than we did previously. The fact that it was a British cheese that won wouldn't have created such a stir as it might have done before.

"You've got your greats from France, Italy and Spain, and some really interesting cheeses from the States, South Africa and Australia, but I think we hold our own on a global stage and have as much chance as any of those countries now. We are certainly not to be underestimated in our ability to make cheese."

Dr Judith Bryans, chief executive of Dairy UK, believes that the positivity surrounding British-produced cheese is becoming

more prevalent. She told Speciality Food, "Demand for British cheese remains strong and the outlook for exports is very positive. In 2016 the UK exported over 160,000 tonnes of cheese overseas (32 per cent of total cheese production), with consumption expected to grow (notably for countries outside of the OECD) over the next decade. The success of UK cheese exports and the increasing demand speaks for itself, with international consumers recognising the great taste and quality of British cheeses in their purchasing decisions.

"Demand for dairy on the whole is also increasing, with fresh dairy products expected to grow by 2.1 per cent and processed dairy products by 1.7 per cent over the next decade. Increasing population sizes and continued economic growth are drivers of this increased demand, with dairy consumption in developing countries expected to outpace that of developed nations.

“ The success of UK cheese exports and the increasing demand speaks for itself, with international consumers recognising the great taste and quality of British cheeses in their purchasing decisions ”



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## “Allow me to introduce myself”

**W**e stood by the board in the restaurant, which requested "Please wait here to be seated". Eventually a waiter came up (several had passed us by) and said: "You alright there?" Clearly, we were not, as service was unlikely to be as forthcoming as the easel. Nonetheless, meekly, I asked for a table.

When a different waiter came to take our order, he prefaced his spiel with "You alright there?" Again I let it pass, but over the next five minutes or so, I heard the phrase being used again and again, by different waiting staff all around the restaurant. What I might have taken as a cheery informal greeting, had it been a one-off, was clearly the tiresome cliché of the day. In a service role, it's very easy to slip into saying things by rote, and when this happens it can be counter-productive.

The first lesson in the sales training that I undertook in the 1970s was that "You never have a second chance to make a first impression". Getting visitors into a positive frame of mind, ready to shop, can be a nuanced process. It's obvious that they should be welcomed, made to feel valued and given the information they need to have a pleasant shopping experience.

Some outlets enshrine the welcome as part of their brand: "Have you been to a Harvester before?" Short, simple and immortalised in a TV campaign from the 80s. Of course, it doesn't work in quite the same way in a non-corporate environment. Regular

customers don't expect to be greeted as though they are first-timers, but may be difficult to identify. In my shop many of my 'regulars' were actually annual visitors, popping in during their yearly holidays. Having upset some who expected to be recognised from a fleeting visit over 12 months before, my stock greeting became: "Hello! You've been here before, haven't you?" Those customers who in fact had never ventured into the cheesemonger before would happily correct my assumption, while the 'regulars' felt valued and recognised.

Recently I visited a friend's large food outlet. He issues his sizeable platoon of floor staff with the instruction that they should stop whatever they are doing, welcome the shopper and ask if they might be of assistance. It works well in his environment. In a smaller, owner-operated enterprise, it may not always be as easy. If I'm at a cutting-board, already serving another customer, I try to make eye contact and offer a welcome to new entrants to the shop – I'll offer the newcomer a taste of whatever cheese I'm working on. If I'm tending to a cheese – stripping its cloth, trimming or wrapping it, I seek to engage the new customer with the process. I've lost count of the number of times I've sold Red Leicester after offering them a smell of the cheesecloth.

Customers do not want to be addressed by an automaton. Human interaction and warmth will always succeed in winning their custom; trite clichés will not.

“ The first lesson in the sales training that I undertook in the 1970s was that ‘You never have a second chance to make a first impression’ ”



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CHARCOAL & RYE  
90g e

**PETER'S YARD**

The natural choice for cheese

**PETER'S YARD**



to mellow the tannins, which you always need to watch with blue cheese, and it's quite earthy itself. Some Stag Water Biscuits and olives complete the box.

#### WHAT ACCOMPANIMENTS DOES THE DELI STOCK?

Crackers, chutneys and charcuterie. Being based in the West Country we are spoiled for choice and we use plenty of amazing producers from our area, but I don't like to be bound by local. For our boxes, and my own cheeseboards, we tend to use Peter's Yard Sourdough Crispbreads, Stag Bakeries Water Biscuits and the Miller's Damsels range. Each has subtle yet distinctive flavours that enhance rather than overshadow the cheese.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PAIRING COMBINATIONS?

We look at individual cheeses and the wines that pair up with them. For example, what pairs with a Roquefort is different to what pairs with Mrs Bell's Blue, even though they are both ewes' milk cheeses. A soft tannin Corbières teams beautifully with Roquefort but would clash with Mrs Bell's Blue. However, a Monbazillac would match both well. Hard cheeses tend to match bigger reds, but for me nothing pairs better with clothbound Cheddar than quality cider.

#### RETAILER INSIGHT

### Chris Kewin, wine expert at Bodnant Welsh Food Centre, on wedding Welsh cheese with wine:

#### ● ABERWEN MATURE:

A creamy, full flavoured, farmhouse-style cheese aged for four months, this cheese pairs beautifully with white Bordeaux wines that consist primarily of Sauvignon Blanc, those from Graves, for example. The creamier the cheese, the more acidity is required in the wine to achieve balance.

#### ● ABERWEN EXTRA MATURE:

Aged for a minimum of six to eight months, this cheese changes character with age, becoming something more akin to a mature Cheddar in style and texture – harder and zingier mouthfeel enables wines with higher tannin content to be effective partners. Consider cooler climate Syrah regions,

#### MATCHING CHEESE

**Clare Jackson of Slate, a specialist cheese retailer and delicatessen in Aldeburgh, on the art of matching cheese:**

#### ● BLUE

Blue cheeses are wonderfully enhanced by a touch of sweetness to cut through their tangy, metallic taste. We love walnuts and a drizzle of honey with blue cheeses such as Gorgonzola, and Cropwell Bishop Stilton sits well on traditional Scottish oatcakes

#### ● HARD

Hard cheese like Lincolnshire Poacher taste amazing with walnuts and freshly sliced apples. Fruit cheese is also a brilliant accompaniment – we source loaves of fruit cheese to display in our cheese counter and serve in slices

#### ● SOFT

You can't beat a classic cracker such as Peter's Yard Original Crispbread with a dollop of our homemade Chilli Jam. Our local soft cheese Baron Bigod is phenomenal served like this

#### ● WASHED RIND

The strong flavour of these cheeses needs something crisp to accompany it, we recommend a crisp Sauvignon Blanc to go with our washed rind cheese of local origins St Cera

such as Northern Rhone or perhaps Piedmont reds such as Nebbiolo or Dolcetto.

#### ● BODNANT TRADITIONAL WELSH CAERPHILLY:

The creamy, crumbly texture of this award-winning Caerphilly is best paired with white wines of moderate to high acidity. Cooler climate Chardonnays such as those from Macon AC or Montagne AC work very well.

#### ● BODNANT ABERGOCH:

A distinctive naturally coloured medium-hard cheese with a creamy, sweet flavour, this works extremely well with Grenache-based wines, perhaps from the Languedoc, Southern Rhone or Spain.

# THE FIVE: CHEESE ACCOMPANIMENTS

Solve any cheeseboard conundrums your customer may have with the help of these quality accompaniments



### 1 CHILTERN CHARCUTERIE: Spicy N'Duja

This decadent and spreadable salami is made from local free-range pork and a good dose of chilli powder, paprika, garlic and a splash of red wine. "It has a nice spicy kick and lovely smooth flavour," says John Miller of Chiltern Charcuterie. "It's perfect on crackers with some cheese."

[chiltern-charcuterie.co.uk](http://chiltern-charcuterie.co.uk)

### 2 LYME BAY WINERY: Brut Reserve Sparkling

A fruit-driven sparkling wine that displays refreshing lemon and green apple notes with a vibrant and creamy mousse finish. "The excellent depth of flavour alongside the Brut Reserve's characteristic burst of citrus acidity makes it a great match for soft cheeses," Liam Idzikowski, head winemaker at Lyme Bay Winery tells us. "The crisp effervescence cuts perfectly across the silky, rich texture of a triple crème."

[lymebaywinery.co.uk](http://lymebaywinery.co.uk)



### 3 COTTAGE DELIGHT: Ploughman's Pickle

This jar contains the finest silverskin onions, courgette and chunky apple, all picked when they are at their best. Made in small batches using the finest ingredients, it has a great seasonal flavour combination ideal for autumn and winter. "We promote the use of both manned and unmanned tastings all year round," explains Melissa Rigby, NPD manager at Cottage Delight. "Chutneys and pickles are particularly effective when offered as samples."

[cottage delight.co.uk](http://cottage delight.co.uk)



### 4 PAXTON & WHITFIELD: Charcoal Crackers



Charcoal is reputed to aid digestion and restore a natural balance, so consumers will be happy to know that these crackers are adding some nutritional value to their cheeseboard. "Our Charcoal Crackers are crisp and savoury biscuits with a dark and distinctive appearance and a natural wheat flavour," says Ros Windsor, managing director of Paxton & Whitfield. "They are delicious when eaten with goat's and sheep's milk cheese. They are also a great palate cleanser."

[paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk](http://paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk)

### 5 ROSEBUD PRESERVES: Old Yorkshire Chutney

"Our Old Yorkshire Chutney is a British store cupboard essential, freshly prepared to a traditional recipe including Bramley apples, plums, tomatoes, vine fruits and spices," says Mark Alderson, sales and marketing manager at Rosebud Preserves. "It is perfect with hard Territorials like farmhouse Cheddars and Yorkshire Wensleydale."

[rosebudpreserves.co.uk](http://rosebudpreserves.co.uk)



## The natural choice for cheese

**PETER'S YARD**



# A TASTE OF TRADITION

When Speciality Food editor, Holly Shackleton visited the makers of Le Gruyère, she discovered that there's much more to the cheese than simply good taste



**W**alking around a food establishment here in the UK, it's only natural to be impressed by how much us Brits love our food. It's undeniable that throughout recent times the appreciation of quality food and drink has grown, and with this growth in consumer understanding has come a boom in producers launching new items into the market. Across Britain there are foodie hubs – London is undeniably a hot bed of innovation and exciting new flavours and experiences, while the West Country, the North and East Anglia (not to mention Scotland, Ireland and Wales) boast their own networks of artisan makers and appreciative customers. But when I visited the home of Le Gruyère AOP in Switzerland earlier this year, I was genuinely taken aback by the deep-felt love that the region had

for their local cheese – and the value that it clearly had for communities and families. It's not overstating the matter to say that Le Gruyère AOP is a focal point for the region, and it is perhaps this widespread admiration of the ancient cheese which has seen it travel the world to become one of its most popular.

## An appreciation of great food

At its roots in the Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Jura, and Bern cantons of Switzerland, home to the food-loving French-Swiss, Le Gruyère AOP has legend-like status. We traversed the breathtaking scenery – if you're as spellbound by mountains and lakes as I am, the region is a must-visit – to visit La Maison du Gruyère, a museum/restaurant hybrid which also works as a production site and mecca for cheese lovers.

“ It's not overstating the matter to say that Le Gruyère AOP is a focal point for the region, and it is perhaps this widespread admiration of the ancient cheese which has seen it travel the world to become one of its most popular ”

Accompanied by members of the Le Gruyère AOP team we explored the museum, discovering its rural history (which dates back to 1115AD) and the true scale of its popularity across the world, before viewing the cheesemakers in action in the demonstration factory and finally indulging in a Le Gruyère AOP-fuelled feast. Deliciously cooked with rice, meat, salad, potatoes; this cheese certainly is versatile. As well as the party I was visiting La Maison with, made up of UK-based cheesemongers and journalists, the site was host to an impressive

variety of visitors: families of all ages, tourists from around the globe and cheese-loving locals filled the space. It was heartwarming to see that young children from the region were just as engaged as us food journalists in finding out more about Le Gruyère AOP; this goes to show that quality and education can work wonders in developing and maintaining an appreciation of food.

