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## EDITOR'S LETTER



**W**elcome to the October issue of *Speciality Food*. You're reading this after one of the biggest events in the magazine's calendar has taken place: the final of the New Producer Awards 2018. As I write this it's one week away so I'm unable to wax lyrical about the supreme champion just yet, but what I can tell you is that our team of expert judges have whittled down hundreds of entries to just eight incredible businesses – and that this was no mean feat. The quality of this year's entries was astounding, and I can honestly say that I'm so proud to be in a position to oversee these fledgling brands and offer them advice, a leg up the ladder, and a space to shine.

I hope that some of you will have come to Bread & Jam to see the final presentations, and have come away as inspired as I am by the passion that powers these entrepreneurs through thick and thin.

These are exciting times for food and drink, and we're all in it together.

Holly

holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

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# How EU-protected foods will fare in a post-Brexit world

Protected-name products are the jewels in the British food and drink industry's crown, but what's to happen to them once Brexit comes into force?

Foods like the Cornish Pasty, the Traditional Cumberland Sausage and Bramley Apples are protected by regulations put into place by the EU. As ever, the prospect of Brexit brings with it more questions than answers, and there is no certainty as to what the ramifications of leaving the established system will bring. Producers are left wondering how they will cope until a new system is up and running.

In the white paper released in July, the UK government confirmed plans are in place to continue the protection scheme after Brexit, assuring producers that current protections will continue and future regulations will mirror past ones. But the following month, PDOs were used as a bargaining chip by UK negotiators to get better market access in the EU. While the threat was the UK not recognising protected EU products, the two-way nature of

the relationship put protected UK products at risk.

Labels like PGI are important to both producers and consumers; the sector is worth £1bn in the UK. For the producer it is a livelihood, for the consumer it is the assurance of quality and tradition. According to the board of the Cornish Pasty Association: "A lot of work has been done in the past 20 years to reconnect people with food, particularly by raising their awareness of where it comes from, how it is made, and what makes a product great. Geographic indicators have played a big part in this, by celebrating and adding value to regional distinctiveness and generating a sense of pride in it, something that had become all but lost in the preceding couple of decades."

Reactions vary from uncertainty to reassurance. Some companies express worries about what will

happen during the transition period. According to Dr Matthew O'Callaghan, chairman of the UK Protected Food Names Association, "We are less than six months away and we [producers of protected goods] have still not been consulted on any schemes." Patricia Michelson, founder of La Fromagerie adds: "I don't think we, as a country, have ever experienced such uncertainty and lack of information on such an important and life-changing aspect for a country. We can keep beating ourselves up about it but we need to focus on making the transition as painless as possible and positive for the sake of future working relationships."

However, the UK will not be starting with a blank slate when it comes to building a plan. Columbia, for instance, is not a member of the EU, but Columbian coffee is protected under EU regulation.

The biggest hurdle for the UK at the moment is establishing a system that is reciprocal with the EU. "The fear," O'Callaghan says, "is what happens to if we bounce out the system without any regulation; EU products within the UK won't be recognised and to that extent why should they recognise us?" As Brexit approaches, tensions between the UK and EU grow higher, but it is in this moment that the biggest focus should be on collaboration.

When asked about what he wants out of the new system, O'Callaghan responded: "I think we'd want the same scheme and we'd want it seamless. There are things that can use some slight amendment. We think there ought to be a register of all protected producers. It costs to be inspected. We have an annual inspection of our members, which isn't cheap, and to that extent we think that should give us rights,

terms of making sure that other producers around us have to go through that regime."

Michelson adds: "It is not in the best interests of the EU and UK to not work together. Trade should be welcomed from both sides of the channel and what Brexit has opened up is maybe how the EU is run and whether it should have a shake up and re-think. I loved being part of a wider market, and would hope that even though Britain has stepped away from the EU it can continue to make a contribution to developing new ways of working with EU countries. What is important and what I think has been an interesting strategy is the way that transport hubs and companies in UK and EU are discussing how to work better. Whether we like it or not we are going to see changes in the way we work outside of the UK. We will see prices rising and poor exchange rates for the next few years until things settle down. All agriculture will have to make changes and sacrifices because of increased prices of products they buy from the EU.

"Now more than ever the government on this side of the channel and those in the EU need to make sure that their farmers and distributors are looked after and encouraged to continue trading together."

**For the full story visit [specialityfoodmagazine.com](http://specialityfoodmagazine.com)**

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## JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



### “Late Bloomers”

This summer I stumbled across two facts that in particular stuck in my mind. Firstly, a reminder that Winston Churchill's age when he took over as Britain's war time leader was 65 and a half. Secondly that Sooty is still on stage at the age of 70. It appears that both of them were invigorated at the prospect of a challenge in later years. Churchill, as we know, contributed to the salvation of western civilization and, although Sooty's achievements as a family business may be more modest, the fact that they both kept going under difficult circumstances says a lot about character at a certain time of life. They are two examples of late bloomers.

I am mindful of this in particular because the start of September saw the return of the Speciality & Fine Food Fair. It is always a highlight of the year. Having been to about 24 of them, the event is not only a great showcase and celebration of the best but also an opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues from the past and make new discoveries and contacts for the future. Many exhibitors are late bloomers themselves, having embarked courageously on a change of course in life after giving up the day job. Recently, the topic of retirement has surfaced. In particular, I am often asked about whether I've thought of 'packing it all in', or indeed receive confirmation that those who have 'stepped back' regard it as the 'best thing [they] ever did'. I am sure one day, and maybe sooner than I had previously expected, that I will be saying the same thing.

However, as a committed sexagenarian, the question of retirement now arises of its own

accord and not just during wet weekends, or team bonding sessions. Is it still appropriate to look at Twitter, wear shorts, turn up at new product launches, and talk about life during the first EU Referendum? (Just for clarification I have only ever tweeted twice and certainly not worn shorts for over five decades).

Although nothing much physical happens when you break through the 60 barrier (touch wood), a gradual but noticeable intolerance to certain experiences starts speeding up. A lot of life's background noise moves into the foreground. Here I am thinking of pension funds, business rates, building works and the like, not to mention political and environmental woes. It often seems there is a mountain to climb while trying to sell fine food at a later time in life. I am sorry if this is beginning to sound like Ed Rearidon's Week in Speciality Food!

However, seeing the new and innovative fine food at the show and listening to the people who created them is inspirational. It brings to mind examples from the wider world.

Senator John McCain who died recently just a few days short of his 82nd birthday was still a serving US senator. Paul McCartney is launching a world tour at the age of 76. Colonel Sanders was 65 when he started KFC. Daniel Defoe was a wine merchant before he published Robinson Crusoe at 60, and let's not forget the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit Job of 2015. As Mark Twain said, it is not about the size of the dog in the fight but about the size of the fight in the dog.

And for those of us running a speciality food business, it is never too late to become what we might have been.

# New Producer Awards 2018: Category Winners Announced

After releasing its **Top 40 shortlist in late August, the category winners of Speciality Food's New Producer Awards 2018 have now been named.**

The 40-strong shortlist of entries to the New Producer Awards has been whittled down to just eight. A renowned panel of judges, which brings together Renée Elliott, founder of Planet Organic; Jessica Abela, product developer at Selfridges; Ed Mehmed, director at ?What If!; Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of Cotswold Fayre; Richard Horwell, MD of Brand Relations and Tara Mei, founder of

Hotcakes and co-founder of Bread & Jam, has chosen a winner from each category which they believe to be the very best in their field. The category winners are:

- **Innovator:** Kinda Co
- **Mission-driven:** Nemi Teas
- **Crowdfunded:** NovelTea
- **World Flavours:** The Russian Food Company
- **British Brand:** Never.25
- **Young Producer:** Bullion Chocolate
- **Newcomer:** Hunter & Gather
- **Farm-to-fork:** Hive Urban Farms

Holly Shackleton, editor of *Speciality Food* said, "We've been amazed by the number and quality of entries this year. Even though this is only the second edition of the New Producer Awards, both have seen a huge jump and we can confidently say that our Category Winners demonstrate the very best the start-up food and drink scene has to offer.

"At the time of going to print we are just days away from the final presentations at Bread & Jam, and I can't wait to see these brands come face to face with the judges and be rewarded for their hard work."

## Summer 2018: who will take the heat?

**Summer is at an end and, with it, the heatwave that ravaged the country for two months. In its wake lie decreased yields, damaged crops and long-term effects for the food industry.**

The hottest summer in the UK since 1976 brought with it a drought. Between the heat and the lack of rainfall, farmers noticed a significant change in their crops, which could ultimately affect the price of certain fruits and vegetables and their availability. According to the National Farmers' Union, farm gate prices are looking to increase and it will be to the discretion of the retailers about who takes the hit:

consumers or themselves.

Certain crops, such as onions and carrots have reportedly yielded between 25 and 30% less than the prior year, due to the lack of rainfall. The heat stunted the growth of brassicas, with cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower down in volume according to Jack Ward, chief executive of the British Growers' Association. Peas, apples and potatoes have been affected, their crops producing smaller products. Grains ripened far earlier than accustomed because of the heat, decreasing their yield and their bulk. Lettuce provides an interesting case because the heat not only wilted and

diminished crops, but throughout the long heat spell there was a 40% increase in demand for lettuce from consumers wanting to make summer salads. Amid reports of failing and withered crops, prospects for raspberries and cherries look promising. The long summer suits raspberries and cherries, which benefit from drier weather.

With approximately £500m worth of crops lost to the weather, food prices are reported to rise an estimated 5%. The meat and dairy industry have also suffered, with milk production down and winter stores already dipped into just to keep livestock fed. It will be a matter of waiting to see what further effects the weather has, and how it shapes the latter half of 2018.

Have you been affected by this year's heatwave? Get in touch: shannon.lewis@aceville.co.uk

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## CHARLES CAMPION



### “Getting authentic”

As the world shrinks, thousands of traditional foreign recipes are out there begging to be adapted and improved. Keep the name; keep the cheaper ingredients; filch the presentation. So far so good, but in the autumn a war broke out between a couple of unlikely combatants – no less an eminence than the shadow equalities minister accused Jamie Oliver of “cultural appropriation”. In Jamie’s Italy, Jamie and his long time mentor Gennaro Contaldo buzz round Italy on a Vespa, stopping only to eat dishes prepared by a succession of grandmas – the octogenarian Italians cooked the same dishes that their family had always cooked, with recipes that have been unchanged for decades. After much lip-smacking Jamie would gush about authenticity and offer up similar dishes with his twist.

Meanwhile, back in Blighty, the “cultural appropriation” charge revolved around the authenticity of jerk. In the Caribbean “jerk” tends to mean a spicy marinade for chicken, so it was a surprise to find it changed into a vegetarian dish tailored for the microwave. Heavily branded Jamie Oliver Punchy Jerk Rice sold into the supermarkets despite such un-jerk ingredients as ginger, aubergines, beans and jalapeno chillies... but no chicken. All of which goaded the shadow equalities minister into her righteous anger. In the immortal words of a nameless advertising copywriter, “A good idea doesn’t care who has it”, and chefs and cooks happily add extra exotic pizzazz to their dishes. Nigella Lawson doses her spaghetti carbonara with nutmeg, wine and cream. Mary Berry advocates adding a dollop of double

cream and some white wine (or red, “whichever is handy”) when creating ragu Bolognese. All is anathema to the authenticity hard core.

The problem is that most recipes evolve rather than arrive fully fledged. Look through Elizabeth David’s books or Escoffier’s mighty tome and you’ll find lots of recipes that have been “improved”; it’s the same when it comes to traditional ingredients. We should be encouraging chefs to try non-authentic flights of fancy – make a risotto, but make it with pearl barley rather than rice; make that dressing with verjus rather than vinegar; use cep powder for a bosky note on the plate. While the culinary world is reeling from the inevitable shortages following the summer of 2018 – the potato crops were hit hardest by lack of water – perhaps it makes sense to take another look at traditional dishes and add unauthentic ingredients – rice, spelt, pasta, cous cous. Surely taste and texture are what matters?

What’s a little cultural appropriation amongst cooks? So what if the telly chefs like to add a splodge of double cream, it’s indulgent and delicious. How dare anyone stand up and say that the only true path is the one they have personally sketched out. In many ways the public are ahead of the celebs, and a recent survey saw potato sales down 5.4% while sales of rice have soared by 30% over the last four years. Does this mean that chips are on the way out? Does this mean that rice is on its way to a stranglehold in the kitchen? It’s strangely comforting to think that maybe Jamie Oliver Punchy Jerk Rice is slap on-trend. Perhaps what we need now is a bit more cultural appropriation? And for politicians to get over their prejudices.

# Great British Food Awards shortlist announced



**After an unprecedented number of excellent entries, the shortlist of UK-made products for the 2018 Great British Food Awards has been set.**

The awards, now in their fourth year, set out to find the finest home-grown products the UK has to offer. The shortlist, which was determined by a highly-skilled team of in-house experts, will be judged by a panel of celebrity judges and industry experts, including Michel Roux Jr, Monica Galetti, and Jimmy Doherty.

The shortlist categories are: Fresh Meat, Charcuterie, Butcher’s Corner, Fish & Seafood, Gin, Cider, English Wine, Spirits, Beer, Non-Alcoholic Drink, Store Cupboard, Cooking Oil, Savoury Preserve, Sweet Preserve,

Ready Made, Subscription Box, Sweet Bake, Savoury Bake, Free From, Gluten Free, Healthy Boost, Cheese, Dairy, Confectionery, and Savoury Snack. The full list can be found at: [greatbritishfoodmagazine.com/producerawards/shortlist](http://greatbritishfoodmagazine.com/producerawards/shortlist).

Natasha Lovell-Smith, editor of Great British Food said, “The standard of entries has been truly exceptional this year, ranging from wagyu steaks o rhubarb gin. We’re all about boosting small local producers, who may be well known in their regions but have yet to get the national recognition we think they deserve – and I’ve been delighted to see entries from every corner of the UK. With the amazing quality on offer, putting together our shortlist

was certainly a difficult task.”

Category winners will be announced in the November issue of Great British Food magazine, which is on sale 11th October. The 2018 awards will also see the inclusion of a ‘Grand Champion’ award for the best product across categories. This award will be determined by the buyers at Ocado and will be based on criteria such as account provenance, packaging and innovation, although taste will be the primary factor.

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## Sale of railway arches worries thousands of small businesses

**S**mall businesses remain uncertain about their status working out of railway arches after Network Rail approved the sale of thousands of railway arches to Blackstone and Telereal Trillium.

Thousands of businesses across London, as well as in other major cities like Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester, and Birmingham, operate out of railway arches. These businesses are generally small and independent, such as craft breweries or coffee roasters. When Network Rail announced they intended to sell 5,500 arches in early August, thousands of businesses spoke out, voicing fears about increased rent and changes in terms that could lead to them closing shop doors. In response came the Guardians of the Arches, an organisation that formally launched in May of this year with the help of New Economics Foundation and the East End Trade Guild and already spans 600 members. They called for the sale to be put on hold until tenants' interests could be ascertained. However, in mid-September property investors Blackstone and Telereal Trillium won the bid for 4,000 railway arches in exchange for a payment of £1.5 billion.

Adam Dakin, managing director of Telereal Trillium has talked about the possibility of opening 430 empty arches up for business. He confirms that the company will be focused on

ensuring the rights of the existing arch tenants, claiming they "want to keep the quirky and independent nature of the tenant mix." Already Telereal and Blackstone have agreed to sign a charter that will put the tenants first, with promises of "new structures to provide financial or other support" for tenants that are struggling to pay their bills, and an assurance that they will listen to reviews about rent and respond in a timely manner. But many are quick to note that nowhere in this charter is there a promise to keep rent prices low. According to Will Brett, director of communications for the New Economics Foundation, "The potential new owners have made a lot of nice noises about how they are going to be on the side of tenants and put 'tenants first'. But what the Guardians of the Arches want to see is nice noises being turned into concrete commitments."

The uncertainty of the new situation is what makes businesses nervous. "[Businesses] have no way of knowing what the intentions of the new owners really are." Brett said, "They are open to negotiations; they want to get it down on paper, making it a formal commitment to the tenants." Several have expressed concerns that the companies' desire to turn a profit will lead to overnight rent hikes that put them out of business and want the assurance of stability. According to Brett, "A starting point would be to meet

our demands for a full, transparent rent and lease audit, and to recognise Guardians of the Arches formally as a tenants' association."

The reason behind this call for transparency is "because, historically, they've had real problems with differences on rent. Arches next door to each other being told that they have been compared to different businesses in different locations. There's been a divide in rural approach by Network Rail that has been leaving tenants feeling confused and disorganised. They want to understand how rent is set and what parameters are used; they want that to be transparent so there's no scope for suspicion and uncertainty. When it comes to leases, tenants have been forced to sign away their security of tenure; they are contracted out of the Landlords and Tenants Act but that's the only way they're able to sign on as tenants."

One of the reasons behind the lack of trust is tensions that took root with Network Rail as owners. Leading up to the sale, businesses in the arches have been hit with rent increases of 250-300%. According to Kristen Schnepf, founder of cheese company Gringa Dairy, "Our primary issue with Network Rail is they absolutely gouge us on service charges. They don't provide the services we pay for and have not reconciled the service charge accounts since 2013. We can't seem to get any help or have any recourse."

Brett continues, "the fact that Network Rail does nothing has definitely come up...Boosting rent so it goes up to the level of conventional commercial estate is madness when these places are really badly looked after. You have trains rumbling overhead, they're damp, and lots of tenants end up investing their own money in these arches. Charging a service charge at all seems a bit much given that there isn't much service going on."

While uncertainty lies ahead for those in sold arches, and unideal circumstances for those that have not been sold, the publicity behind the sale has brought the arches into the public eye. With politicians like Hackney South and Shoreditch MP, Meg Hillier, Jeremy Corbyn, Baroness Bakewell, and transport secretary Andy McDonald showing support for Guardians of the Arches, the small businesses at risk won't go down without a fight.

**MICHAEL MACK,**  
NFU

## "Celebrating our farmers"

**I'm writing this on the eve of the Back British Farming Day (12th September) hosted by the NFU, which made me think about what a day like this is trying to stimulate.**

The aim of the day is to galvanise farmers, consumers, politicians and businesses around one simple message, that British farmers are important to all of us.

It's saying these people are important for the produce they create, the landscape they maintain and communities they sustain, and that if we don't support them we cannot guarantee that we can rely on them being there for future generations.

This sounds a grand objective, but what does it mean to the independent retailers across the country? The starting point for these businesses is that the produce they sell is one of the keys to their success. The produce has to come from producers with great stories and must constantly be of the highest quality.

Great quality and provenance for most food and drink products revolves around how the core ingredients are produced. This is true regardless of if you're talking about a joint of beef at the butcher's counter or a bottle of local cider. By tracing the origins back in a range of products around the shop, many businesses can create compelling promotional stories about how the shop comes from a 'real' farm. With farm shops this is particularly true as the consumer can also look out the window and see the environment that's being produced alongside this quality food and drink.

