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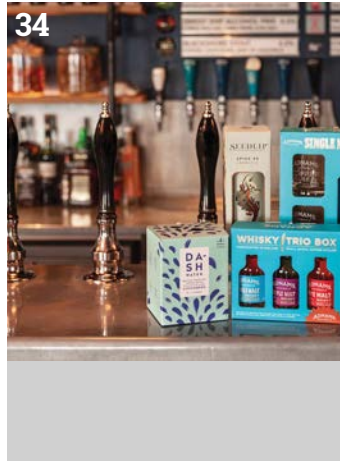
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the July/August issue of *Speciality Food* – an exciting issue indeed, as we announce the top 20 Icons of Food & Drink as chosen by the industry. We've worked in partnership with Speciality & Fine Food Fair for this exciting project, for which we surveyed professionals across the food and drink industry who responded in their droves to nominate their heroes' names for the spotlight. Head to page 16 to see the rundown.

This issue also marks the start of the judging process for the Future Food Awards. We received hundreds of exciting entries and are currently in the process of whittling them down to a shortlist. Watch this space for more updates.

Within this issue you'll also find a preview of the upcoming International Cheese Awards (p. 26), tips on how to prep for Christmas (p. 32), and a lot more besides. Plus, alongside this issue you'll find *Snack Buyer*, our annual compendium of trends, insight and product highlights within the snacking sector. Enjoy!

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Food waste is a huge concern across the industry. Figures from WRAP state that total household waste stands at 7.1 million tonnes. Plenty of produce is cast aside before even reaching the plate of the consumer.

When it comes to the UK, the focus on aesthetics is a big part of the issue, as consumers have become used to 'perfect' fruit and vegetables in particular, being presented by the supermarkets. Wonky or imperfect produce often doesn't even make it to the retailers. Aside from food waste being a tragic loss of produce, it also takes a lot of precious resources to produce in the first place, such as land and water to grow crops.

The impact of food waste on the environment is also monumental. Paul Hargreaves, CEO at Cotswold Fayre implores businesses not to send any waste products to landfill: "Having spent a lot of time with poor communities in developing countries, I have always thought the amount of food we waste in the west is completely scandalous purely due to the waste of resources involved in producing food that isn't eaten. However, I have also become aware recently just how damaging waste food is to the environment, with one of the main by-products from decomposing food in landfill being methane, which is up to 30 times worse than CO₂ with respect to damaging the atmosphere resulting in climate change. It is essential

Industry issue: Tackling food waste

It's a topic that affects the entire food supply chain, from producer to consumer. So what's being done in the fight against food waste?

that food and drink producers do not send any waste products to landfill, and, like Cotswold Fayre, use an organisation like City Harvest, who collect all of our waste to be redistributed to good causes."

Plenty is being done to make changes across the food and drink industry to combat the topic however. WRAP is a mission-driven organisation wanting to accelerate the move towards a sustainable, resource-efficient economy and has ongoing campaigns to spread awareness. Eleanor Morris, programme area manager says, "The mission of sustainability organisation WRAP is to use resources more sustainably on a global level. Within the UK, WRAP has voluntary agreements with business and industry as well as consumer facing campaigns aimed

at reducing food waste. For the food and drink sector, WRAP's Courtauld Commitment 2025 and the IGD UK Food Waste Reduction Roadmap are the key routes to addressing the challenge of food waste across all sectors. The focus is on adopting a method of target, measure and act to tackle food waste reduction head on."

Eleanor goes onto say change is happening; "In the UK, fantastic work is already happening on food waste reduction and we all have a part to play. WRAP accelerates change on the ground wherever people are, at home or at work. This year Defra appointed its Food Surplus and Waste Champion, Ben Elliot, to spearhead change; following the launch of his pledge at the 'Step Up To The Plate' event on May 13th, a food waste week will be held in early November to help all of us

understand how we can change our behaviours and actions, and the climate-related consequences if we don't. WRAP has tools and resources which are all freely available for businesses, including the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, Courtauld 2025, and Guardians of Grub. Citizens can visit the Love Food Hate Waste website for more information, and check out the new campaign Spoiled Rotten to help you reduce your impact on climate change."

It's not just organisations like WRAP that are fighting hard to reduce the amount of food that gets wasted in the UK – there are plenty of brands that are finding ways to produce products that are made in a sustainable way. Take Rubies in the Rubble, which makes condiments such as ketchup, chutney and relish from excess ingredients that would

otherwise simply go to waste. Jenny Costa, founder and CEO says, "We're now poised to make sustainable sauces the mainstream, and take on the market leaders."

We recently cracked the recipe for the perfect ketchup. We know that consumers quite like the sweetness they get from a standard ketchup, but when the food industry is looking to cut back on its sugar content, we were faced with the challenge of launching a product that could compete with the market leader, but with much less sugar. It wasn't easy, but we've done it; using rescued pears for that tasty sweetness, with 50% less refined sugar than other leading brands. This means that for every 100kg of product we sell, we save 45 kg of pears, and this is the equivalent of 17.5kg of CO₂e."

Spare Snacks founder Ben Whitehead adds, "Food waste is a complex issue that needs a collaborative solution – with brands like ours, supermarkets, producers, Government and of course consumers, working together."

"Our aim is to rescue 5,000 tonnes of surplus produce over the next five years, but the real impact surplus brands can have is in the awareness raising. 70% of food is wasted at home in the UK and we've reached an estimated audience of 200 million people this year, so if we can even 10% think twice about how they value food, then we'll be doing our bit."

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"The Costa Del Shop 2019"

Warning! The following article contains information that some readers will find distressing.

The high street is in crisis. We all know that. In November last year I read a report in *The Week* magazine that indicated shops were closing at the rate of 14 a day in the United Kingdom or about 5,000 over the course of a year.

Over the same period only 1,569 shops were believed to have opened and London was the worst affected area. There are many reasons for this depressing state of affairs but, in particular, a new evil villain has emerged from the shadows pouring oil on troubled waiters and speciality food retailers: business rates.

Tax is never an exciting subject to write articles about. Unless, of course, it was the 17th century tax on beards in Russia or the 18th century tax in England on printed wallpaper, fireplaces, hats, powder and windows.

What makes our own contemporary business rate tax appear particularly regressive is that it is not based on sales or profit but the physical size of the business premises. Therefore one online distribution centre can have a turnover equal to hundreds of shops but pay a fraction of the rates. Also, the rates become payable before a key has been turned in the front door or a penny has been spent at the tills. It is paid up front and works out for us at 1p per day per five linear inches of shelf space by my rough calculations. This may not be a problem with fast-selling deli lines or the wine department, but the mustard section frankly does not cut the mustard and as for the home bake section, should it just bake off?

What is even more galling is that, apparently, as highlighted in the press, some online retailers have had their rates bills reduced. Since 2015 ours have gone up by 85%.

There is an appeal process in place which, from my own experience, is something akin to mountain climbing wearing a blindfold and flippers in bad weather (although that is true of many activities at a certain age to be honest). Fortunately we have enlisted the assistance of a competent person to help, but as yet there is no clear understanding of how long the process will take. Current estimates are between two to four years and the appeal may not even be successful. To start the process one needs to get acquainted with the Government Gateway and, once logged in, avoid distracting and arresting subjects like the Sheep and Goat Ear Tag Allocation System. As a humble speciality food retailer I am way out of my comfort zone – which is an ever shrinking space, sadly.

With regard to overall costs, on our accounts we have about 15 types of expenses identified. Some like cleaning, motor expenses and pensions weigh in at less than 1% of overall costs.

Bank charges, heat and light, legal and professional charges and plant repairs would fall into the next category up. However there are three costs in particular that stand out.

Our biggest cost element is wages, which account for 57% of our overall costs. Second on the list comes the rent at 20% and third are the business rates, that now account for 14% of the total costs of our shop. In 2017 they were 8%.

In the House of Commons the Opposition have blamed business rates for the annihilation of the high street, but the government regards the current tempestuous process as the 'story of constant change in the retail sector'. Or plus ça change as our old French wine manager, Francois, would have said.

Unless there is an overhaul in the system, let's hope we don't have any bad weather until we get the results of our appeal in four years' time!

Amazon launches pop-up shops in UK high streets

Amazon has partnered up with Enterprise Nation, Direct Line for Business and Square, and launched a year-long pilot programme which it says will give over 100 small online brands the chance to have a presence in high streets. The 10 Clicks and Mortar pop-up shops will be opening up in high street locations across the country. The first pop-up in Manchester opened in June, with locations in Wales, Scotland, the Midlands, Yorkshire and across the South East to follow.

Doug Gurr, UK country manager at Amazon, said "From giving up-

and-coming online British brands the chance to experience physical retail, to funding the training of full-time apprenticeships and helping to increase SME exports, Amazon is committed to supporting the growth of small businesses – helping them boost the economy and create jobs across the UK."

Commenting on the news, Andrew Murray-Watson, owner of Guzzl, says, "While it is tempting to think that Amazon's move onto the high street is evidence that there is still life in the old bricks and mortar dog, the reality is that

this loss leading exercise is entirely designed to boost long-term loyalty to the website.

"It is about convincing consumers that Amazon sells niche independent brands as well as all the big names. High street retailers should not look at these pop up stores as an encouraging sign of things to come. Amazon is just moving into units that have been shuttered by their previous owners because of the dominance of giant online players."

What are your thoughts? Email lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk.

Award-winning food hall expands into new space

Macknade Fine Foods is celebrating 40 years in retail with a move to a new food and drink hub. Famous for its award-winning food hall in Faversham, Macknade will be filling the 5,136sq ft space in Ashford with an all-day dining experience, as well as its groceries and deli counters, which will feature a range of local, British and Continental cheese and charcuterie. A bar area will also be stocking premium beer, cider, wine, spirits and soft drinks local to Kent.

The new Ashford Macknade will be supported by the Faversham management team and the business has said that it will be looking to employ people from the local community to start growing the team. The company has said that it

is looking to open the Ashford site around October this year.

Stefano Cuomo, managing director of Macknade commented, "For over 40 years we have celebrated more than just fine food and drink, for me it's about people and communities coming together. We enjoy discovering and selling the incredible array of food from our Kentish doorstep as well as cuisine from around the globe. We are all about creating a food and drink experience that is so much more than just a restaurant or shop."

"We've seen a real increase in the number of consumers choosing to shop locally and engage with independent businesses. Customers no longer

want to shop and dine solely at supermarkets and chain formats; people want to know where their food comes from and that the businesses they are spending with are sustainable. This ethos has been supported throughout the county by organisations like Visit Kent and Produced in Kent."



“ We’ve seen a real increase in the number of consumers choosing to shop locally and engage with independent businesses. Customers no longer want to shop and dine solely at supermarkets and chain formats; people want to know where their food comes from and that the businesses they are spending with are sustainable ”

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CHARLES CAMPION

"Jellyfish"

The thoughtful diner's watchword is that "you cannot have anything better than exactly what you want." If your heart is set on a Dover sole then the finest sirloin steak in the land will not ring the bell. It's the same when food shopping: if you set out to buy asparagus you will get little sympathy for returning with Hispi cabbage. We are what we eat and increasingly Britons are up for eating adventures. At some point in the past decade or so, trying novel, exotic and often expensive foods has become the rule, not the exception.

Cast your mind back to the Noughties. Foodies had moved on from the mantra of prawn cocktail, steak and Black Forest gâteau that dogged the Seventies... but only just. The time for trying new food and drink – rather than sticking to the over-cooked veggies and relentlessly cooked meat of "Granny knows best" – has arrived. This year, as you'll have spotted, a handful of respected middleweight restaurant chains have gone bust. Intriguingly, this may be linked to dullness. Food has got more exciting and some of the failures may be linked to lack of ambition – certainly rents, rates and uncertainty will have played their part, but some restaurants are failing because they are not exciting or interesting enough. The food businesses that are winning are those offering something new and interesting. It has been a long time coming but anyone in, or around, the food business will be encountering a new kind of consumer. These folk query prices, sustainability, value and

convenience – but they have an open mind when it comes to the unfamiliar.