## A spellbinding combination of tradition and personal touch

This appreciation was tangible

throughout my visit, and nowhere more so than in the locations where Le Gruyère AOP is produced. I was honoured to spend a morning at the home of Le Gruyère AOP production at Le Crêt, 3,000 feet above sea level and the pride of Jean-Marie Dunand, master cheesemaker. With its small scale, personal touch and traditional approach, it's a prime example of how mistaken some people are in thinking that Le Gruyère AOP is a mass-produced cheese. Dunand runs this dairy with heart, and a dedication to upholding the philosophies of its AOP accreditation. Milk



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AOP enjoy the perfect conditions for maturation: cool temperatures, high humidity and expert care. This was the ideal setting for getting to know the varying characteristics of the different ages of cheese, from the young and mild Classic – aged 5-9 months – to the rich, sweet and nutty Reserve – aged for 10-24 months. While my party traverses the extensive tunnels, listening to the steady ‘drip-drip-drip’ of the rainwater falling naturally down the cave walls and being sure to swiftly dodge the speeding forklift trucks carrying teetering piles of cheese, I decide that this is, most probably, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

#### Picture-postcard setting

Throughout the trip I was taken aback by the love that the people who work with Le Gruyère AOP have for the cheese, but never was

“ It was heartwarming to see that young children from the region were just as engaged as us food journalists in finding out more about Le Gruyère AOP; this goes to show that quality and education can work wonders in developing and maintaining an appreciation of food ”

this more the case than at the farm of Jean Louis Roch, a producer of Alpage. Due to the smallness of production scales this truly artisanal cheese is only available seasonally in some cheese counters across the UK. In many ways Alpage is the same as Classic, Réserve and Le Cret – its flavour characteristics and traditional philosophies are shared – but what sets this apart from the other varieties is the scale and location of its production. We arrived at Roch’s farm early in the morning, when the mists were still circling the mountains and the day’s cheesemaking was just beginning. The farm’s small herd of cows had been milked by our host, son of Jean Louis, and his seasonal helper, and this milk was now being heated and stirred in copper vats above an open fire within the picture-postcard chalet. Goats and pigs surrounded the small wooden-clad building, and these together with the smoke from the open fire added to the fragrance of the smallholding, and the sense that this venture is very much in-keeping with Le Gruyère’s dedication to small-scale production and tradition. We witnessed the cheeses being pressed using a combination of expert hand and wooden tools, and then its ageing in the cellar underneath the cheesemaking room. As well as producing the cheese here, the producer and his animals live here during spring and summer, while the colder months are spent down in the more sheltered valley. Our visit did not coincide with the transhumance, the annual pilgrimage of the cows up into the mountains, but it’s an important part of the local community’s calendar and cause for colourful celebration.

#### The ultimate Le Gruyère feast

Le Gruyère AOP’s popularity is well-deserved – just one bite of this sweet, nutty cheese will have you hooked whichever of its variations you’re

indulging in – and its versatility in cooking has chefs excited, too. I, like any cheese lover, always appreciate a good cheeseboard containing Le Gruyère AOP, but on this trip I was lucky enough to experience what must be the epitome of Gruyère-eating: a richly satisfying traditional fondue within the city of Gruyères itself. Dipping fresh, crusty bread and simple potatoes into unctuous melted cheese while surrounded by charming cobbled streets, picturesque buildings laden with red geranium-filled window boxes and with a view of the town’s castle in the distance, I was in heaven. Enjoying a pre-fondue walk through the town of Gruyères, I noted that it shares a number of characteristics with its eponymous cheese: deeply rooted in tradition, rich in history and above all, one of a kind. The town’s world-famous Giger bar, opened by Swiss designer H. R. Giger and fully entrenched in the theme of the Alien films, may seem incongruous in this charming Swiss town, but reflects the modern approach taken by the dedicated team behind Le Gruyère AOP to establish the cheese as an ancient cheese perfectly attuned to modern tastes.



arrives fresh to the dairy every day, delivered in small vats by the hardworking farmers from no more than 12.4 miles from the dairy, and is handled with care by a small team of cheesemakers overseen by Dunand. Once the wheels are produced and aged sufficiently, they are taken to

an affineur who will take care of them until they are at their optimum condition for sale. One such affineur is based at the Emmi cellars in nearby Moudon, a spellbinding maze of cave-like tunnels carved into the mountain. Within this labarinthine setting the wheels of Le Gruyère

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"We made our first batch of lemonade at university and now offer two flavours of non-carbonated drinks: zesty Lemonade and our juicy Raspberry & Lemon," Alex Carvey, founder. "Our drinks are made with grape juice as well as stevia, a natural sweetener, which helps to reduce the sugar content but keeps the great taste! They also feature no artificial flavours, additives, preservatives or refined sugar." [wemadedrinks.com](http://wemadedrinks.com)



### 2 FOREST BOUNTY FRUIT SPREADS

"Being healthier than traditional jams means that our fruit spread range will find so many uses in the kitchen," says Snezana Knowles, founder. "Try using these fruit spreads in cakes or as an accompaniment to puddings. They are great at breakfast time on your toast or in porridge. We are really pleased to be introducing this range at a time when everyone is searching for lower sugar options." [forestbounty.co.uk](http://forestbounty.co.uk)



### 3 FILIPPO BERIO CROSTINI

Inspired by delicious Italian flavours, the Filippo Berio Crostini range is made from freshly baked bread and drizzled with Filippo Berio Extra Virgin Olive Oil. All five options are free from artificial colours, flavours and preservatives, contain 30% less fat than fried crisps, are suitable for vegetarians and are baked, not fried. [filippoerio.co.uk](http://filippoerio.co.uk)





**4 BORNA FOODS PISTACHIO BUTTER**

Borna's luxuriously intense Pistachio Butter contains no sugar or salt, just 100% premium pistachios that have been lightly roasted and stone milled by hand. It is lovingly made in the UK in small batches to ensure the highest quality. Available smooth or crunchy, this indulgent yet nutritious butter can be enjoyed on its own, as a topping, or as a spread.

[bornafoods.com](http://bornafoods.com)



**5 OSIUS BONE BROTH**

Using bones that are sourced from local organic farms where the cattle are grass-fed, Osius uses organic vegetables – British when available – and organically-certified British seaweed and herbs to concoct its nutrient-dense, collagen-packed, delicious and rich bone broths. They are simmered at a very low temperature with organic apple cider vinegar for either 12, 24 or 48 hours, depending on the variety.

[osiusbonebroth.co.uk](http://osiusbonebroth.co.uk)



**6 NOURISH COCONUT MACAROONS**

Offering all the satisfaction of a delicious macaroon without the guilt, these coconut macaroons are gluten, dairy, soya, refined sugar and egg-free and are suitable for those following vegetarian and paleo diets. Available in six different varieties in pouch format or single serve for on-the-go, all flavours are organic and most are vegan-friendly, too.

[nourish-growcookenjoy.com](http://nourish-growcookenjoy.com)



**7 GRAN STEAD'S GINGER CO. REDUCED SUGAR FIERY GINGER WINE**

Health-conscious customers are increasingly opting for lower-sugar products, so Gran Stead's Reduced Sugar Fiery Ginger Wine has great appeal. This non-alcoholic drink recently beat off stiff competition to win a prestigious Good Choice Quality Food Award. It's knock-your-socks-off spicy and comes from a range of six traditional drinks handmade by the Sussex-based ginger experts.

[gransteadsginger.co.uk](http://gransteadsginger.co.uk)



# SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW 2018

Savour the best Scotland has to offer in  
Glasgow on 21st–23rd January

## IN DETAIL

**WHAT:** Scotland's Speciality Food Show  
**WHERE:** SECC, Glasgow  
**WHEN:** 21st–23rd January 2018  
**WEB:** [scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.co.uk](http://scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.co.uk)

This summer has been busy in Scotland with a great tourist season due to the low pound and staycationers, so visitors in their droves have enjoyed the fine Scottish food and drink on offer. This has led to strong demand for stands at Scotland's Speciality Food Show, which will be held at the SEC in Glasgow from 21st–23rd January, with over 140 of the best and most innovative suppliers of fine food and drink in the country.

As the first food show in the year in the UK, the three-day event allows retailers and food buyers the opportunity to find new producers and see and try new ranges for the first time. Almost a third of all stands are new so there is always plenty to excite visitors from gins to jams, dressings to drinks and biscuits to ice cream.

Beyond the Launch Gallery, the show has many new exhibitors from established brands that want a slice of the Scottish market to younger, innovative companies. Producers well worth a visit are Choc Affair, Giacopazzi's wholesale ice cream, Blue Star crabmeat, Laprig Valley apple juice, Taste of the Trossachs, Cream o'Galloway, Runwick Roastery/Cupsmith beverages, Smoky Brae and Burren Balsamics.

Many long-standing exhibitors use this show to unveil new products and new ranges for the year such as Tracklements chutneys and condiments, Cairn O'Mhor drinks, Great Glen Charcuterie, Little Doone dressings, Summer Harvest oils and Walkers Shortbread.

New for 2018 is a large, purpose built stand to hold Taste of Orkney. The Orkney Isles are regular exhibitors but this year have created a special stand and will showcase Orkney Distilling, Argo's Bakery/Orkney Bakery, Orkney Creamery, Jolly's of Orkney and The Orkney Roastery.

The number of drinks exhibitors continues to rise with the increased popularity of craft spirits, especially

gin and other drinks. The list this year includes The Gin Bothy, Avva Gin, Ogilivy Spirits, Select Drams and Isle of Skye Distillery.

With the story behind the product ever more important, the show is also a great opportunity to talk to producers all under one roof, make new contacts and actually taste the products and feel the packaging so ensuring you buy products that meet your customers' demands.

Chrystal Mackinlay from Chrystals Shortbread said of last year's show: "Scotland's Speciality Food Show was a fantastic show with a very busy Sunday followed by the best Monday trade we have ever had. We can't wait for the next show."



With such a wealth of quality exhibitors both established and new, competition will be fierce for the Best Product Awards which are always a fantastic boost for both sales and social media for the winners.

The Show is run in conjunction with Scotland's Trade Fair, which is the only trade gift show north of Yorkshire with about 500 home and giftware, fashion and jewellery and craft producers, which allows buyers of many outlets to source food and non-food items all under one roof.

## THE LAUNCH GALLERY

The Launch Gallery will be bursting with new products from young specially selected companies, such as:

- **Merchant City Brewing:** based in the centre of Glasgow, this craft brewery's products reflect the quality, character and diversity that makes up the best of Glasgow's Merchant City
- **Foal Drinks:** low calorie, low sugar and inspired by non-alcoholic bar favourites
- **Granite North Gin:** the purest highland water distilled with botanicals into a fine gin
- **Greybe Fine Olive Products:** organic sustainable olive products with a conscience from Greece and South Africa
- **Hawkhead Kitchen:** a range of smoked salt and smoked cashews from Glasgow
- **Mirrie Dancers:** handmade artisan chocolates from Shetland made with local ingredients and inspiration
- **Rora Dairy:** healthy yoghurt from long-established dairy herd in Aberdeenshire
- **Lussa Gin:** new gin from the Isle of Jura
- **Rawnchy:** raw vegan cakes and desserts, perfect for restaurants and Best Product Winner in 2017

“ 2017 was once again a good year for retailers in the speciality and tourist trade, especially in areas such as on the North Coast 500 route or on the Isle of Skye. When producers feel confident it breeds innovation and we have some exciting new products being launched at the show ”

MARK SAUNDERS, DIRECTOR OF SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW

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## STOCKING SCOTLAND

The dramatic landscapes north of the border are home to some of the UK's most spectacular food. We speak to some of its most passionate ambassadors to find out what to stock



### SCOTLAND FOOD & DRINK

**James Withers, Chief Executive of Scotland Food & Drink**

Over the last 10 years, Scotland's food and drink industry has become the country's best performing industry. Food exports have more than doubled, it's Scotland's biggest employer and sales of Scottish brands in the UK have risen over 40%.