I'm surprised, however, how little many farm retailers and independent retailers make of these links. I am often left wondering why the first sign I see at a shop is not one telling me about the amazing meat, fresh from the farm, or the veg that's been picked that day.

The inverse of this is the drive of many businesses to align their businesses with many of the values created by British farms, with very

little to no evidence behind these claims. These businesses are making these links because the consumer values British farmers.

Brexit seems to be affecting how the consumer is valuing British produce, and as the predicted price increases start to come through to the shop shelves, it's predicted that the consumer will increasingly look for products on the shop shelves that carry the Union Jack.

So championing products that carry amazing stories back to the farm gate should always be a priority. But how to get the message out to the consumer in a strong and meaningful way?

It is amazing how often shops don't link this provenance to their core marketing strategy. Linking the stories behind your products with your core marketing strategies enables consumer to see that you share the values of these farmers.

Ensure the story is true and honest. That sounds obvious but we have all heard of the fake farms used in retailing. Farm shops have the biggest ace up their sleeve on this point. They are the real deal, with a wealth of authentic stories that can be linked to their business.

Tell the story of the product over the season. Farmers have had a difficult season this year due to a cold winter followed by a drought over the summer. Tell the consumer through newsletters, social media and in-store storytelling how this is affecting production. If this then affects price or quantity later on, consumers should respond in a positive way as they have bought into the story.

The final point would be to integrate the farm into how you surprise and entertain the consumer. Ask your suppliers to host joint farm walks, to which you invite your priority customers. These low cost events became the reason these consumers value your business.

Backing British farmers must be a priority for all retailers, big and small, and not just a priority for the NFU.

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## Post-Brexit farmer immigration scheme launched

**The first post-Brexit immigration plan released by the government looks to provide British farmers with a much sought-after seasonal workforce.**

Beginning in spring of next year, the UK will be providing 2,500 six-month visas for non-EU nationals to come to the UK to work on fruit and vegetable farms. The UK farm industry relies on the 67,000-75,000 seasonal workers that join the workforce during peak production time. As 95% of the workers come from EU countries with freedom of movement, the UK is looking for alternatives to alleviate any potential labour shortages on British farms once Brexit comes into force.

This is not the first scheme of its kind in the UK. From 1945 to 2013, the UK implemented a system called the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS). The last iteration of the scheme, which provided an immigration route that allowed agricultural producers to satisfy their labour needs, gave migrants from Bulgaria and Romania six-month visas that allowed them to enter the UK to work as fruit and vegetable growers. The scheme ended in 2013 when restrictions on the right to

free movement for Romanian and Bulgarian people was lifted, and the EU labour market was able to provide for the UK. Brexit will change that.

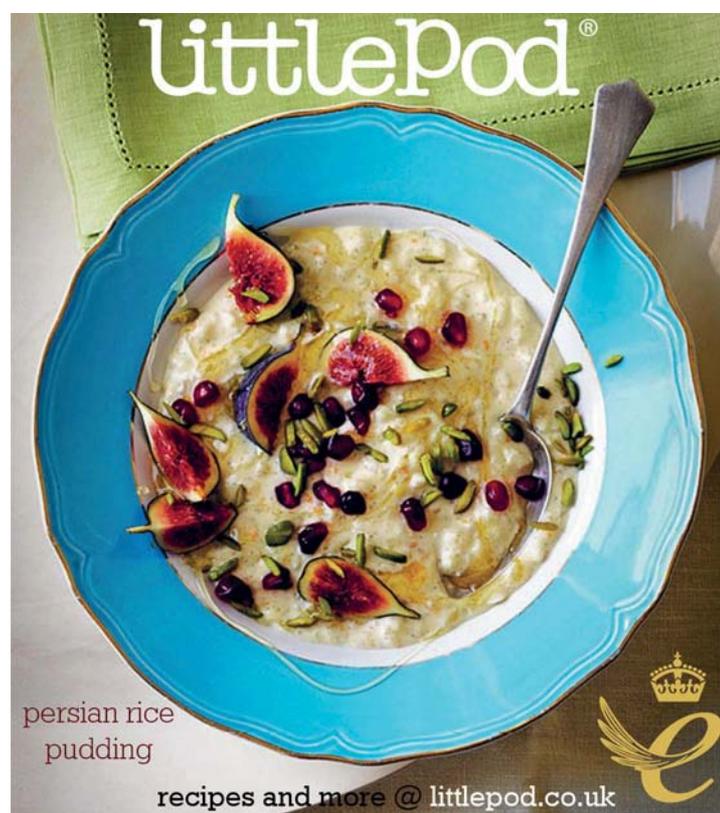
Worker availability has been in decline in recent years, with a shortfall this year of 10%. Strategies like these are investments in the British farming industry that payout throughout the rest of the consumer year. Farmers placed increasing pressure on the government to ensure a protective system is in place, insisting upon the importance of seasonal labour during busy periods to ensure productivity. The scheme extends the reach of its migrant worker pool outside of the EU.

While presenting the plans, Home Secretary Sajid Javid said, "British farmers are vital to the UK's economy – and the Government will look to support them in any way we can." The scheme will run until 2020 and has been positively received by UK growers. Minette Batters, President of the National Farmer's Union, told the Financial Times: "Growers will take great confidence in knowing they will have access to workers for the 2019 harvest, during what have been extremely testing and uncertain times for the sector."

## Great Taste Supreme Champion 2018 Announced

**Premium Pili Nuts with Ecuadorian Cacao made by Mount Mayon Brand has been named Supreme Champion of this year's renowned awards scheme.**

The product beat over 12,000 other competitors, with judges ultimately proclaiming they were "nuts about these nuts." The product also won the Golden Fork for Best Imported Food. Mount Mayon Brand is a Philippine company based in Olongapo City and sell multiple varieties of Premium Pili Nuts including Himalayan Pink Salt, Ecuadorian Cacao, and Kyoto Matcha. Barefoot Provisions, an American retailer of Mount Mayon Brand, calls the product "the caviar of nuts."



## BigBarn steps in to save 60 local food hubs



**When 60 businesses lost their online trading platform because of a move, UK-based BigBarn absorbed them into its own system.**

After four years working in the UK, French technology company, The Food Assembly, announced it would be leaving the country. As a result, more than 60 local food and drinks hubs were left without an online platform to trade on. Food hubs operate like virtual farmers markets, with consumers selecting goods online and picking them up from a specific location (or organising a delivery). These businesses would have struggled without a trading platform. Enter BigBarn, a UK food and drink website. BigBarn was already host to 7,000 producers, some of which had been going through or managing these abandoned hub and asked BigBarn to take them on. BigBarn obliged.

As a result, consumers have increased access to local products, producers are granted a certainty of online presence, and hubs are given easier access to new farmers and producers. According to Anthony Davison, the founder of BigBarn, food hubs portend massive potential. "Theoretically," Davison says, "they can be one click away from being an online supermarket. If you've got enough producers locally, they can all put their products online and you can get a complete shopping basket of goods all in one shop. Because it's local, it can potentially be cheaper and fresher and [consumers] can be putting [their] money back into the local economy, building [their] local food system." BigBarn hopes that this change can bring about increased support for more hubs to be set up around the country, which Davison says could be important with Brexit on the horizon. "We could see food prices rise quite quickly, but if we've got lots of farmers growing produce for local people then it could all work out a lot better."

BigBarn has revealed they intend to build upon the French company's existing platform, updating it to best suit the businesses that use it. When asked what kinds of changes BigBarn intends to make, Davison responded: "the existing platform allowed producers to add their products and the organiser had to then make sure all the products are there and organise the consumers and sign them all up. Within our system we've got 7,000 producers already on our map. [We want] producers who can quickly add their products, so all the organiser has to do is link to them and do a bit of promotion to local consumers."

One of the ways BigBarn is making sure the platform evolves in the correct direction is by "talking to all of the hubs and developing the technology for them." Davison emphasises the importance of lending these hubs a voice in the development process: "it's all about communication and improving the service... we've already developed a certain amount of the technology and we want to make sure the stakeholders benefit from it."

“ We could see food prices rise quite quickly, but if we've got lots of farmers growing produce for local people then it could all work out a lot better ”

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# A NEW CHOCOLATE EXPERIENCE

House of Sarunds introduces Visser Chocolate: an indulgent blend of quality, taste and visual appeal

The demand for high-quality Belgian chocolate in the UK has been a constant throughout the generations, a concept that House of Sarunds have been championing since their humble beginnings over 25 years ago. What began as a single man taking a weekly trip to Belgium to stock up on chocolate for a small handful of local chocolate shops has grown into an industry leading supplier of a wide range of chocolate and confectionery brands. What was true almost three decades ago remains just as true now: the UK has a hunger for fresh Belgian chocolate.

With the company's growth came the constant evolution to maintain their position in an ever changing marketplace. From the beginning, the company expressed a dedication to environmental responsibility by carefully monitoring the way its goods are packaged, to industry

ethics by stocking one of the largest ranges of fairly-traded chocolate and confectionery in the UK, and to health and dietary requirements by constantly seeking sugar-free, no added sugar alternatives through to gluten-free and vegan ranges. House of Sarunds' list of suppliers has evolved, too – they are proud to now be stockists of the innovative Visser range.

The Netherlands-based chocolate company was first started by celebrated artisan chocolatier Frank Visser, and produces colourful, interesting products from 100% organic cocoa sourced from Biolands, Tanzania. Quality can be traced from end product to original bean, with the farmers growing the crop in a sustainable high-quality way and being compensated with

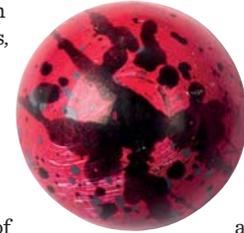
a fair price that allows them to maintain a higher quality of life for them and their families. Visser states it has a mission of making “the most delicious of chocolates, in the most sustainable of ways.”

With a smooth, creamy texture and impressive visual designs, Visser chocolates layer a variety of flavour profiles into its confectionery, making every bite a complete sensory experience. Founder Frank Visser explains on the website: “At Visser Chocolate, we look at chocolate in a new way. Through my background as a chef, I feel it's important to make chocolate that little bit more special. Chocolate with the sharp sourness of a superfruit? Chocolate with a caramel tinged with vinegar and a sprinkling of fleur de sel? It makes the flavours expand. Makes for an

element of surprise. It transforms a bonbon into a mini-dish all on its own. Something that's experienced. Food pairing with first class ingredients sourced from all over the globe is our starting point.”

The Visser range available through House of Sarunds consists of 30 different individual chocolates and two options for deluxe chocolate gift boxes, with every chocolate available a careful combination of interlinking flavours and meticulously-crafted designs with a smooth finish. Visser bonbons, the brand states, are made with the tenets of bonbons kept in mind. That is: a melt-in-your mouth texture and a flavour combination of tastes that are distinct but fit together. The range offers classic flavour combinations like Mint Chocolate and Peanut & Caramel, options that are in keeping with modern trends such as Yoghurt & Goji Berry, as well as flavour combinations that push boundaries and present new exciting options like Fig Anise and Thai Chilli. As much care goes into the chocolate element of Visser's confections. The chocolate production takes cues from interesting options all over the world; Tanzania 75% uses single-origin chocolate from Tanzanian cocoa beans that boast particularly

high cocoa mass, which is blended with cream and butter to ensure a balance between the tart bitterness of the chocolate and the richness of the dairy. For the Cassata option, the makers turn to the ancient Southern European tradition of candying excess harvest fruit as a means of preservation to produce a bonbon topped with candied orange peel, melon, pineapple and succade, balancing the sourness of the fruit with bitter caramel by cooking it at a high temperature.



Aside from its wide range of flavours and assurance of quality-control, one of the biggest allures of Visser chocolates are their stunning visuals. A display of Visser chocolates offers a kaleidoscope of designs: geometrical pyramids, half-spheres and perfect squares drizzled with splashes of colour, topped with cheetah spots, dusted with gold powder, and covered in crisp marbling or smooth lines. Then there is the Picasso range, hand-painted in extravagant bright colours with a shiny smooth finish. Between their fantastic flavours and picturesque design, it would be hard for any chocolate lover to pass by a Visser creation without indulging – and House of Sarunds is proud to bring this luxurious opportunity to independent retailers across the UK.

“Visser chocolates layer a variety of flavour profiles into its confectionery, making every bite a complete sensory experience”

FRANK VISSER, FOUNDER OF VISSER CHOCOLATE



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## RETAIL-TAINMENT

Doing the grocery shop has become quite an experience says Sally-Jayne Wright. Be prepared for anything from yoga classes to supper clubs

To compete with online shopping, multiples and indies alike are having to try harder. Earlier this year, Waitrose trialled yoga classes at a handful of branches. Paid-for tastings of Plymouth and Japanese gin followed and as we go to press, Waitrose is planning pop-up supper clubs run by amateur cooks at 50 in-store cafés. Sainsbury's experimented with the first UK supermarket ice cream parlours at five branches this summer.

At Eteaket, a specialist tea store for Edinburgh hipsters, there are monthly wellness talks. At a typical event, a chiropractor advises on how to look after your spine while customers sip green, black and peppermint teas and are shown hot and cold brewing techniques.

### HOLD ON. COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE WORD RETAIL-TAINMENT?

The use of sound, ambience, emotion and activity to get shoppers in the mood to buy. A US sociologist called George Ritzer invented the word in a grandly titled 1999 book called *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption*.

### WHAT MIGHT THIS RETAIL-TAINMENT BE?

Tastings, supper clubs, street food, markets, festivals, talks, even date night sushi-making classes for couples.

### WHAT'S BEHIND THE TREND?

Shopping has become divided into 'chores', on the one hand, and 'cherish' – socialising and discovery – on the other. We order spare parts and dishwasher tabs online because it's easy. In real life

we want to meet new people, learn skills and make new memories.

'People will still make their way to physical stores, because they want to get experiences that they won't find anywhere else,' predicts Vaughan Rowsell, founder of Vend, an international retail software company.

Eataly, a giant food hall cum new age education centre in Asia, Europe and the Americas, is a prime example of how to turn shopping into experience. At its Bologna store, as well as numerous pop-up food and kitchenware shops, it has sports and play areas, a cinema, farm animals and vegetable plots.

### ANY TIPS ON PUTTING ON AN EXPERIENCE?

Consider what your target customer will enjoy and appeal to all five senses. Fudge Kitchen is a chain of seven confectionery stores selling slab fudge made from fresh whipping cream. The pouring and shaping of the

molten fudge is highly watchable and demonstrators chat up the audience and encourage samplings. Customers can also take selfies of themselves learning the process.

Music creates mood, and comparative tastings enhance appreciation. Could your bread supplier teach shoppers why slow-fermented sourdough is better than supermarket-bought?

Don't forget aroma. A chain of travel agents pumped out the smell of coconut sun tan lotion to put customers in a holiday mood. Can you get tastebuds salivating with the aroma of fresh ground coffee and cinnamon buns?

### WE'VE HARDLY ROOM TO SERVE PEOPLE, LET ALONE PUT ON A SHOW. ANY IDEAS?

How about taking the show to the customers? The annual Glyndebourne opera festival takes place in east Sussex from May to August. Most festival goers share picnics on the lawns. This gave TV presenter, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, and his team the idea of setting up a River Cottage-branded pop-up deli in the grounds. They set up shop in an adapted shipping container and offered two seasonal picnic menus. Opera-lovers could buy their whole supper from River Cottage or top it up with bread, brownies, flapjacks and salads.

“Numerous surveys have shown that millennials value memories and experiences over material goods”

### WHAT IF YOU'RE NOT REACHING THE KIND OF CUSTOMERS YOU WANT?

"Think outside the box" advises Giovanna Eusebi, whose Italian deli had been struggling along in Glasgow's East End for decades. To introduce her brand to a more affluent demographic, she took over an empty shop in Princes Square – a more upmarket end of town – for a three-week, December pop-up. Her budget was tiny so she shared rental and databases with a candle-making company and paid a music school student to play carols to set the scene.

She also taught Glasgow College students how to make real ricotta, used deli products to cook at a street food stall and hosted tastings of regional Italian wines. Creativity and passion paid off because today she has a West End restaurant and deli and the original site is her bakery.

### THIS ALL SOUNDS FABULOUS BUT I'M SOOO BUSY...

You don't have to go it alone. To offer supper clubs, Waitrose teamed up with an online platform which links amateur dinner party cooks with potential guests. Could you co-host an event with a supplier, catering college, restaurant, celebrity chef or street food stall? Speak to your chamber of commerce and research food festivals.

### THE 64 MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION: WHAT WILL EXPERIENCES DO FOR SALES?

Retail-tainment is about profile, not hard sell. It's a success if: more people know about you; you increase your database; gather feedback on your products; and convert occasional customers into regulars.

### IS THIS TREND HERE TO STAY?

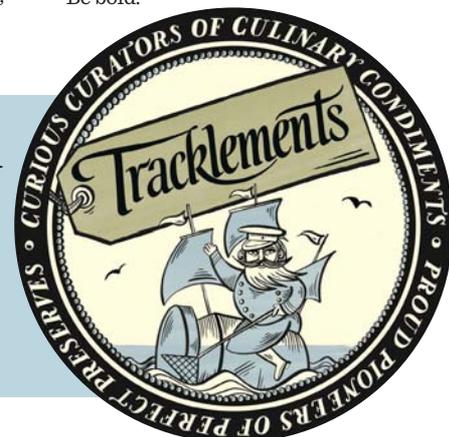
Absolutely. Humans are sociable animals and high tech needs high touch. Numerous surveys have shown that millennials value memories and experiences over material goods. So it's just a matter of creating the right experiences. Be bold.



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With sustainability a hot topic in the food sector, we explore the new technologies and sourcing methods that are advancing supply chains and reducing our environmental impact

The image of non-recyclable materials – especially single-use plastic packaging – has taken a battering as of late, mainly caused by what's now been coined The Blue Planet Effect. The David Attenborough-fronted television series – aired in late 2017 – featured shocking scenes detailing how overfishing, plastic pollution and climate change are all damaging ocean habitats. It quickly caused the general public and politicians to address the formidable issue of waste.

As well as a 5p carrier bag charge to be extended to all retailers, Theresa May vowed to eliminate all plastic waste within her 25-year environment plan, with proposed policies including plastic-free aisles in supermarkets and a tax on takeaway containers. In February this year, Dutch chain Ekokopla demonstrated that the former can be done and unveiled the world's first plastic-free aisle.

While plans for a Latte Levy – a mandatory 25p charge on the use of takeaway coffee cups, which tend to feature plastic lining – hasn't come to fruition just yet, the public is repeatedly pushing for ceasing the use of takeaway cups.