This summer there are signs that even the most obscure delicacies are starting to get a fair trial. For the average, often old-established, restaurant chains there were a few developments that set the alarm bells ringing. Typical is Jeow Jeow – until September a pop-up restaurant in a Soho pub The Sun and 13 Cantons. The head chef is Tania Knott, ably assisted by her food writer husband Bill. And what is the cuisine making headlines at Jeow Jeow? Lao food, plus dishes from the length of the Mekong river. The menu lurches from larb with pork and crabmeat and a battered trout dish to kaipen (dried cured river algae) and padaek (a fermented fish sauce). And what are two (admittedly well-travelled) Brits doing running a kitchen like this? Isn't it encouraging to see that Brit diners can be broad-minded enough to try the food of the Mekong?

Naturally the big supermarkets make it their business to spot these trends and started looking for something... anything... new. The increasing interest in what's new and obscure has been driven by a series of articles in the broadsheets. Grasshopper pasta, anybody? Or the spotlight may be thrown onto cultivating jellyfish as a source of protein. Do not fear, the jellyfish prediction has a timeline of "2169" so it's unlikely that the boffin who made the prediction will be around to see who was right. Meanwhile, in the real world, food businesses should embrace this new generation of adventurous shoppers. We are all in for a lively ride and can finally move on from that Black Forest gâteau.

Cotswold Fayre reports to be first UK carbon-neutral fine food wholesaler

Cotswold Fayre has entered into a partnership with transport and logistics experts GEODIS that it says will enable the business to be the first fine food wholesaler in the UK to be completely carbon-neutral.

GEODIS will provide a complete supplier to retailer logistics service, collecting products from listed suppliers, warehousing and stock managing, picking and delivering orders direct to retailers.

The transport and logistics expert's Euro 6 compliant fleet and the eradication of trucking goods through regional hubs is a combination that is said will reduce the wholesaler's carbon footprint by 46% and the remaining carbon output incurred will be offset.

Paul Hargreaves, CEO at Cotswold Fayre, said, "As a B Corp, Cotswold Fayre has always had the planet as equals with people and profit, but we have recently declared a climate



emergency. There are 10 years left before potential environmental meltdown occurs if businesses and people do not change their habits.

"The government's target of being carbon neutral by 2050 is far too long and businesses must show the way and act more quickly. Their customers are demanding it, their

employees are desiring it and the planet may die without action. I feel that it is important that Cotswold Fayre, as a speciality food wholesaler, leads the way amongst the much larger mainstream food and drink wholesalers and I believe that we are the first wholesaler to announce carbon neutrality."

Manufactured goods industry would be hit hardest in no-deal Brexit

Analysis carried out by Statista has found that the manufactured goods industry would take the hardest hit by a no-deal Brexit.

Figures reveal that the gross value of the industry would decrease by 12% over the next 15 years. The agriculture and foods industry would

also experience a loss of 11%, the financial services industry would decrease by 9% and the services industry by 8%. The statistics portal also stated that in the case of a no-deal, the highest tariffs are likely to be imposed on agriculture and foods, which are expected to be almost 20%.

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Field fare MD joins new FRA Council

Frozen food specialist field fare has strengthened its connections with the British farming community, with MD Karen Deans joining the Farm Retail Association Council. The Council is made up of representatives from mature, medium and start-up businesses as well as trade members from the food service industry and training services, headed up by new chairman Rob Copley, who built up his own farm shop in Pontefract, West Yorkshire over 16 years.

Karen says, "Being invited to join the council of the FRA was a

great opportunity. We have been associate members pretty much from inception and have found their networking support indispensable. This is my chance to give back, then, not just for the sterling work of FRA, but to the farm shops that have stocked and supported us. It comes on the cusp of an exciting time for farmers markets and shops, where responding to and understanding a changing market is critical for our members' success and growth."

"As consumer demand increasingly focuses on provenance, local shopping, food miles and



environmentally clean alternatives to food production and packaging, and Brexit upheavals put the spotlight back on British produce, farmers markets and farm shops will only continue to grow in importance and popularity."

UK food and drink industry calls on support from government

Over 30 organisations across the UK's food and drink supply chain have released a publication calling on the government to provide support to the industry, as the UK's exit from the EU approaches. *A Recipe for Growth, Prosperity and Sustainability: the UK Food and Drink Industry's Plan for Success* suggests ways in which the government can work with the industry to tackle important issues, as UK Government begins drawing up plans for a holistic National Food Strategy, with a focus on post-Brexit food policy.

The publication talks about important topics including future

regulation and trade policy, tackling obesity, developing skills and talent, investing in exports and innovation and environmental sustainability.

Ian Wright CBE, FDF chief executive, commented, "Ahead of the upcoming National Food Strategy, the UK Food and Drink Industry's Plan for Success demonstrates that our industry is ready and willing to deliver economic growth, healthier consumption, environmental benefits, and higher skilled jobs that will benefit every community. Now we need governments across the UK to work with us in partnership to deliver a thriving UK food and drink industry."

NFU president urges farmers to tackle climate challenge "head on"

NFU President Minette Batters has spoken out about climate change and said that every farmer has a role to play, alongside other industry leaders, scientists and policy makers, in contributing towards Britain reaching its target of a net zero agriculture by 2040.

Mrs Batters was speaking at a farming and climate change conference hosted by the NFU and Sustainable Food Trust, which covered the topics of climate change, biodiversity and soil carbon loss and the changes needed to deliver climate-friendly food. She said, "Climate change is the greatest and most compelling challenge facing society today and each and every one of us has a part to play to mitigate the climate threat. For farmers, this means tackling the climate challenge head on – adapting the way we produce food to help deliver a greener planet for us all."

"The British farming industry is pushing itself to become net zero by 2040. This does not need to impact net farm income, and certainly doesn't mean downsizing production or exporting our production abroad.

Instead we need to implement a portfolio of methods to improve our production efficiency, capture more carbon on farmland and boost our production of bioenergy and land-based renewables. Effective incentives are going to be vital in each of these areas.

"As both a sink and a source of greenhouse gasses, British agriculture is uniquely placed to be a key part of the solution to the climate challenge. Our unique landscape and diverse farming systems enable us to produce food efficiently and sustainably, and we have been very clear in our ambition to build on this further and lead the way in climate-friendly food production.

"Our journey towards climate neutrality must be made together. If we work together, learn from each other and share our ideas I truly believe we can reach our net zero aspiration, and show the world that it can be done."

During the conference Mrs Batters also urged the government to provide incentives to help farmers reach the target.

Happerley to open centre for provenance

Farmer-led food provenance champion Happerley has announced plans to open what it says is the country's first national centre for provenance. A step towards delivering transparency across England's food and drink industry, the centre, located at independent food and leisure destination Lock29 in Oxfordshire, aims to give farmers, suppliers and producers a platform to champion their 'Gold Standard' produce, an accolade given to food and drink producers that can state the exact sources of their core ingredients back to the primary producers. Each core ingredient must be traceable back to source.

The new concept has been developed as the interest in food and drink increases alongside a demand from consumers for transparency.

Set to open on 1st March 2020, the centre aims to provide a platform for inspiring, educating and engaging consumers. It will feature an auditorium and cinema, connecting people with the food and drink journey.

The plans were unveiled by TV presenter and farmer Adam Henson during the event on the founder's farm. He says, "With Brexit and other economic uncertainties constantly putting farmers' livelihoods at risk, never has there been a more critical or fundamental time to provide a platform where English-grown and reared produce is championed and celebrated as it should be."

Matthew Rymer, CEO and founder of Happerley, added, "What better place to offer a national centre for England's food and drink provenance than Banbury – in the heart of England, 50 minutes from London. By giving the country an experiential showcase of the best of English produce, we expect to create a national destination venue."

PARTNER CONTENT



INTRODUCING ISHIKAWA:

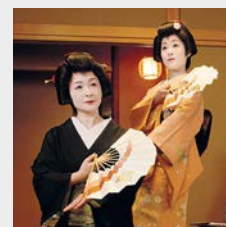
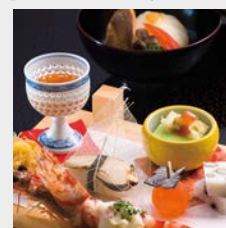
A treasure trove of finely crafted Japanese delicacies

Surrounded by water on three sides and home to one of Japan's most iconic mountains, Mount Hakusan, Ishikawa is renowned for its culinary craftsmanship. So much so, in fact, that it is respectfully referred to as the 'Kingdom of Craft', a title thoroughly deserved thanks to its centuries-old heritage of expertly produced food, drink and crafted items.

Every season of the year provides a treasure of fish and vegetables, and thanks to generations of perfecting its fermentation technology, the prefecture produces fine fermented delicacies including healthy soy sauce and miso paste.

Ishikawa is also rightfully revered for its sake production. The prefecture's natural water supply and rice production is highly regarded and form the basis of its renowned sakes.

There are around 35 brewers of sake within the area, and a number of them produce sake using the delicious fresh water from Mount Hakusan which stands at 2,700 metres above sea level in the Southern region of Ishikawa. Despite the simple, natural ingredients used, each sake produced in Ishikawa boasts its own perfectly balanced flavour which pairs beautifully with a number of foods enjoyed in Britain today.



Four years ago, the Hokuriku Shinkansen bullet train opened in Ishikawa and heralded a four-fold increase of British visitors to the prefecture. While the total number of visitors is still small in comparison to some other regions of Japan, this increase demonstrates the interest the British consumer has in traditional Japanese food and crafts so well represented in the prefecture.

Craftsmanship has long been valued in Ishikawa. During the feudal era, the Maeda family had tremendous financial power, which they used to invest in the cultural activities of the prefecture – raising its profile and setting stable foundations for its future. Thanks to no wars or disasters taking place in the prefecture in the past 400 years, Ishikawa's 36 traditional crafts have remained strong in the region.

As well as the Maeda family, a range of people play a large part in the treasure trove of quality food and drink hailing from Ishikawa. From the dedicated producers of such food and drink products as miso, soy sauce and sake to the talented chefs producing impressive dishes using this produce – as well as the makers of the finely crafted plates and bowls which showcase the food and drink – the success of the traditional culinary skills present in Ishikawa today is testament to the area's passion for quality and its heritage.

“Renowned across the world for its talented craftsmanship, the Japanese prefecture of Ishikawa is deserving of its title: The Kingdom of Craft”

SUE NELSON



"The plant-based revolution"

"Veganism has rocketed in the UK over the past couple of years – from an estimated half a million people in 2016 to more than 3.5 million," screamed *The Guardian* last year. They based their headline on Compare the Market research that claimed 7% of the UK population is vegan. But the survey of 2,000 adults was fundamentally flawed.

The question was: "Which of the following have you done or are considering doing to help reduce your impact on the planet?" This was followed by a list of options, which included "becoming vegan". 7% of respondents selected "I have done this" for the vegan option. But this is a rather open-ended question and doesn't actually tell us how many are strict vegans in 2019.

For example, you could become vegan for a month as part of Veganuary or go for meat-free Mondays each week. This means you could reasonably answer that you had become vegan, even though you are currently tucking into a bacon sandwich. The July 2018 National Survey (SSI) shows the number of vegans in the UK at 0.4% of the population not 7%, and the Vegan Society broadly agrees.

So, the true number of strict vegans could be dismissed as a consumer base that is not worthy of attention for small retailers. The recent research from Great British Chefs entitled 2019, *A Year Of Change* gives much more insight. It aims to understand the behaviours and beliefs of consumers trying to follow more of a plant-based diet. A category they describe as

"Committed Foodies" – who surely are the key audience for independent retailers – are vanguards in this change. 66% of them claim to be trying to adopt a more plant-based/vegetarian diet, with 42% saying they are not vegan but often eat vegan dishes. This insight is critical in that while many of these consumers would happily buy fish or dairy on some days, they will go for vegan products, recipes or dishes regularly. Yet often they are poorly served on menus or can only find vegan options in one tiny section of a retail outlet. The plain fact is that they are looking for interesting and tasty vegan options, while not considering themselves vegan at all, and they don't have much choice.

The marketing departments of the big brands and supermarkets are following the absolute vegan statistics and not understanding the flexitarian approach. The inescapable reality is that the plant revolution is gaining pace and core deli and restaurant customers are happy to eat vegan dishes, even if the absolute number of strict vegans remains small.

For independent retailers this trend presents clear opportunities for growth and some pitfalls too. Although there have been some high-profile acquisitions in the market, supermarkets poorly serve the vegetarian, and particularly the vegan, market. This presents a real opportunity for delis, farm shops and food service. Your best customer who loves expensive charcuterie and a well-made blue cheese is probably looking for exciting vegan products.