Food and drink businesses of all shapes and sizes are now part of a Scottish food and drink movement and we are seeing more and more Scottish labelled produce on UK supermarket shelves and in restaurants across the world.

A huge amount of effort and investment has gone in by the sector to build its reputation. We now have

a reputation for outstanding quality on both home soil and overseas.

Despite the success though, we have huge ambitions still, with a real growth opportunities over the coming years. It will require ongoing collaboration and commitment from the industry and building Scotland's food and drink identity will be central to that. We do a lot of work to understand consumer habits and perceptions and we're seeing Scottish products increasingly resonate.

Almost two thirds of Scots say that they are more likely to buy products marked as Scottish, way higher than for products from

anywhere else. Outside Scotland, 40% of shoppers in the rest of the UK are prepared to pay more for Scottish-sourced food and drink.

It is, therefore, incredibly important that we work closely with retailers to ensure their customers understand the economic value to them of supporting Scottish products, which have a provenance that sits behind them that is attracting more and more people to it.

To keep up the momentum we need to invest in our own development and embrace world class innovation. We believe that by connecting industry, government and food and drink businesses themselves, we can double the size of the farming, fishing, food and drink sector by 2030 and make Scotland one of the world's great food and drink identities.

pickles are not enjoying as significant growth. It's a very busy category all competing for limited shelf space!

#### IS MODERN SCOTTISH FARE AS POPULAR AS TRADITIONAL?

We are lucky to have many innovative Scottish fine food producers. Whether they are well-established or new to the market, they are all working hard to make exceptional tasting foods for a wide audience. I think the days of people just associating Scotland with Haggis and tablet have gone, and that is all down to the hard work and commitment of the many fine producers we have here in Scotland such as Summer House Drinks, The Chocolate Tree, The Little Herb Farm, Summer Harvest, Galloway Lodge, Great Glen Charcuterie, Rannoch Smokery, Rora Dairy and St Andrews Farmhouse Cheese Co.

product offer is set to grow in 2018 as we continue to search for new and interesting product ranges to add to our portfolio. Cheese is an important and growing part of The Cress Co.'s product portfolio and includes cutting cheese, specialised cheese and retail cheese packs sourced from artisan producers in the UK and Europe. The brands have been carefully selected with provenance at their heart but fundamentally it was important to provide an extensive well-priced cheese range to accommodate both a counter and retail offer.

#### IS ANYTHING LOSING FAVOUR?

Like the wider grocery sector, traditional ambient items like jams, marmalades and



### FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR...

**Nikki Castley, buyer at Cress Co**

#### WHAT'S TRENDING IN SCOTLAND RIGHT NOW?

Scotland has a veritable larder of fine food producers and many retailers are backing the ongoing 'support local' trend. From salmon to craft gin to chocolate, Scotland pretty much has it covered! The Cress Co. are keen to support those smaller producers and give them the wheels to get their fine produce to a wider audience.

#### WHAT CAN YOU FORESEE BECOMING POPULAR IN THE COMING YEAR?

Our chilled retail offer is definitely gaining momentum and our

“ The days of people just associating Scotland with Haggis and tablet have gone, and that is all down to the hard work and commitment of the many fine producers we have here ”

## FOUR SCOTTISH GREATS

Wow your customer with our pick of fabulous food & drink



### SCRUMPTIOUS SHORTBREAD FROM DEANS

**1** Famed for its light and crumbly melt in the mouth texture, Dean's manufactures its traditional Scottish shortbread in Huntly, Aberdeenshire where founder Helen Dean started her business in the 1970s. Dean's is still a family owned business, and continues to bake shortbread just as Helen used to do. Over the years the product range has expanded to include biscuits, savoury cheese bites, gluten-free shortbread and cake.

[deans.co.uk](http://deans.co.uk)

### ECO-FRIENDLY BISCUITS FROM ISLAND BAKERY

**2** Joe and Dawn Reade have been making the Island Bakery Organics range of biscuits on the Isle of Mull for 15 years. The couple began a bread bakery business in Tobermory in 1994, and diversified into biscuits in 2001 to help to balance out the seasonal nature of the business. The company now focuses entirely on biscuit making in their sustainable energy-powered premises. The Readers are proud to now be employing over 40 staff on the Hebridean island.

[islandbakery.co.uk](http://islandbakery.co.uk)



### STUNNING SMOKED SALMON FROM INVERAWE

**3** Robert and Rosie Campbell-Preston began creating their smoked fish back in 1974. Taking over the reins, their son Patrick is continuing the legacy to deliver Inverawe's signature deep, smooth and smokey flavours which can only be achieved by slow-smoking in hand-built, old-style kilns. The award-winning and Royal Warrant-holding company does nothing by halves; there are no mechanical processes, just oak smoke, expert hand and time.

[smokedsalmon.co.uk](http://smokedsalmon.co.uk)



### FARMHOUSE CHEESE FROM ST ANDREWS CHEESE COMPANY

**4** Robert and Jane Stewart, the only farmhouse cheesemakers in Fife, began production in 2008. Their range of award-winning raw milk cheeses includes Anster, a crumbly farmhouse; Red Anster, the flavour-added sister cheese to Anster with fresh chives and garlic; and St Andrews Farmhouse, a mature Cheddar. Every cheese is handcrafted using milk from home-bred Friesian Holstein cows.

[standrewscheese.co.uk](http://standrewscheese.co.uk)





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## RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

### Simon and Sarah Yearsley, The Scottish Deli – Dunkeld and Pitlochry, Highland Perthshire



Our sourcing strategy is simple, we stay local wherever possible and that includes buying smoked salmon and homemade preserves that are produced just 30 metres from our shop in Dunkeld. We stock lots of delicious food from Perthshire and the rest of Scotland and then look for really special fine foods from the rest of the UK and beyond. This approach makes sense to us; it reduces food miles and supports local food producers. As we said it's a simple strategy. Of course we haven't found a Scottish olive oil producer yet but let us know if you know of one! Being based in Highland Perthshire means that the shops have an amazing natural larder on their doorstep and this is mirrored in the range of delicious produce on the shelves.

Smoked salmon, honey, venison, craft beers, berries, mushrooms and fungi are just a few of the Scottish Deli's favourites.

Our sourcing local strategy works on several levels with our customers. For locals who are interested in reducing food miles and supporting local producers then buying Scottish is really important and makes good sense. For our international customers, and we get lots of overseas visitors and visitors from the rest of the UK in both Pitlochry and Dunkeld, being able to buy lovely locally produced food to eat whilst on holiday or to take home as a souvenir is important too.

Scottish cheeses are continuing to be really strong and holding their own (quite rightly!) against other UK and international cheeses. Overarching these is the continuing trend in small producers, selling great products locally, with a strong and attractive story behind them and their food.

### 6 MUST-STOCKS

- Haggis
- Dunkeld Smoked Salmon
- Chocolate, either The Chocolate Tree or Charlotte Flower
- Locally-produced honey from Beeswing Apiaries
- Laird's Inn Preserves and Young's Preserves
- Beef Jerky from Pistol Pete – "it flies off the shelves, our customers can't get enough of it!"

“ Scottishness is very important to our business, we are a Scottish couple, we have hundreds of Scottish suppliers, and our own-brand stock is all made in our store in Aberdeen on-site. It is very important to our customers; we attract a huge amount of tourists as well as a very loyal customer base from Aberdeen and all over Scotland ”

JULIE AND JAMES HAIG, HAIGS FOOD HALL



**Island Bakery**  
ISLE OF MULL



[www.islandbakery.co.uk](http://www.islandbakery.co.uk)

## 5 MINUTES WITH... CLAIRE POLLOCK of Ardross Farm Shop



**HOW IMPORTANT IS 'SCOTTISHNESS' TO THE BUSINESS?**  
 'Scottishness' or buying local and supporting other businesses similar to ours is very important to us as a family. We are just incredibly lucky that Scotland is becoming a wonderful foodie place renowned all over the world. However, I think

quality is the most important thing for our shop, business and for our customers – it just so happens that all of the best foods are right on our doorstep. Aren't we lucky to live in Scotland!

**AND YOUR CUSTOMERS?**  
 We produce our own beef, lamb, vegetables and honey, and you

can't get much more Scottish or local than that. Our customers love knowing where all our products in the shop are produced, who they are produced by and how they are produced. Working with small producers also gives us the advantage of new exciting products which you don't see in all the mainstream shops which our customers love.

### WHAT ARE YOUR TOP-SELLING SCOTTISH PRODUCTS?

That's easy – our home reared grass-fed beef shortly followed by our new addition of our own grass-fed lamb and mutton.

### WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU SEEING IN SCOTTISH FOOD AND DRINK RIGHT NOW?

Consumers are becoming more aware of the foods they eat, the health benefits of them and the ethics behind food. This is amazing – for business like ours who pride themselves on producing and sourcing each and every product to this exact criteria. The focus within Scotland has already started to move towards good sustainable local food and I think this movement will only get stronger.

“ No-one knows what Brexit is going to mean for business, good or bad. However, no matter what is happening at Government level, we are trying to produce good food for local people – which is what really excites us as a family – and I don't think the need for this will disappear completely ”



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[www.standrewscheese.co.uk](http://www.standrewscheese.co.uk)

# MEET THE DISTRIBUTOR

Estimable customer service, top sourcing methods and a passion for quality products have made The Cress Co. one of the most revered companies in fine food



It's fair to say that esteemed fine food distributor, The Cress Co., has experienced a vast amount of changes in 11 years. Founded by managing director, Joe Wall, the company started with just Joe, his van and six brands, but has since grown to represent over 200 food and drink companies. Although The Cress Co. calls Scotland home, with its head office and warehouse located in Fife, the company also has depots in Wetherby and Milton Keynes, meaning it can deliver to the majority of the country using its own fleet of vehicles. "We have a team of six area account managers who cover most of the UK and a dedicated service team that are always on-hand to assist our customers," explains Nikki Castley, buyer at Cress Co. "Our office support teams, warehouse team and drivers continue to expand to accommodate the growing demands of the business – a strong team is a core element in our success."

The Cress Co. prides itself on its low minimum order of £125, which can be mixed between ambient and chilled produce. The company boasts an extensive product offer of ambient and chilled lines; its range and reach covers more than just the retail speciality food industry – it also encompasses a comprehensive deli counter offer and foodservice lines, which is helpful if retailers have a catering option. "We carefully source a wide selection of products



to ensure that we can fulfil all of our customer's requirements whether they have a farm shop, delicatessen or high-end speciality store. As well as popular 'must-stock' brands we have some brands that work with us on an exclusive basis. This provides us and in turn our customers with a point of difference," Nikki tells us. "Retailers can benefit from mixing their orders of ambient lines such as bakery, traybakes, confectionery, crisps, snacks, chutneys, jams, relishes, sauces, condiments, oils, dressings, soups and drinks with our chilled offer of cheese, yoghurt, cream, butter, British and Continental charcuterie, bacon, black and white pudding, haggis, salmon and pâté. The low minimum order combined with frequent deliveries gives our customers the ability to control their intake and manage their stock holding."