So much so, in fact, that at the time of writing 241,950 people have signed a petition calling for the

discount for customers using them. Boston Tea Party, a chain from Bristol, has all-out banned single-use cups in its stores. "We want to demonstrate to other operators that to make a difference, big change is needed," said Sam Roberts, owner and managing director of the Boston Tea Party. "We will make this work and we'll share details of how we've

“ We dream of a future where our children marvel at the fact that pre-2018 we would regularly use a cup once and throw it away ”

Government to make shoppers pay for throwaway plastic cups at the till in the same way they do so for plastic carrier bags.

This strong reaction to single-use coffee cups has increased the use of reusable, eco-friendly coffee cups, with chains like Pret a Manger – and plenty of indies, too – offering a

done it with anyone who wants our help to do the same. We dream of a future where our children marvel at the fact that pre-2018 we would regularly use a cup once and throw it away. The discarded cup could then take centuries to decompose. When you consider it in those terms, it really is senseless.”

### Responsible sourcing

It's not just packaging that has been put in the spotlight, with companies increasingly encouraged to be transparent about their supply chain and sourcing methods, too. The Fairtrade certification scheme has been emphasising this point for decades and sets social, economic and environmental standards for both companies and the farmers and workers involved in growing ingredients for produce like chocolate and coffee. For farmers and workers, the standards include protection of workers' rights and the environment, while for companies it includes payment of the Fairtrade Minimum price and the enforcement of an additional Fairtrade Premium that should be invested in the business or project of the community's choice. Fairtrade independently checks that the standards have been met by the farmers, workers and companies that are part of a product's supply chain.

In order to reassure consumers that those steps have been followed, Fairtrade licenses the use of a Fairtrade Mark on products and packaging.

Ethically-focused certification schemes don't just start and end with Fairtrade. More and more business are signing up to be B Corporations – or B Corps – as of late, which is a scheme that ensures that companies are held accountable for their social and environmental performance. B Corps are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community and the environment. UK-based food and drink companies that are certified B Corps include Cotswold Fayre, Cook, Doisy & Dam, Toast Ale and many more. Businesses are expected to be responsible for being part of a community of leaders, which use business as a force for good.



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## VIEWPOINT: JOHN STAPLETON

Meet the champion of SMEs and passionate advocate of facing Brexit head on

**E**verybody, in one way or another, is affected by Brexit. It's a big topic. In the context of food and drink, businesses have to become more aware of the effect it could have on them. There are hundreds of small businesses in the industry, and there is an elephant in the room; it's my job to help them not feel distressed.

Being Irish myself, with a great deal of interest in the business world, I have a slightly different perspective on things to others. Having spent five years in the US and another five years in Germany, I've experienced the British food industry from within as well as as an outsider, and I can see that while I'm not going to change it, it needs someone proactive to help guide it. By holding events and even just sitting down for a chat over coffee, I hope that I'm making a difference; my main message is that when something is happening outside of your control, it's important to be proactive with the things that you can control. Discussing an

issue with a peer could turn into a community where you can talk about your issues openly and where ideas can start to form.

Interestingly, Irish businesses are being more proactive than those in the UK when it comes to making plans for Brexit. They've been madly busy coming up with potential scenarios – even though it's entirely out of their control. Their theory has been that if they can't control Brexit, they should prepare as much as possible for whatever might happen. Having said that, in Britain we're no clearer on what's going to happen; we trust that our politicians will deal with it, but they're changing their minds all the time. A lot seems to be happening behind curtains. When it comes to food businesses getting into retail, British brands are coming up against a lot of resistance from retailers, who are saying that as Brexit hasn't been figured out yet they can't make a decision until next year, while Irish brands are speaking with retailers in Ireland and coming up with plans. That's not

to say that every Irish brand has it completely covered – some of their ideas are good, some are half-baked, but the point is that they've made the decision to get on top of it and decide what to do. There's a lesson here for British brands – it's not possible to make a plan in isolation. Instead, every business needs to come up with a plan and discuss it with the people they're doing business with, for example retailers.

Is the UK government doing enough? The answer is no. I do think that the UK government is a lot better at preparing and supporting SMEs for Brexit than the SMEs would be alone, but let's not forget that there are thousands of other businesses that need support. I think the food and drink industry is overexposed to the potential affects of Brexit. You might say that Brexit brings opportunities, because it does, but there are also huge risks. For example, consider the employees of food and drink businesses. I believe that there are 1 million to 1.5 million employees in the food and drink industry in the

UK, and 35% of those are of EU origin. That's a huge number of people who have no idea how their lives are going to change when Brexit takes hold. Putting our current situation into context, in 2015 there were 85 thousand people working at harvest time. In 2016 that had dropped to 61 thousand, and in 2018 there are only 50 thousand expected. In 2017, a large percentage of the harvest was left in the ground or on the trees due to the lack of harvest workers.

Compared to other EU countries like Ireland and the Netherlands, we're woefully underprepared – and it wouldn't necessarily be too difficult for the Government to change that. By creating a simple Prepare for Brexit website with a questionnaire to answer to see how prepared you are, we could make a big difference. It would help to have someone offering advice along the lines of 'this is too much of a risk' and 'there's an opportunity here but you could do more to make the most of it', as well as practical steps to clarify what can be done now in order to be prepared – as well as advice on how important it is to be flexible.

The Irish government, together with Bord Bia, has created a Brexit Barometer which is working brilliantly – the businesses who are using it have become a lot more comfortable about what's potentially to come. Small-scale businesses who don't have the resources to do this kind of thing themselves have found it particularly invaluable. Companies like Mondelez have a Brexit preparation plan that involves stockpiling ingredients – big businesses have the resources available to prepare for Brexit, but as we have so many SMEs in the food industry right now we could really do with this kind of tool for practical purposes as well as for putting peoples' minds at ease.

### TALKING POINTS

#### NATIONAL PRIDE...

**Following the Brexit vote, more brands have associated themselves with the heritage and values of the British food industry. It's not just about slapping the Union Jack anywhere, though, it has to be relevant. I remember seeing this happen in Ireland. Back in 2008, after the crash, almost overnight you saw the Irish flag in the grocery market. In part it's an emotional response – consumers wanted to support the country they called home, and there was a support for local farmers and produce and products that we hadn't seen before.**

#### MY ROLE...

**These days I help businesses grow, particularly if they are food or drink-based – they could be either start-ups or long-established businesses. They could be wanting to produce a business plan to set them up for launch, or they could want to build their business from being worth one million to five million. I either invest in businesses, or I help by establishing a relationship with them.**

“ Brexit is forcing us to take action. If you prepare, you'll be at the head of the queue ”

### WORK EXPERIENCE

My focus is on the SMEs, with a particular focus on the 's'. That's my background and it's what I've done for the last 30 years – I've had three businesses in my time. The first was the New Covent Garden Soup Company way back in 1987. Andrew, my business partner, had this crazy idea for soup: we wanted to challenge an audience who weren't interested in buying canned soup because it was bad quality, so we

came up with a process and patented it because it was a novel way of making fresh soup in a can. In hindsight I can see that in essence we built the fresh soup category, although perhaps we didn't go about the business side of things as efficiently as we could have done. Of course, new labels came in once they realised the category was going to be established, so we built it to around £20 million revenue and sold it, then all went our separate ways. I later went to America to do something similar under a different name

with fresh soup in a carton. With that, we did a lot right, got information about how the market works there, and built a factory in California. It actually didn't work in the end for lots of reasons, some out of our control, some mistakes we made ourselves, but that little adventure – it was a five year adventure in California – was very insightful in terms of the things we did right and the things we did wrong, and we learned a lot about not just business and branding but about ourselves.

Having moved back from the States to Munich (my wife is German), I was kicking my heels around wondering what to do next. I met Hilary, who became my business partner for Little Dish. We created the brand in 2005 and started selling in 2006. Little Dish is all about the provision of healthy convenient tasty food products. We started with ready meals for children aged 12 months and up, and since then have expanded the range but maintained our original ethos and values.



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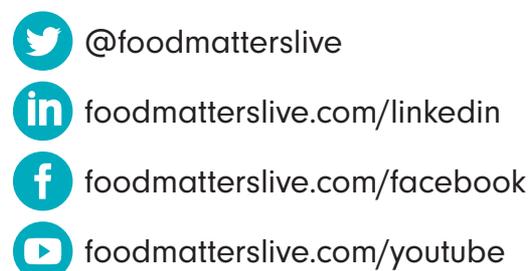


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Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

## Cookbook author launches ayurvedic energy snacks

**Food brand Dadima's has launched new energy snack products inspired by ancient Indian ayurveda medicine.**

Following a recipe handed down by founder Aneeka Ludhra's grandmother, the snacks, called Panjiri, are cooked, ready-to-eat and high in fibre and come in 200g glass jars.

They contain 14 natural ingredients, including semolina, ghee, pistachios, almonds, melon seeds, sultanas, green cardamom, fennel seeds, ginger powder, desiccated coconut, carom seeds, sugar and Arabic gum. The product was created to be used as a topper on yoghurt, porridge, fruit and salads.

Aneeka said, "Panjiri symbolises the epitome of heritage Ayurvedic food cooked with the expertise of a loving grandmother and my aim is to put it on the commercial map as a trustworthy, nutritious, age-old energy snack."

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



## New festive gifting options from Flower & White

**Speciality baker Flower & White has launched limited edition collections of chocolate-themed meringues for Christmas.**

The new Meringue Truffles and Chocolate Covered Meringue Drops both come in festively-themed gift box sets. The Meringue Truffles are filled with chocolate ganache in flavours such as Chocolate Brandy,

Pink Champagne & White Chocolate and Cointreau Chocolate Orange. The Chocolate Covered Meringue Drops are made from hazelnut-flavoured meringue covered in milk chocolate and finished with caramelised hazelnuts and edible gold stars.

All of Flower & White's meringue products are handcrafted in Britain using free-range eggs, natural flavours and colours and Callebaut chocolate. Slow-baked to a traditional Swiss recipe, they're naturally gluten-free and suitable for vegetarians.

Leanne Crowther, co-founder of Flower & White said, "We believe that our premium chocolate-filled meringues are a first. For retailers looking for a point of difference at Christmas, these are the very essence of luxury, both in presentation and taste."

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



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



## Aduna taps into superfood trend with launch of African super-teas

**Health food brand, Aduna, has released a line of African Super-Teas as a way of "tapping into four trends: superfoods, ethical consumerism, Africa and premiumisation."**

The teas, which are organic and nutrient-rich, are made with a variety of spices, leaves, flowers and whole pieces of fruit, and are packaged in organic tea pyramids.

Alongside its launch of new teas,

Aduna further tapped into the African superfood market with the release of a new energy bars.

Andrew Hunt, co-founder and CEO of Aduna, said, "Consumers of speciality food are amongst the most discerning, placing high priority on quality, authenticity and taste."

"Our two latest product ranges – African Super-Teas and Superfood Energy Bars are made using the highest quality natural ingredients boosted with African superfoods."

"Delivering on nutrition without compromising on taste, both ranges are also rich in story and social impact, giving them a strong appeal to a socially conscious and health-oriented millennials within the category."

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



## London-based Italian baker releases authentic panettone

**Wimbledon-based delicatessen and wholesale bakery operation La Bottega del Pane has announced the launch of its new almond glazed panettone, which is made to a traditional recipe and features sultanas, candied fruit and a unique variety of almonds produced in Avola, Sicily.**

Rocco Tanzarella, owner of La Bottega del Pane, started producing his own panettone in 2010 to avoid importing ready-made options.

He enlisted the help of his brother, who came to London from Puglia,

and they developed their own recipe for panettone.

Each year the company produces a new option using a variety of different ingredients, with 2018 seeing the launch of the almond glazed variety.

Rocco said, "I strongly believe all delis should give their customer the opportunity to taste a real Italian panettone, the only one artisanal-made in England. It's unique, delicate in taste and rich in flavour. It is a niche product that sells very well through the year."

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

At Divine, the cocoa farmers who grow the finest quality cocoa for the chocolate also own 44% of the company and share in the profits.

[www.divinechocolate.com](http://www.divinechocolate.com)

## Zuma bucks the trend with Organic Beetroot Powder

Drinks brand Zuma has launched an Organic Beetroot Powder, which adds a purple colour and earthy flavour to any drink.

The company recommends that it be added to steamed milk to create a beetroot latte, to hot chocolate to make a red velvet option, as well as smoothies, frappés and cakes.

The powder is made from dehydrated and ground whole beetroot, is approved by The Vegan Society and is believed to boost immunity, endurance and stamina, as well as increase energy levels. Available in 100g pouches, each pack provides 33 servings.

Gary McGann, sales and marketing director at Zuma said, "There has been a considerable growth in consumer demand for organic products, which is why it was important to create a pure product that met this demand. Zuma Organic Beetroot Powder contains nothing but beetroot and squeezes an incredible 24g of fresh beetroot into each concentrated 3g portion." [beyondthebean.com](http://beyondthebean.com)



## Scottish bakery offers boozy twist on a bakery classic

Stornoway-based Stag Bakeries has released a brand-new range of fruit cakes, available in three varieties. The cakes are made by a talented team of craft bakers based out of the the Scottish Outer Hebrides.

The cakes take traditional fruit cake recipes and adds a twist to suit the modern palate. Available in Raspberry & Gin, Blackcurrant & Rum and Orange & Whiskey, each cake is 300g and made with a recipe that ensures they are light but decadent.

The cakes are dotted throughout with fruit, and will be sold in luxury gift tins in order to add "that extra special touch." Each tin features a glossy image of the fruit that is in that particular cake, and a stripe of colour on which is written the cake type.

Charlie Macdonald, owner of Stag Bakeries said, "We're always experimenting with flavour combinations to try and create the best possible experience for consumers and we feel these cakes offer something special. Each cake is packed with fruit and we've been delighted with the feedback we've had on the range so far. As a great gifting option or an indulgent treat, we're very excited about consumers getting to try them".

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



## Artisan vinegar company creates Lovage variant

Vinegar Shed has recently launched a lovage vinegar, which has already scooped one star at the Great Taste Awards 2018.

The vinegar is made with lovage that is hand-picked in Vinegar Shed's garden and infused into cider vinegar for three to six months. Lovage, a member of the Apiaceae plant family alongside celery and parsley, is nutrient-rich, with antioxidants, Vitamin B and Vitamin C benefits that it carries over to the vinegar.

The vinegar is aged in wooden barrels of sustainable wood, such as oak, chestnut, and acacia, in the company's West London headquarters. It can be used in salads, soups, stews, and sauces, as well as in cooking fish or chicken. Mixed with water, it can help digestion.

Andy Harris, chief vinegar officer said, "Lovage is a wonderful undiscovered herb that's now finding favour with chefs and home cooks. I love its intense flavour and wanted to make a very British herb vinegar for my new own-brand Vinegar Shed range of British vinegars. More and more people are drinking vinegars, not just using them for salad dressings, so its myriad uses make it a perfect addition to the pantry."

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



## Gradz Bakery's expanded range now supplied to indies across the UK

Gradz Bakery has added Vienna Cheesecake, Apple Cake, and Fruit Tart to its range, and they are now available to stock via Cotswold Fayre.

Agnes Gabriel-Damaz, co-founder, said, "This is very exciting for Gradz because previously we have had to deal with individual small stores on a one to one basis. It meant we could only supply stores within our local vicinity. Now we are working with Cotswold Fayre, hundreds of shops across the country can sell our natural sourdough breads and cakes. We know everyone will love them because we have had such great success already, winning numerous awards, and receiving countless letters and emails from customers telling us how pleased they are."

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

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# THE SF GUIDE: SOURCING PRODUCTS

Some business owners primarily browse wholesalers' brochures while others are obsessive when it comes trade shows. We talk to retailers about their sourcing methods and where they go for inspiration

**"It's really important for us to have the latest and greatest beers or customers will look elsewhere"**



**Hop, Burns & Black has built an esteemed reputation by supplying the public with quality craft beer**

**and hot sauce. Jen Ferguson, co-owner, discusses the importance of savvy sourcing.**

"The craft beer retail sector is increasingly competitive – it seems like every other week a new craft beer shop opens up and supermarkets are increasingly getting in on the act, too. This means there is a huge emphasis for us to source new and rare products, with many drinkers not wanting to drink the same beer twice.

"A lot of things come into play when choosing new lines for our two shops. The fast-moving world of craft beer means it's really important for us to have the latest and greatest beers or customers will look elsewhere, so every week we bring in between 20-50 new products. We find out about these in numerous ways – we keep our ear close to the ground on social media to see what people are raving about or producers are boasting about, and our customers are always quick to tell us about new things we should be getting in. We know our customers' tastes very well after nearly four years, so we know which producers we should be keeping an eye on for new releases. Obviously we do a lot of tasting and research ourselves,

**"We know our customers' tastes very well after nearly four years, so we know which producers to keep an eye on for new releases"**

## ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

- The fine food industry is lucky to have plenty of quality options when it comes to wholesalers and distributors. Make sure to sign up to their newsletters, brochures and social media channels

- Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms are a great way to keep abreast of new launches, as well as monitor how popular they are proving with consumers

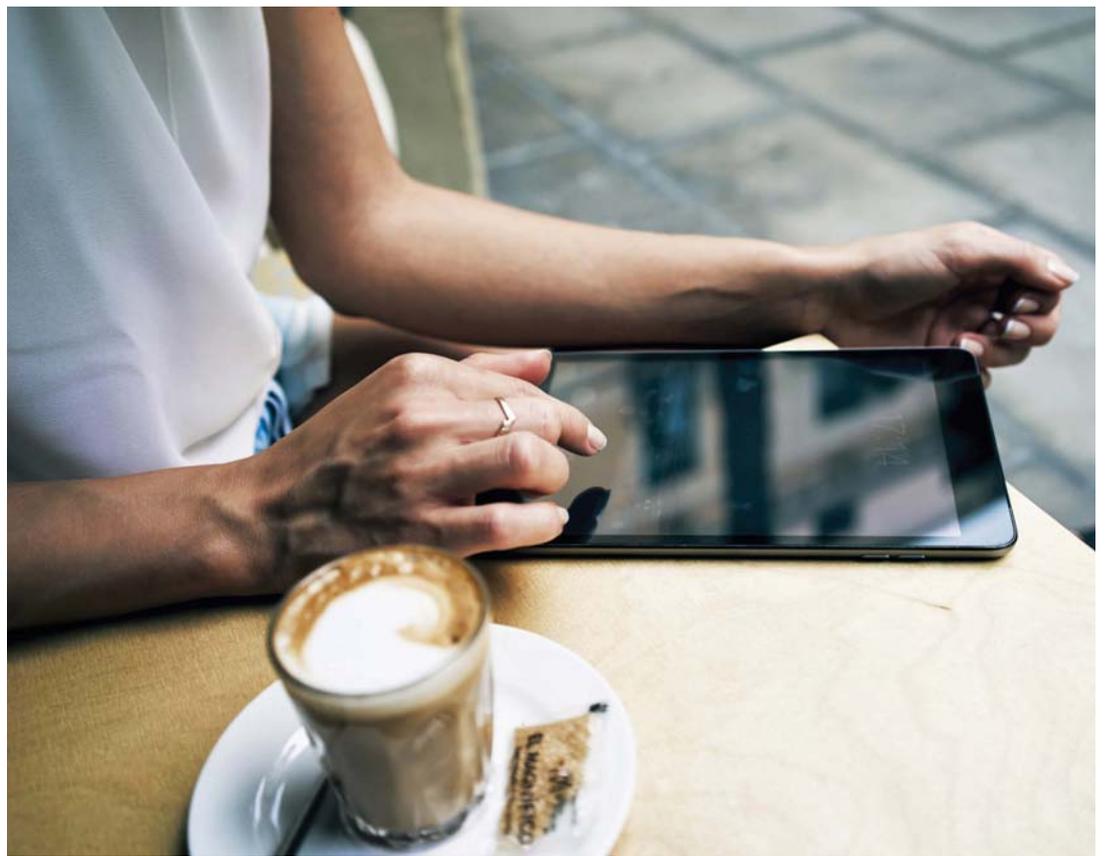
- Speciality Food's online Product Finder tool is an invaluable digital directory of thousands of fine food items

too – it's one of the perks or pitfalls of the job!