Download the 2019 'foodie' research for free from greatbritishchefs.com.

Iber Oleum guide highlights importance of olive oil in Spain

The fourth edition of the Iber Oleum is the ultimate Extra Virgin Spanish Olive Oil (AOVE) guide for oils of the Jaen region of southern Spain.

According to the creator Francisco García Mendoza, the objective of the guide is to highlight the importance of the role of olive oil in Spanish cuisine and culture, as well as gathering the best Spanish AOVEs in a single publication, where producers are classified according to the quality and properties of their oils.

Olive oil has been traditionally used in Spain for millennia, and is the founding stone of the Mediterranean diet, alongside wine and bread. The value of Spanish olive oil can also be translated to British consumers, with Spain being the biggest exporter of olive oil in British markets, accounting for 63.34% of total olive oil imported by the UK.



MOBILE PAYMENTS PLATFORM SUMUP'S SMALL BUSINESS INDEX 2019 HAS REVEALED THAT GLASGOW HAS BEEN RANKED AS THE BEST CITY IN THE UK IN WHICH TO OPEN A RESTAURANT, BAR OR CAFÉ. THE CITY ALSO CAME IN AT NUMBER 19 IN EUROPE

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GUIDE TO ECO PACKAGING

Are you fighting the war against plastics?
Knowing what packaging alternatives are out
there is essential to making changes
for the future

The battle against plastic is underway, with businesses across the food and drink industry making the necessary changes to help reduce the amount of plastic polluting our planet, after an onslaught of coverage regarding the devastating effects of single-use plastic in particular. According to WRAP, approximately 5,000 items of marine plastic pollution have been found per mile of beach in the UK.

Plastic is an amazing material and there are circumstances where it does have a role to play, but the main issue is that it is overused and often disposed of in ways that harm the environment. WRAP's The UK Plastics Pact brings together businesses, UK governments and NGOs to tackle the plastic waste issue, with the organisation targeting for 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

Responding to Which?'s recent research into packaging in supermarkets, Peter Andrews, head of sustainability at the British Retail Consortium, said, "Our members are working hard to ensure all plastic packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable, in line with the UK Plastic Pact, and are eliminating single-use packaging where they can, whilst ensuring it doesn't lead to avoidable food or product waste. The retail industry is keen for government support in making recycling labelling clearer. To support this, it's crucial that there is consistent household collection of materials across the UK so that customers can recycle a yogurt pot or a carton, for example, wherever they live."

Cutting down on the use of plastic bags and packaging and nailing the recycling is one thing, but knowing where to turn when it comes to more environmentally friendly alternatives is another.

Christina Brown, head of sales and marketing at B Smith Packaging, explains how options including waxed paper and compostable brown kraft are the way forward when it comes to packaging in the cheese industry, "With over 50 years of supplying cheese wrap, linen wrap, hampers and bags to the likes of Paxton and Whitfield, Fine Cheese

Co and a whole plethora of artisanal cheese manufacturers, we have seen lots of new trends emerging over the past few years across different routes to markets. With consumer buying behaviour and ever-changing external forces driving the sustainability, recyclability and reusability of packaging, the cheese sector is at the forefront of biodegradable and compostable materials. The more natural and environmentally friendly the better, and this includes waxed paper and compostable brown kraft which is a return to the packaging of yesteryear.

"For independents, the opportunity to brand their cheese wrap, keeps their name and brand front of mind with the consumer. These are then often placed in paper bags or bags made from recycled plastic bottles that also upholds

the already recycled and reusable attributes at the forefront of today's environmentally aware consumer. Our bespoke brand-printed packaging not only reinforces the clients brand, it protects the cheese and ensure the integrity and quality of the product is maintained, whilst also allowing the retailer to add value to their product offering."

The compostable materials have been around for awhile now. Beeswax wraps, for example, are by no means a brand new concept but with the current emphasis on eco-friendly alternatives they are having their time in the spotlight. BeeBee Wraps supply wraps made from British beeswax and organic cotton. The products are free from plastic, reusable, are a zero-waste alternative to cling film and at the end of their life they can then be

composted or used as firelighters. Rachel Karniely, communications manager, says, "With the concept of BeeBee Wraps being rather novel and finding alternatives to single-use plastic a current hot topic, we find customers often enjoy testing out the product and discussing them in-store. This means BeeBee Wraps thrive in independent retail settings as the personal and intimate environment allows for engaging chats with customers and BeeBee's bright, beautiful designs make an eye-catching display in any store."

In order for change to truly happen and to create a movement that takes us towards a more sustainable future across the whole industry, it's also up to retailers to be proactive. As a shop is there more that you could do to incorporate eco-friendly packaging? Why not use signage

and messages across social media platforms to encourage customers to bring their own bags when they visit and perhaps only offer paper bags in-store? Waitrose & Partners announced last month that it has taken hundreds of products out of packaging, including fruit, vegetables and coffee in its Oxford Botley Road shop, in a trial offering customers a dedicated refillable zone.

Henry Mackley, director at Harp Lane Deli, has been taking extra steps over the last 12 months to create a more environmentally friendly business, "Our takeaway coffee cups are now all recyclable and we have been selling bamboo keep-cups for the last year, which we sell at cost price. As an incentive to use reusable coffee cups we offer a 10p discount. Many of our regular customers who work close to the shop now bring in their own china mugs, again, they receive a 10p discount. One downside is that I find recyclable coffee cups to be considerably more expensive, but perhaps because more and more people are bringing their own cups the cost balances out."

"We have completely gotten rid of plastic carrier bags, now only offering paper bags if people ask for one. We find that probably 80% of our customers now bring their own bag. We are yet to find an eco-friendly alternative to tamper-proof plastic tubs that we serve things like olives and antipasti in, although we do try to encourage our regular customers to re-use these tubs. However, I'm still not entirely sure of the potential food hygiene implications if, for instance, someone had not cleaned out their old tub sufficiently. We try to re-purpose as much packaging as possible."

Henry adds, "I think wholesalers - especially the larger ones - could do more to reduce packaging or to find greener alternatives. Every week we are inundated with plastic bubble wrap which we then have to dispose of. I appreciate it's probably a bit of a conundrum for suppliers: get your products delivered safely, or go green? But there must be a happy balance."

“ With consumer buying behaviour and ever-changing external forces driving the sustainability, recyclability and reusability of packaging, the cheese sector is at the forefront of biodegradable and compostable materials ”



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Award-winning, luxury, hand-prepared desserts from field fare, made with only the finest ingredients and selectively sized for an average family. Three of the range boast a prestigious 2018 Great Taste Award: Coffee Roulade, vegan gluten-free Chocolate Torte and gluten-free Salted Caramel Cheesecake. Other recipes within the range include Lemon Cheesecake, White Chocolate and Raspberry Cheesecake and Raspberry Roulade.

field fare can supply a retailer with all their frozen food needs – keeping the buying process simple and efficient with one order, one environmentally friendly delivery and one invoice.
01732 864 344 enquiries@field-fare.com field-fare.com



Long Tail Mixers

Long Tail Mixers are an emerging brand dedicated to providing rums, bourbons and whiskies with the ideal pairings and help consumers discover dark spirits in a new light.

The mixers have been created by two lifelong friends, Alex and Tom, who share a passion for dark spirits. The mixers, which come in three flavours – Blood Orange, Island Spice and Ginger Lime – are blended from natural ingredients with carbonated spring water to produce unique and balanced mixers that are designed to enhance and complement the flavour notes of your favourite dark spirit but not overpower. The mixers are lower in sugar and all natural. Long Tail Mixers can be purchased from a variety of distributors.

0208 064 0239 sales@drinklongtail.co.uk drinklongtail.co.uk

Potts Partnership

Take your food to the next level with Potts' condiments this winter. Our delicious condiments are the perfect accompaniment to all roasts so stock up!

Our mustard and herb sauce is a unique complement for roast chicken as there is a lack of condiments specifically for this roast, so provide your customers with a new, delicious option. Roast beef goes perfectly with our hot horseradish and chilli mustard for a delicious flavour kick. Minted balsamic reduction is perfectly paired with a lamb roast, while our apple and pear sauce with cider is amazing with a pork roast.

Our colourful packaging will stand out on shelves, which combined with the delicious flavours will have your customers coming back for more!

01672 556 109 info@pottspartnership.co.uk
pottspartnership.co.uk



Hawkshead Relish

Roasted Vegetable Relish is a delicious smoky medley of grilled vegetables including peppers, courgettes and aubergine combined with Halen Môn Sea Salt to create the ultimate relish.

This versatile relish is fabulous with chicken, fish and red meat, and is perfect when stirred into fresh pasta for a smoky kick. Gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan and free from additives and preservatives. One of over 100 award-winning handmade preserves.

01539 436 614
hawksheadrelish.com



Stag Bakeries

Something Different for Cheese is a rich and moreish fruit cake that is an exciting alternative to the British classic, biscuits with cheese. Unlike the conventional fruit cake for cheese, this cake is jam-packed and bursting with alcohol-infused fruit. The cake is also generously studded with pecans to add an exciting crunch to each mouthwatering bite.

The fruit cake for cheese is a versatile cheeseboard favourite that can be paired with a variety of cheeses such as strong Cheddar, tangy blue cheeses and mellow, ripe soft cheeses such as Brie, or for a little pure indulgence, on top of a Stag Bakeries Stornoway Water Biscuit.

Presented in a balsa wood box for a luxurious artisan feel, making it perfect for those special occasions.

01851 702 733 sales@stagbakeries.co.uk stagbakeries.co.uk



Willy's Apple Cider Vinegar

A delicious blend of 1/3 honey and 2/3 raw Willy's Apple Cider Vinegar.

Willy's Apple Cider Vinegar with 'the Mother' is made from 48 classic apple varieties grown in Willy's pristine organic orchards in Herefordshire.

Controlling the whole process from apple to bottle, Willy's Apple Cider Vinegar with Honey can be enjoyed as a versatile cooking ingredient, a salad dressing blended with quality oils and mustards, or it can also be enjoyed as part of a daily wellness routine.

The Willy's team recommends enjoying 25ml diluted in warm water each day to support digestive health and to help keep pH levels balanced within the body. Apple Cider Vinegar with Honey is also recognised for its anti-inflammatory properties.

willy@willychases.co.uk
willysacv.co.uk



Walkers Nonsuch

Great for giving, perfect for sharing at Christmas time is the Luxury Selection Hammer Pack made by family company Walker's Nonsuch. Included in the pack are four chunky toffee bars in Original Creamy, Roasted Hazelnut, Liqueurice and Fruit and Nut along with a traditional toffee hammer.

Using just good ingredients like whole milk and butter, the taste and chew are second to none. All the toffee is free from hydrogenated vegetable oil, artificial colours, preservatives and gluten, too. 2019 is a triumphant year for the company as they are celebrating 125 years of toffee making!

01782 321 525 hello@walkers-nonsuch.co.uk
walkers-nonsuch.co.uk/trade

Dean's

Following on from the great success of last year's Steven Brown Art shortbread tins launch, Dean's are extending their range with the introduction of another six tins featuring the work of the popular Scottish artist.

New designs include Tam McDeer, a majestic stag painted in Steven Brown's unique and contemporary multi coloured style, which is sure to perform well in both gift and tourism retail.

Commenting on the latest designs, brand manager Siobhan Ingram said "We have been amazed at the success of this range, consumers love the combination of contemporary art and Dean's melt in the mouth shortbread."

Dean's first started baking their melt in the mouth shortbread in the 1970's, when company founder Helen Dean started baking in her Aberdeenshire kitchen to raise funds for the local pipe band. Dean's brand has since grown to become a household name across Scotland and beyond.

01466 792 086 deans.co.uk



Old Rectory Preserves

Old Rectory Preserves is an artisan maker of a range of multi-award-winning jams, chutneys, jellies and marmalade based in Norfolk.

They use only top quality, locally-sourced ingredients including heritage fruit varieties and herbs, and their delicious products picked up a further six Great Taste Awards in the last year.

New flavours launched this year include alcohol-laced preserves with mouthwatering flavours such as Brandied Cherry, Blackberry & Sloe Gin and Blackcurrant & Pimm's as well as Limoncello Marmalade.

oldrectorypreserves.com 01953 789 910
aa@oldrectorypreserves.com



Jelly Belly

Always a huge best-seller, the Jelly Belly Advent Calendar is famously the tastiest way to celebrate the family countdown to Christmas.