#### Scotland and beyond

Although it's Scotland-based, the

company's product range represents fare from all over the world. This is especially evident in its cheese offering, which has recently been extended and represents an important and growing part of The Cress Co.'s product portfolio – the catalogue includes a carefully-selected and wide selection of cutting cheese, specialist cheese and retail cheese packs and truckles. "The cheeses have been sourced from British and Continental artisan producers," explains Nikki. "The range includes hard, soft, blue and washed-rind cow's cheese, as well as ewe, goat's milk and buffalo. Each brand has been carefully selected with provenance in mind. We felt it was important to provide an extensive and well-priced cheese range to accommodate both a counter and retail offer. We now have an in-house dedicated cheese team who are on-hand for both customers and producers, and there are also plans to extend product tasting events,

giving customers access to the cheesemakers to benefit from their expertise, knowledge and passion."

It's this passion and dedication to consumer demand that has pushed The Cress Co. to the top of its game, with the company committed to pinpointing trends that retailers need to be aware of. "We are currently seeing increased consumer demand in foods with clear provenance – people really want to know where their food comes from," Nikki says. "It is important to remain interesting and provide consumers a reason to purchase, therefore offering a diverse product range both ambient and chilled is vital. We continually strive to improve our offer and source new things – there is always a good uptake of our new ranges and as such we're constantly on the lookout for the next big thing! In our new Spring Summer 2018 catalogue, launching in February, we welcome over 20 new suppliers and 400 new products."

#### Connect with Cress Co.

In February The Cress Co. team will be hitting the road for its inaugural Cress Connects roadshow, stopping in Welwyn Garden City on 21st February, Manchester on 22nd February and Perth on 1st March. This offers shop owners the chance to experience the products in person, to talk to the producers and connect with The Cress Co.'s sales and buying teams. "The intention of this initiative

is all about making it easy to bring together all sectors of our business and connecting them together," explains Nikki. "It's important to support our customers and producers as much as possible. Cress Connects will give our producers the opportunity to showcase their products and share their stories and values with our customers. Customers will be given the opportunity to meet the producers, sample products and review the breadth of products in The Cress Co.'s portfolio. We are expecting over 60 producers and suppliers to be attending each event so customers will have plenty to see and sample. Anyone interested can register online at Eventbrite for Cress Connects 2018."

Cress Connects isn't the only new feature on the horizon either, with 2018 primed to be a big year for the company. "The Cress Co. website will be relaunched in the New Year and will encompass an online trading function, which gives our customers the ability to place orders from home, the office or at the shop," Nikki reveals. "And they'll still be benefiting from low minimum orders, promotions and delivery frequency. Frozen is also on the cards at some point, so watch this space!"



“ Our office support teams, warehouse team and drivers continue to expand to accommodate the growing demands of the business – a strong team is a core element in our success ”

# CRESS CONNECTS

Connecting  
Producers  
Suppliers and  
Customers

The Cress Co team and over 60 of our suppliers look forward to welcoming you to our Cress Connects events. Come along and meet our suppliers who will be showcasing their product ranges and sharing their knowledge, passion and values. See and sample fabulous products and take advantage of exclusive in-show promotions from all our exhibiting suppliers. A great opportunity to connect.

Register online at [Eventbrite for Cress Connects 2018](#)

Wednesday 21st February 2018 10am-4pm  
Tewin Bury Farm Hotel  
Hertford Road  
Welwyn Garden City  
Hertfordshire, AL6 0JB

Thursday 22nd February 2018 10am-4pm  
A.J.Bell Stadium  
1 Stadium Way  
Barton-upon-Irwell  
Manchester, M30 7LJ

Thursday 1st March 2018 10am-4pm  
Perth Racecourse  
Scone Palace Park  
Perth  
Scotland, PH2 6BB

**M**y department's remit goes to the heart of life in Britain, from food production to rural communities. Our key responsibilities for government work are three-fold – we are responsible for safeguarding our natural environment, supporting our world-leading food and farming industry, and sustaining a thriving rural economy. It is also an honour to be in this crucial role at such a historic moment – leaving the EU provides a wide range of opportunities for our vibrant food and farming sectors and I am committed to making sure these vital industries are in the best possible position to make the most of this.

So the work we do has a tremendous impact on people's everyday lives and particularly food and drink businesses – whatever their size.

The food and drink sector is the UK's largest manufacturing industry and SMEs are key drivers to increasing productivity – they make up 99% of the sector. Last year small food and drink businesses had an annual turnover of around £21.5 billion. This is not a figure to be ignored and therefore naturally a lot of our work is focussed on helping small, and rural, businesses thrive.

One of the ways we are doing this is through our Food Innovation Network which we launched last year. This connects food and drink producers – who would otherwise not have the funding or resources to do so – with world-class facilities such as test-kitchens, laboratories and the expertise to help them create new and innovative products and production methods. We've recently held a competition to offer micro, small and medium-sized food and drink businesses one of 10 £5,000 grants to carry out innovative projects, such as reducing packaging, extending shelf life or reducing the amount of water used to grow vegetables. This will help them to increase productivity and drive profits up.

The Government launched its Industrial Strategy in November – it is our long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. Significantly, it announced the creation of a Food and Drink Sector Council. An early focus for this Sector Council will be exports support, skills and innovation – all of which will be very beneficial to food and drink SMEs.

I don't think it is any secret that I like delicious food and drink, and of course I am particularly passionate about the creative, home grown produce we have here in the UK.

Our Food is GREAT campaign is an excellent visual demonstration of the fact British food has a reputation all around the world for great taste and unbeatable quality. This is undoubtedly something we should all be proud of. If you've gone through UK airports or attended food and drink trade shows, you will probably have seen some of the campaign's branding, including photos of succulent strawberries, slices of rare roast beef, scones smothered in cream and jam and shellfish plucked straight from the sea and ready to go to market. The Food is GREAT Instagram account is guaranteed to make your



## THE INTERVIEW: MICHAEL GOVE

Michael Gove, secretary of state,  
on the future of British food

stomach rumble. I think those images, those UK products shown in all their glory, are a real source of pride – for me and the UK producers who feature in them.

Some of the food and drink featured in the campaign are actually registered for protection on the basis of their heritage, quality and distinctiveness – in fact there are 84 different protected products across the UK. Geographical Indications play a vital role in boosting the UK's global food reputation and we are committed to upholding this protection when we leave the European Union.

Another thing that we should highlight as a real achievement is the contribution our food and farming sector makes to the UK

economy. Around one in eight people are employed in the wider agri-food chain sector – that's a workforce of around four million. It is boosting our economy by more than £110 billion each year and constantly growing to meet the booming global demand. UK exports are now going to more than 200 countries. You cannot help but be impressed by those figures.

One in four of England's businesses is based in rural areas and as such the Government is committed to creating a strong and prosperous rural economy. A key way in which we are supporting rural communities is through the Rural Development Programme for England.

This is investing nearly £1/2bn in rural businesses, including the £200 million grant

offer that we announced in July. This funding will generate thousands of jobs and enable rural businesses to expand and improve their premises. The programme will help on-farm businesses to invest in new machinery and increase productivity and landowners will be supported in exploring rural tourism opportunities. There is also specific funding – £30 million – to support new rural broadband, which is essential for helping businesses in remote locations to get online.

I know that many rural communities feel uncertain about what Brexit will bring for them, so all projects agreed before we leave the EU will be guaranteed for their lifetime – providing stability and certainty while future support for farmers and rural communities is developed.

Last year was the first year our food and drink export figures exceeded the £20 billion mark and I'd like to see that upward trend continue. Only around one in five of our food and drink producers currently export and I think there is – quite literally – a world of opportunity out there for businesses to explore and we are encouraging and supporting them to do that.

Our International Action Plan for Food and Drink has set out the Government's commitment to driving exports over the next five years. The plan has identified a number of priority markets which offer the greatest potential to grow our exports. Last year we saw exports to the US go up 12%. Exports to China rose by 50% – salmon, pork, whisky and beer were among the top exports to them.

### What's to come

As I've mentioned, we will soon be creating a Food and Drink Sector Council. It will be an ambitious partnership between the government and industry leaders from across the food chain, including agriculture, food and drink manufacturing, retail, hospitality and logistics. It will lead the work to secure the UK's position as a global leader in sustainable, affordable, safe and high-quality food and drink.

The Food and Drink Sector Council will build on emerging proposals for a sector deal in food and drink manufacturing. This will include support to transform exports, and to capitalise on its unique innovation opportunities including sustainable agriculture and food manufacturing.

I mentioned earlier the Food is GREAT campaign, which is part of the wider GREAT campaign set up by government to nurture talent and create exceptional products and services that can be sold across the globe. Defra continues to work closely with the Department of International Trade (DIT) to drive exports and increase global demand for the UK's top quality food and drink.

I think all of these things will help us meet our goal to further boost exports and in our commitment to getting the best possible deal when we leave the EU, one that allows us to continue to have tariff-free frictionless access for goods and services into the European market.

“ We are facing a truly landmark moment in our national history as we prepare to leave the EU. I think it is a great honour to be leading the department at this time ”

### MAKING IT WORK

We are facing a truly landmark moment in our national history as we prepare to leave the EU. I think it is a great honour to be leading the department at this time.

I want to be clear that the Government is committed to doing whatever it takes to support our

vibrant, thriving food and drink industry.

It is important we get a good Brexit deal for Britain, one which works for farmers, food producers and consumers. We are determined to make sure we continue to benefit from tariff-free trade for all our goods that is as frictionless as possible. At the same time we will need to make

decisions that maintain our reputation for high quality UK food and drink produce, while underpinning this with an insistence that the UK will maintain its own high animal welfare and environmental standards in future free trade agreements.

Leaving the EU also provides us with a golden opportunity to design an approach that works and delivers for

our food sector. Our ambitious food producers will launch new products by investing in innovative technologies and creative ideas. We will open new international markets to drive the global demand for our produce.

It stands to reason that this will not be without its challenges, but over the next few years we will be working hard to make sure we make the right

decisions that will stand the test of time.

I have been consistent in my belief that, as we leave the EU, the UK will strive for world-leading excellence in everything we do. We are a nation that trades on a reputation for trusted, high quality products produced to high standards – leaving the EU gives us a chance to enhance this reputation.

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# PLANT POWER

Once it was mums making us eat our greens, now it's the food industry, says Sally-Jayne Wright. They're sneaking veg into everything from ice cream to water

## VEG WATER! REALLY?

At the lunch! show we came across JF Rabbit's range of waters 'infused with the power of vegetables'. Their Cucumber, Ginger & Lime and Carrot & Orange Blossom waters contain under 10 calories a bottle and all your daily vitamin C and zinc requirements.

Frill Refreshing Green frozen smoothie looks like mint ice cream and contains spinach, avocado, basil, celery, pineapple, mango and lemon. Improbable as it sounds, it tastes good: £4.99 for 500ml at selected Waitrose branches, Whole Foods Market stores and online at Ocado. You can also use this ice cream alternative as a base for veg smoothies.

At The Book Club, a trendy bar in London's Shoreditch, you can even consume veg in your cocktail. Order a beetroot espresso martini or peach and fennel spritz.

## DOES THIS MEAN THE END OF STEAKS, SAUSAGES AND PORK PIES?

No, but you'd better be prepared for sweet potato steaks, veggie sausages and wild mushroom and asparagus pie filling.

Mintel's Meat-Free Foods UK Market Report, August 2017, found over a quarter (28%) of meat-eating Brits had reduced or limited meat consumption in the previous six months (to March 2017).