"It's really important that we trust the brewery when stocking their products – it has to have a record of quality and consistency. We don't get to try every beer before we buy it in, so dependability is key. We know what's going to sell well for us – which styles and breweries are popular with our customers – so that informs our weekly purchases. We also have an independents-only rule – we won't stock beer from multinational conglomerates such as AB InBev or Heineken.

"We take a very similar approach when it comes to our hot sauces. We love sauces from small, local saucemakers – people taking an artisan approach, such as the Peckham Sauce Co. and Barnfather's. We also try to avoid too many novelty sauces – the hot sauce market is much more sophisticated these days.

"When it comes to knowing what will go down well with our customers, we use instinct supported by data. We've been doing this for nearly four years now, so we have a good read on what people will like. Vend, our point-of-sale system, allows us to drill down into any aspect of our inventory to see which products, styles or brands have been selling well (or not), and base our weekly purchasing on that. We pride ourselves on extremely low stock wastage – we rarely see products go to date."



**"Word-of-mouth suggestions are a great starter"**



**Fink in Boroughbridge, Harrogate, opened its doors two years ago and has garnered awards and acclaim ever since. Co-owner, Hugh Fink, details his criteria for stocking products.**

"Word-of-mouth suggestions are a great starter. Whether a customer suggests a product or asks whether 'something like...' it often initiates a search. We also use some great

wholesalers and their existing listings are a great source for products. We often also give a call to our most specialist suppliers – they can often come up with the goods or will be able to suggest a source.

If we draw a blank within our existing network, we'll revert to internet searches.

"When it comes to trade shows, we make a point of visiting the Harrogate Fine Food Show and the Farm Shop & Deli Show – we see these as really important in maintaining contact with existing suppliers, chatting to potential new ones, identifying trends and picking up ideas. We sample a lot of products, but the decision as to whether to stock them is the result

of a process of identifying their appeal to our customer base, and practical issues like price, shelf life, availability and minimum order size.

"We love classical products which are beautifully and simply presented with credible provenance. The provenance issue is much more important than just being local, and while we promote produce from our home county of Yorkshire, our stock covers a broad range of high quality products from around the world. But, sometimes, the reality is we just immediately know we want to stock a product – the love at first sight scenario. They often turn out to be our most successful ranges."

**"We have an independents-only rule – we won't stock beer from multinational conglomerates such as AB InBev or Heineken"**

**"Products being made primarily with machinery in large batches aren't going to have the attention-to-detail that most retailers are looking for"**



**Award-winning charcuterie expert and owner of Denver-based deli and salumeria Il Porcellino, Bill Miner, walks us through curating cured meats and the American charcuterie scene.**

"Retailers should be looking for how the charcuterie is made, where it's processed and how big the company is. There are many factors that go into making a quality salami. Small batches of the production lends to a more artisanal, hands-on product. Products being made primarily with machinery in large batches aren't going to have the attention-to-detail that most

retailers are looking for. We hand-trim all of our raw pork through a process called seam butchery, removing any sinew and unwanted silver skin in the pork. This ensures that there are no pieces that get stuck in your teeth while eating the finished product.

"Provenance isn't as important as using heritage breed pigs which are raised properly. That being said, we source our meat locally, because Colorado has some fantastic farms that live up to the standards we're seeking. Animals that are raised on-pasture, allowed to roam freely and graze, are happy pigs. They are fed a vegetarian diet with non-GMO grains and legumes. A higher quality raw product definitely lends itself to a higher quality finished product.

"An example of a great charcuterie

selection must include one small-gauge salami that's packed full of flavour. As well as one large-gauge, sliceable and spicy salami, something different like a beef bresaola or lamb prosciutto, a succulent whole-muscle pork product like coppa or lonza with plenty of fat in it, then maybe a nice pâté or rilette. And, of course, some type of smoked sausage, like Toulouse.

"Wine and beer obviously pair well with charcuterie. But so do some higher-end spirits, such as artisanal gin or small-batch tequila, too.

"The business of American charcuterie is experiencing a boom much like cheesemaking did 25 years ago. There's a fair amount of artisanal salumi and charcuterie makers in America, and their businesses are growing rapidly. We went from having three full-time employees in February to now eight full-time and five part-time – that's pretty significant growth in six months!"



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# HOW TO SAVE YOUR HIGH STREET

Could online retail and street food markets be key to keeping our high streets alive?  
Angela Youngman investigates

**F**orecasts of the demise of the high street are all too common, appearing every time yet another multiple brand collapses, or there is talk of the growth of online retailing. Well-known companies are struggling. John Lewis has reported virtually zero profits; Waitrose and Debenhams are among retailers in trouble. Archie Newman, chairman of M&S has been quoted as saying that unless the company changes and develops “in decades to come there will be no M&S”. BHS has vanished while House of Fraser was sold at a knock down price. Thousands of retail staff are losing their jobs. Parcelforce Hero’s David Jinks has suggested that half of the UK’s shops will have disappeared by 2030.

Such opinions are nothing new. Take Ludlow for example. In 1995 the Independent reported, “The medieval town of Ludlow is slowly dying, victim of a decline in similar market towns across the country.” Sound familiar?

Move forward to 2018, and Ludlow is a thriving gourmet food destination, home to extremely successful bakers, delicatessen and food retailers as well as an annual Ludlow Marches Food & Drink festival. Ludlow is not unique in this situation as there are many examples of thriving market towns where footfall and customer spend are steadily increasing.

So why is this happening? Why are specialist retailers succeeding where national chains are failing? The answers lie in a complex mix of customer service, product sourcing, the provision of local produce, versatile trading concepts, local control and the creation of shopping areas that are not dominated by the national brands that have created a sense of uniformity within high streets, making them look the same wherever you happen to be in the country. It is also a matter of local initiatives, and local organizations taking control of the high street.

## “The connection between production and selling”

In Yorkshire, Malton has become known as the ‘food capital’ of the county. Tom Naylor-Leyland of local landowners Fitzwilliam Malton Estate explains how this came about. “10 years ago, we had empty shops, and our retail environment was challenged by out-of-town stores and internet shopping just like other market towns. Visiting Borough Market

in London, I saw just how many products came from Malton and North Yorkshire. We held our first annual food festival in 2009 and 1,000 people came to see just 25 stalls. We now get around 30,000 people and 180 stalls.”

This was only the beginning. A monthly food market was set up attracting up to 4,000 people a month, followed by food tours, and a cooking school run by local food companies. Local food producers including a gelato company and macaron producer were encouraged to set up businesses in the centre of town, stressing the connection between production and selling.

Ludlow too introduced a food festival and encouraged local retailers. Tish Dockerty of the Chamber of Trade says, “The initiatives have come from the Chamber and the retailers, not the local authority. It is what we need and what we want for our town. We have developed a Ludlow guide listing all the independent shops trading here which is very popular with both locals and tourists.”

For such initiatives to succeed, time is needed. Tom comments, “It took three years before we began to see a change in the fortunes of Malton. It is all about getting people into a market town. Food is the hook to get people into Malton. Our big advantage is that the Fitzwilliam Estate owns the buildings in town so there is just one freeholder, which makes it easier to co-ordinate events and policies. We can take a longer-term approach. But it could be replicated elsewhere, just by focusing on what is available locally.”

## “Consumers have lost faith in supermarkets and large suppliers over unethical sourcing and health scares”

National retailers including brands like John Lewis and Waitrose are frequently criticized for levels of customer service, with complaints constantly rising. Independent retailers providing excellent service and specialist advice can take advantage of this, as well as growing consumer worries about food provenance. Claire Holland, manager of the Q Guild of Butchers says, “Consumers have lost faith in supermarkets and large suppliers over unethical sourcing and health scares. Independent butchers can step into the breach by offering products of higher quality with a trusted provenance. Younger generations are less comfortable

about asking for produce by weight, so we are offering pre-packaged and pre-priced cuts of meat.”

Another reason why market towns are thriving is the ability of specialist retailers to diversify and respond quickly to trends. Some Q Guild butchers have added handmade charcuterie or ready meal dishes while others like Robinsons Butchers & Deli in Tetterhall have added a sit-in bistro. There is also genuine retail innovation which adds interest and excitement to the consumer high street experience. Tofurei in Pottergate within the Norwich Lanes area is the first shop-based micro soya dairy in the UK. It quickly became popular, resulting in a move into bigger premises so to offer workshops and a dining facility.

“Speciality food retailers can thrive with initiatives, such as local events and tasting sessions to drive footfall. Becoming part of the local community is key,



MALTON: THE UK'S 'FOOD CAPITAL'

successful speciality retailers know their regular customers by name and provide a personalized service that larger food chains struggle to replicate,” says Gavin Dow, managing director of the business Coffee Central.

Far from being a threat, evidence is emerging that online retailing is being used to help high streets thrive, especially in market towns. Saltaire-based Jackie Mulligan set up the Shopappy App a couple of years ago as a way of encouraging people to shop locally. She explains, “I realised how enjoyable it was to

shop locally where you could speak to shopkeepers about the products because they had chosen them and brought them. I noticed that in the local shops, residents talked to each other. People cared about shopping local, but when they got home from work, the shops were closed and they could not use them.”

Her solution was to create Shopappy. It is now spreading steadily throughout the UK, with more and more small towns joining the network. Most recently, Great Yarmouth market became a member. Users simply order

8 x 150ml Indian Tonic Water

8 x 150ml Club Soda

8 x 150ml Indian Tonic Water (Perfectly Light)

8 x 150ml Bitter Lemon

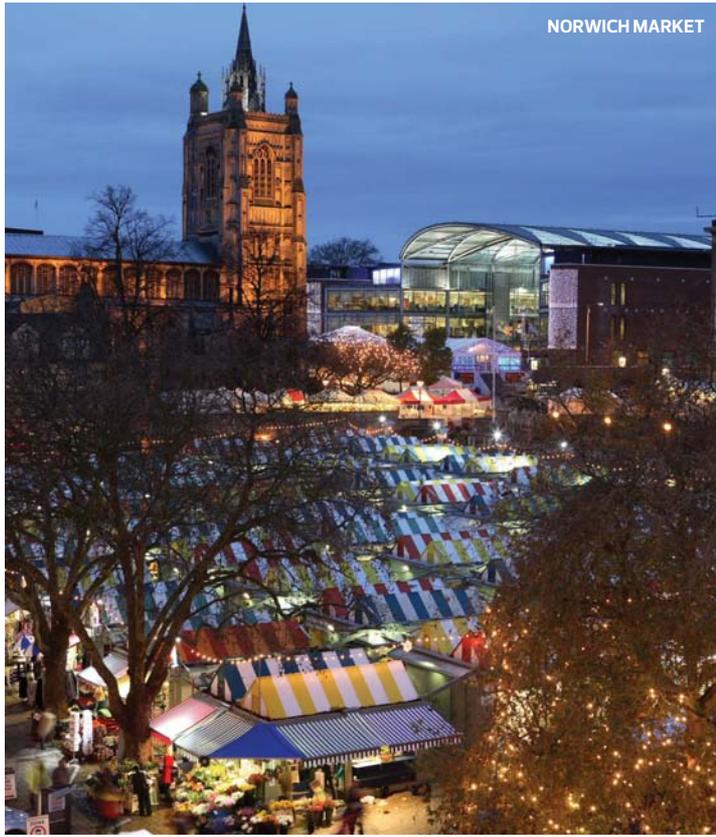
8 x 150ml Ginger Ale

8 x 150ml Sicilian Lemonade

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NORWICH MARKET

what they need, pay then collect their purchases from the local collection point, usually a pub or late-opening store. It opens up the online market to smaller specialist retailers including market traders, who might not have a website of their own. It has proved a winning combination. Maria Cotton, group leader for markets and town centres in Barnsley comments, “Shoppappy is well used by local people. There are regular transactions, and it encourages people to use local shops. Footfall has increased and it has kept the market visible while we were undergoing renovation.”

Jackie adds, “Shopappy encourages people to become familiar with local shops and are more inclined to visit the high street stores and browse. Retailers can collaborate and work together for the benefit of the high street. For example, one retailer, Christopher Taylor creates special packages such as the ‘In the Dog House Dinner Date’. This contains everything you need to deal with an awkward situation. It is convenient and high quality. He will collaborate with other local retailers to add in a bottle of Prosecco, a bunch of flowers or a large steak from the near by butchers.”

Cathy Parker of Manchester Metropolitan Museum explains, “People stopped coming to Altrincham high street when the Trafford Centre opened. The local authority took a long hard look at what was happened and knew it virtually impossible to compete, so sought a different answer. It decided to take it back to being a market town, offering services that the public wanted. The hospital was relocated to the centre of town and public transport improved to bring people into town. Nick Johnson and his wife Jenny took the market hall and turned it round by creating a centre for street food, with market traders in adjacent areas. There are lots of specialist food retailers including one stall holder who sells only Portuguese food. Footfall has increased.”

Such a solution is not always suitable for other market towns and high streets. Identifying local needs and having a local identity are the key to success. Cathy points out, “it is not a matter of one size fits all. What is important is that organizations discover what is right for their locality. High street multiples are closing because they are providing the local links or providing what people want. A superstore may have a shelf of local products, but it does not make them a local trader. People increasingly want a connection to a local area, with retailers who are investing in the area and are part of it.”

Ultimately, it comes down to customer service and providing what the customer wants, when they want it – which is where specialist retailers can really make an impact encouraging footfall and creating a vibrant, lively high street. Encouraging regular visits through special events like food tastings, pop up markets, talks can make a difference. Initiatives like Brighton’s Seafood Festival and Norwich City of Ale prove that the high street is not definitely not dead!



PHILIP WARREN BUTCHERS

“ In 1995 The Independent reported, “The medieval town of Ludlow is slowly dying, victim of a decline in similar market towns across the country.” Sound familiar? Move forward to 2018, and Ludlow is a thriving gourmet food destination ”

**“Identifying local needs and having a local identity are the key to success”**

Vibrant markets also play a crucial role in creating thriving high streets. In Norwich the market has changed from providing cheap downmarket goods to what is claimed to be the largest weekday food market in the UK. There has been an explosion in the number of food stalls owned by local people selling everything from local cheese, speciality breads, teas and coffees, to locally made porridge and ethnic food from many European countries.

In Altrincham, Cheshire the town centre has been revitalized by the introduction of a street food market. Retail specialist Professor

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

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

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The secret of Niederegger marzipan lies in the recipe, with the right mix of almonds, sugar and a secret ingredient comparable with rose water. Today, as was the case when the company was founded, roasting takes place in traditional copper roasting cauldrons. Niederegger is the only premium manufacturer that exclusively produces its marzipan paste itself.  
[fineconfectionery.co.uk](http://fineconfectionery.co.uk)



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

**5 WALKERS SHORTBREAD  
TRADITIONAL SHORTBREAD**

Walkers Shortbread Limited is a family company founded in 1898 in the picturesque village of Aberlour, in the heart of the Scottish Highlands. Today, Walkers Shortbread is still made by traditional methods, using the original Walker family recipe. Walkers have the perfect range of shortbreads to suit every Christmas occasion from stocking fillers to after dinner treats.

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

**6 HAWKSHEAD RELISH  
COUTURE CHRISTMAS PRESERVES**

Hawkshead Relish's Fabulously Fruity Cranberry Sauce, handmade in the Lake District using only the finest all-natural ingredients from a family recipe, made in traditional open pans. Its Christmas Chutney is also a festive must-have, filled with rich apricots, cranberries, ginger, orange and spices is designed to complement the festive cheeseboard throughout the season.

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

**7 WALKER'S NONSUCH  
FRUIT & NUT TOFFEE SLAB**

This new Fruit and Nut Toffee Slab is the latest gift pack to family company Walker's Nonsuch's portfolio. The creamy toffee has an almond flavour added and is topped with juicy raisins and toasted almond flakes. It has great fun appeal with a real toffee hammer included in every box. Perfect for placing under the tree for toffee lovers of all ages, this is sure to sweeten the festive season.

[walkers-nonsuch.co.uk](http://walkers-nonsuch.co.uk)

## ANTONIO SURACE "ITALIAN PANETTONE MADE IN LONDON"

I am sure you all know how complicated it is to make panettone. It actually takes 48 hours work when done traditionally: without the use of chemicals and raising agents that make it leaven quickly. In my 40 years experience as a panettone eater and lover, I have tasted very few good ones made by expert Italian pastry chefs.

You won't believe this, but the one I tasted last year at La Bottega del Pane in Wimbledon is superior by far, on all fronts, to the many Italian ones I tried.

I wanted to ask Rocco, the recipe owner of this panettone masterpieces, how it all started. Here is the story.

Rocco Tanzarella is well known in the London panorama of elite restaurants and delicatessen for his Altamura bread, focaccias and many other bakery products, all made at La Bottega del Pane. His panettone making skills date back to the Seventies when, as a young man, he used to help out in his uncle's pastry shop back in Italy; this is now owned by Rocco's brother.

Eight years ago, in 2010, Rocco decided he didn't want to import ready-made panettoni any more, as he knew his customers deserved better than that.

Rocco called his brother, who came to London all the way from Puglia, and they started testing their traditional recipe, which was a great success from day one. Trust me, Rocco's mind is always at work, even when he is busy rolling his bread doughs or forging his chocolate sculptures. Year after year Rocco has been improving his traditional recipe by combining the best flours and ingredients. Every year at La Bottega del Pane there is

a new Panettone. Rocco makes his new recipes by experimenting with the best and exclusive ingredients from all over the world; he tells me they don't use the same ingredients in Italy as they are difficult to get and also quite expensive. Using delicacies like dotted figs and a particular quality of Spanish sultanas which were personally recommended to Rocco by Paco Torreblanca, the internationally renowned pastry chef, Rocco has made his panettoni a unique delicacy.