This year Mr Jelly Belly is featured decorating his tree surrounded by piles of presents, a roaring fire and Fido the dog. It is the ultimate and idyllic seasonal scene.

Behind each numbered day are Pyramid Bags of popular Jelly Belly jelly bean flavours – with an extra special surprise behind the Christmas Eve window. A delightfully delicious treat for all ages.

Generously proportioned, the box accommodates 24 x 10g Pyramid bags. The festive fun is extended to a beautifully embossed Jelly Belly Christmas Gable Box. The perfect gift.

01727 829 010
uksales@bestimports.co.uk
jellybelly.co.uk



Joe & Seph's

It's back! Debuting last year to great success and reviews, Joe & Seph's Gourmet Popcorn Advent Calendar is the world's first popcorn advent calendar. Illustrated as a beautiful snow-covered, Victorian shop-front, the calendar opens up like a giant Christmas storybook and behind each of the 24 doors are mini packets of artisan popcorn in 12 unique flavours, from their popular Salted Caramel and Caramel & Belgian Chocolate to festive Orange Chocolate. This year, they've added 40% more popcorn and corniest jokes!

0203 697 0203 joe@joeandsephs.com joeandsephs.co.uk



DTM Print

Probably the easiest way to make a product more unique is by personalising its label, either by offering name variations, different designs and personalised messages or by including individual photos.

As a business, you can either offer personalised labels as an additional service through your website or you can decide to go for an in-store on-demand printing solution, which allows customers to personalise a consumer product with a label that contains a photo or individual text before having it printed at the POS to take away.

DTM Print, international OEM and solution provider for specialty printing systems, offers a wide range of label printers for a fast and flexible on-demand personalised label production including Primera's LX500e and LX910e. Both printer deliver full-colour labels in any shape, size and amount that's needed. They use only one high-yield tri-colour cartridge with integrated print head, simplifying operation and on-going maintenance and minimising downtimes during ink replacement.

+49 611 927 770 sales@dtm-print.eu dtm-print.eu



The Sun Valley Nut Co.

The Sun Valley Nut Co. has added a brand-new Spicy BBQ Peanuts and Corn with Tabasco® Brand Seasoning flavour to its range of nut mixes. The link up, twinning the UK's number one hot pepper sauce brand with the purveyor of premium nuts, spells good news for operators looking to profit from a snacking market in the ascendancy.

Sun Valley marketing manager, Alison Robson comments, "The words 'nuts' and 'kick' should rarely be used together but for this new fiery new flavour they're the perfect pairing. The new Spicy BBQ Peanuts and Corn with Tabasco® Brand Seasoning have been created to add a much-needed dose of spice and flavour to predictable snack offerings."

01514 827 100 sun-valley.co.uk



Grey Poupon

Grey Poupon is one of the world's leading premium mustard brands. As the only mustard widely sold in UK retail stores made in the traditional French way with added white wine, Grey Poupon is a truly unique and distinct brand and flavour for consumers.

With heritage dating back to 1777, Grey Poupon has a timeless quality that epitomises the best in French cuisine.

Grey Poupon is now undertaking a compelling social media and in-store marketing campaign in the UK.
greypouponuk.com



Deerness Distillery

Spontaneous, self-sufficient, and with a little spirit thrown in for good measure – that's Stuart and Adelle Brown, founders of Deerness Distillery: Orkney's first distillery for over 130 years. It is here that they produce the multi-award winning Sea Glass Gin, new Scuttled Gin and the Island's only distilled vodka.

From their purpose-built distillery at the side of their home in Deerness, Orkney they launched their products Sea Glass Gin and Into the Wild Vodka back in May 2017. The distillery boasts a beautiful shop as well as tours and tastings of their spirits. Plans are afoot for a café and extending their spirits with a small batch rum and small batch whisky. 01856 741 264

sales@deernessdistillery.com deernessdistillery.com



Gruyère AOP

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

Gruyère AOP can be found with different maturities: the Classic is matured for six months and has a delicate, nutty, creamy flavour. The Reserve is matured for 10 months and has a drier, more grainy mouthfeel. Then you can find an older Gruyère AOP, 14 months or more, giving it a much stronger flavour. The age brings a difference in taste, but the recipe always stays the same.

gruyere.com



The Premium Greek Olive Oil Company

Every time you step into your kitchen, you transform into a master chef. To live up to your reputation as a master chef, you always have that secret ace up your sleeve, that one ingredient which makes you a better cook. EVO3 is an award-winning, organically cultivated, superior quality, innovative and delicate-tasting Greek extra virgin olive oil produced in environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner, and its mission statement is "one bottle, one tree, one life" reflecting its pledge that for every bottle sold a tree is planted in a deforested areas in Africa and Haiti.

info@premiumoliveoil.co.uk premiumoliveoil.co.uk



Summerdown Mint

The classic Mint Chocolate Collection was inspired by the notable success of Summerdown's award-winning peppermint chocolates. It is a new addition to the range – a selection of milk and dark chocolates made with pure English Black Mitcham peppermint. As well as our distinctive dark chocolate peppermint fondants and crisp mint discs, the collection includes dark chocolate and silky milk chocolate mint Neapolitans. Over the last 20 years, Summerdown has reintroduced traditional Black Mitcham peppermint to this country, relearning lost farming skills from America and combining them with the latest technology at our farm in the foothills of the Hampshire downs. The oil, which is distilled on the farm, has a consistent quality and a soft lingering taste.

01256 780 252 sales@summerdownmint.com
summerdownmint.com

Peter's Yard

Peter's Yard, famous for their award-winning Sourdough Crispbreads, are introducing a new Sourdough Flatbreads range. The long, thin flatbreads are designed to pair with your favourite dips for a delicious snack.

They are made from simple, natural ingredients including Shipton Mill organic flour, British rapeseed oil, Halen Môn Sea Salt and their own, 16-hour fermented sourdough starter. Hand-baked, they come in three recipes: Sea Salt, Seeded and Smoked Chilli.

The Flatbreads are all high in fibre, low in sugar and saturated fats and with no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives. They will also be Peter's Yard's first products suitable for vegans.

Available from a wide selection of distributors from August 1st.

orders@petersyard.com petersyard.com



ChicP

ChicP creates a variety of unique and natural sustainable houmous from wonky fruit and vegetables.

The London-based brand is passionate about reducing food waste – it is committed to ensuring that 20-25% of its raw ingredients come from surplus over the course of every year, in effect supporting farmers (whose 'wonky' vegetables are rejected by supermarkets) as well as promoting food sustainability.

As well as being good for the planet, ChicP's products are high in protein and free from added sugar, dairy and gluten. Not only that, but they're made primarily from raw vegetables – one of the healthiest food options available.

Their flavours include Beetroot & Horseradish; Carrot, Ginger & Turmeric and Herby, each of which has a shelf life of 24 days. They will also be bringing out a limited edition line later this year.

07788 474 803 hannah@chicp.co.uk chicp.co.uk



Dean's

Dean's have recently added to their product portfolio with the launch of a new range of savoury cheese bites. Baked with a generous quantity of intensely flavoured extra mature Cheddar cheese, the mini bites are further enhanced with the addition of chilli, caramelised red onion and cracked black pepper. The crumbly, oaty texture and real cheese flavour make them the perfect nibble to enjoy with a glass of wine.

Dean's first started baking their melt in the mouth shortbread in the 1970s, when company founder Helen Dean started baking in her Aberdeenshire kitchen to raise funds for the local pipe band. Dean's brand has since grown to become a household name across Scotland and beyond.

Dean's Extra Mature Cheddar Bites are available in Original Cheese, Chilli, Caramelised Red Onion & Cracked Black Pepper varieties.

01466 792 086 deans.co.uk



Bettys & Taylors

Taylor's of Harrogate Coffee Bags are proper coffee made easy. The clever bags let the ground coffee brew perfectly in two minutes in your cup. They work just like a teabag but for ground coffee – all the flavour without the mess. Each bag is individually wrapped to ensure it stays fresh and delivers on the extraordinary quality and taste Taylor's is renowned for.

Coffee Bags are perfect for busy people looking for convenient proper coffee at home but are also ideal when on the move and in the workplace.

Four blends are available from your local wholesaler: elegant Rich Italian, smooth and sweet Decaffe, rich and fierce Hot Lava Java and new Flying Start for a kick-start to your day. 0800 328 1886 hello@taylorsofharrogate.co.uk taylorsofharrogate.co.uk



Jake's Boost

Jake's Boost is an artisan producer of multi-award winning premium mixed nut and seed butters, using only the best nature has to offer to create nourishing spreads that are unique in ingredient combinations, flavours and textures. Born out of love for the outdoors and honest, nutritious, naturally delicious food, the combination of nuts and seeds in our Boost Butters provides you with a higher concentration in micro nutrients than plain nut butters for a daily dose of energy-boosting goodness.

Four blends are currently available in 190g and 1kg jars using recycled glass and compostable labels as packaging. Produced in small batches in the UK, our nut and seed butters are vegan and always free from gluten, added sugar, sweeteners, salt, and added oils. In need of a boost? Jake's Boost has got you covered! 07476 764 101 ansje@jakesboost.com jakesboost.com


**JAMÓN IBÉRICO GUIJUELO:
A DOP PRODUCT**

Jamón Ibérico Guijuelo is a DOP-certified product, with regulation demanding that only the regions of Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura and Andalusia are entitled to produce the protected meat.

TASTING NOTES

Jamón Ibérico Guijuelo DOP has a complex, lingering flavour with a hint of nuttiness and strong sweet notes.

HOW TO SERVE

Jamón Ibérico Guijuelo is rich yet delicately balanced, so slice thinly and serve simply – the Spanish often enjoy it without accompaniments. Serve at room temperature, at which the fat in the meat will melt on the tongue.

DID YOU KNOW?

Iberian pigs are known across Spain as 'pata negra' due to their black hooves.

While there are many variations of Jamón Ibérico, Jamón Ibérico Guijuelo DOP is widely recognised to be one of the finest.

Boasting deep, ruby red flesh, acorn-infused fat and a uniquely sweet flavour, which lingers on the palate and provides a creamy finish, the title is only given to the very best hams hailing from Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura and Andalusia, where the pigs graze on the acorns dropped by encina trees (known as holm oaks in English). Only pigs which are 100% or 75% Iberian are allowed to be a part of this 'dehesa' production.

Acorns and cereals form the diet of iberico piglets until they are 18 months old, and during the last three months before they are dispatched – 1st October until 1st January, also known as 'montanera' – they feed on the acorns which drop from the encina trees to impart the meat's distinctive flavour. The oleic acid,

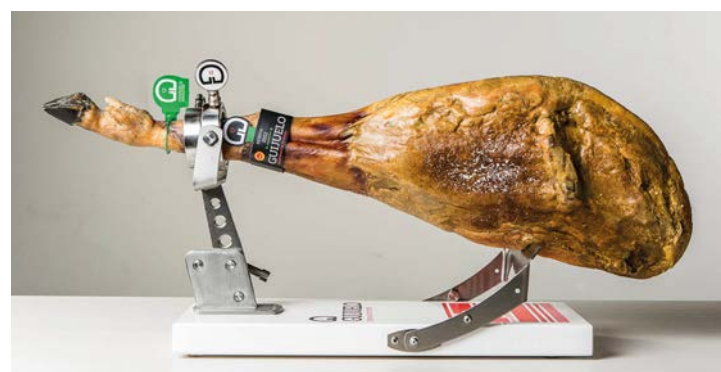
TASTES OF SPAIN: JAMÓN IBÉRICO GUIJUELO DOP

As one of the most iconic Spanish exports, Jamón Ibérico Guijuelo DOP deserves its place in counters across Britain

also found in olives, infuses into the fat and leads the locals to refer to the pigs as 'olives with legs'. The meat is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, high quality protein, potassium, zinc, phosphorous, selenium, iron and vitamins B1, B2, B3, B6 and B12.

Once 'sacrificed', as locals refer to the killing of the animals, the paletas (front legs) and jamones (rear legs) are refrigerated overnight to increase the firmness in the meat and cured in sea salt for

24 hours per kilo. Once complete, the legs are washed then hung for around 18 months in purpose-built rooms at 1,000m altitude. At the final stage of production, the cured legs are pierced with a cow's bone which is then smelt to gauge their quality and suitability for the title of Jamón Ibérico Guijuelo DOP. Pigs which do not satisfy the exacting demands are still referred to as Jamón Ibérico but do not receive the desirable 'Guijuelo DOP' suffix.