Many see eating too much meat as a major driver of climate change, and younger people and women – particularly city-dwellers – are reducing the amount they eat or cutting it out. Reducers are known as flexitarians.

## ARE YOU SURE THIS ISN'T JUST A TRENDY, CELEBRITY-LED, LONDON THING?

Quite sure. You don't associate the nationwide pub chain, Wetherspoon, with Quorn sausages and quinoa

salads but both are available. The letters page of their magazine abounds with pleas from vegans wanting more options. Regulars can already choose a five-bean chilli, veg lasagne, and sweet potato, chickpea and spinach curry.

Marks & Spencer has a new Veggie range which includes edamame bean burgers, topped sweet potato steaks, veggie sausages and veggie mince.

Big brands are using plants as a selling point. The blurb on Unilever's Flora Buttery spread reads: 'powered by plants', highlighting linseed and rapeseed oil as healthy ingredients.

## ANY OTHER EVIDENCE THE FUTURE IS GREEN?

'fraid so. The sandwich chain Pret a Manger opened two more veggie branches in London last year following the 2016 success of the first-ever Veggie Pret in Soho.

Food campaigner, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, who built his reputation writing books about

humanely reared meat and nose-to-tail eating, is now more likely to prepare Jerusalem artichoke gratin than jellied tongue and tail. His second veg-based cookbook River Cottage Much More Veg appeared in September. The Hairy Bikers also jumped on the parsnip and potato bandwagon with Hairy Dieters go Veggie (Hairy Bikers).

## WHAT DO YOU PUT THIS TREND DOWN TO?

Many factors including more adventurous palates; vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free eating; concerns about climate change; and alarm about intensive meat production. The biggest reason, however, is health.

It began with the government's five-fruit-and-veg-a-day campaign. Most of us heard only the fruit bit, and bought fruit smoothies, juices and punnets of raspberries to gobble at our desks. But then we worried we were consuming too much fruit sugar, hence the rise of veg smoothies, spiralizers and NutriBullet blenders. On social media, bloggers loved to make us 'guess the healthy ingredient' as they baked beetroot, cauliflower, courgette, carrot, sweet potato and avocado into pizzas, cakes and desserts.

With the coming of the sugar tax, we learnt how much refined sugar 'healthy' fruit yoghurts contained. So Arla launched the first branded fruit-and-veg yoghurts for kids. Waitrose followed with such combinations as Apple, Carrot, Beetroot & Ginger and

Pineapple, Butternut Squash & Turmeric.

## WHERE IS THE VEGGIE TREND MOST SUCCESSFUL?

We've mentioned it before and we still love Cavi-art – a Danish faux caviar made of seaweed, ideal for vegan canapes and garnishes.

We also love ChicP's carrot hummus, Pelagonia's Malidzano aubergine spread and their roasted pepper spread, Aivar. We like Rubies in the Rubble's cucumber-based London Piccalilli.

## SHOULD I STOCK UP ON VEGGIE PRODUCTS BIG-TIME?

The usual rules apply. Know your customers. The Mintel survey suggested younger generations are the most likely to be vegetarians with one in five (19%) Brits under 25 saying he, or more likely, she, doesn't eat red meat or poultry.

If you have a café or restaurant, make veggie options imaginative. Flexitarians get bored with goats cheese tartlets and butternut squash risottos. How about vegetable moussaka with tofu topping, curried sweetcorn fritters, or spiced potato-filled rice pancakes (marsala dosa)?

This is a good time to stock award-winning meat alternatives such as MacSween or Ramsay veggie haggis and Cauldron's Lincolnshire sausages. But don't over-buy anything too weird if your customers are older, more traditional omnivores.

## WILL THIS TREND LAST?

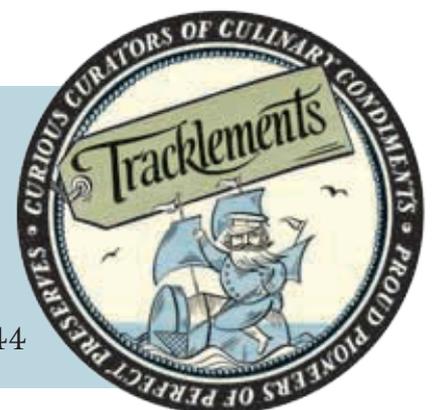
We don't see the whole country going vegetarian or vegan; we do see more families sharing a veg-based meal once or twice a week, instead of feeding the family vegetarian separately. We predict meat-free products and ready meals will improve and vegetable sales soar. Our mums were right.

“ Many see eating too much meat as a major driver of climate change, and younger people and women – particularly city-dwellers – are reducing the amount they eat or cutting it out ”



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# SWEET SALES

Keep your customers sweet with an enticing assortment of chocolate perfect for gifting on key calendar dates

**W**hether they come in a box, tube or in individually wrapped packets, opening up a selection of chocolates is synonymous with life's celebrated events. Be it Valentine's Day, an anniversary or numerous other notable dates dotted throughout the year, it would be a rare to walk away from an occasion chocolate-less.

It's not only the theatre that a beautifully-packaged box of chocolates can provide which lures shoppers. Cacao terroir, ethical sourcing methods and unorthodox ingredients have become equally as important considerations that dictate many shoppers' decisions to purchase chocolate nowadays.

In fact, according to chocolate maker Divine's consumer research, shoppers are often turning to indies

for last-minute higher quality chocolate gifts for such occasions. The company states that this demand provides the opportunity for retailers to cater for shoppers seeking high-quality last minute gifts. "The chocolate you buy for someone says something about you," says Steve Rudkin, account executive at Divine. "Shoppers are looking for elegant gifts that will impress."

Divine has several best-sellers for such occasions, such as its popular Milk Chocolate Hearts for Valentine's Day, a Chocolate Tasting Set for Mother's Day and the new 70% Dark Chocolate Egg with Salted Caramel Mini Eggs for Easter. "Our Easter range will give shoppers the luxurious treats they can feel good about giving, as well as producing delicious products for gifting and sharing occasions," explains Steve.

## HOW TO SELL: CHOCOLATE



**Helen Pattinson, co-founder of Montezuma's, explains the seasonal appeal of the brand and how display entices customers to spend more:**

"It's important from a retail perspective to ensure that our shop windows are regularly refreshed to keep them interesting and relevant. Consumers are, of course, shopping for a range of occasions all year, but it's important that we reflect seasonal trends and significant events through the year. January can be a tricky month for confectionery as most people will have indulged over the Christmas period, so we usually focus on our hot chocolate products and dark chocolate ranges which best suit cold winter days or the trend for people to eat more healthily. We try to ensure all of our stores are focusing on the same themes at the same time, but the individual store teams love creating their new window displays and in-store merchandising in line with these themes so we give them some free rein to demonstrate this creativity.

Key calendar dates are important although in recent years we have

seen more of an even revenue in sales across the year. Our newer, sugar-free range is proving to offer sustained turnover year-round, and the fact that consumers choose quality chocolate as a natural gift regardless of the time of year helps. Having said that, Easter and Christmas are traditionally linked with chocolate so it would be fairly unusual not to see a good spike in sales around these times of the year.

Provenance and the supply chain are now much more important factors for many consumers. As a business we have always felt strongly about this issue, so when we started

“ Provenance and the supply chain are now much more important factors for many consumers ”

## RETAILER INSIGHT



**Candice Fonseca, Delifonseca**

### KEY CALENDAR DATES

Key calendar days are very important, with Christmas proving to be a crucial time for sales. During the summer months the appetite for chocolate tends to fall, so revenue generated by chocolate produce is concentrated

between the winter months through to Easter. Valentine's Day is popular for smaller token chocolate gifts often paired with wine. Chocolate never fails to be a best-selling gift.

### MERCHANDISING

The way that products are displayed

has a direct impact on sales, so it is important to get it right by grouping things together logically in ranges and also in types, whether it is grab, everyday, gift or luxury gift. As customers hate to ask the price, it is vital to always display the prices of each product clearly.

### SOURCING

It is important to order stock for a specific event early, leaving plenty of time to sell out and replace stock,

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we created our own Trading Fairly policy which we still adhere to. The ideals we started out with have stayed with us and are firmly rooted. Our ethics cover everything from how we work with suppliers and how much packaging we use to how we dispose of rubbish and how the ingredients we buy are farmed. By the nature of the geography of cocoa growing, often in countries with high levels of poverty, there can be issues of child labour and slavery as well as farmers not being paid a fair price for their crops. We avoid this issue almost entirely by buying the best quality cocoa from central and South America – areas which don't have such extreme issues of poverty. We still have to be cautious and often buy from co-operatives which operate as an umbrella for hundreds of farmers with their own very small farms.

They work together and support each other when there are issues with crops but also sell as a unified force so demanding a good price for their crops, which are often in very high demand meaning the natural supply and demand economics are in force.

Trading Fairly also extends to the way in which we treat our customers, our staff and our suppliers, and we won't deal with suppliers who can't uphold similar standards.

rather than having excess products at the end of the key sales period. Quirky items are always popular for any occasion and gain interest from customers as well as making for a great social media post, so it is essential for us to consider the items on offer as well as the supplier. In an ideal world our stock would be locally produced, ethically sourced, beautifully packaged and above all, delicious – although finding products to meet all of that criteria can be a challenge.

## PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT: GOUPIE

Just because limited edition or seasonally specific products are the raison d'être for some producers doesn't necessarily mean that all adopt this approach. For chewy chocolate company Goupie, it's more about focusing on the day-to-day. "We do notice an increased demand around Easter – which is evident with our special egg offering – but for the 'one-day holidays' we don't experience a significant increase," Grace Simpson, brand manager at Goupie tells us.

"This is likely because we have deliberately stayed away from the novelty gift packaging as we have always been adamant that our priority should be the product, not the packaging.

Having said that, our Christmas flavours are incredibly popular, and we find that retailers do often ask for gifting options around this time."

Grace states that as a small company, taking on new packaging for a special holiday is a huge cash flow strain and can be a distraction from everyday business. "We find that it is not overly beneficial for us to provide these offerings," she explains. "There are many companies which can provide a better service due to a larger amount of resources and alternative business model, which rely on these holidays to boost their yearly revenues. However, this is not the approach we have chosen to take."

If you're familiar with the Goupie brand, you'll know that this stance is not to their detriment. Each

product is packaged in eye-catching trapezoid-shaped boxes, featuring chewy triangular chocolates – their distinctive concept offers enough pizzazz to wow customers as it is. "Goupie's biggest distinguishing feature is its unique texture," explains Grace. "It combines a cocoa-rich syrup base with toasted rice and biscuit before being fully-enrobed in a 54% Belgian couverture chocolate. This gives a soft chew with a slight crunch in one chocolatey bite. Goupie also

has a huge range of flavours for an artisan product – 17 to be exact. 13 of the flavours are vegan-friendly, three soya-free and seven are gluten-free. This, combined with the relatively low price point and artisanal value, puts

us in a fairly unique position in the confectionery market, especially when it comes to free-from products."

Just because the brand doesn't line-up launches to coincide with annual events doesn't mean that it hits the brakes when it comes to developing new products, either. "In January we'll be launching our Salted Sticky Toffee Goupie in our 180g sharing boxes," says Grace. "We will also be rolling out a new flavour in the summer. We have hopes that this flavour will not only be vegan-friendly and gluten-free but also protein-rich. We will also be slightly rebranding our Easter Eggs to bring them up-to-date with our current branding and are hoping to develop the entire Goupie range to be vegan-friendly – we're going to be busy in 2018!"

“ We have always been adamant that our priority should be the product, not the packaging ”



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# MEET THE PRODUCER

When it comes to stocking confectionery that boasts premium appeal, a company with traditional roots and tried-and-tested flavours is a sure-fire way to entice your customer base. One producer that boasts a wealth of experience creating delectable chocolate and confectionery is Australia-based Darrell Lea.