Rocco started eight years ago with 50 panettoni produced for his own shop, and last year, he produced over 3,000 pieces: traditional panettone, figs and chocolate and pandorato.

Don't miss out this year's new panettone named Mandorlato. Rocco made this glazed panettone using his traditional recipe with sultanas and candied fruit, plus the unique Avola Almonds.

I've already had a bite and I tell you, you cannot not taste this unique delicacy!



# PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

Innovation and relevance is the name of the game when it comes to acing the festive season

Christmas is drawing closer, and with it a combination of excitement and nerves. Questions like, 'am I prepared enough?', 'have I ordered the right amount of stock?' and 'will my staff be as on it as I need them to be?' are partnered at this time of year with hopefully looking forward to a spike in sales and, let's be honest, to it all being over for another year.

These emotions are known all too well by everyone in the food and drink industry, from retailers to suppliers and wholesalers alike. Stephanie Rose O'Riordan of Empire Bespoke Foods recognises these challenges. "Christmas is one of these frantic periods where consumers choose to treat and indulge themselves and their special ones and are ready to spend extra on Christmas food and gifts." This may be viewed by outsiders as a win-win situation, but "at a retail level," she explains, "Christmas adds a lot of pressure on the retailers who each year try to make the best decision on selecting the best product range for their shoppers."

Each year sees a raft of new products hitting the market – some destined for success, some not so much. According to Stephanie, the key to choosing a product which will go on to prove successful on your shelves is taking into consideration its innovation and relevance to the consumer. Also important to look out for, she says, are variety, authenticity and value.

By positioning yourself as a go-to destination for foodie gifts during the Christmas season and beyond, you stand a good chance of gaining a new customer base – those who may not be looking for superior quality food and drink themselves, but are looking to purchase for someone they know who does. Hampers are a fail-safe option for festive gift-giving, and you can

“It's really important for retailers to offer unique gifting options that will differentiate themselves from others and inspire shoppers to make the best choices”

"Consumers in Britain are looking to capitalise not just on the best deals for their festive shopping but on the best gifts or food. It is really important for retailers to offer unique gifting options that will differentiate themselves from others and inspire shoppers to make the best choices."

either pre-prepare some with your seasonal favourites – perhaps theme them; chocoholics, cheese lovers and chilli addicts would love a themed collection – or allow your customers the option to curate a hamper themselves at a range of price points.

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*Cakes for Gifting.*  
A new cake range from Stag Bakeries.



Available in three varieties: Orange & Whisky, Raspberry & Gin and Blackcurrant & Rum.

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

## WHAT TO STOCK:

The beautiful Star-shaped, Rotating Musical and Bauble tins are a beautiful keepsake and are lovely gifts for children! The range provides a fantastic offering of shortbread made by a small family run bakery based in the historic capital city of Edinburgh. The shortbread is made by small team of bakers and baked in small batches producing a crumbly, light and wonderfully moreish shortbread. The Gingerbread men are made by a fourth-generation family business from Lancashire, UK who have been making the finest biscuits for over 40 years.



Upgrade your standard window to maximize £ per customer during the increased footfall period leading up to the big day. You'll have already spent time sourcing and preparing produce; now it's time to put the extra effort into your festive presentation. Use your display to enhance your produce and show it at its best. Be appealing to customers and make it easy to shop, they won't buy what they can't see!

With all the extra lines for Christmas, space is going to be tight, highlight your festive treats by using pedestals for height, contrasting colours and textures that complement your displays.

Invest in new display trays and POS, refresh your pricing tickets and holders and communicate pricing with quality signage in a clear and easy to read format, as many consumers are too shy to ask 'how much?'.

Remember, food safety is paramount – no chipped crockery, glassware or homemade wooden boards! Use professional durable, food-safe display equipment to showcase your offer.

Yes, you're under pressure, but this is a wonderful opportunity to showcase your skills and business to a new set of customers. At Christmas people are looking to upgrade from supermarkets and purchase quality food for the festive season.

Christmas is hard work and to stay on track keep a visual record of your display by taking photos throughout December. This will make it easier to review overall display performance in January and see what can be repeated and improved for next year.

gift products will always be popular with shoppers at this time of year. Attractive packaging sells, as do products which offer a step up in luxury from year-round fare. Empire Bespoke Foods have this covered: "This year," says Stephanie, "we have added a new range of gifting tins under our

Making Christmas Special brand. As one of the most recognised distributors in the seasonal industry, Empire Bespoke Foods continuously improves its seasonal range by leveraging insights from market research and customer feedback which are inherently used to shape new product development. Based on an increasing demand for foodie gifting range at an accessible price point, the tins symbolise innovation, creativity and passion for gifting and would certainly be lines that would generate sales for retailers."

**"Get set for Christmas, it's never too early to be prepared!" says Martin Chudleigh, marketing director of Dalebrook Supplies.**

Now summer is over, it's fast forward to the main event of the retail calendar – Christmas!

So, what needs considering when building the ultimate festive display? Our advice is to be bold and think outside the box.

## FESTIVE BUTCHERY INSPIRATION AT DALEBROOK SUPPLIES



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## RETAILER INSIGHT... Sue Johns, Johns of Instow



### BY THIS STAGE OF THE YEAR, WHAT PREPARATIONS HAVE YOU DONE FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON?

All of the Christmas orders for ambient stock have been placed and some stock will have even been delivered! Planning for Christmas tasting events in-store are well underway with local producers booked in to showcase their fabulous products.

### WHAT'S STILL TO COME?

Final ordering for fresh produce such as Christmas cheeses, smoked fish, poultry and other meats. Full-on merchandising in the shops has to take place to transfer all the festive stock received into enticing displays to convert to sales.

### WHEN DO YOU START PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS?

January! We always review what's worked well and not so well from Christmas a month earlier. Sales figures are reviewed and

documented for products types in readiness for ordering for Christmas in that year.

### WHEN DO YOU ORDER/RECEIVE CHRISTMAS PRODUCTS?

We start ordering in June, complete ambient orders by end of July, and fresh orders start in September and run through until the week of Christmas as we have to keep fresh produce stocks high with it being one of the busiest weeks of the year eg cheese, pâtés and poultry. Stock is received from September and right through to the week before Christmas for fresh produce as we are always busy in the lead up to Christmas and between Christmas and the New Year celebrations.

### WHAT'S YOUR RATIO OF CHRISTMAS TO NON-CHRISTMAS PRODUCTS DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON?

60% Christmas 40% non Christmas as we offer grocery services to customers, too.

“Tasting events in-store are well underway at this time of year, with local producers booked in to showcase their fabulous products”



### POTTS PARTNERSHIP TURKEY ROASTING KIT

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### PAXTON & WHITFIELD POTTED BLUE STILTON WITH TAWNY PORT JELLY TOPPING

Hand-crumbled Blue Stilton PDO topped with a delicious jelly made from Paxton & Whitfield Tawny Port, an age-old combination.  
[paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk](http://paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk)



### CHOCOA MOCCA CARAMELISED WHOLE HAZELNUTS SMOTHERED IN DUSTED MILK CHOCOLATE

Crunchy, caramelised, chocolate-coated nuts housed in an eye-catching box.  
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# SPOTLIGHT ON: JAMS, HONEY & NUT BUTTERS

Sweet spreads are more than toast toppers; producers are offering up taste, quality and story like never before

**Q**uality, provenance and versatility are the name of the game when it comes to jams, honeys and spreads in 2018. These days, a handful of conventional jams and

commodity peanut butter just won't cut it – especially not for speciality shoppers – and now that the supermarkets are branching out from bog-standard preserves and nut butters to stock higher

brow options, it's a necessity for independents to show their product-sourcing mettle.

## Gold standard

Hive & Keeper, an ambassador brand for quality honey with provenance, conducted a poll of 100 adults aged 18-70 in August 2018 – equal numbers of respondents listed supermarket honey and British honey as their favourite type of honey, a fact which Emily Abbott, London beekeeper and founder of Hive & Keeper puts down to a lack of education about honey.

"Supermarket honey' is what most people are used to," she explains, "only 7% of the honey sold in the UK is from British bees. Nearly all the honey British consumers buy is from abroad, with a staggering 40% from China. Although 'supermarket honey' is the most popular honey in terms of amount sold in the UK, our figures suggest that with a similar level of popularity British honey

could also sell well. Indeed, 41% of our respondents don't buy local British honey simply because they don't see it for sale.

"The majority of honey in British shops is filled with a blend of different imported honeys designed to keep the flavour constant from

and connect them to the place and bees that each honey speaks of." With such passionate advocates of real deal honey, and an increasing number of quality options for discerning consumers to choose from, let this be the time for honey with a great taste and story to shine.

“41% of our respondents don't buy local British honey simply because they don't see it for sale”

EMILY ABBOTT, FOUNDER OF HIVE & KEEPER

## Jam today

There's something special about the simplicity of jam on toast. A classic adored by generations of Brits, it's no wonder that innovative brands are bringing the traditional preserve into the twenty first century with riffs on conventional flavours. Take the exciting new preserve brand from Botswana, Maungo Craft – shortlisted for the New Producer

jar to jar." she continues. "It's a bland honey and hides all that's amazing about it." One of the most exciting things about honey is its endless variety and natural provenance – two things which are sure to be attractive to speciality consumers once communicated. "Hive & Keeper is on a mission to introduce people to each honey's aroma, flavour, colour and texture



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Awards 2018 – who are turning tradition on its head with such options as Wild Berry, Orange & Liquorice Marmalade and Morula, Banana & Coconut Jam. There will always be a place for the classics, though, and one producer making waves by putting the simplicity of a good jam front and centre is Single Variety Co. “The amazing thing about jam.” says founder Nicola Simons, “is that it preserves delicious fruit when it is in season, in abundance and at its tastiest, and then it can be enjoyed all year round.”

Of course, flavour is paramount – especially when you’re producing a quality, no-nasties product. “The trickiest art in jam making is preserving the fresh fruit flavour,” says Nicola. “You want the fresh fruitiness to burst through no matter what you choose to eat your jam with. To achieve this, having the right balance of fruit and sugar, the right cooking time and the best tasting fruit are all really important factors in making jam. Looking to traditional jams as inspiration is a great starting point to create a seriously delicious jam. A traditional jam would have a 50:50 ratio of fruit and sugar and we used this as a starting point in our recipe development for Single Variety Co. With a vision to get the freshest fruitiest product, we managed to pack even more fruit into our recipes. Cooking jam for the shortest time possible is best for flavour, but it is a real balancing act ensuring that you still achieve a good set on your jam. A classic recipe would always advise to regularly check the setting point once your jam is boiling. Finally, having the best tasting fruit will ultimately give you the best jam.”

Looking forward, Nicola sees simplicity as the key to the brand’s success: “We’ve seen a trend for adding flavours to jams, but we’ve found that to get the most pleasure and versatility out of jam, keeping it simple and showcasing the fruit is the best way to go. That is why at Single Variety Co we work with our farmers to select the very best variety of fruit for each of our recipes.”

### Versatility sells

Versatility and ease of use are two of the most important things shoppers



## FROM THE PRODUCER... Andre Dang, Manfood

Depending who you ask, the jam sector is either stagnating, or is being overtaken by the popularity of other spreads, such as peanut butter, biscuit butters and chocolate spreads.

But don't write off this category. Each of them has a place on your shelves because consumers are now travelling more and broadening their taste buds. They are experiencing local specialities such as Malaysian Kaya (a coconut egg curd) which is normally spread thickly on toast and sometimes served with a fried egg, South American Dulce de Leche which is used to sandwich indulgent biscuits called Alfajores and Belgian Lotus Biscoff spread to name but a few.

The way we eat has also changed, so we need to disassociate from the idea that these products only sit within the breakfast category: the current Great British Bake Off shows jams being used for a variety of fillings, planting them in the Afternoon Tea category, while other brands are

targeting snacking and food on the go: all of which you can address.

In America, jams are frequently served alongside cheese and charcuterie. While this seems a little odd, the classic sweet and salty pairing works, which is why in Scandinavia meatballs are often served with Lingonberry jam while in Northern Italy they serve Bollito misto with mustard di frutta (though strictly speaking this isn't a jam / spread).

While the UK has a long and proud history of fruit growing and preservation, you don't have to plump for the mop cap old world look: the London Jam Factory is not only modern looking and innovating with unusual flavours, such as Raspberry & Geranium, but they're also using half the amount of sugar of supermarket brands, while Great Taste Award-winning The Artisan Kitchen is combining fruit with alcohol in products such as their three star-winning Blood Orange Marmalade with Vino de Naranja.

“The way we eat has changed, so we need to disassociate from the idea that these products only sit within the breakfast category”

are looking for in their food and drink these days – if a product offers value for money and is suitable for on-the-go eating, that's a win-win for busy consumers. We all know how delicious nut butters are on toast, but Manilife's Stuart Macdonald recommends we try something new with this perennial favourite: “Manilife pairs perfectly with porridge pots, yoghurt and fruit pots and toast,” he says, “whilst they also provide a tasty solution for dipping with fruit and adding to freshly-made shakes.” Convenience-wise, the brand has commuters covered: “Our newest arrivals the Mani-minis can even complete commuters' breakfast on the go, accompanying their morning coffee and snacks on the journey to work.”

“Changing usage occasions of peanut butter and nut butter has

certainly evolved in the past couple of years,” says Pippa Murray of Pip & Nut. “Looking at our social media we pay particular attention to how people are eating our products, when and why in order to get an understanding of the changing habits around the consumption of this product. For instance, when looking at a two week period of Instagram, we reviewed over 600 social media posts and noticed that over 40% showed people eating our product on top of porridge. This was followed by smoothies (11%), then pancakes (11%) and coming in fourth was toast at just 8%. Whilst this is only a snapshot in time, it's mirroring a significant change in habits where toast is no longer seen as the only way to eat nut butter, but actually it's great eaten in so many different ways.”



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



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

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# PREPARING FOR PARTY SEASON

What's new in the party scene? We've spoken to industry experts to find out what nibbles are grabbing the attention of this season's shoppers

**T**he phrase 'party foods' conjures up a variety of images: crisps, crackers, cheese, olives, dip. These are staples of the party food world that have attained the status of classics. But just because something is classic, doesn't mean there isn't room for it to evolve. Walkers Ready Salted may be a consumer go-to, but recent trends have shown that the party food world is opening up to weird and wonderful flavour profiles. While bowls of mixed store-brand mixed nuts have been eschewed for olives of various stuffing, an area of party food that has been undergoing a transformation is the dips, crackers, and crisps sector.

## Dipping into something new

Dips are a cornerstone of the party food platter. The types of dip that make their way into the spotlight have changed over the years. On a global scale, the market for salsas, dips, and spreads has been projected to grow 5% between 2016 and 2022, according to research by Market Research Future. The UK dip market has benefited from the influence of globalised options, with a rising interest in recipes and flavours from other countries.

Houmous has grown wildly in popularity since it first hit the UK market in the late 1980s, with the UK dubbed the houmous capital

of Europe. Hannah McCollum, the founder of dip company ChicP, says of houmous: "As an easy 'go to' healthy vegan product (in most cases), with more interesting flavours on the market, it's something that independents should be allocating decent shelf space for."

"There are many new recipes for dips, as a snack, on the side or as part of a meal. With such delicious and good quality dips on offer, it is no wonder they are being swept off the shelves; those with the added bonus of having a highly important sustainable angle should be celebrated and marketed as such." Dip company G'nosh showcases further examples of how the market has expanded to accommodate recipes with roots in Greek, Levantine, and Turkish cultures, with options like Babaghanoush aubergine dip and Muhumarra red pepper dip.

"Houmous and dips offer more than just a 'dip' or snack food," says Mccollum, "They go well with main meals; they're lovely as a gift; they're great for kids; they sustain you for a good length of time, and buying a good selection to offer as party food is a win win situation. You can jazz them up with lots of brightly coloured vegetables and other party foods."

With 3.5 million vegans in the UK, party-planners are becoming

more conscientious of ensuring a vegan option is provided. Dairy-free alternatives that replace beloved snacks with vegan-friendly choices have been cropping up more and more. Dairy-free brand Kinda Co – winner of the Innovator category in the New Producer Awards 2018 – offer a vegan nacho dip, meaning a well-loved option can be shared by all.

"With some dips offering wonderful colours and no additives, independents should stock up and advertise the fact that dips have multiple uses, many health benefits and a far reaching customer base."

The crackers and crisps of today

One of the nibbles that is rarely lacking at a party is a stack of crackers or a bowl of crisps. While these have remained fixtures of the party platter, their modern iterations have undergone transformations. With the health food market is growing massively, over two-thirds of Britons are looking to buy healthier alternatives, according to research by the IRI.



This trend has found its way into the party food scene, bringing party-goers more nutritional options at no cost to flavour. Sprouted Genius, which launched in January of this year, are the UK's first sprouted flour cracker brand. In keeping with the growing trend by companies to incorporate ancient grains into their recipes, founder Noreen Finnermore notes that she first encountered sprouted grains on a trip to the United States and was "intrigued by their health properties as well as their delicious flavour." Bright and colourful, both in packaging and in product, the crackers make an eye-catching addition to a party platter and comes in Amaranth, Amaranth & Beetroot, and Purple Corn, Sea

Salt & Black Pepper.

The potato crisp, of course, remains a staple. What the market has seen a tendency towards are flavour profiles that push boundaries, providing something different. While Cheese & Onion continues to be a national favourite, Savoursmiths makes providing an alternate path their mission. Calling themselves the "masters of flavour and faber", this crisp company "re-invented and elevated the traditional crisp." Every flavour an exploration of traditional gourmet cuisine, the company currently produces five crisp flavours: Champers & Serrano Chilli, Truffle & Rosemary, Parmesan & Port, Desert Salt, and Wagyu Beef with Honey & Mustard.



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They elevate the potato from simple snack to elegant treat, a welcome development for this party season.

### Bottoms up: Innovations in party drinks

The search for new and bold flavours drives not only party foods, but also drinks. The rising demand for adult soft drinks extends past the usual sodas. The party drink scene is on the prowl for beverages that are delicious without being over-sweet and interesting while still being elegant.

Prosecco has seen rising popularity in the UK over the past few years, indicating a taste for the bubbly. With wine once and Prosecco now standards of the party drinks table, drinks innovators are looking towards the production of these drinks with new and interesting ingredients, alternatives to the classic grape. Renegade &

Longton, an Isle of Skye-based wine company presents a fresh take on sparkling wine, aims to “revolutionise people’s perception of [it].” The company inspires itself on the first era when Champagne and sparkling wine became popular to produce fruit wines that are fermented with the Champagne method of production. According to co-founder and managing director Brendan Thomson, “With regard to innovation, we are looking to take inspiration from the champagne industry, but are using different ingredients and flavours in our fermentations and so opening the possibilities of sparkling wine that are available.” Renegade & Longton produce a fruit wine that, rather than sweet, is dry because of their reliance on the champagne processes. This results in “deliciously unique British sparkling wines made from more than just

grapes,” with flavours like sparkling elderflower and rhubarb and berries that suit the modern palate. Further exploring this trend is sparkling mead company, Gosnells. Based in East London, the company is the

only producer of sparkling mead in the city. Its 5.5% abv, much lower than traditional mead, brings the mead into the low-alcohol sector, putting it on par with a bottle of wine or Champagne. The drink has been called by fans “Peckham’s answer to Prosecco.” Created after founder Tom Gosnell discovered

the possibilities behind mead on a trip to America, the company makes its mead by fermenting Spanish Orange Blossom honey, which lends it its distinctive flavour. As a pairing drink, it works well with “small bites” like tapas and cheeses on cheeseboards. The mead was launched as a sharing bottle, making parties the ideal location for it to be shared.