“Boasting deep, ruby red flesh and acorn-infused fat, the flavour of which lingers on the palate and provides a creamy finish, the ‘Guijuelo DOP’ suffix is only given to the very best hams”

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HOW TO: EXPERIENCE-BASED RETAILING

Shoppers want memories not things, explaining the growth of the experience economy within food retail, says Angela Youngman

Research undertaken by Barclaycard indicated that over half of consumers would rather spend money on entertainment and events than products. Respondents indicated that the setting in which they are served is as important as the food or beverage they are buying, indicating that providing the best quality produce or price is no longer sufficient to tempt customers.

Direct contact

Seeing produce being made immediately attracts attention. Award-winning leisure attractions such as the Beamish North of England Open Air Museum with its Victorian township has majored on this by providing a sweet shop with adjacent manufacturing facilities where visitors can watch toffee, fudge and boiled sweets being made, and have a taste of the finished product. Most of the visitors immediately head into the shop to buy some to take home.

High street retailer, Fudge Kitchen, has used a similar approach throughout its 35-year trading history. Fudge Kitchen's managing director, Sian Holt comments, "We have always had an element of retail theatre, producing fudge in front of our customers. We have seen a change in reactions to that from where people used to stop for about five or 10 minutes, now they are stopping to watch the entire process and asking questions afterwards."

Recognising an opportunity, Fudge Kitchen began looking at ways it could expand its experience-based offer. "We set up fudge making experiences. One of the biggest issues we had was to persuade our insurers to cover us, because of the health and safety issues. Such experiences had not existed before. We used to do a couple a month, now we are doing upwards of 10 a

week across our stores. It increases brand awareness, interest among customers and we get a lot of repeat business. It is a great way of retailing, tapping into the day out experience, retail in its leisure aspect. We feature strongly on TripAdvisor, and are usually in the top three attractions in the heritage towns in which we operate."

At Turnips in London's Borough Market, actively engaging with the public has enabled them to develop new markets for hitherto wasted produce. Charles Foster says, "We supply Michelin restaurants who only want visually perfect products. This results in a lot of rejected produce. We employed a chef and created a seasonal pizza and risotto offering which is cooked and sold directly at our stall. It gives us something to talk about to customers and encourages them to try the produce. It inspires customers to buy unusual produce such as black garlic aioli or exotic mushrooms. We used to have 26% waste, we are now down to around 5% and are making a profit on the produce, giving us higher margins that help make our retail business pay, and elevating the business to a new level."

Brand-building

Producers are equally convinced of the value of providing experience-based events, especially when it comes to building a brand or introducing a new style of product. For NOVELTEA, creating a customer experience was essential to develop sales. Apart from offering in-store sampling or at festivals, they utilise eye-catching props such as displaying the product in a tea chest, as well as collaborating with other complementary brands to create a memorable, interactive experience. NOVELTEA's Vincent Efferoth explains, "Following the success of a pairing event on the main event stage at the Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival, we held an exclusive event with Paxton and Whitfield to pair artisan cheeses with our unique alcoholic teas. Currently we are developing a unique 'tea tasting' event with a Newcastle tea brand."

On the road

Retailers are also investigating ways of taking their retail offer into new locations, thus creating brand awareness and developing sales opportunities within a wider market. Festivals are a key target. Artisan

retailers increasingly trade at food, music, wellness and arts festivals. Caterfest Concessions Management has announced plans to develop themed food areas at festivals to showcase artisan food and retailing.

Paz Samah of Bad Brownie says, "Music festival pop-ups now account for 15% of our annual revenue so they're hugely important to our marketing strategy. They give our customers the opportunity to meet us, offer feedback and share their ideas for future brownie flavours, playing a vital role in shaping and growing our business."

The Co-Op has linked with festival organisers to become the first food retailer to operate pop-up supermarkets at the Download, Latitude, Reading, Leeds, Isle of Wight, Creamfields, Glastonbury and BellaDrum music festivals this summer, thus catering for hundreds of thousands of festivalgoers. Yet these are stores which are not just supermarkets – they offer experiences too by providing in-store DJ's playing music relevant to the festival. Last year, the Co-Op's first festival store in Leeds included a DJ playing music in-store at 2am in the morning, creating a lively

atmosphere linking into the festival theme. Customers loved it, and started dancing in the aisles and forming a large conga line. Scenes of customers doing the conga around the Co-Op went viral via the Unilad website reaching 2.2m people, and was shared 4.3k times across Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp.

Food festivals are an instinctive choice for specialist food retailers but choosing the right ones is important. Dan Bliss of Paxton & Whitfield believes that it is "better to engage with local food festivals than national ones. We've seen bigger returns by doing this." Lack of a food festival in an area should not be a deterrent, in fact it can provide an opportunity. Faced with exactly that situation in Stratford-upon-Avon, Paxton & Whitfield's store manager simply liaised with other local food brands to create a very successful festival.

STAFF SUCCESS

Ensuring the success of experience-based events, sampling or taking part in festivals requires participating staff to be more than just sales assistants. Additional product training to ensure they can provide the relevant information and advice is crucial.

At Fudge Kitchen, the staff providing the experiences are hand selected for being engaging, quirky, upbeat and entertaining. Apparently many of the staff moonlight in various creative fields such as musicians, stand-up comedians and even a trainee weaponry blacksmith. Their role requires them to be entertaining and informative, explaining the history, science and techniques encouraging customers to enjoy an interactive, immersive experience.

“ Recognising the changing retail scene, specialist food retailers are investigating ways to expand their experience-based offer including the provision of much greater sampling activity, developing elements of retail theatre, opening pop-up shops at festivals and hosting events outside normal trading hours ”



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Ben Branson

"I want to change the way the world drinks," exclaims Ben Branson, founder of Seedlip. The man who arguably single-handedly created the non-alcoholic spirit category in the UK – as a result of frustration at the lack of options out there for non-drinkers as well as a keen interest in herbs and his family's farming heritage – Ben is a bona fide icon of the start-up sector. He's driven by thoroughly honest influences, aiming to to "solve the dilemma of what to drink when you're not drinking and continue my family's 300 year legacy of working with the land. It drives me and my team," he says, "and is just scary enough to keep us all on our toes!"

MEET THE ICONS OF FOOD & DRINK



Speciality & Fine Food Fair and *Speciality Food* have partnered up to celebrate 20 years of the show and the biggest icons in food and drink

Earlier this month, an event was held at Wellington Arch in London to honour the most inspiring icons in the fine food and drink industry. The event was hosted by Speciality & Fine Food Fair in partnership with *Speciality Food* and English Heritage to mark 20 years of the Fair, and saw the great and the good of the fine food sector gathered in celebration.

While every industry has its icons, the fine food and drink industry can boast some of the most passionate of them all. Some of them are driven by a mission – to change the face of food and drink, to promote sustainability or to secure a positive future for the evolving sector – while some are driven simply by a love of what they do. The call went out across the

food and drink industry and people responded in droves, eager to see their icons receive the recognition they deserve.

Each of these icons will be celebrated at Speciality & Fine Food Fair, taking place at Olympia London on 1st-3rd September.

So, in no particular order, here are the 20 Icons of Food & Drink. Prepare to be inspired...



William Chase

William Chase: the man with the Midas touch. From founding then selling Tyrrells to creating his own spirits, wines, snacks and apple cider vinegar products, thanks to a combination of hard work, determination and business nous, William is truly deserving of the title of 'Food and Drink Icon'. "I love to own a process," William explains, "from growing, manufacturing and packing to the final design. Tyrrells: From Seed to Crisp; Chase: Single Estate Spirits and now Willy's ACV: From Apple to Bottle." Despite his great success, William has held onto his roots – "The farmer in me enjoys nurturing the land to create a quality end-product" – but continuously keeps an eye out for the next big thing: "I enjoy spotting a trend and trying to own it, applying a healthy dose of brand magic to set my brand apart."

Margaret Carter



A true inspiration and food entrepreneur, Margaret started her business, Patchwork Pâté, with just £9 in the 80's and now leads an incredibly successful enterprise. She has so much knowledge to share and gives back to the industry through mentoring young entrepreneurs and supporting other businesses through their journeys. "I care about people and how they make their living and what makes them tick," she explains. "It gives me a real buzz to find out about other people's lives and find ways to make what they do more focused, allowing them to achieve their dreams." This openness extends to her experience, too: "I enjoy sharing my story with groups of people, who find it inspiring to hear that life is not all plain sailing and that to make it to the top of your game sometimes you have to keep on trying," she concludes.

“English Heritage is proud to be partnering with Speciality & Fine Food Fair and *Speciality Food Magazine* to celebrate 20 years of fine food and drink. We were delighted to host their evening with guests and artisan producers together to celebrate 20 icons of the food and drink industry at Wellington Arch. The setting was perfect; with London views for the guests to enjoy, the evening was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievement of those recognised by their peers for their contribution to the food and drink industry”

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Bob Farrand

The Guild of Fine Food, home to the Great Taste Awards and *Fine Food Digest* amongst other pillars of fine food, was founded by Bob Farrand – and with a number of Farrands spanning two generations now forming the team of directors, it's an inspiring family affair. Since 1992, the business has been an integral part of the food and drink industry and we have Bob, his passion for food and bringing together, supporting and encouraging professionals – to thank.

Peter Hannan



"Peter Hannan is responsible for Britain's finest steak," read many, many responses to our survey. Peter has well and truly put Northern Ireland on the fine food map through his iconic business, Hannan Meats, giving lovers of incredible quality meat across

the UK access to some of the very best. He is driven, he says, by "a true desire to produce great food, and to feed people well" and relishes "being a member of a great team, who share that passion and continuously strive to make good things even better."

Paul Hargreaves



Paul is well-known throughout the speciality food industry for two things in particular: supporting artisan producers and promoting ethical business methods. He's so passionate about the latter that he wrote a book on the subject, *Forces for Good*, and is a proud B Corp ambassador. "Right from the start, 20 years ago," he explains, "I have believed that business should be a 'Force for Good' and be making the world a better place. This continues to drive us at Cotswold Fayre today." The food and drink industry is a fitting home for such a business and icon: "We are fortunate to be based within the world of speciality food, where there are far more genuine, authentic leaders than in many other sectors," he says.



Patrick Holden

As the founder of The Sustainable Food Trust and producer of the organic – and delicious – Hafod Cheddar, Patrick Holden is a pioneer of the sustainability movement so key to the food and drink industry today. Sustainability is hot in the headlines and on the lips of consumers and industry professionals alike, and Patrick is an authoritative and supportive figurehead for both. He was director of the Soil Association between 1995 and 2010, during which time he became a respected spokesperson and campaigner for the organic farming movement and now, in his role at The Sustainable Food Trust, he communicates and collaborates with forces across food and drink to inspire change and put it into action. Patrick's aim is for us all to enjoy a healthier environment with more wildlife, increased diversity within our food culture and improved public health.



Bruce Langlands

Bruce has one of the most impressive CVs of anyone working in food and drink today, and currently resides at London's iconic Selfridges as Board Director of Food & Hospitality. He's an icon of food and drink retail through and through, recognised and revered across the fine food industry. "There is so much that drives me within the world of food and drink," he says. "We have many great ambassadors such as Chef Dan Barber from Blue Hill who creates delicious food out of un-coveted food by-products and in doing so has changed the way I think about food waste. In addition, innovation within food and drink inspires me. I love to see category and product disruptors like Ben Branson's Seedlip and Aecorn Aperitifs brands, whose highly innovative beverages have catapulted non-alcoholic drinks onto a platform that is as dynamic and exciting as their alcoholic counterparts. I feel so lucky to be part of this fascinating and vibrant industry."

Randolph Hodgson



Founder of the now-iconic – and must-visit – Neal's Yard Dairy, Randolph Hodgson is an elusive hero of the fine cheese world. Neal's Yard is a vocal champion of quality British cheese, celebrating and promoting the makers who make it their life's work, and tirelessly caring for the cheeses to ensure hardworking producers are supported and get the spotlight they deserve.

"Cheese was made on thousands of farms all over this country before the Second World War, but by the time Neal's Yard Dairy started in 1979 only a handful were left," Randolph explains. "It seemed only right to seek out these remaining cheese-makers and bring their delicious cheeses to appreciative cheese-lovers. So that is what we did."