The family-ran company, most recognisable for devising and pioneering soft eating liquorice, was established in 1927 by Harry Lea (the company was named after his son, Darrell) when he started selling sweets from a pushcart, and later upscaled to a small factory under the first arch of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Since then the company has garnered a reputation as being one of the best-loved chocolate and confectionery brands around today.

"The product on taste, texture and brand heritage alone is making Darrell Lea really well-known in the UK," explains Vic Azam, senior

national account manager of May & Raeburn, the market partner of Darrell Lea. "In the Australian market it's the number one brand with some really exciting NPD and growth plans. Here in the UK, having recently re-launched in 2017 we're seeing a huge consumer demand for the product. I get weekly emails from consumers looking for the product as it has such a loyal following. I'd say from an independent retailer's point of view, Darrell Lea offers them something much more than what is available in the supermarkets, a premium product that is fit

for the independent market."

## Best of the batch

With an eclectic and well-proven list of different ranges under the Darrell Lea brand, one of the best performing is its Batch 37 products. "Batch 37 was launched around six months ago," explains Vic. "The response has been absolutely fantastic. Where it has been placed in Waitrose, it has overtaken the older styles of liquorice – it is even outperforming them by 50% in some cases." It's easy to understand why. A favourite all over the world due to its

freshness and smooth and soft texture, it comes in delicious traditional and strawberry flavours, and represents the apex of confectionery making.

Another appeal that underpins the Batch 37 brand is that each variety attracts distinctly different demographics. For example, the Traditional Liquorice is for the more mature generation of consumer, but the strawberry flavour liquorice is loved by young and old alike. "The strawberry flavour in particular is not what you expect liquorice to taste like," explains Vic. "When people taste it, they express amazement at just how different to regular liquorice it tastes. It's also Vegetarian Society approved, Australian-made, contains nothing artificial and is completely natural, non-GMO, free-from and 97% fat-free."

The range comes in original, craft and rustic-style packaging which highlights the authenticity of the Darrell Lea brand. The company makes its confectionery in a traditional way in small batches to maximise the texture and flavour of its products. "This makes it a premium imported offering rather than everyday item," says Vic. Next up to join the Darrell Lea canon of confectionery is Darrell Lea Sticks, which are longer single individually-

wrapped sticks of liquorice – they're set to hit the market next year. "We're also developing sugar-free for 2018," says Vic. Keep your eyes peeled for more tastiness from the expert liquorice maker to come.

## Insight into the industry

Any retailers that wish to stock the Darrell Lea range themselves should contact Creme d'Or, a UK wholesaler of the brand. In terms of helping to further establish the brand within the UK market, May & Raeburn was



the natural company for Darrell Lea to partner with. The company has over 60 years' experience developing branded business in the UK, with staff committed to understanding the brands they work with and formulating ideas on how best to establish them in the UK market, how to add extra value to them, recommending which channels to go into, what packaging they should develop and more. "The business has touchpoints within every single retailer in the UK – there's not one retailer that we're not dealing with at this moment in time," Vic informs Speciality Food.

"May & Raeburn regards ourselves as offering sales management in the UK," he says. "We have a small client base – we're not a big distributor with a massive catalogue. We work really closely with just a handful of brands in order to get them maximum distribution in the UK." This strategy has worked to great effect, with the company successfully launching over 100 brands. "We're more of an intuitive partner," continues Vic. "We have a close relationship with our suppliers and we give them focus."

“ The company has garnered a reputation as being one of the best-loved chocolate and confectionery brands around today ”



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# TOP DRAWER SPRING/SUMMER 2018

Food Emporium has become a destination of choice for creative retailers searching for a delectable line up of the finest 'giftable' food and beverage products

The dedicated Food Emporium sector at Top Drawer allows buyers to discover the latest food and beverage trends and products from oils and condiments to seasonal treats and confectionery. A hand-picked edit of the best artisans and producers offers irresistible edibles from the likes of Amelia Rope, Paxton & Whitfield, Joe & Seph's, Ross & Ross Foods, Truffle Hunter, Nom Nom Chocolate, Willie's Cacao, Dart Valley Foods, Pinkster Gin, Cartwright & Butler, Joe's Tea Company, Scarlett & Mustard, Man Food and Delicioso.

Amelia Rope joins the Top Drawer roster for the first time this season. The award-winning chocolatier has caused a stir in the chocolate market since launching ten years ago with an array of Colombian chocolate bars.

London cheesemonger Paxton & Whitfield will showcase their new line of products for S/S18. Although the name is synonymous with cheese, Paxton & Whitfield

also offer a unique range of gluten-free bakes, gift sets and cheese accessories that are sure to please any discerning foodie.

Truffle Hunter, the UK's leading supplier of fresh truffles and truffle products, will join the line-up with their best-selling products including Truffle Oils, Minced

Truffles, Truffle Salt, Truffle Honey, Truffle Mustard and Truffle Mayonnaise.

Manfood will return to Top Drawer with their 32-strong range of pickles, sauces, jellies and jams; the perfect accompaniment to a fridge buffet or summer barbecue. They bring to the show their new



range of gift boxes that are a perfect treat for Father's Day, Christmas or any occasion.

Also returning to Top Drawer this season is family-run business Joe & Seph's, who launched in 2010 with a mission to produce the best tasting popcorn in the world. All their popcorn is handmade in London by a small team of pastry chefs. They have a range of over 40 flavours of gourmet popcorn, 10 varieties of caramel sauce and have won a total of 29 Great Taste Awards.

Food Emporium is part of the exclusively curated world of Top Drawer, which comprises Home, Gift, Fashion and Craft. It is the go-to destination for buyers to discover the most exclusive launches from the very best brands.

Top Drawer will be held on 14th-16th January at London Olympia. Trade buyers and press are now invited to register online at [topdrawer.co.uk](http://topdrawer.co.uk)

## IN DETAIL

**WHEN:** 14th-16th January 2018

**WHERE:** London Olympia

**WEB:** [topdrawer.co.uk](http://topdrawer.co.uk)

**TWITTER:** @TopDrawerLondon  
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“ Top Drawer is the go-to destination for buyers to discover the most exclusive launches from the very best brands ”



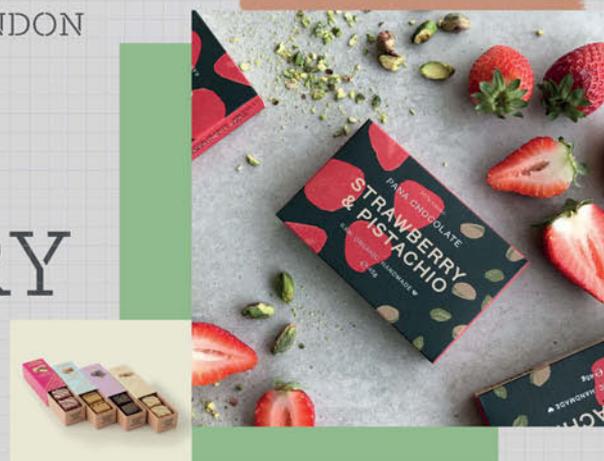
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[bobalife.co.uk](http://bobalife.co.uk)

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[littlepod.co.uk](http://littlepod.co.uk)

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[nouri-health.com](http://nouri-health.com)



## Franklin & Sons

Franklin & Sons products were first introduced in 1886 and the Franklin brothers quickly established themselves as experts in creating authentic, high quality recipes made from delicious hand-picked ingredients. This ethos continues today with the range of premium soft drinks, tonics and mixers. They use only natural flavours, extracts and colours and never include preservatives or sweeteners. Franklin & Sons use local fruit, roots and herbs to ensure we support British agriculture where possible and provide the finest tasting drinks. Flavours include Sicilian Lemonade & English Elderflower with crushed juniper, Cloudy Apple & Yorkshire Rhubarb with cinnamon, and Ginger Beer Brewed with malted barley, ginger and lemon.

[franklinandsons.co.uk](http://franklinandsons.co.uk)

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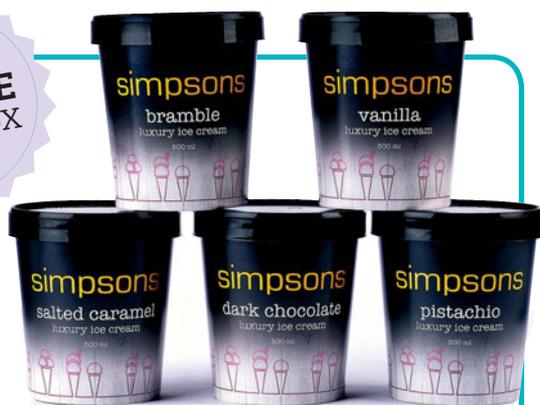
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## Rana's Bakery

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## The Little Treats Bakery

We put fun at the heart of everything we do, lovingly crafting quality little treats for everyone. Made in Cheshire by family bakers, all our characterful biscuits, in a range of gingerbread, vanilla and chocolate shortcake, are decorated to add a dash of playfulness and a sprinkling of joy to the every day. Our delicious premium iced biscuits are filled with fun, jam-packed with character and layered with personality to delight all ages. Plus, impactful and treat-worthy packaging provides great standout on shelf and highlights the premium nature of the product. [thelittletreatsbakery.co.uk](http://thelittletreatsbakery.co.uk)

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## ManiLife

ManiLife is quickly becoming known as the peanut butter for foodies. While other brands are all about "adding nothing and doing nothing", ManiLife celebrates adding nothing but doing a whole lot more. Two years ago, ManiLife imported a tonne of peanuts from their partner farm in Argentina. Abandoned by their manufacturer, ManiFounder Stu and his friends roasted, blitzed and blended the entire tonne, one jar at a time. During this process, they meticulously experimented and created unique blends and roasts, which unleashed ManiLife's distinctively rich flavour, creamy texture and crunch. That's what makes ManiLife different. It's not just the peanuts, but the painstaking process of roasting, blitzing and blending it, one jar at a time, and the experience that comes with it. ManiLife offers three blends: Original Crunchy, Deep Roast Crunchy, Original Creamy. [mani-life.com](http://mani-life.com)

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# HOW TO CASH IN ON RETAIL TOURISM

Now's the time to plan for your share of the tourism trade, says Angela Youngman

**C**apturing a share of the tourist market can prove very lucrative for speciality food retailers. Just consider the numbers. York has 6.8m visitors a year who spend £594m in the city. In Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, over £70m is directly generated from food tourism based on its association with Melton Mowbray Pork Pies and Stilton cheese. Food tourism in Northern Ireland is worth £50m to the local economy.

Food retailers are ideally placed to tap into this market. Whether from overseas or from within the UK, tourists are keen to try local produce, and to take home examples as gifts or as reminders of their visit. Sue Johns from West Country retailer Johns of Instow says, "We get a lot of tourists coming into the shops. They like to buy a taste of Devon to take home or as gifts. We always need much bigger display space during the tourist season as volumes of stock are much higher. Ambient products like Devon clotted cream and jam are always needed, as is freshly made food to take away."

## Offer food to go

Even if there is no café on site, tourists can be encouraged to try new foods by providing small taster

portions, chunks of cheese and dips for use with preserves. Many tourists will be seeking food at lunchtimes, or places for a coffee and cake, thus creating opportunities to promote a wider retail produce range.