Another trends that has made headway in the drinks world is the low-to-no-alcohol market. According to Miles Beale, the chief executive of the Wine and Spirit Trade Association, while drinks in this category are still only a small portion of the entire drinks market, “demand is increasing every year.” Those less inclined to drink will still find options for their party-planning needs. Lowlander, an Amsterdam-based brewer, has recently tapped into the market with the launch of two low-alcohol beers, each at only 2.5% abv. Like with any food trends, flavour comes first. Lowlander is a botanical beer maker, creating beer that is infused with a myriad of interesting ingredients including tea, fruits, herbs, and spices. Again we see a blending of techniques across alcohols with Lowlander taking its beer-brewing inspiration from the ingredients used in gin and genever (Dutch gin). The beer, which launched at Speciality & Fine Food Fair in early September, is available in Yuzu & Grapefruit and Ginger & Kaffir Lime flavours. The trend is present, as well, in the world of cocktails. According to co-creator of The Bristol Syrup Company Danny Walker, “Syrups play a key

and a great way to add complexity to alcohol-free options.” The syrup company was created in reaction to a negative trend they noticed and wanted to correct: “We believed there was a gap in the market.” says Walker, “Speciality cocktail bars were making everything from scratch and high volume cocktail bars were using syrups that didn’t always make the best cocktails. We wanted to try to bridge that gap.” Bringing the potential of home-cocktail making allows party-goers more choice when it comes to deciding how much alcohol to put in their drink. With cocktail recipes available on their website, Bristol Syrup Company gives party-planners the option of bringing the fun and festive drinks made in cocktail bars into the festivities taking place in their own home.

Low calorie goes hand-in-hand with the low alcohol trend, both a response to health concerns. Since parties provide an opportunity to indulge, the interest in well-being needs be complemented by an availability of bold flavours. WiseHead Productions originally created Thomas & Evans No.1, a zero proof drink, targeted at non-drinking adults who still want access to delicious and quality drinks. One of their more recent projects is the creation of low calorie drinks mixers through The London Essence Company. Their tonics are less than 20kcal per 100ml, but by no means lacking in bold flavours, with flavour listing like Classic London Tonic, Grapefruit & Rosemary Tonic, and Bitter Orange & Elderflower Tonic. Most recently

“With some dips offering wonderful colours and no additives, independents should stock up and advertise the fact that dips have multiple uses, many health benefits and a far reaching customer base”

HANNAH MCCOLLUM, FOUNDER OF CHICP

role in low alcohol and no alcohol cocktails. Removing some or all of the booze from a drink takes a lot of flavour with it, and the best way to replace that flavour is with syrups, cordials, shrubs and vinegars. We’ve used acidity, bitterness and vinegar in some of the syrups which makes them more than just sweet

they have launched a Pomelo & Pink Pepper variety, a drink which responds to the Millennial love of all things pink and that evokes a sense of festivity. This provides thirsty adults an alternative to calorie-laden beverages, meaning partying doesn’t necessarily come at the cost of health.

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**EMMA YOUNG,  
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**“Tell your customers to be brave!”**

**T**he cheese world is more exciting than ever at the minute. There are new producers and cheeses popping up all over the world and it is great to see traditional recipes being revisited, new ones being created and respectful farming practices being increasingly more important to cheesemakers.

With so much happening, it can be hard to keep up! Keep your eyes and ears open and follow social media. Instagram and Twitter are powerful tools which keep me up to date with new producers and new products who may not be in my vicinity.. It is always good to visit trade shows and food fairs, you never know what you will come across. A lot of producers are new or just do not yet have national scope, so it is fun finding them as well as beneficial for them to be found. Just recently at Speciality & Fine Food Fair I found an exciting cheese stand: The Ethical Dairy, which was recommended to me on Instagram by a fellow cheesemonger. I also found some great local cheeses at the Nantwich Show this summer which I had never encountered before. There are lots of agricultural fairs and cheese events in the UK throughout the year so try to get to as many as those as you can. Elsewhere, some of the best cheeses I have tried have been at markets on holiday... always keep one eye on the beautiful market stands around the world. Finally, talk to fellow mongers and those in the trade. We are a really welcoming and sharing community.

Making sure that your team are trained on your new and exciting products is crucial as they are your marketing and your direct connection with the customer. Find what your team are interested in and, believe me, they will sell it.

Getting to know your regulars is great as you want to keep them excited and up-to-date with your counter and anything new. My favourite question is when I'm asked to put together a 'cheesemonger's choice' selection. There you can easily drop in suggestions for cheeses which are a little out of the norm! The most essential part of our retailing at Mons is to taste out with the customer. You can make it a fun activity by tasting with them and it also takes off the pressure which can happen with samplings where customers can feel forced into buying what they have just tasted even if they don't like it.

Tell your customers to be brave! As we all know, a lot of cheeses have a bark worse than their bite. Let them let their monger lead. We have many customers who think they do not like blue cheeses. However, we have many that have lighter blueing and can even be milder in flavour than some more popular styles such as Brie de Meaux and Camembert. Cheese doesn't fall neatly into categories, there are always exceptions to the rule. At Mons we have a cheese called Persillé du Beaujolais which is fruity and buttery and with your eyes closed you can be tricked into thinking it is not blue!

Always get your customer to taste where you can. Tastebuds develop and evolve so something a customer may have not have liked in the past may be different now. Explain the flavour profile and if they do not recoil and tell you to go away, give them a taste!

Customers are adventurous however they are not all as lucky as we are to be aware of such a vast selection, so they need us to guide them. Find out what makes them tick and what they usually eat and lead from there.

**RUTH HOLBROOK,  
PAXTON & WHITFIELD**

**“Sourcing and selling unusual cheeses”**

**L**isten and talk to your customers. They will often know what is going on in the local food scene and know about cheesemakers making new cheeses that you may not. This is something I've found out by working with our retail and restaurant trade customers. It really pays to have an open ear to help keep your cheese counter stocked with new/interesting cheeses! Also, talk to the cheesemakers that you work with as they may well be developing new cheeses that they'd like to talk to you about.

Who do you work with, other than customers and suppliers, that you can talk to and may know if there are new cheeses out there? It's amazing what people know and over the years I've found new cheeses via this channel that I would never have discovered.

Get out to exhibitions and festivals to find out what is going on and talk to producers about what they are doing. Cheesemakers will often trial new cheeses at these types of events to get invaluable customer feedback.

Trade magazines, consumer magazines, food blogs, Twitter, Instagram – there's a lot of information out there. Remember to dip in and dip out of this to find out if it can help.

Once you have your new cheeses you need to train the team who'll be selling them – the flavour, how the cheese is made, where it's made, who the cheesemaker is and what is unusual about it. Get the team excited and knowledgeable about the cheese and they'll sell it to your customers.

Your customers won't know that you've got a new cheese on your counter unless you tell them that it's there. Use point of sale on the cheese counter to show that the cheese is new, put it 'on taste' in a prominent

place (by the cash register is normally a good spot), and you could even produce a leaflet to give to customers.

If you are a cheese counter/shop that supplies local restaurants with their cheese, then when you do your next selling visit take some of the new cheese with you to the chefs/teams you are talking to. Taste the cheese with them and talk about it. It's something that I often do as chefs don't have a lot of time to research new foods themselves and so rely on suppliers to suggest new products.

Use your company website, e-newsletters and social media channels to talk about the new cheeses you have. Customers love a story and if you can tell them about a new cheese through these channels that's great. The wonderful thing about social media is that it is so immediate. We regularly use social media at Paxton & Whitfield to talk about new additions to our cheese range.

If you work with a PR consultant or have someone in-house that does this for you then get them to promote the cheese to relevant media to help you create awareness about the new products. You never know where this may lead. We work with an external PR agency and they've given us some really interesting opportunities – including one where we were invited to talk on a local radio about new local cheeses that one of our shops had started to stock. If you have the budget you may want to think of advertising the new cheeses either in print format, online or even using Facebook ads.

Enjoy getting out there and looking for these cheeses and then, having got them, promoting them to your customers. If the current climate of the industry here in the UK is anything to go by, you'll find some great new cheeses to source, promote and then make them into your customers' favourites – so start looking!

**Cheese Talk**

**New retail perspectives from industry experts**

The natural choice for cheese

**PETER'S YARD**  
90g e

great taste 2018

**PETER'S YARD**

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

## WHOLE FOODS MARKET: OUR MUST-STOCK BRITISH CHEESES

**Simon Fortune, cheese buyer at Whole Foods Market, explains the retailer's most popular cheeses made on these shores**

### ISLE OF MULL CHEDDAR

Isle of Mull Cheddar is a hearty, full flavoured Scottish Cheddar and is stocked in all of our Whole Foods Market stores. The cheese tastes sharp and almost fermented, and has a uniquely pale ivory colour.

In 1979, cheesemakers Jeff and Chris Reade moved from Somerset, where they had been making Cheddar, to a dilapidated farm in the Isle of Mull. The Cheddar made there has a very unique, distinct taste due to the unusual diet of the cows who eat fermented grain from a nearby whiskey distillery.

### BARON BIGOD

Baron Bigod is a creamy, white bloomy-rinded cheese. This Whole Foods Market favourite is one of the few in the world to be made by the farmer on the farm, meaning it can be called a true farmhouse Brie.

It has a smooth, silky texture and a golden curd, with long lasting warm earth, farmyard and mushroom flavours. The UK's only raw farmhouse cheese, Baron Bigod is made by hand in small batches very early in the morning, so the raw milk is still warm from the cow.

### STINKING BISHOP

Stinking Bishop is a soft textured, washed-rind cheese that, with age, develops a distinctive, meaty pungence. This semi-soft cheese originates from Dymock in Gloucestershire, where it was first made in 1972 by Charles Martell in a bid to save the remaining 68 Gloucester breed heifers.

The rind is washed in Perry, made from the local 'Stinking Bishop' pear, from which the cheese takes its name. This alcoholic wash is what gives the cheese its pungent smell and pinkish rind. It's a true original and a Whole Foods Market favourite.

### COLSTON BASSETT STILTON

Despite only being made by six producers, Stilton is one of the nation's favourite cheeses. It is popular among many because of its fruity blue veins and creamy paste.

The cheese is produced in the village of Colston Bassett, Nottinghamshire – apart from a brief hiatus during the second world war, Stilton has been made there since 1913. The curds are painstakingly ladled by hand, which takes time but results in a creamy, buttery texture you won't find with a mass-produced Stilton – it's sold at Whole Foods Market all year round.

### BERKSWELL

Berkswell is the perfect blend of fresh, fruity, brothy and savoury. Made by the Fletcher family at Ram Hall farm in the West Midlands, Berkswell is an unpasteurised sheep's cheese.

Steven Fletcher started as a dairy farmer, but in the 1980's the cattle were slowly replaced with sheep. A local shop asked Stephen if he could make ewe's milk cheese as they had lost their local goats cheese supplier – never one to turn down a challenge, Stephen began making the cheese from scratch based originally on a Caerphilly recipe. Berkswell developed its own character.

“ A true original and a Whole Foods Market favourite ”



## Wensleydale launches range of boozy cheeses

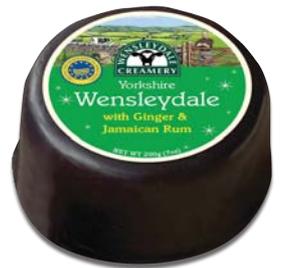
**Wensleydale Creamery has announced the launch of two new alcohol-infused cheeses, available in 200g truckle and 1.25kg half-moon formats.**

The flavours are Yorkshire Wensleydale with Caramelised Orange & Masons Yorkshire Gin, which marries two Yorkshire brands, and Yorkshire Wensleydale with Ginger & Jamaican Rum.

Sandra Bell, marketing manager of Wensleydale Creamery said, “We pride ourselves on our traditional cheesemaking skills while remaining innovative in the creation of new flavours and blended cheeses. These two exciting new Yorkshire Wensleydale cheese blends were created with current consumer trends in mind.”

“As the ‘gin renaissance’ continues to build momentum, we saw an opportunity to offer consumers an iconic and flavourful addition to their cheeseboards this Christmas. And, with the following for rum picking up pace, a blend with ginger creates a warming twist to add variety to the festive period.”

“We believe independent retailers and farm shops are a perfect outlet for both cheeses, as this is where consumers often seek something new, different and interesting while being confident that the products are of the highest quality. We look forward to introducing them to our customers and offering them a delicious slice of warmth in the cooler months.”



### CHEESE FACT FILE: BRIE DE MEUX



● Brie De Meux was first created in the Middle Ages by the monks of the Priory of Rueil en Brie

● It is made with raw cow's milk and takes around 25 litres of milk to make a large cheese

● It remains traditionally-made in

the region of Ile-de-France – 30 miles east of Paris – with a history going back over 1,200 years

● It is said that Louis XVI's last wish was for a taste of Brie cheese

● As it's an AOC cheese, it should only be matured in the regions of Aube, Loiret, Seine-et-Marne, Haut-Marne, Meuse and Yonn

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# Paxton & Whitfield appoints new head of operations in workforce restructure



**Cheesemonger Paxton & Whitfield has appointed James Rutter as its new head of operations. He will be responsible for overseeing the growth of the online delivery side of the business and warehouse operations.**

Rutter has a background in fine food retail and will join Paxton & Whitfield from his role as head of sales and marketing at TruffleHunter. His previous experience included working as the

export sales manager at Neal's Yard Dairy for over six years.

Ros Windsor, managing director of Paxton & Whitfield said, "Today's retail market is fast and ever-changing. To help drive the online channel of our business we've been looking for the right team to help deliver the exciting strategy we have developed. James ticked all the boxes in terms of his experience and also his enthusiasm. We're looking forward to him joining the company and leading on the growth of our direct to customer experience."

James Rutter said, "I'm really looking forward to coming back into the artisan cheese world in the UK. With a proven track record for increasing sales of speciality food in challenging digital, export and domestic wholesale environments, working for such a prestigious food retailer with a great heritage such as Paxton's and helping to grow its online sales is a great opportunity."

To deliver this new focus the company has created a new team

structure at the warehouse. Jeremy Bowen, the trade and corporate sales manager who has been with the Paxton & Whitfield for 22 years, will be leaving the company to take up new commercial opportunities.

## TRACES OF WORLD'S OLDEST CHEESE FOUND

**An international team of researchers have found traces of a cheese that was made 7,000 years ago in what is now Croatia.**

The discovery came in the form of traces of fatty acids found on fragments of pottery from an archaeological site at Pokrovnik on the Dalmatian coast. It is assumed that the pot was used for straining curds out of whey to make cheese.

The team notes that their discovery indicates that humans were producing cheese in the region 2,000 years earlier than previously documented.

**Brooke's Wye Valley Dairy Company, a family-run Welsh company that has produced ice cream for years, has diversified into making cheese with support from the Food Centre Wales. Owners Robert And Irene Brooke's daughter, Hannah, has begun making cheese on the farm, recently developing its latest cheese, Fedw. Fedw is a soft and crumbly cheese with a similar taste and style to a Feta. Another new cheese in the company's portfolio is Angiddy, a mould-ripened soft cheese, similar in style to a Brie or Camembert.**



## JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



### "Teamlist"

I have an inkling of how Gareth Southgate, or perhaps the England Test selectors, might have felt when a key member of their team pulled a hamstring or twisted an ankle. Not in relation to my staff, but those stalwarts of the chiller – my cheeses. I've had situations over the years where a star striker, for example, Denhay Cheddar, announced that they were retiring. Then there was the day that the entire outfield, the Cranborne Chase cheeses, declared themselves unavailable for future fixtures.

What does the prudent team manager or selector do in such a situation? Sporting coaches in the 21st century are fortunate in having reserves on the bench, ready to step into the breach when the starting player gets tired or injured. Do cheese retailers enjoy such luxury? We may not have a back room full of cheeses in reserve, but (if I may stretch the analogy still further) we can have the reassurance of having done some thorough scouting, ready to source replacements when profit-generating lines are no longer available.

My shop's cheese list set out to specialise in West Country cheeses, with particular emphasis on those from our home county, Dorset. Wholesalers proffered candidates for me to stock; I looked in directories to identify those who didn't have distribution, and dealt directly with them when I felt the cheese was a 'must have'. I visited farmers' markets, and kept my ear to the ground, so that I might have early awareness of new entrants to the market. Producers used the shop as a test market and we got first dibs on quite a few new

cheeses. If local producers called it a day and left the market, I found out who was buying their cheese-making equipment. Thus, I ensured that the sad demise of star attractions from my chillers did not compromise my proposition of offering the finest cheeses from 'my manor'.

The quantity and variety of cheeses from the West Country that we stocked remained fairly static, but the names on the team-sheet, and the percentage of cheeses from each county, was changeable. Long-term players such as Quicke's, Lyner, Montgomery, Keen's, White Lake, Ticklemore and others stayed the course, but some makers, such as Windswept Cow from the Isle of Purbeck, blossomed for a comparatively short time – but were certainly worth stocking.

Recently, more than one maker of soft white cheeses has withdrawn from the market. Godminster decided to concentrate on their renowned organic waxed Cheddar rather than continue to diversify with the soft cheeses they acquired from Daisy a few years ago. In this country, it seems to be a struggle to create a strong brand around white-rinded cheeses, with the notable exceptions of Tunworth, Sharpham, Village Maid and a few others. Conversely, washed-rind specialists such as James's Cheese have carved a niche with products that consumers view as individual characters and not generic.

The uncertainties of the next few months may mean that there's more churn in the cheese industry. Scouting for new cheeses ahead of it being a necessity may prove to be wise.

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Watch out for our Inglewhite Buffalo making a TV appearance in early 2019!



# THE BRITISH CHEESE RENAISSANCE

The UK's cheese industry is going from strength to strength, as Hannah Freeman reports

There has been something of a renaissance within the British cheese industry over the past few decades. By the mid 20th century Britain was in danger of losing all but a small handful of its historic cheeses. It is now home to over 700 artisan cheesemakers, encompassing organic, unpasteurised, and even bio-dynamic varieties; and predominately making their products from cows', sheep and goats' milk, although mares' milk has recently featured too. The cheeses of Britain essentially fall into two categories; territorial and non-territorial. The territorial cheeses are those with familiar names, sometimes with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status, these include Single Gloucester, West Country Cheddar, Dorset Blue, Exmoor Blue, Lancashire and, of course, Stilton. Britain's favourite cheese is, without question, Cheddar.