An industry wide celebration Congratulations to all 20 icons!



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Alison Lea-Wilson

Alison is known for her integrity and honesty; philosophies which run through her iconic brand, Halen Môn. No shortcuts or compromise allowed.

"For the past two decades, we have been trying to make the very best product we can with as little impact on the environment as possible," she explains. "Sustainability has been at our core, both in terms of our environment and our growth." She and her husband and business partner David were recently visited by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and were recently awarded MBEs – both honours thoroughly deserved. Ultimately, it's the people within the food and drink sector. "The best thing about working in food for me is the community," she says. "Food ultimately brings us together."



Monika Linton

30 years ago Spanish food was an unknown entity in the UK. Monika changed that by connecting Britain to the makers of the country's very finest food and drink through founding Brindisa. "Since I was young I have always felt strongly about making food choices that improve things for everyone," she says. "I spent many years living abroad, where I saw how vital food, agriculture and technology was to the survival and health of different communities and countries. Although our cosmopolitan life in first world countries is a world apart from day to day life in third world countries, we can continue to build strategies to protect people and the environment." Supporting small scale businesses can build a bond between their lives and the British table. "We can choose to buy from small producers, paying a small premium for their skills and learning to taste the difference in the foods they make. After 31 years, this is one of our most valued assets and pleasures."

Edward Perry



Edward's brand, COOK champions great taste, and its products are prevalent throughout the food and drink space, providing discerning independent stores and shoppers honest food. "22 years after we started, we remain committed to our founding statement 'to cook using the same ingredients and techniques you would use at home' and equally committed to working in partnership with independent retailers." COOK was one of the first B Corps in the UK, pioneering the new way of doing business that is about people and planet, not just profit.



Mary Quicke

Recognisable to anyone and everyone in the fine food sector, Mary – managing director of Quicke's – is a force to be reckoned with, and her passion and personality enliven whatever room she's in. Unsurprisingly, she received a good few nominations in the survey. One, which sums her up perfectly, reads: "I was fortunate enough to work with Mary for a number of years, and her absolute fanatical passion and dynamism – not just for her own cheeses but for many artisan producers in the UK and beyond – was a true inspiration that made me fall in love with the speciality food sector. Her vision and commitment to promoting the industry through the Academy of Cheese will make a significant and lasting difference." She inspired by world class cheese created by people connected to their farming roots, and is a true legend of the fine cheese world.

Fiona Richmond



As a key part of the Scotland Food & Drink team, Fiona's vision to put the nation's larder on the world stage culminated with her being named 'food star' where she led the initiative of the Year of Food & Drink, putting Scottish food and drink at the heart of the Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup. "What drives me is a deep desire to support the producers who work tirelessly to bring quality food and drink to our tables," she says. "Their stories, spirit and determination are a constant source of inspiration, from those who are upholding our food heritage to those who are creating their own traditions. I feel a responsibility to keep playing my part in the sector's success and to celebrate the produce and people behind it."



John Shepherd

John Shepherd heads up one of London's most iconic retail stores which, through offshoots such as its outdoor market and Startisans, passionately supports burgeoning businesses. Partridges is a legendary pillar of Sloane Square, and John is one of the longest-standing faces in retail and a true expert in his field. "Over the 47 years of Partridges," he says, "there have been different drivers at different times, such as the desire for success or sustainability or survival. Yet the desire to prove doubters wrong when necessary is perhaps the biggest driver of them all."

“ To be in the same room as so many of the food and drink industry's elite was a privilege, and a fitting celebration of 20 years of Speciality & Fine Food Fair. Every year the show brings together the brightest and best of the sector – a true testament to the incredible people, skills and expertise within the fine food industry today ”

HOLLY SHACKLETON, SPECIALITY FOOD

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Tristram Stuart

Tristram changed the landscape of the drinks industry by founding Toast Ale in 2016 to make great quality beer out of bread which would otherwise have gone to waste. He's a vocal campaigner, with *The Times* labelling him "a genuinely revelatory contribution to the history of human ideas".

He states: "The food system is the single biggest impact humans have on planet earth: the biggest cause of deforestation, species extinction, soil erosion, water extraction and the biggest single source of greenhouse gases. We already know how to do food in ways that replenish nature rather than depleting it – and that it can bring humans together into companionship. Let's make it happen."

“ In recognition of the Fair's 20th anniversary, we are delighted to have partnered with *Speciality Food Magazine* and English Heritage to celebrate the Icons of our industry. Through their hard work and determination, each of our icons has made an incredible contribution. Since the Fair began in 1999, many of them have played an integral role in shaping this vibrant, thriving sector ”

ELENA ATTANASIO, EVENT MANAGER



Guy Tullberg

Supportive connections with the finest producers in Britain and truly tasty food are key to Guy's approach as MD of Tracklements. "I'm unashamedly obsessed with hunting down the criminally overlooked and the downright delicious products that make up our range." He's most proud, he says, of "being part of a team that works with UK farmers, growers and suppliers in a sustainable and collaborative way to build a business for the long term supporting speciality retailers across the UK and beyond."

Joe Wall



"I enjoy dealing with the great variety of characters you meet in the food industry," says Joe, rather than "the band of grey suits that dominate other industries." As MD of The Cress Company and Route2, his main driver is "the desire to provide a genuinely valued service which meets and hopefully exceeds their expectation." His agricultural background plays a part in his business approach, and he states that "anything which makes a contribution, however small, to promoting and supporting British agriculture and the UK countryside is also a great motivation." An inspiring young entrepreneur indeed.



Ros Windsor

In our survey, Ros was described as, "A phenomenal lady." One who has "championed British cheesemakers and mongers through amazing leadership as MD of Paxton & Whitfield." Ros is also a founding Director of The Academy of Cheese, an enterprise passionate about demystifying the world of cheese and sharing it with all, as well as promoting and supporting today's vibrant British cheese sector. "It's an honour to be named an icon of the speciality food and drink industry," Ros says. "I am constantly inspired by the artisan cheese industry. Not only is it full of amazing products, it is also full of dedicated people who produce and sell world-class cheeses. With all these encouraging influences it makes my job so rewarding. I'm often told I've got the best job in the world!"

Steve Walpole



"Food is such a wonderful arena to be involved in and can be so versatile," says chef Steve. He is passionate about food and cooking and has been since he started a Saturday job in a local restaurant at the age of 15. With a whole host of qualifications, diplomas and prestigious awards, Steve is a chef who cares. He cares about where and how the ingredients he uses are sourced, he cares about the people who make the product and the stories behind them, and above all, he constantly strives to champion speciality food using his voice as a platform. "I love being involved in all areas from produce to people," he explains. "I have a genuine want to help showcase the great and the good of the food world. There is so much more out there than what is on a supermarket shelf – how can you not get excited over the global cuisines and products that are available? There is so much to try."

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1 DRIVERS PICKLES THE CHEESE LOVERS BOX

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2 ORSOM THE GURU

A blend of Red Leicester cheese with sweet and aromatic mango chutney – stunningly sweet and with a touch of Indian spice. The Guru takes on a new level of character when melted, and can deliver an Indian-inspired twist on British classics such as cauliflower cheese and naan bread pizza. joseph-heler.co.uk



3 SOUTH CAERNARFON HANDCRAFTED RANGE

Dragon cheese has developed a new Handcrafted range, full of Welsh provenance. Working in collaboration with other Welsh companies they've launched a signature Cavern aged Cheddar, now also infused with smooth Penderyn Whisky and in Maple Wood-smoked Cheddar and Halen Môn Sea Salt Cheddar varieties. sccwales.co.uk



4 ELITE IMPORTS MONTAGNOLO AFFINE

A creamy and soft blue cheese which is surface ripened. The distinctive grey rind is edible and each cheese is tended by hand. Its flavour and texture is akin to triple-cream Brie, with a distinctive and slight piquant flavour associated with blue cheese. Named Supreme Champion at Nantwich in 2012 and World Champion the following year. elite-imports-limited.co.uk





5 DELAMERE DAIRY PLAIN GOATS' CHEESE

Delamere Dairy's plain goats' cheese log is mild and creamy, and pre-sliced into seven portions for ease of serving and to encourage healthy portion sizes. Convenient and versatile, the cheese is a great addition to a meal, as a pizza topping, in salads, stuffed in chicken or simply served on crackers. delameredairy.co.uk



6 LE GRUYÈRE AOP

A popular cheese from the western cantons of Switzerland, the award-winning Gruyère AOP is revered for its unique and delicious flavour. Made with raw milk sourced from a small cluster of dairy farmers in the region, which is transformed by master cheesemakers using customs shared throughout the generations. gruyere.com/en



7 BUTLERS FARMHOUSE CHEESES

BUTTON MILL
A bright, unbelievably soft little cheese that has a truly unique rind and delicate flavours that make it dangerously moreish. The unique cocktail of cultures results in each cheese behaving and maturing in a truly unique way that just grows more and more delicious with each day. butlerscheeses.co.uk



8 PETER'S YARD ORIGINAL CRISPbread WITH HOLE

Harking back to the Swedish tradition of hanging crispbread on long poles above the stove to keep them crisp over the winter, Peter's Yard's holey crispbreads add a talking point to any cheeseboard. Made from simple, natural ingredients and hand baked, they are available exclusively to the speciality trade. petersyard.com





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New retail perspectives from industry experts

SARAH APPLEBY APPLEBY'S CHEESE

“‘Commercial’ versus ‘profitable’”

A few things I won't bore you with have got me thinking about balancing the importance of being 'commercial' with the value of having a great story or 'magic' surrounding a product. A chance encounter at the International Cheese Awards press event and more conversations later and I'm feeling the pressure to write something with a beginning, middle and end. Something we can draw conclusions from. I'm not sure this is achievable but it has been a thought-provoking exercise at a time of slippery sales forecasts and uncertainty both on the high street and in the multiples. I want this to be, if not joyful and exultant, then at least a positive look at trading which is after all what commercialism is.

I have feet in two camps, both farming and end production. Agriculture is something I find fascinating; farmers have historically planted, watered, fed, finished and sold a product (sometimes artisan and sometimes commodity) and then traded that product be it grain, cattle, eggs or cheese either to neighbours or on market day at the local market town – they went to 'market' their goods and trade them in a way that was competitive and commonplace. The word 'commercial' has only recently evolved in food terms, just as our buying and eating habits have changed in the last half century. I wonder if it's meaning is seen as distasteful and pushy. The concept hasn't really changed – we have a product to sell at the best price we can get, maybe just the platform has changed.

Perhaps this platform, which is now global, has changed our perception of commercialism. The scramble as some food producers try to keep afloat has left huge differentiations in food production systems and those that are more industrial are deemed to be more commercial. I would argue that this is not the case. It is a mistake to lump the two together. We all strive to be commercial but we are definitely not all industrial.

Perhaps a better take would be to replace 'commercial' with 'profitable'. Whatever your product is, without sales it becomes extinct. Controversial perhaps, but sometimes for the survival of a rare breed we need to eat it. It needs to become relevant and have a value.

This relevance and value are intrinsic to success and profitability. We quite often ask what success looks like and how can we get there. For me it is understanding the value of our own product, in our case a very traditional British Territorial cheese: Cheshire. We value it enormously having stewarded each truckle of cheese from its conception as a blade of grass, eaten by a cow, converted into milk, crafted in a vat and tenderly matured in a renovated cow barn. These are our time capsules, our stories or if you like our 'magic'. I want to tell this story, a cheese love story, about our heritage, provenance and ultimately legacy. I need you to know about the flora and fauna that makes our Cheshire unique. And by doing so I am being commercial, I am trading my cheese with you by letting you know how much I value it. I want our business to be profitable. We would shudder at the thought of calling our agricultural business commercial, but the huge changes we've made in the last two years to become a sustainable, biodiverse farm have been driven by both a love of our land, the need to be a robust profitable business and an understanding that our personal Appleby story isn't about industrial food production.

If I have a bug bear it's that of authentication. A story has got to have a soul, a real meaningful value at its core. It may be one of sustainability, or regeneration, or fair trade. Let's be mindful in our approach to profitability, try to understand and communicate the magic of our products and allow for mindful, conscious consumption of speciality foods that probably aren't industrial but are commercial. Because, after all, they would be long gone if they weren't.