Product size is extremely important in encouraging sales. Ludlow Food Centre attracts a large number of coach parties and finds that tourists tend to buy ambient products which they can easily transport on a coach. Ros Windsor, managing director of Paxton & Whitfield comments, "The majority of tourists visiting our shops are looking for the classic British cheeses – Cheddar, Stilton and Territorials like Cheshire. We find we sell a lot of smaller cuts of cheese, such as 100g of an artisan Cheddar, so that they can enjoy them back in their hotel rooms. We find that tourists are looking for other traditional British items such as a chutney or piccalilli that they can take home to enjoy or give as a gift. We've found that our trios of confits for cheese are particularly popular as they are small packs that tourists can take home in their hand luggage."

## Tell the story

She adds, "Any window or in store display related to UK events such as

Wimbledon or Royal Ascot are very popular with tourists, especially if there is a Union Jack in view. We also have the honour of holding two Royal Warrants, which means we are able to use them on our packaging. Buying products that have Royal Warrants are very popular with tourists."

Tourists play a substantial role in the business of London's Borough Market as Kate Howell, director of development and communications indicates. "Provenance and production of goods takes centre stage as our traders treat visitors to the story of everything sold here. Creating appealing displays helps to draw people in and encourage them to shop here – particularly newcomers. We create an environment that allows visitors to explore and learn something new."

## Work with tourist organisations

Just as with any other customer category, marketing has to be carefully targeted to attract the tourist spend. Many retailers work with tourist organisations thus benefiting from extra exposure on websites, in promotional literature or through tourist related events. Such links can be extremely



successful. Johns of Instow invite local tourist organisations to special events and act as a location for photoshoots. They also distribute Tarka Trail leaflets to visitors, thus giving tourists an extra reason to seek out their stores.

Other speciality food stores have identified ways of promoting themselves directly to the group travel market by providing talks, tours and cookery sessions. Set in the Conwy Valley, Snowdonia, Bodnant's Welsh Food Centre attracts large numbers of coach parties keen to discover the wide range of artisan produce on offer, as well as taking part in courses at the cookery or wine school.

Over at Ludlow Food Centre, marketing manager Michelle Griffiths says, "We work with a number of tour operators and coach companies to deliver our Talk and Taste packages. These involve an overview of the establishment, it's history, how it evolved, why we are here and what we do. Visitors also sample a selection of some of the handmade products available to purchase at the Ludlow Food Centre. The site is also utilised by many coach companies who make a stop here to look around and visit our café."

Working with local tourism can be advantageous for retailers. Paxton & Whitfield frequently work with a range of tourist organizations such as Visit Britain, Visit London and Savouring Bath, frequently hosting tastings for foreign journalists visiting the UK to demonstrate the range of artisan cheeses produced in the UK, fine food products and cheese serving accessories sold within the stores. This often leads to articles and broadcast stories that help promote the Paxton & Whitfield Brand overseas.

Ludlow Food Centre takes part in local events that attract tourists to the area such as the Ludlow Food and Spring Festivals. They are also members of Shropshire Tourism and are listed on numerous tourist websites. Ludlow Food Centre advertises in the Welcome to Shropshire Guide, which is placed in the bedrooms of numerous accommodation providers throughout the county.

"We're looking to build other mutually beneficial relationships with other attractions and points of interest in the area," says Michelle Griffiths. "Going forward, we will also be looking to develop a leaflet to be distributed to other local attractions and tourist centres."

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## SPOTLIGHT ON YORK

**Retail and tourism are very closely linked in York. Two years ago, Make It York was formally set up as a brand.** It combines Visit York with groups dealing with economic development and inward investment thus giving greater cohesiveness to all the activities undertaken. A retail forum, newsletters and promotional advice are among the services provided for its retail members. The group is constantly seeking ways to involve retailers in the tourist market, because they recognize there is always much more that can be done.

When Make It York was formed, it was given responsibility for re-energising York market in the

Shambles, turning it into a successful visitor attraction in its own right. Retailers are encouraged to become involved in the York food and drink festival, thus enabling them to promote themselves to tourists via tastings and special events in some of the most picturesque venues in the city. It is not unknown for retailers to become tourist destinations in their own right. One of the most successful examples of an independent food retailer within the tourist market is Bettys of Harrogate. It has become a York 'institution' and features in most travel guide books as a 'must visit' both for afternoon tea and for their range of products. According to Visit York, Bettys is especially popular with Chinese visitors who insist on visiting

the store whenever they come to York.

Kay Hyde, head of communications, Make It York says, "retail is one of the key drivers for tourism in York. We know that shopping is a number one priority for visitors to York. Over the last few years we have seen a surge in independent retailers interested in York and our customers tell us it's these special and unique places that they love about the city. Tourism has a vital role to play in driving footfall to retailers and we can work collaboratively to boost the city's tourism economy and promote Yorkshire artisans, who make such a difference to what we have to offer our visitors."



A DEDICATED DISPLAY FOR LOCAL PRODUCE AT JOHNS OF INSTOW

### Join the club

Many specialist food retailers become members of tourist organizations who develop tourist/retail links for their members, taking advantage of any publicity opportunities that are presented. Jarrolds Delicatessen and Louis Deli are both members of Visit Norwich. Melanie Cook of Visit Norwich always recommends them to journalists on press trips to the area, and includes details in food and drink-related stories – for example, a feature on picnic sites would include a recommendation to buy food from Jarrolds or Louis Deli. "We constantly look for opportunities. There is an exhibition on Anna Sewall's Black Beauty illustrations in Norwich at the moment and a local brewer, Woodfords has relabelled some of its beer to be sold exclusively under the Black Beauty brand at Jarrolds delicatessen. We mention this in our promotional literature on the exhibition. We always think creatively as to how we can include our members with little add ons to tourism publicity."

### Consider long-term sales

An added benefit for specialist food retailers is that attracting the tourist spend need not end when the tourist goes home. Potentially long-term sales can be generated as a result. Johns of Instow often get customers ordering hampers of Taste of Devon food to remind themselves of the holiday they enjoyed.

"We find we have tourists who visit our shops and then once they have returned home, want to order more of what they bought in the shop or try something else from the assortment we retail through our website. We listen to what tourists are asking for and if we are missing anything that they are regularly requesting, we review this to see if we need to create a product or service that responds to this request."

"This is why we update our website regularly with new products and information on how we deliver and what we can deliver abroad. It's our promotional window to the world and so it's important to review and refresh it regularly," says Ros Windsor of Paxton & Whitfield.



### Ros Windsor, Paxton & Whitfield:

"Any window or in store display related to UK events such as Wimbledon or Royal Ascot are very popular with tourists, especially if there is a Union Jack in view"



### Sue Johns, Johns of Instow:

"We always need much bigger display space during the tourist season as volumes of stock are much higher. Ambient products like Devon clotted cream and jam are always needed, as is freshly made food to take away"



### Michelle Griffiths, Ludlow Food Centre:

"We work with a number of tour operators and coach companies to deliver our Talk and Taste packages. These involve an overview of the establishment, it's history, how it evolved, why we are here and what we do"

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**TASTE DIRECT 2018**

**A**lcoholic drinks can represent a valuable source of income for many independent food and drink retailers. Although economic uncertainty is likely to contribute towards a drop in volume sales over the next four years, rising prices are expected to see value sales increase with wine remaining an important consumer category (Mintel). Indeed, 62% of UK adults polled reported purchases of some type of wine.

While still wine remains the most popular type, the sparkling category has seen significant growth, with non-Champagne styles particularly successful, experiencing a 10% rise in on-trade sales in 2016 (Mintel). Moreover, a 2016 report by the Wine and Spirit Trade Association shows that currently eight out of 10 bottles of sparkling wine sold in the UK are not Champagne, an increase of nearly 80% in five years, fuelled mainly by Prosecco, although sales of English sparkling wine, Cava and Crémant are on the rise too. The Institute of Masters of Wine lists market uncertainty due to Brexit and climate change as reasons for buyers exploring alternative high-end sparklers to supply the luxury market. This is a factor that should not be lost on the speciality industry as a greater choice of traditional method sparkling wines becomes available within the UK.

### Diversify

For Mark Billington of Billington's of Lenzie, offering a choice of different styles is key to both customer engagement and sales, thus forming an integral part of his buying strategy. "At least 30% of our off-trade wine sales is sparkling and slightly higher for on-trade. I think with the explosion of Prosecco over recent years, the sparkling wine market has become increasingly affordable. Therefore, customers are more aware and knowledgeable, so look for a bigger choice. We don't just go for the usual - Champagne, Cava and Prosecco. We have a vast, diverse selection from around the world and introduce new lines for short spells to keep shelves interesting and current. Additionally, with Prosecco still most popular, we stock many producers to give customers a wider choice. Cava is also often asked for - we currently stock two - although I fear the explosion of supermarket brands has given this wine a misconception that it's a cheaper alternative to Prosecco. Customers are often surprised to hear it's produced like Champagne, but would still normally choose a Prosecco instead. We have also noticed an uptake on sparkling reds, with Shiraz from Australia very popular."

Branding is another aspect with which to draw and retain customers, as Billington explains. "We are always looking for new products and suppliers, but tend to keep core lines the same as customers become loyal to a brand. Although we have a high demand for favourite and recognised brands, our customers are often open



# SPARKLING SALES

Think sparkling wines are just for Christmas?  
Think again, says Robin Goldsmith

to new suggestions, especially when making gift purchases, and they are drawn towards the more unique bottling."

### Be flexible

At the Ludlow Food Centre, a clear differentiation from high-street offerings throughout the year that reflects ongoing customer demand is a core business strategy, as Jon Edwards describes. "We will not stock products that generally can be found in major multiples and, through working with our

wine merchant, we have selected a number of small independent growers. We do four seasonal reviews, although we are also flexible enough that should a customer request a specific product we can bring this into the range if we think it will work. We hold wine events with our customers and have introduced a number of new wines into our range based on feedback."

### Think different

Local provenance is a key value within the speciality industry,

a factor which has become increasingly relevant to wine offerings as the success of English wine continues to grow. For Edwards, sourcing locally is a major USP and wine is no exception. "We stock a number of quality English sparkling wines from very good vineyards who produce within a relatively short distance from our location. This is a nicely developing area of our business with a loyal customer following, and it also fits into our ethos of sourcing products from surrounding counties." Mark

NON-CHAMPAGNE  
STYLES HAVE  
SEEN A **10% RISE IN**  
**ON-TRADE SALES**  
IN **2016**  
(MINTEL)

Kacary of the Norfolk Deli offers his thoughts. "We took a decision four years ago to buy and sell wines not only made in England, but more specifically made in the counties which form the East Anglian region. We choose the vineyards we work with and stock whatever wines they make, including sparkling. We do have the traditionalists who will only buy something which says it was made in the Champagne region. However, these are the same traditionalists who, having scoffed at the English wines we were selling until Winbirri vineyards won a Decanter 'Platinum Best in Show' medal for their single varietal Bacchus earlier this year, came, bought and raved about this local Norfolk wine! We believe that our range offers people something unique. The fact that we are always selling out of sparkling wines and that the vineyards we use run out too is a good indicator that they sell well. Our wine sales are up by over 100% this year and this doesn't include Christmas sales!"

Champagne is still an essential year-round offering and, at Darts Farm Shop, Gremillet is an important choice. This multi-award winning, family company from the Aube, a lesser-known area of the region that specialises in Pinot Noir, provides a real alternative to standard supermarket fare, the richer Aube fruit giving this good value Champagne broad commercial appeal. "Customers like to buy something special and we feel that Gremillet is just that", comments wine & spirit buyer, Holly Pelly.

### Consider the seasons

Seasonal effects should be carefully monitored to ensure demand for particular products can be met. At the Ludlow Food Centre, the sparkling range provides a quarter of total annual wine sales, a percentage which increases over the festive season to around a third. Although Champagne is the fastest seller, the majority of this is concentrated into December, while all year round Prosecco sells fastest. Similarly, at the Norfolk Deli, there is a slightly larger selection of sparkling wines in the lead up to Christmas and more sparkling rosé during the summer months, reflecting consumer buying habits.