A growing market in the UK, and often associated with the new generation of cheesemakers, is the non-territorial and speciality cheeses, those based on European or farmhouse methods, and those with additional ingredients. Exports of these cheeses were up by 18% in the January to June 2018 period (AHDB). West Wales based Caws Teifi's Dutch Style cheese and Cornwall's Curds and Croust's range of soft cheeses are just two examples which fall into this category.

These companies represent the beginning of the cheese renaissance, and also the future of the British cheese industry. Caws Teifi is Wales' oldest established artisan cheesemaker, founded in 1982, and has won numerous awards including twice being named Supreme Champion at The British Cheese Awards; whilst Curds and Croust, sister company to Rodda's Dairy, was formed in 2016, and now produces three Brie-style cheeses, and one Camembert-style, all of which are proving to be extremely successful. Their Russet Squire, launched earlier this year, took Supreme Champion at The 2018 Global Cheese Awards.

## Artisan versus large-scale

Within the UK cheese industry how there is, however, a very clear divide; artisan producers vs the large creameries. The UK's 'Big Three' dairies; Arla, Dairy Crest and First Milk, which produce some of the country's most familiar brands, as well as supplying supermarkets with their own branded products, are often regarded with suspicion by the smaller cheesemakers who feel that their artisan production style results in a far superior tasting product, with greater ethical credentials. The larger creameries are quick to defend their cheese, the production of which is



always undertaken by skilled and knowledgeable cheesemakers - albeit on a much grander scale. The Dairy Crest Davidstow Creamery, based in Cornwall, produces 180 tons of cheese a day, processing over 1,500,000 litres of milk. In essence, the cheesemaking process is virtually the same, and the flavour and quality is proven through their many successes at the world's major cheese awards. Dairy Crest Davidstow also won this year's Dupont Danisco Cheddar Grand Prix cup, awarded to the 'best maker of finest mature cheddar cheese' across six national cheese shows, beating rivals Arla, The Taw Valley Creamery, in neighbouring Devon. Whilst there has been investment within the cheese industry, in preparation for a buoyant future



market, there have also been major changes - most recently at Arla, who's £400 million pound restructure will result in the closure of their Denbighshire factory, potentially with the loss of 90 jobs. In the past couple of decades it has been the medium sized creameries which have fallen by the wayside;

too big to fit into the artisan market and too small to compete with the super dairies. Over the past few months the price of milk has also increased, Haverfordwest based First Milk raising their prices most recently, by 0.5p per litre in early September, and reports of even higher milk prices in the near future

“ British cheeses are now known throughout the globe. They are regarded as status symbols in Japan and the US and feature on the cheeseboards of some of the world's most prestigious restaurants ”

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## WHOLESALE PERSPECTIVE

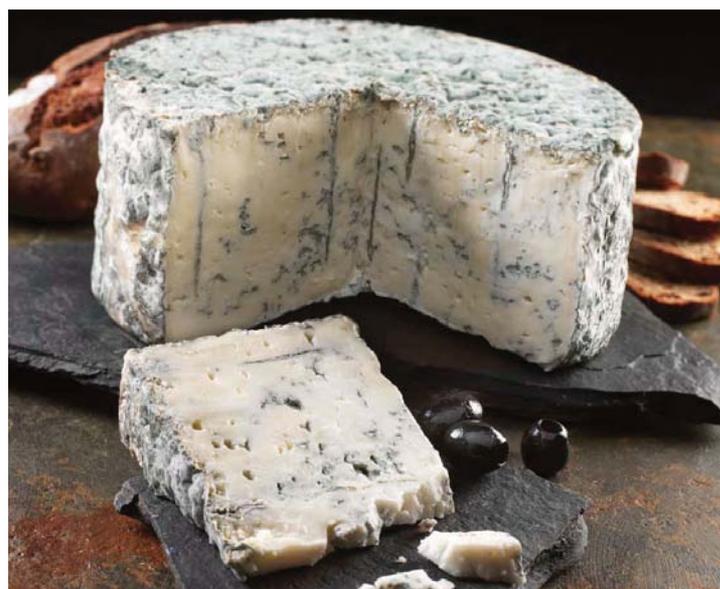
### Tom Rhodes, Carron Lodge



As farmers, cheesemakers and wholesalers, we are lucky enough to witness the diversifying market and trends of the British

cheese industry from numerous angles. Whilst classics such as Cheddar and Stilton have remained resilient in the ever-changing landscape, the industry has become a hybrid between classics and innovative new cheeses. There are now 277 members of the Specialist Cheese Makers Association and a plethora of new and exciting cheesemakers within the industry. This has meant that the diversification and quality of cheese within the British industry is evolving at an enthralling rate, providing real enthusiasm for the future.

Without question, we have noticed a substantial increase in demand for cheese products made with alternative milk types, opposed to the traditional cow's milk territorial, as consumers are broadening and adapting their cheese boards to include new flavour combinations. Our goats, ewes and buffalo milk cheeses are gaining traction at an unprecedented rate. We have grown our own herd of buffalo from just five to twenty five within three years to meet requirements of our British buffalo



cheeses. Moreover, our Inglewhite Buffalo, a twelve-month matured, clothbound Cheddar-style cheese went on to win the accolade of the best specialist cheese at the International Cheese Awards.

As wholesalers, when working closely with retailers whom we supply, it is clear that provenance and heritage is becoming more prevalent than ever before. Delicatessen and farm shops continue to support local communities and focus on the sustainability of their local village, county or even nation. Continental cheese is still a substantial and important part of the industry, although we have recently seen more cheesemakers merging the flavours and textures of the Continent while providing a local twist. This year saw Wensleydale Creamery launch their Yorkshire Brie, binding a French classic

with regional provenance. Consumers are ever more absorbed by the finer details of cheese industry and are interested in not just where the product is made, but indeed the story and heritage behind it.

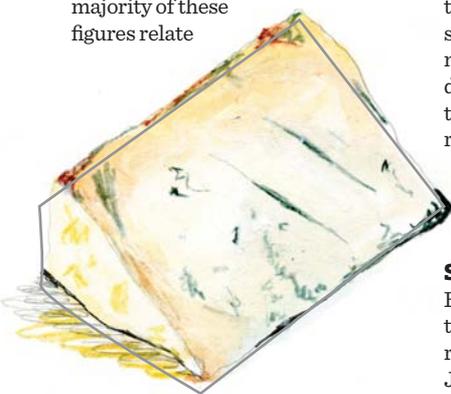
There are many new, exciting producers, providing consumers with a wider choice. Whilst industries such as gin and ale have seen the rise of craft producers, perhaps now the cheese industry will embark upon a similar path as new and unique cheese inspires the industry. Moreover, the quality and standard of cheesemaking seems to excel year on year, as the importance of food awards is growing and is desired by consumers. While we are surrounded by uncertainty within the economy and other sectors, there is one thing that seems assured: that British cheese will continue to flourish.

are a cause for concern. However, the export figures for British cheeses are soaring. In the period January to June 2018 exports were up 18% overall, with Cheddar being up 21% (to EU destinations) and 14% (non-EU), although territorial cheese exports were slightly down on previous years (AHDB). The majority of these figures relate

to Cheddars produced by the larger creameries, but sometimes these numbers can prove deceiving because many British artisan cheeses are sold on an extremely localised scale, or in specialist UK based cheesemongers – the output is small, and batches delicate, requiring specialist care and temperature control. The, often short, shelf-life of these products makes the export process extremely difficult, which is why the easily transportable blocks of the more robust cheeses, like Cheddar, command control of the overseas market.

### British cheese as a status symbol

British cheeses are now known throughout the globe. They are regarded as status symbols in Japan and the US and feature





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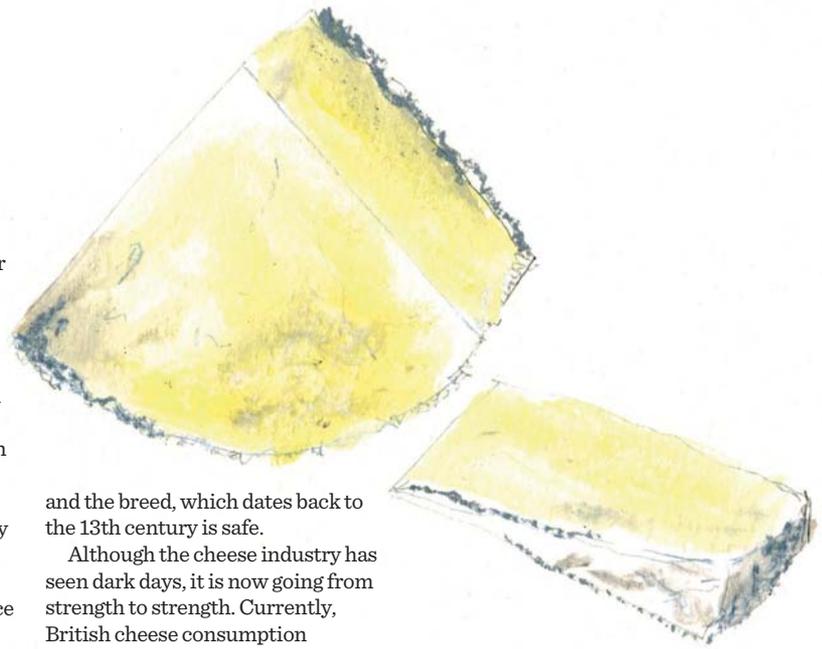


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on the cheeseboards of some of the world's most prestigious restaurants; there are even skilled British cheesemakers teaching the people of Borneo to make Cheddar style cheese with their excess milk. Historically Europe has been rather condescending when it comes to British made cheese but there is now a growing appreciation of our territorials. The increase in the number of British cheeses awarded PDO / PDI status has certainly had an impact on the world's perception of British cheese. For many years the UK was associated primarily with Cheddar and Stilton, and many varieties with hundreds of years of history were forgotten - historic cattle breeds balanced on a precipice of extinction and in the 1980s, there was the threat of a complete ban on unpasteurised cheese, a niche which is now thriving. One of the territorial cheeses' great success stories came in the form of the Martell family, dairy farmers from Gloucestershire who are now best known for the production of the Stinking Bishop, Perry-brined cheese. In the 1970s Charles Martell, along with a small group of like-minded conservationists, brought the historic Gloucester Cattle back from near extinction. There are now four dairies awarded PDO status producing Single Gloucester, all of which must keep Gloucester Cows,



and the breed, which dates back to the 13th century is safe.

Although the cheese industry has seen dark days, it is now going from strength to strength. Currently, British cheese consumption stands at 600,000 tons per year, an average of 27.4g per person, per day, and is bought by 98% of British households. Cheese is fashionable once again, and consumers are seeking out new British cheese varieties, as well as supporting the reestablishment of territorial classics and many, once niche varieties, have become familiar household names available at even the smallest local supermarkets. Across the industry there is also a great infectious enthusiasm amongst the cheesemakers, whether novices to the industry, diversifying from other unprofitable agricultural

businesses or just continuing a family's long cheesemaking tradition. With the popularity of farmers' markets, the extraordinary influence of social media, and, with online sales allowing small producers to ship nationally, British cheese has a very promising future.

### THE BREXIT AFFECT

When it comes to the future of the industry in the wake of Brexit, there are very mixed feelings. Within the industry many feel that Brexit could be of benefit to small artisan makers, who may find that the price of imported European cheeses will increase to such an extent that buyers will turn to British made alternatives; whilst the larger companies have their own challenges to face, especially those exporting to Europe on a grand scale.

BRITISH CHEESE CONSUMPTION STANDS AT **600,000 TONS PER YEAR**, AN **AVERAGE OF 27.4G PER PERSON, PER DAY**, AND IS BOUGHT BY **98% OF BRITISH HOUSEHOLDS**

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**L**oyalty and customer retention can be crucial for a retailer, with research by Forbes indicating that it is seven times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep one, and research from the Chartered Institute of Marketing stating that a 5% increase in customer retention can result in an 85% increase in sales. Retailers have been experimenting with ways of bringing in swathes of new customers, and making certain they are there to stay, whether it is by appealing to the needs of the modern consumer or experimenting with new and exciting formats.

#### THE COMMUNITY SUPERMARKET: HEIGHTENED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

In its 2017 Retail Survey, KPGM's supply chain director James Tilley said, "Today's consumers are looking for value, convenience and a unique experience. The role of the store is key in providing a showroom which delivers an outstanding service and an attractive and memorable retail environment." Eat17, with the motto "not your average store," encapsulates this sentiment. According to Eat17 marketing manager Saskia Parks, "Increased internet use means that customers can share their opinions to millions of people in seconds, so a good customer experience is vital."

Eat17 is equipped with facilities like indoor street food markets, refillable food units, an in-store fishmonger and an in-store eco florist. "We want people to enjoy doing their shopping and discover new foods and local producers," says Parks, "We are always listening to our customers and want to make their shopping experience better –



EYE-CATCHING DISPLAYS AT EAT17'S HAMMERSMITH RETAIL CONCEPT STORE



SELF-SERVE DISPLAYS AT HISBE

# THE SHAPE OF RETAIL 2018

In a bid to provide something different for customers, businesses are innovating with new formats and retail techniques

whatever their priority. Whether it's a bigger vegan food selection, larger refill stations, environmentally friendly products etc. We will always be willing to learn, listen and adapt to what our customers need."

Eat17 looks to redefine the supermarket to a place where "people [can] sit down, relax and enjoy their food or drink". Its street food facilities have become popular lunchtime spots, and the brand now

has four stores operating in and around London. Parks says: "SMEs have the ability to adapt quickly, which is key, and this can be used as an advantage against larger, well-known brands."

#### AN ETHICAL FOCUS: APPEALING TO MODERN SENSIBILITIES

The 2017 Ethical Consumer's Markets Report reports a 9.7% growth for ethical food and drink,

while research by Unilever found that 53% of UK shoppers say they feel better buying sustainably-produced products. Enter Hisbe, a Brighton-based supermarket that brands itself as "supermarket rebels". According to co-founder and director Jack Simmonds: "We feel major supermarkets aren't really about food or helping the customer; they're a traditional business set up for short term profits for shareholders. So, we've structured a social enterprise where we try to put any profits we make right back into the store." The store's tills display exactly how grocery prices translate into store profit, providing customers with total transparency.

The store is equipped with over 70 food dispensaries and 15 liquid dispensaries that dispense everything from pasta and beans to olive oil and conditioner. Most of Hisbe's fruit and vegetables are sold plastic-free. "The wins are for everyone," says Simmonds, "For us it's great we're buying good versions of stuff, everything in our dispensaries is organic and bought in bulk bags. [For customers], we sell it a price point that's cheaper than major supermarkets."

"In Brighton," Simmonds continues, "there are a lot of single-person households. When you're buying a bag of rice to cook a meal, you don't always need a kilo of it... for customers it means they can come in and take and pay for the amount they need." With research showing that 66% of UK citizens go to the supermarket more than once a day and 10% of people decide what to buy for a meal immediately before eating, this flexibility suits the modern shopper.

#### ONLINE-ONLY: THE DIGITAL SHOPFRONT

Despite industry specialists insisting on the importance of in-store service and experience, Pong Cheese has been running through and flourishing on an online-only

platform for the past nine years. The focus of co-founder Mathew March Smith has been on ensuring its website provides for its customers all they would ask of a brick-and-mortar store.

According to Smith, Pong Cheese has an extensive customer service team that works to ensure web-goers have the best possible experience: "The only difference is that we are not face to face with our customers and that we can handle many more queries at one time than could be dealt with over a counter in a shop." Pong Cheese is able to automate certain things, such as having a FAQ section to deal with regular questions.

Smith compares the front page of the website with the front of a shop, saying it has to be constantly updated in terms of stock in order to entice both new and returning customers. The benefit, of course, is that there is no physical moving of shelves, but it is just as important

“Saskia Parks, marketing manager at Eat17, “Increased internet use means that customers can share their opinions to millions of people in seconds, so a good customer experience is vital”

that it be kept up-to-date and fresh. "The size of potential audience is not geographically restricted, marketing to that audience can be done in a more targeted and probably cheaper way, rent and rates are usually much less per average sale value, customer services can be scaled," Smith states, "you're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week so you can organise your fulfilment staff around your own timetable, digital analysis or all your transactions, customer behaviour and product popularity."

There is no one true path for indie retailers to follow when it comes to innovation. While there are societal tendencies from which they can take their cues and particular formats that have proven effective, it is all down to the individual store to decide what makes them unique and what tools to use in order to highlight that.

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# THE WHOLE PACKAGE

John Bensalhia investigates how modern examples of food packaging combine convenience, simplicity and environmentally friendly solutions

**F**irst impressions matter for food packaging. Customers' eyes pick out eye-catching, distinctively packaged foods. The right logo. A successful combination of colours. Clear, concise explanation of the food. Persuasive reasons for customers to buy.

But food packaging must be more than just eye candy. Modern packaging should not only be attractive, but convenient, practical and environmentally sound.

"As modern life becomes ever-busier, convenience is increasingly important as time-poor consumers look for clever, efficient packaging that is easy to use," says KM Packaging's Managing Director, Charles Smithson. "This has shifted the dynamics of packaging design

for food, as solutions become more innovative, whilst achieving new heights in terms of functionality with features such as dual-ovenability."

To meet customers' requirements, ingenious packaging solutions are available that offer simplicity, practicality and safety. Take for example, the growing amount of customers who don't wish to handle raw meat. Sainsbury's has recently produced straight-to-pan plastic doypacks, allowing customers to simply rip the packaging and tip the meat straight into the pan.

Charles Smithson explains that with increasing consumer focus on food safety, demand has risen for packaging solutions that do not require handling of raw foods. With this in mind, KM Packaging has

“Our concept is not about gimmicks – it’s about helping to create a more sustainable environment and to educate people about the importance of reusable packaging”

introduced a solution to ensure that customers don't have to handle raw foods.

"For example, our KOven ovenable flow wrap, incorporating our migration tested OVEN INK technology, ensures foodstuffs can go from supermarket shelf to plate without the need to be directly handled, presenting clear benefits in terms of both convenience and food safety."

## Convenience storage

But if some consumers are concerned about safety issues, others want greater convenience and quicker cooking times. An ideal solution for preparing bacon is Sirane's microwaveable Sira-Cook Crispy Bacon Pack. Inside is an absorbent board that soaks up the hot bacon fat released during cooking. The packs allow for flexible cooking times, which can be adjusted in accordance with how each customer prefers their bacon done.

KM Packaging's KPeel PLUS+ range was developed to overcome the challenges faced by food manufacturers when working in demanding tray-sealing conditions. "Significant sealing and contamination challenges can occur when packing tricky foodstuffs, such as oily products, processed vegetables, pasta and sauces," says Charles Smithson.