“ Let's be mindful in our approach to profitability, try to understand and communicate the magic of our products and allow for mindful, conscious consumption of speciality foods ”

JEREMY BOWEN JB FOOD SOLUTIONS

“Focus not fluff”

Gosh, it would be such a joy to run a food business that was all about giving back and not about making money! A hobby foodie charity that you could enjoy and deliver credible charitable results with no stress or strain. Talking about your love of artisan food (passion and vision) and its comfortable production in a non-commercial way.

But at JB Food Solutions it's all about living in the real world. I have lived and breathed artisan food for the last 20 years and understand how challenging it is. Really challenging.

We have all picked up a glossy magazine and taken a deep breath when we've seen a farming family head to foot in Boden, sitting on bales of hay and cuddling cute newborn baby lambs, and delighting in their passion and enthusiasm for their comfy artisan food business. But don't panic. Get real. It's fantasy, not reality. Refresh your memory by looking at the unopened bills on your untidy desk, SALSA paperwork waiting for completion, FIR

compliance and debtors list which has resulted in late payment of your mortgage. So less talking and more walking, please.

Product is key for sure, combined with the story, but if you are not number commercial and don't understand and celebrate how the food world works it will be pain and no gain. Therefore, I present three examples of new and established artisan businesses and how they don't just talk but walk.

Berkswell Cheese is celebrating 30 years of artisan cheesemaking but not resting on their established customer base and history. Stephen and George don't just talk but walk; it's not just about the fluff but true financial structure to what they do after 30 years of successful cheesemaking. Evolution rather than revolution – in 2019 it's all about engaging and understanding what their customers require, hence whole cheeses, half cheese pre-packed, sliced prepack, baby Christmas cheeses and special order grated Berkswell. Therefore, from one product they have an offer of five and

cover seasonality and foodservice. Credible and commercial boys who should be proud of their 30 years in artisan cheesemaking, and their customers are celebrating too!

Fiona Pink is Isle of White Food Royalty and her historic foodie credentials begin with Pinks Marmalade conquering the empire over 100 years ago. Fi has done the fluff and now is fully focused on moving her biz forward! She realised she had to consolidate rather than conquer, hence her focus on local and the Isle of White. Now she is ready revisit the UK Mainland. Slowly, but with commercial credibility, she is reaching out to old and new retail customers plus talking and walking with distributors, all the while understanding that it will take time as she does not wish to run before she can walk on the mainland.

Ballylisk of Armagh may be new kids on the cheese block, but Dean and Mark are established farmers in Northern Ireland's County Armagh. They produce the only soft artisan cheese in NI, with great shelf life and packaging – and it's clearly yummy. But if they are going 'make it happen' it's all about a commercial plan of attack, and the boys are credible fighters for sure. They've been focusing their energy with a clear timescale in place and a commercial strategy orchestrated from day one. The boys are not busy fools – it's more about focus and less about fluff with Dean and Mark; catch them if you can!

New retail perspectives from industry experts

Young Paxton & Whitfield cheesemonger comes out on top

ALAN WATSON



The winner of the Young Cheesemonger of the Year 2019 competition was revealed at the recent British Cheese Awards. Alan Watson, a cheesemonger from Paxton & Whitfield, was crowned champion after four rounds of competition at the Royal Bath & West Show on 30th May. The eight finalists from cheese retailers across the country had battled it out in a Cheeseboard Proposal & Discussion, Cut & Wrap exercise, Identification and a Mastermind-style quiz.

Alan said, "Just taking part in the competition is a great accolade for any cheesemonger and to have been surrounded by such talented people yesterday was incredibly daunting. On top of that, having such respected and experienced judges added to my slight feeling of nerves when I started the day. However, I managed to keep a calm mind and approached each round of the competition with determination. The feeling of hearing

my name read out as the winner at the end of the day was amazing and it really hasn't sunk in yet that I won!"

Julius Longman, chairman of the British Cheese Awards, added, "I was extremely impressed by the eight finalists and how they performed throughout the competition day. Although there did have to be a winner it's good to know that the profession of being a cheesemonger is in safe hands with young cheesemongers like these coming up through the ranks."

There were plenty of other winners throughout the British Cheese Awards as well, with artisan cheesemaker White Lake Cheese scooping the Supreme Champion accolade for the third year in a row. The award-winning English Pecorino beat out just under 900 other cheeses from 122 makers entered into the awards.

Roger Longman, co-founder and cheesemaker at White Lake



Cheese, said, "The British Cheese Awards is a great competition for artisan cheesemakers. The level of judging is superb as the judges are extremely experienced, they are the best in the UK, and we really value the feedback that we get from them."

"The British cheese industry at the moment is a fantastic place to work in. As well as established cheesemakers there are also new and upcoming cheesemakers, like Marcus Fergusson who makes Renegade Monk, who are making really exciting cheeses. There's a real comradery in the industry

that you don't see in many other businesses," he says.

As well as Supreme Champion, the Reserve Champion, the four Country Awards and the nine Main Category Awards, there were two new awards for Best Block Cheddar and the other for Best Traditional Cheddar. This year there were also 13 Special Awards, including one for Best Specialist Cheesemaker.

Mary Quicke, MBE, of the Devon-based producer Quicke's, was also given the Cheese Industry Award, presented for her impact on the cheese industry.

QUICKE'S TO HOLD TRAINING COURSES

Devon-based Quicke's is set to become the first cheesemaker to hold Academy of Cheese training courses on a working farm. The Level 1: Associate one-day course will cover cheesemaking, provenance, terminology and more, and will take place on 24th September and 26th November 2019, plus 25th February 2020.

THE ETHICAL DAIRY SELLS OUT OF CHEESE

The Ethical Dairy has announced that it has sold out of cheese for the next three months. The business has said that the step has had to be taken following higher than expected demand for its range of unpasteurised farmhouse cheeses, which are made with milk from their pioneering cow with calf organic dairy farm.

All online cheese sales stopped on 28th June and will remain this way until late September, with the company warning that stocks will remain low until November. Director Wilma Finlay has said that the company will be scaling up cheese production by a factor of four from next week, following the completion of larger production facilities: "Thanks to crowdfunding support last autumn and an award from the Scottish Government's FPMC scheme we were able to accelerate our plans for a larger cheese dairy, which means we can significantly increase the amount of cheese we can make."

The Academy of Cheese secures funding for Heritage Project

The Academy of Cheese has acquired £15,000 of funding to be able to develop its Level 3 programme of professional accreditation. The Frank Parkinson Agricultural Trust awarded the funds to be invested in a Heritage Project that will capture and record the unique traditions of 10 classic British cheeses, starting in Cheshire. The information from this research project will then form a part of the study for the Level 3 accreditation, which is the penultimate step to becoming a certified Master of Cheese.

Charlie Turnbull, director of the Academy of Cheese, explains, "The UK has an incredibly rich, diverse and fascinating dairy history that absolutely deserves to be preserved for future generations. Territorial cheese recipes have been handed down through farming dynasties – in some cases for centuries – but there is a risk of these intricacies

being lost, forever. We firmly believe that the Academy's primary role is to share and spread knowledge to all lovers of cheese. Part of our responsibility involves preserving and maintaining an accurate archive of our collective food heritage which is why we're so delighted to have received this generous funding from the Frank Parkinson Agricultural Trust."



Sodiaal, France's leading dairy cooperative, made up of 11,800 farmers produces a range of products including PDO cheeses, Brittany butter and UHT milk and cream.

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For further information about Sodiaal UK and their product range visit www.sodiaal.co.uk or call 0203 865 2369



Wensleydale Creamery invests in the future

Wensleydale Creamery has partnered up with Iona Capital in a deal that will help to heat hundreds of homes in Yorkshire using energy from a by-product of cheesemaking. Iona's Leeming Biogas plant in North Yorkshire processes the by-product whey permeate during the manufacturing of the Yorkshire Wensleydale cheese, which will be turned into nearly one million cubic

metres of green gas. The process of anaerobic digestion will then produce 10,000 MWh of thermal power, said to be enough heat around 800 homes a year in the area.

Wensleydale Creamery's managing director, David Hartley, said, "We are delighted to be signing this agreement with Iona Capital and proud to be delivering sustainable environmental and

economic benefits to our region. The whole process of converting local milk to premium cheese and then deriving environmental and economic benefit from the natural by-products is an essential part of our business plan as a proud rural business. It is only possible as a result of significant and continued investments in our Wensleydale Creamery at Hawes and to sign this agreement and have the opportunity to convert a valuable by-product of cheesemaking into energy that will power hundreds of homes across the region will be fantastic for everyone involved."

Wensleydale Creamery has also recently unveiled an interactive demonstration room at its visitor centre, part of an ongoing programme which has seen over £5 million invested across the whole cheesemaking business in the last five years. The launch also tied into the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the popular visitor centre, which attracts around 350,000 visitors each year.

The new addition features a fully equipped kitchen and tasting area and technology for streaming demonstration footage, film and audio. There are also interactive cheese and butter-making demonstrations, delivered by the Creamery's knowledgeable cheese experts, and a full programme of specialist cheese tasting, grading and pairing workshops and live cookery demonstrations.

JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



"Black and white thinking"

Last time around, I suggested trumpeting the benefits of the produce we offer, and the importance of conveying its taste and of making each purchase viscerally appealing. I believe that it's not helpful to just reel off a list of features, or merely the provenance of a particular cheese. However, at the British Cheese Awards dinner in May, I was told of an unusual query about a cheese on sale at a market. An enthusiastic shopper came up to a cheesemonger, who was featuring a new, Cheddar-style cheese. "But is it badger-friendly?" enquired the customer. I don't know about you, but I don't have a list of all the milk producers who supply my cheesemakers, let alone their co-operation in badger-culls (presumably the point of the enquiry). I may be blinkered, but I'd not considered this aspect before and thus, for me, this question would have concerned a feature, while to the enquirer, this was an absolute deal-breaker, and a major benefit.

The following day, during the Young Cheesemonger of the Year competition, I fired questions at the contestants on the cheese board selections that they were proposing – was this cheese made with cow or other milk? Was vegetarian rennet used; the milk unpasteurised? With 100% accuracy they came back with answers and suggested substitutes when I asked for alternatives if the response didn't suit me. In many shops, such data

would be on the display labels, using a simple key, including adherence to organic milk and production. I'd resist adding still more data on badger-friendliness to what is supposed to be a selling tool, unless of course such an enquiry became commonplace.

Keeping on top of changing production methods and developments in our cheese stock should be simple, but the lack of direct communication between producer and cheesemonger can stop us being up to date. Wholesale reps sell in new lines and answer questions on them, but how many think to notify existing stockists when changes occur to a cheese? A switch from unpasteurised to pasteurised milk in production will be a reassurance to some shoppers, yet a turn-off to others. A switch from animal to vegetarian rennet will mean that a cheese that was previously verboten to our vegetarian regulars can now be on the menu. So here's a plea to producers: please try and make sure that such changes are fully communicated to your stockists, however you can – stickers on whole cheeses, building and emailing a database of stockists (some wholesalers won't cooperate in this), and press releases to magazines such as this. It's not just to ensure that we are up to date with bland facts, it can increase sales! For the moment, however, don't feel that you have to let me know about your attitude towards Brock the badger.

“ The British cheese industry at the moment is a fantastic place to work in. As well as established cheesemakers there are also new and upcoming cheesemakers, like Marcus Fergusson who makes Renegade Monk, who are making really exciting cheeses. There's a real comradeship in the industry that you don't see in many other businesses ”

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SHOW PREVIEW: INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS 2019

The must-attend event is back, hosting thousands of cheeses from around the world



IN DETAIL

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WHEN: 30th-31st July 2019

TEL: 01270 780 306

WEB: internationalcheeseawards.co.uk

TWITTER: @iCheeseAwards #ICA2019



The International Cheese and Dairy Awards remains the best competition to showcase new products and benchmark against the very best the world has to offer



IAN LUXTON, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS

Every July, the Cheshire town of Nantwich welcomes cheese lovers – professional and public alike – to the world's largest chilled marquee to celebrate the best of the world's cheese industry. The International Cheese Awards 2019 will see thousands of cheeses appraised by hundreds of expert judges, from makers to buyers, before enjoying the unrivalled networking opportunities and the legendary Trade Day Lunch.