### Education is key

Education and tastings can encourage customers to try different styles, as Jon Edwards illustrates. "We provide background information on the producer and tasting notes, and we regularly run wine events aimed at those

“ Our customers are often open to new suggestions, especially when making gift purchases, and they are drawn towards the more unique bottling ”

## “ Work with a good wine merchant or supplier who can add value to your business and help you get a balanced range ”

customers who are looking to develop their knowledge of wine. We find that established products which have been around for a long time and have suffered from a reputation point of view can struggle to gain a foothold back into the market, such as Cava and Asti Spumante. There is a wariness from customers to give these another try based on historic experience and reputation. However, during our sparkling tasting event, our Asti Spumante was the product that generated the most positive feedback, yet started the evening with no customers saying they would consider it! Education and in-store tastings are the key to re-establishing these styles back into customers' consideration when purchasing.”

Edwards offers some advice for farm shops and delis wanting to

stock sparkling wine: “do it, but with guidance from a good wine merchant or supplier who can add value to your business and help you get a balanced range. Understand the market you trade in, speak with your customers and find out what they want. Getting the right mix will definitely add value to your business. Billington adds the following tips: “Keep a good core selection and promote with tastings and events. Don't be afraid to be diverse and introduce some curveballs to keep your shelves exciting and interesting.” Kacary also stresses the need to offer an alternative choice to other retailers and to know your products well. “Stock what you believe will sell, but be different. We know that none of our wines are available in the supermarkets and that very few larger wine merchants will stock any

of the wines we stock. It's a point of difference which works for us. We visit the vineyards and have them visit us to provide tastings. If you do something different, make sure you educate yourselves as well as your customers. If you stock what can be bought in many other places, then you're going down the route of price matching/comparisons which is never fun.”

### EIGHT OUT OF 10 BOTTLES OF SPARKLING WINE SOLD IN THE UK ARE NOT CHAMPAGNE

(WINE AND SPIRIT TRADE ASSOCIATION)



#### EXPERT INSIGHT



**Sarah Jane Evans, master of wine, offers her expert advice on building a portfolio**

“Undoubtedly, UK shoppers are driven by low prices, but a speciality retailer will never be able to go there. Instead focus on originality, build your own list and definitely don't attempt to do the same thing as the high street. Keep out of mainstream Prosecco, mainstream Cava and cheap Champagne. As a UK based retailer, it's essential to have English

and/or Welsh traditional method sparkling wine on the shelves. The best of these are exceptional, so pick your local producer(s), build a relationship with them and know their stories, so you can recommend that people visit. Choose wines that you actually like and make sure you taste before you stock. Additionally, some retailers may be able to get a special label from their

local producer to add an element of exclusivity. Also, consider arranging events and promotions with the producer or a winemaker evening. It's expensive to produce a traditional method sparkling and even more so in somewhere like the UK, so an event is an excellent way to explain the handmade aspect. In terms of non-UK wines, Tasmania has terrific fresh traditional method sparkling, Franciacorta is the serious stylish Italian and there are many great choices from South America too. Selling these 'unknown' wines may be difficult, but they are all excellent and offer a point of difference.”



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# THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Jérôme Henry, renowned French chef behind Edinburgh's newly opened Le Roi Fou, tells us about his favourite independent shops and suppliers



**T**he quality of the produce in Scotland was one of the reasons I was attracted to open a restaurant here in the first place. Particularly in Edinburgh - an appreciation for good food is evident in the restaurants and suppliers available - but also in the standards expected from the customer. From a chef's point of view, it's like being an artist and crafting a plate from the best materials available.

We're fortunate that where the restaurant is situated in the New Town of Edinburgh there is a pocket of independent businesses which we try to take full advantage

of. Right on our doorstep we have Something Fishy which is from a dynasty of fishmongers - I believe the current owner is the fifth generation to take the helm, and I'll often pop across the road to see what he has in. One of our most popular dishes is our Rockefeller oysters using produce from Loch Fyne, and they are some of the finest I've ever had the pleasure of preparing.

Being in Scotland we often have game on our menu, and we're lucky to have the best game supplier only a mile west of the restaurant. There is nowhere better for duck, venison and other game than George Bower Butchers. One of the nice things about using independent retailers is that your menu is in part dictated by

what's in season and what they are able to stock.

It's the same with the organic vegetable produce we use in the kitchen, which we get from Phantassie Farm out in East Lothian, but which you'll also find at local food markets in Stockbridge and Leith. The produce which is available means your menu is constantly evolving. Buying our vegetables independently also means that we get the quality you would expect from a kitchen garden, but without needing the space, which can be tricky with a city centre location.

It's not just the kitchen which benefits from these local businesses, our bar is better because of local independent retailers, too. Raeburn Fine Wines, which is not far from the restaurant, is a constant source of inspiration for our cellar. I love to try new wines here, and could while away an entire afternoon sampling their wares.

“ One of the nice things about using independent retailers is that your menu is in part dictated by what's in season and what they are able to stock ”

## TWITTER POLL

What has your experience using TripAdvisor been like?

Positive  
**40%**

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**20%**

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**30%**

We don't check it  
**10%**

## SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

The next issue will include:

- Essential Products (for Spring & Summer)
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- Frozen Food & Ready Meals
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## BRAND NEW LOOK

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# TALKING SHOP

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The old cliché of ‘New Year, new you’ might be met with a roll of the eyes by many, but it would be remiss to suggest that consumers aren’t going to be swayed by health foods in January. It’s quite clear now that ‘free-from’, ‘plant-based’ et al aren’t just a flash in the pan, and these lifestyle and dietary choices are generating a formidable following (head to p.27 for Sally Jayne Wright’s piece on the consumer demand for plant-based foods). The industry is now chock-full with products that cater for specific dietary requirements, be they paleo snack bars or gluten-free cakes. These days it would be tricky to follow a specific diet and not locate a relevant product, and a good tasting one, at that.

While you don’t want to be going as far as removing all indulgent foods from the shelves – what a miserable world that would be! – it can really pay to look at capturing the footfall of the health-conscious that walk

among us. For instance, many partake in Dry January after the festivities peter out, so it would be a good idea to stock some of the quality examples of the many premium alcohol-free beverages and ‘adult soft drinks’ out there at the moment. Personal favourites of mine include botanical soft drinks brand Lurville’s Delight’s Original variety, New Producer Award-winning Big Drop Brewing Co.’s utterly marvellous 0.5% ABV Stout and Seedlip’s Spice

94 non-alcoholic spirit, which tastes exceptional served with tonic water, plenty of ice and a sprig of rosemary.

Grouping together healthy or nutritious products into hampers or bundles is a good way to introduce an array of brands to your customer base, and will offer them the option to really delve into this growing sector. This can allow your shop the opportunity to piggyback on the recent craze for subscription or recipe boxes – everyone loves

the element of surprise these packages provide.

It really is testament to the industriousness and market nous of these company founders that they are able to provide such a diverse number of interesting and delectable products to consumers who may be struggling with the limitations restricting them to particular dietary requirements or preferences. Rewind a decade or so ago, and most following a vegetarian

diet would have been met with the option of either stuffed portobello mushrooms or mushroom risotto in most establishments. Now, there’s seemingly a plethora of exciting meat-free choices on menus and products in shops.

The same goes for the likes of gluten and dairy-free. Nowadays there are hundreds of companies creating fantastic quality options to cater to the demand – many a time I’ve eaten a thickly-cut slice of bread to be left befuddled when I discover it’s actually gluten-free.

The inventiveness of smaller companies flying the flag for free-from has elicited a response from established brands, with many of them waking up to the realisation that they need to expand their ranges to appeal to the modern consumer. Whether the quality is there is yet to be seen, but at least there are more satisfied customers.

james.fell@aceville.co.uk

“The industry is now chock-full with products that cater for specific dietary requirements”

## 5 MINUTES WITH... VINNY DE OLIVEIRA co-founder of Chapter Coffee



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

Being part of the food industry and a coffee roaster has always been my passion, so if I wasn't involved in the industry I would be growing my own coffee plants on a farm.

### WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

Helping my father in Brazil with roasting coffee.

### WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

From a young age my father has inspired me to follow in his footsteps and create my own dream of providing exceptional coffee! The challenge of evaluating different coffees in the roasting and cupping process is what gets me up every morning.

### WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

I have been fortunate enough to have always been involved in something that I love, but roasting rooms in the middle of summer in Brazil can be unbearably hot!

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

Creating new and exciting flavours and seeing first-hand the customers'

facial expressions when they take their first sip of our beautifully-crafted coffee.

### AND YOUR LAST FAVOURITE?

The heavy lifting of the burlap bags.

### HOW DO YOU TAKE YOUR COFFEE?

Black V60.

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

I'd like to see more direct trade at source with producers.

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

A barbecue feast.

### WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

Coffee is our game, 100% customer satisfaction is our aim!

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

Crocodile tail.

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

Stephen King's Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption.

### SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Sweet!

## DIARY DATES

### January

#### 14th-16th TOP DRAWER

Olympia London  
topdrawer.co.uk

#### 16th-1st COTSWOLD FAYRE NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH SHOWS

Across the UK  
cotswold-fayre.co.uk

#### 21st-23rd WINTER FANCY FOOD SHOW

San Francisco  
specialtyfood.com

#### 21st-23rd SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW

SECC, Glasgow  
scotlandspecialityfoodshow.com

#### 23rd-25th HVAC & REFRIGERATION SHOW

ExCel, London  
hvacrshow.com

#### 25th LOCAL PRODUCE SHOW

Hilton, Southampton  
businesssouth.org

#### 28th-31st ISM

Cologne  
ism-cologne.com

### February

#### 4th SPRING FAIR

NEC, Birmingham  
springfair.com

#### 7th-8th THE SOURCE TRADESHOW

Westpoint, Exeter  
thesourcetradeshow.co.uk

#### 8th TRI BICCHIERI WINE TASTING

Royal Horticultural Halls, London  
winetecalondon.co.uk

#### 14th-17th BIOFACH

Nuremberg, Germany  
biofach.de

specialityfoodmagazine.com

## WHAT'S IN OUR BASKETS

JAMES, DEPUTY EDITOR



### When In Rome

These wine boxes are already catching the attention of some big players, with When In Rome recently securing listings at Harvey Nichols and other premium retailers. It's

easy to see what all the fuss is about. The box design is snazzy and sleek, the concept is unique and the wine itself is seriously delicious. One to watch.



### Maple Moose Butter

Beloved by the likes of Nigella Lawson, I'd initially failed to wrap my head around the appeal of a butter and maple syrup coalescence. One or two Maple Moose Butter-laden crumpets later and I'm a convert. The subtle sweetness lifts crumpets, toast, and I imagine, literally anything other item it's slathered on to tasty new heights.



### BeFries

This Brighton-based Belgian fries restaurant has recently launched five of its most popular sauces in a retail format, and they're gobsmackingly delicious. Available in Garlic Mayo, Green Peppercorn Mayo, Samurai Mayo, Basil Mayo and Dill & Gherkin Mayo, they're a very welcome addition to any bowl of chips and instantly add a bit of pep to any veggie burger.



HOLLY, EDITOR

### Cotchel

Located just down the road from Speciality Food HQ is Pete Thompson's wonderful farm, which is producing the most sensational range of apple juices from unwanted fruit. Available in a choice of four juices made with apples and pears grown, pressed and bottled on the farm, every single bottle is remarkably flavoursome and boasts crystal-clear consistency. Cotchel juices are now a firm fixture on my breakfast table.