"KPeel PLUS+ lidding film works reliably, even under the most testing of circumstances, enabling a broad range of high performance solutions that combine a heavier heat seal coating with excellent transparency, clarity and print properties. KM Packaging can tailor solutions for customers' specific sealing conditions without compromising on pack

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functionality and performance.”

KPeel PLUS+ provides effective, reliable seal performance, with key benefits including heavier heat seal coating and wide sealing range, delivering enhanced performance in both hot and cold conditions.

One problem with packaging is the length of storage time. Fruit and vegetables, for example, only have a limited time before they start to go off.

Tesco now offers special packaging for its avocados, cited as an increasingly popular choice of healthy snack. The snag with avocados though, is that once ripe, they can go bad in a fairly rapid space of time. The new packaging from Tesco supplier and fruit and vegetable importers, Greencell, however, adds a couple of extra days of storage time. The key to this is a mixture of UV lighting treatment and improved packaging film that combine to lengthen freshness time for customers.

A common trend in today's time-intense society is eating on the move. Solutions such as the snack-size Graze Pots from Bunzl Catering Supplies and London Bio Packaging allow customers to tuck into an instant snack any time. With foodservice outlets remaining a popular source of go-to eating, Graze Pots can be used in 175ml, 300ml, 350ml and 425ml sizes. Foodservice operators also benefit from the pot topper for the medium, large and extra-large containers, which keep wet and dry ingredients separate.

### Green for go

One of the biggest trends today is environmentally friendly packaging. Calico Cottage's Managing Director, Nigel Baker, explains that food companies, manufacturers and retailers all have their own challenges when it comes to this sector. "There is a huge commercial battle to be had by

food companies to have products that still look attractive but are made from compostable packaging."

"There is also a challenge for manufacturers and retailers to educate the consumer in disposing of packaging and our experience of some retailers is that they really don't see it as their job, others have embraced the challenge."

"The problem with packaging is that there is too much of it," says Catherine Conway, director, Unpackaged Innovation Ltd. "More specifically, too much of the wrong types of packaging that will still harm the environment. The current infrastructure is not designed for existing packaging as it is. One of the things that we need is better education about packaging, its environmental implications and alternative solutions."

In March 2018, Calico Cottage became the first in the industry to

offer all business customers the option of stocking its impulse bags of sweets in compostable, transparent packaging which breaks down and disappears in soil, under the brand of The Cambridge Confectionery Company. Fully certified and manufactured from sustainably sourced trees, the new bags are converted into pulp and then a liquid cellulose solution. This is then made into a transparent solid film, which is coated and cut to size. The company supplies a wide range of conservation-based attractions such as London and Chester Zoo, Twycross, and Whipsnade.

The key here is that the packaging (including bag and label) is 100% home compostable. "You can literally put it in the ground and it will decay in 6-12 weeks," explains Nigel. "If by some chance it does get 'Littered', it will also decay eventually rather than remain in land or water until it kills something."

"Many companies claim their items are biodegradable but in fact they may take centuries to degrade, others claim they are industrially compostable but in fact very few items will go to an industrial composting facility."

The research goes on into alternative methods of environmentally sound packaging solutions. An innovative potential substitute for plastic food packaging is a new material that combines crab shells and tree fibres.

The Georgia Institute of Technology came up with the new

businesses to reuse and refill, thus reducing levels of packaging waste. "Unpackaged began in 2006," says Catherine Conway. "We were the first modern Zero Waste retailer, and given that we started 12 years ago, we were ahead of our time."

"Our aim is to enable customers to bring their own containers to a store. We have expanded in conjunction with Planet Organic to give shoppers a high quality experience while helping the environment at the same time."

Today, Unpackaged is bigger and more popular than ever before, offering a bespoke refill section (designed and tailored to the retailer's requirements) and an 'Unpackaged At' unit in which everything is set up and ready to go.

Recently, Unpackaged has brought its refill stations to retailers including Welbeck Farm Shop and Macknade Fine Foods. Customers can bring in

of new products that will widen the customer base further (especially those who are interested in health and the environment). And from an environmental viewpoint, the Unpackaged concept means reduced levels of carbon emissions and waste to landfill and incineration.

### Pack to the future

Charles Smithson says that KM Packaging expects to continue working with its customers to reduce plastic use and eliminate unnecessary packaging, as well as further innovating the materials it offers (both plastic and non-plastic) and their performance, to successfully meet the needs of its customers long-term. "We collaborate with our customers to develop lightweight, flexible solutions to help them down-gauge their packaging, presenting significant economic and environmental benefits."

"It's key to the industry going forward that consumers understand the important role of packaging in extending shelf life and reducing food waste, which is an enormous problem worldwide."

Charles adds that plastics play a vital role in offering functionality and performance to minimise food waste. With many innovations coming to market, including compostable products, 'green' polymers and a wide variety of renewable and recyclable solutions, it is important to consider any compromise on food shelf life that can result from manufacturers moving to these solutions.

Nigel Baker says that Calico is working on reducing single use plastic wherever it can, but adds that it remains a challenge. "The strength of the bags makes some applications impossible and once we increase the thickness of a material to gain strength we end up with something that won't home compost in which case it will almost certainly end up in recycling."

Meanwhile, Unpackaged is "absolutely booming" at the moment, according to Catherine Conway. "We are growing with other companies and have some exciting new projects in the pipeline with bigger retailers and supermarkets."

"Our concept is not about gimmicks," concludes Catherine. "It's about helping to create a more sustainable environment and to educate people about the importance of reusable packaging."

“ It’s key to the industry going forward that consumers understand the important role of packaging in extending shelf life and reducing food waste, which is an enormous problem worldwide ”

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on fine food

# THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

TV chef and owner of Simply Good Food TV, Peter Sidwell, talks about his passion for local fare and where he goes to find it



I can't resist a good farm shop or deli. I live in Cumbria and the Lake District, and we're blessed with lots both in the county and around the area.

I always stop off at Tebay Services' farm shop while out and about as I know that I can get great quality food no matter what I'm looking for.

Mainsgill Farm Shop on the A66 has a great selection of northern products from places like Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire – there's so much to choose from. Keelham

Farm Shop is without doubt my favourite as I love the experience and the wide selection of all things Yorkshire, so when I am down there it's a must-visit.

My best kept secret has to be The Courtyard Dairy between Settle and Kirby Longsdale. It is without doubt a cheese lover's paradise – the people who run the shop have such a wide-ranging knowledge and

passion for their products. Within seconds of walking through the door the staff are cutting tasters for you to try without pressure to buy – I always pick up two or three types of cheese for home or to take to a demo.

Your cooking will only ever be as

good as the ingredients you choose to cook with, so making a little effort to visit a farm shop, deli or butchers will easily help you become a better cook and discover what's great around you. I always make a point of getting to know my local shopkeepers as they in turn will let you know when some great products are in.

I tend to cook simple dishes after a shopping trip to a deli or farm shop, as the quality of the raw product needs to shine through – the skill is in creating a dish that celebrates the produce and lifts its character and flavour.

I love making a dish consisting of Yorkshire Pecorino with honey and sea salt roasted walnuts which I serve with fresh peach in the summer and then with pear in the autumn.

I have also just discovered an amazing Buffalo milk Cheddar from Carron Lodge in Lancashire, which is epic.

“My best kept secret has to be The Courtyard Dairy – it is without doubt a cheese lover's paradise”

## TWITTER POLL

Is food-to-go the way forward for indie retailers?

Yes  
66%

No  
11%

Unsure  
23%

## SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

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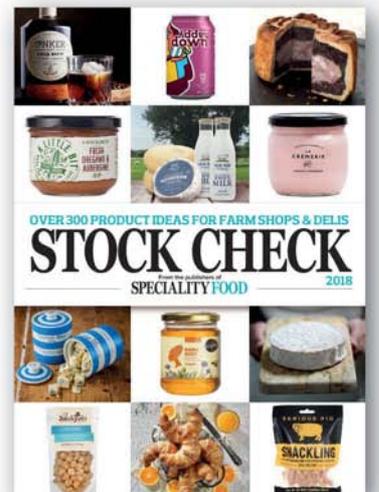
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- Last minute Christmas ideas
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## STOCK CHECK

From the publishers of  
SPECIALITY FOOD

Stock up for 2019  
300 exciting product ideas for  
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**Editor**  
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505981  
[holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk](mailto:holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk)

**Deputy Editor**  
James Fell, 01206 505971  
[james.fell@aceville.co.uk](mailto:james.fell@aceville.co.uk)

**Editorial Director**  
Fae Gilfillan  
[fae.gilfillan@aceville.co.uk](mailto:fae.gilfillan@aceville.co.uk)

**Group Advertising Manager**  
Sam Reubin 01206 505936  
[sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk](mailto:sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk)

**Senior Account Manager**  
Jessica Stevenson 01206 505901  
[jessica.stevenson@aceville.co.uk](mailto:jessica.stevenson@aceville.co.uk)

**Account Managers**  
Samantha Giles  
Alea Pulham  
[alea.pulham@aceville.co.uk](mailto:alea.pulham@aceville.co.uk)  
01206 505934

**Accounts** Sue Carr 01206 505903

**Art Director**  
Lee Whiteford [lwhiteford@btconnect.com](mailto:lwhiteford@btconnect.com)

**Illustrations** Louise Abbott

**Publisher** Helen Tudor 01206 505970

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# TALKING SHOP

[@SpecialityFood](#) [linkedin.com/company/speciality-food](#) [specialityfoodmagazine](#)

Food halls are the new food trucks, I read the other day. I can't say that I would refute this claim; they do appear to be 'the next big thing'. And with real estate specialists Cushman & Wakefield recently claiming that the number of food halls across Europe has exceeded 100, and that the figure is expected to double over the next decade, it appears that food halls will be much more of a common site in the not so distant future.

While the communal food hall has been prevalent across mainland Europe for hundreds of years, in the past couple of decades they've been given a revamp. The success of the Time Out market in Lisbon, which incorporates fine dining, street food and retail outlets, was one of the newest establishments that spearheaded the resurgence of the food hall. The market is now one of the most visited tourist hotspots in the popular Portuguese city.

While many would assume that the rejuvenated food hall format takes its inspiration from the historic mainland Europe outlets, this isn't always the case. In our recent exclusive interview with Simon Anderson, co-founder of the ambitious and exciting Market Halls project, which started this year by opening the largest food hall in the country and has multiple other food halls earmarked for opening imminently, he mentioned that he was inspired by retailing experiences from further afield. "The format we're working with – a group of independent food and drink businesses in one site offering a communal dining experience –

is popular around the world," he said. "It originates in Asia – the hawker markets of Singapore and Kuala Lumpur have long been a big part of the food scene there – but we probably sourced most of our inspiration from New York."

And that's the most captivating aspect about the contemporary food hall – they're a melting pot of myriad flavours, cuisines and concepts. While the ornateness of the traditional European food halls offer an elegant shopping experience with architectural

beauty, the food market-cum-foodservice aspect that modern food halls specialist in offer exuberance and a real buzz.

This mixture of communal dining paired with exciting retail experience that's captivating consumers is most likely why Harrods has decided to transform its historic food halls as part of its two-year The Taste Revolution! Project – its largest redevelopment in 30 years. The company has opened the doors to a new Roastery, Bake Hall and

other interesting food-to-go-centric offerings within its newly designed food halls, and stresses that the retail services will be more 'experience-led'. It's surely inevitable that establishments like Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason will be following suit, if they haven't already.

This resurgence of the food hall concept makes for positive reading amid a backdrop of negativity swirling about the state of the high street. The consumer interest in unique dining experiences can be a coup for your establishment, especially if you are running, or planning to open, a foodservice operation.

**What are your thoughts? Are you inspired or concerned by the food hall boom? Email [james.fell@aceville.co.uk](mailto:james.fell@aceville.co.uk)**

“The number of food halls across Europe has exceeded 100, and that the figure is expected to double over the next decade”

## 5 MINUTES WITH... EVE YANKAH founder of Bepps

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

I'd probably be working in advertising and branding. I love working in a creative environment – I get a real buzz from it!

### WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

My first real role was interning for Stella McCartney. I got such an insight into how a business works

### WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

My children and my husband. I'm at my most creative when I'm pregnant – I came up with the idea for Bepps when I was expecting my first son, Ozzy

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

Working on a shop-floor as a teenager. I used to do 12-hour shifts standing on my feet all day – not fun!

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

Building a brand that has a positive impact on people around me, whether it's customers who enjoy the snacks, the great talent we're able to hire, the farmers who because of Bepps are growing more black-eyed peas for their next crop or the charities we donate 10% of our profits to every year

### AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

Financials and bookkeeping!

### TEA OR COFFEE?

I'm definitely a coffee girl – I probably have three or four cups a day!

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

I would love to see more women in the industry and more female-orientated talks and conferences where female food and drink entrepreneurs can meet, empower and inspire each other



### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

Probably steak and chips with a stack of American pancakes and syrup for dessert

### WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

You only have one life to live, so happy yourself!

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

Probably escargot when I was last in Paris. I enjoyed it, but I doubt I'd make it a regular option

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

The Secret by Rhonda Byrne. It's a great book about how your mindset ultimately affects the energy you bring into your life

### SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Savoury – I try and limit my sugar intake

## DIARY DATES

### October

**19th–21st**  
**BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW**  
**SCOTLAND**  
SEC Centre, Glasgow  
[bbcgoodfoodshow.com/glasgow](http://bbcgoodfoodshow.com/glasgow)

**21st–25th**  
**SIAL**  
Paris, France  
[sialparis.com](http://sialparis.com)

### November

**3rd–4th**  
**ALLERGY & FREE-FROM**  
**SHOW NORTH**  
ECL, Liverpool  
[allergyshow.co.uk/liverpool](http://allergyshow.co.uk/liverpool)

**8th**  
**REAL ITALIAN FOOD & WINE**  
Church House Conference Centre  
[therealitalianwine.co.uk](http://therealitalianwine.co.uk)

**14th–15th**  
**THE EUROPEAN PIZZA & PASTA SHOW**  
Olympia, London  
[pizzapastashow.com](http://pizzapastashow.com)

**16th–19th**  
**TASTE OF LONDON**  
Tobacco Dock, London  
[london.tastefestivals.com](http://london.tastefestivals.com)

**20th–22nd**  
**FOOD MATTERS LIVE**  
ExCel, London  
[foodmatterslive.com](http://foodmatterslive.com)

### January

**13th–15th**  
**TOP DRAWER**  
Olympia, London  
[topdrawer.co.uk](http://topdrawer.co.uk)

**20th–22nd**  
**SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW**  
SECC, Glasgow  
[scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com](http://scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com)

## TRIED & TESTED

JAMES, DEPUTY EDITOR



### BRINDISA BASTARDA SALSA

It's fair to say that this product's label artwork, emblazoned with an angry skull, paired with its threatening-sounding name, very quickly caught my attention. Imported by Brindisa, these fiery hot sauces by the Northern Spain-based company are based on centuries-old recipes used by the region's hardy fishermen during treacherous voyages around Iceland and Greenland. The red variety packs a fantastic scorching heat, if that's your kind of thing.  
[brindisa.com](http://brindisa.com)



### GHEE EASY GOAT GHEE



Butter is back, claims David Klingen, founder of Ghee Easy. It's a statement I strongly support, as I'm a firm believer that the more butter the better. And the same outlook applies to ghee – cooking using it can seriously enhance many styles of curries. This is most certainly the case when it comes to this new Goat Ghee, which is made from pure organic free-to-roam goat's butter and is a joy to cook with.  
[ghee-easy.com](http://ghee-easy.com)

### PEP & LEKKER SEEDS SNACKS

Behold, a healthy snack that I can guarantee will actually leave you feeling full. Following the success of the brand's soups, these seed-laden, gluten-free snacks are available in three options: Cumin & Nigella Seeds, Fennel & Sunflower Seeds and Rosemary & Pumpkin Seeds. They taste fantastic on their own, with delicate flavours providing enough character to please the taste buds, but they'd also make ideal vehicles for cheeses, too.  
[pepandlekker.com](http://pepandlekker.com)



HOLLY, EDITOR



### HODMEDOD'S CHIA SEEDS

I've been following this Essex-based operation with keen interest for a while now as its range of pulses, grains and seeds are of fantastic quality and appear to be going down a storm in foodie circles. The new Chia Seeds – the first to be grown in Britain, according to the company – are a revelation, with the tiny oil-rich seeds working wonders in multitudes of dishes. I'm excited to see what Hodmedod's gets up to next!  
[hodmedods.co.uk](http://hodmedods.co.uk)



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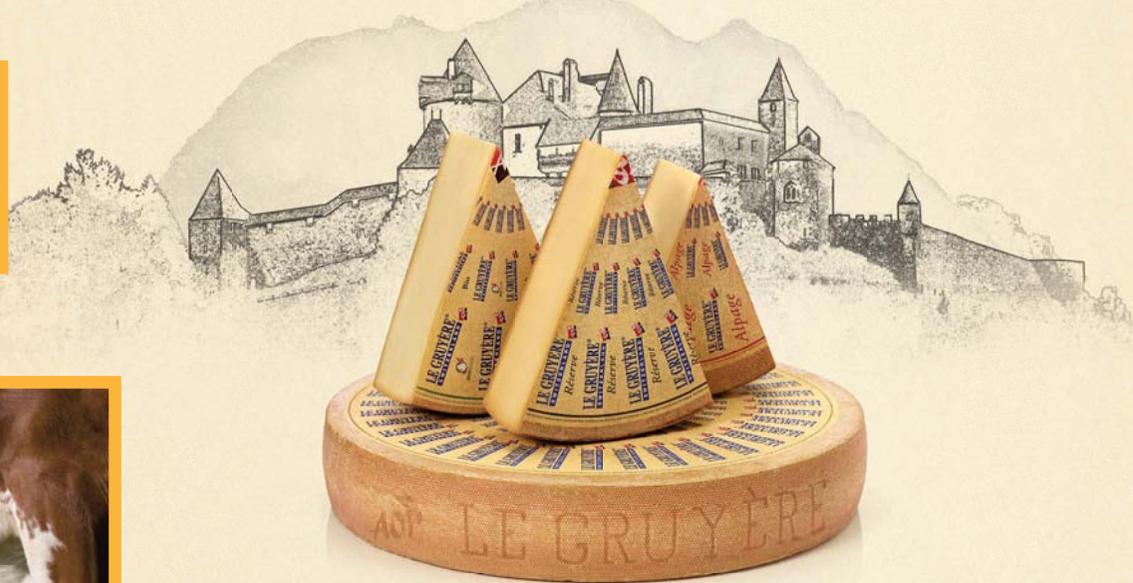
For over 900 years, our milk producers, cheese makers and affineurs in Western Switzerland have followed the same strict protocols and procedures. This is the only way that we can ensure that Gruyère AOP carries the quality and flavour that has been known and trusted for generations. For artisans such as ours, this is what matters above all. We invite you to share this family tradition with your customers.

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