Trade Day: 30th July

Marking the first day of The Nantwich Show, the International Cheese Awards will see an anticipated 5,000 professionals from the industry come together for an unrivalled networking opportunity. 300 cheese and dairy experts will judge thousands of cheeses from around the world, with more international entries than ever before; entries from the USA have jumped 100%, this year Japan has entered for the first time, and organisers have received interest from Argentina and Ukraine as the reputation of the show extends across the world. The judges will be scoring cheeses according to their



flavour, consistency, texture and colour, and over 200 trophies will be awarded to the most impressive entries. The day will conclude with the gathering of 1,400 cheese professionals for the Trade Day Lunch, where winners – including the Supreme Champion Cheese – will be announced.

Public Day: 31st July

The second day of The Nantwich Show will welcome around 35,000



members of the public to the marquee, where they will sample and purchase cheeses from the quality producers exhibiting. They will also have the pleasure of experiencing live cookery demonstrations from renowned chefs at the show's annual Le Gruyère. Cookery School, and experience the largest one-day agricultural show in England in the field surrounding the marquee.



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Cheese Cake Class
Health Drinks
Specialist Cheesemakers Section
Organic Dairy Products
Vegetarian Cheese
Home Internationals: Best English/
Irish/Scottish/Welsh Cheese
International Cheeses
Convenience Cheeses
Butter
Cream
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Quark
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Cheese Board
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JUSTIN BECKETT, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BELTON FARM

JUDGE'S INSIGHT **SARAH DE WIT** senior judge

“This will be my 15th year judging at the International Cheese & Dairy Awards, and the quality and selection of cheese improves and becomes more interesting as the years go by. It's an exceptionally rewarding and enjoyable position to judge, whilst at the same time requiring responsibility, competence and integrity to ensure that the producers who invest heavily in time, resource and passion to produce such amazing cheese are rewarded for their merits”



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PETER'S YARD



“ There’s a defining theme that runs through every event we do: keep it fun, informal and informative ”

cool enough that the cheese doesn’t get up a sweat.” When it comes to tools, “assume nothing,” she advises, “from having running water to sharp knives.” After years of running cheese events, Juliet has developed a failsafe strategy: “Always take your own knives, a two litre water bottle (I even take a Thermos of hot water on occasions), three or four small, thin plastic chopping boards and rolls of kitchen paper.”

Juliet’s toolkit includes materials for attendees, too. “Make tasting sheets for everyone with your logo, contact details and the names of the cheeses etc they will taste,” she says, “as they won’t remember the names more than a few hours, let alone long enough to order them for their next cheeseboard. I print A5 postcards with a gorgeous photo on the front (and the back blank so they can be used for anything) in the optimistic hope they will keep it on their fridge for a few weeks or at the very least remember what to look for.”

“Remember,” advises Juliet, “the ultimate aim in any tasting or cheese event should be to change their perception of cheese and ensure they buy more cheese – preferably from you! Ultimately you want to give them something to think about, something to test or challenge their tastebuds. That’s what helps them learn, forces them to try something outside their comfort zone and inspires them.”

EVENTS

How and why to make an occasion out of great cheese

While – if you don’t already host them – organising cheese events may seem like an extracurricular activity you have little to no time to implement, they’re well worth adding into your schedule. As we all know, people connect with cheese through flavour and story, so by running cheese tasting events you could attract a raft of new clientele.

We also know that people who love cheese, really love cheese. Vickie Rogerson, co-founder of *Homage2Fromage*, a cheese events business, explains, “They love eating it, sharing it, sniffing it, spooning a dollop of chutney on it, agreeing and disagreeing about it and discovering something new about it. Cheese brings people together and sparks a passion I’ve not seen for any other food group.”

Having said that, cheese tasting

events can feel exclusive – in an offputting way. “Don’t be tempted to follow the well-worn path of holding a cheese and wine-matching event where you serve small slivers of cheese paired with obscure wines,” says Vickie. “It can feel a bit clichéd and inaccessible. Run events where you show off the cheese in all its glory and rejoice in the rich tapestry of cheese stories. Who made it and where? Is it new or is it a recipe passed down through generations? Has it won awards? What makes it interesting and special?”

The way you present the cheeses can make a difference in terms of customer connection, with formally perfect layouts potentially causing attendees to feel uncomfortable to ‘damage’ the display. “Serve the cheese whole so people can see its natural state,” recommends Vickie. Don’t forget the accompaniments!

Offer a varied selection, and allow attendees to try out some partnerships themselves. “Let people try the cheeses with different accompaniments; drizzle some honey on a spicy blue cheese, pair some Wensleydale or Lancashire with fruit cake or serve up some quince jelly with a robust Cheddar.”

When it comes to formatting the events, theming each one has worked well for *Homage2Fromage*. “We theme each of our monthly events and showcase eight great examples of that theme,” explains Vickie. “Some of our recent themes have been Italian, Welsh, Lancashire versus Yorkshire, British, unpasteurised and extreme cheese.” Beware hosting sessions on singular cheese types, though. “We tend not to theme events around types of cheese like Cheddar or blue because it can be very overwhelming on your taste buds,” she continues. “No one wants to try eight blue cheeses in one go as they’d all end up tasting the same!”

“Choosing the cheese is the hardest part, says Juliet Harbutt. “I use the general rule of no more than 12 items, say eight cheeses and four wines. For cheese virgins or beginners, distinguishing more than 16 cheeses is too much. I love

combinations like three hard cheese from different milks, three styles of blue and then one soft white (Brie-style if you must call it that), served with a white and a red wine to see how they change its texture and taste.” She recommends avoiding too many “soft, squishy cheeses – they run, stick and spread over everything, whereas hard and blues can be cut up in advance, stored on wax paper in small boxes and laid out in moments.”

Whatever you do, keep an eye on the weather. “Heatwaves and cheeses on the move, I was cruelly reminded recently, are an extremely bad combination,” she continues. “As someone who can’t go to the supermarket without a checklist, sending cheeses to Italy for a serious Cheese & Wine Masters Programme deserves the same attention to detail as a picnic at Glynbourne. So imagine my horror when the overnight delivery spent an unscheduled 12 hours at Charles de Gaul with temperatures around 40°C. No matter how I looked at it, the 19 cheese fondue was never again going to be a cheeseboard or teach anyone the nuances of artisan British cheese!”

“This can happen even in the UK,” she reminds us, “so make sure its




PETER'S YARD

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JAMS, HONEY & SPREADS

Today's shopper isn't willing to compromise; options which offer health credentials, versatility and great flavour are surefire hits

Across the fine food industry, tradition, story and conscientious production are highly prized, and the jam and honey category demonstrates this in spades. With supermarket shelves often full of processed, mass-produced options, there's an opportunity for independents to offer something different: preserves with a connection to the local area, produced without the use of commercial additives and preservatives, and made using traditional methods in small batches – all attributes prized by independent shoppers.

The future's sweet

The 'Britishness' of jams produced on these shores has long been a unique selling point, with classic British jams containing more sugar and therefore a more solid set than looser preserves or conserves found on the Continent. "High levels of sugar has been used for two main reasons. Practically, it literally preserved the fruit without the need for refrigeration," explains Skye Cracknell, co-founder of England Preserves. "Politically, sugar was imported in huge volumes from the colonies at very cheap prices. People that worked in the industrial revolution could be fed inexpensively." 'Healthier' jams containing less sugar have had a different texture to the more traditional options, which has sometimes been seen as a negative attribute, but Skye disagrees: "The

reduction of sugar in our jams has been a focus and an aim since our very beginning. Making jams at home together we always made loose, high fruit jams that we stirred into yoghurt and ate with pancakes. The reason we did this, simply, it tasted better." In simple terms, the less the fruit is diluted with sugar, the more it will taste of and

celebrate the fruit itself. "Kai [co-founder] and I's focus has always been to make the most delicious jams that celebrate the qualities of the fresh fruit, their aromatics, flavour, texture and colour. This is all enhanced by having a low-sugar jam," says Skye. "There is definitely an art in finding the level of additional sugar that perfectly



emphasises but doesn't override. As an example, cooked strawberries on their own can be quite disgusting in colour and aroma, but then you add some sugar and they come alive, the colour becomes deep and rich and the floral summer aromas appear. Add too much sugar, for example the usual 63%, and all the aromatics are lost. A price too high to pay in



our opinion."

In recent times sugar has become to be seen as the enemy, but replacing sugar with 'healthier' alternatives isn't as easy as it might first appear, she explains. "Sugar has a warmth of flavour, unparalleled in new alternative sweeteners. The new group of sweeteners are mainly formed of some kind of polyol, a sugar alcohol which has a cool sweetness – this goes on to affect the flavour of the finished product. Our personal approach to sweetness has always been to just eat less overall and to make sure that it's the really good stuff that you take time to enjoy."

Healthy balance

A sector successfully balancing health credentials with satisfying flavour is nut butters. "Gone are the days of only one or two peanut butters to choose from on the supermarket shelf – laden with sugar, salt and palm oil," says Susan Yale, founder of The Hungry Squirrel which produces a nine-strong range of nut butters in a range of sweet and savoury flavours. "This new breed of nut butter offers a whole host of flavours to cater to the discerning shopper – whether for a specific dietary requirement (sugar-free, gluten-free, dairy-free, plant-based) or just something a little bit more interesting to spread on their morning toast."

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Far from having the choice simply between smooth or crunchy peanut butter, today's shoppers have a whole host of nut butters to choose from ranging from brazil and cashew to those boosted with the addition of protein-rich seeds. Nut butters of all kinds – excluding those topped up with salt, sugar and preservatives, of course – are a filling and healthy option when it comes to spreads. "Nut butters are a fantastic natural source of essential fats, fibre, protein and a multitude of micronutrients," Susan explains, "providing a simple and tasty means of getting all this nutty goodness into our diets."

The versatility of nut butters deserves to be celebrated, too, with them being delicious on toast and in porridge as well as a great addition to sweet and savoury baked goods and recipes. In fact, it's partly this rebranding of nut butters from simple toast toppers to a healthy addition to all sorts of meals – from breakfast smoothies to baked treats

and main meals – that has seen their popularity boom; according to Kantar Worldpanel, in the past 12 months, just peanut butter alone has seen a sales boost of 900kg.

Provenance pays

On the subject of variety, honeys more than deserve a shout out. Arguably as varied as wine and cheese thanks to its reliance on its local environment, honey is truly a product with its provenance on its sleeve. There's a huge range of honeys which showcase the individual flora the bees have been collecting pollen from, and a surprising number of locale-specific ones, too; The London Honey Company is a prime example, offering Shropshire Honey, Oxfordshire Honey and Isle of Purbeck Honey as well as the more traditional Borage and Heather options. Pearly Queen go one step further, offering a range which includes honey from Enfield,

Walthamstow, Dulwich and Balham. It's worth researching honey producers local to your establishment, as it is likely to be popular with tourists and locals alike – particularly if, as the experts say, local honey can improve hayfever symptoms come summer!

Honey certainly seems to be satisfying shoppers, and sure to be playing a part in this is its versatility; consumers use it in hot drinks, baking, cooking and desserts, and as a sweet addition to a cheeseboard, too, alongside sharper pickles and chutneys. Perhaps truffle honey might be a worthwhile addition to your shelves – delicious with cheese, great in a homemade salad dressing (particularly when partnered with candied walnuts, beetroot and goats cheese) and sometimes even drizzled over pizza and pasta dishes – it's almost as versatile as its classic counterpart and would add a touch of luxury to your ambient section.

OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES



As well as commanding a keen audience in the UK, fruit jam is gaining popularity across the world. Thinley Topden, head of region – East of England at the Department for International Trade (DIT) explains:

"There is growing demand for UK jam overseas, creating many exciting opportunities in international markets for UK businesses to tap into. Preserve producers like Wilkin & Sons are leading the way in showcasing the high quality and variety of UK food and drink on a global stage. As one of our Export Champions, the company is a great example of what can be achieved and there is no reason why other jam producers across the UK can't emulate that success with support and advice from DIT."



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SWEET SUCCESS: SPREADS IN NUMBERS (VALUE SALES)

HONEY: £138.2 MILLION (UP 3.4%)

JAM: £107.7 MILLION (UP 0.2%)

PEANUT BUTTER: £101.6 MILLION (UP 9.5%)

CHOCOLATE SPREAD: £73.6 MILLION (UP 5.9%)

MARMALADE: £57 MILLION (UP 2%)

YEAST SPREAD: £45.2 MILLION (DOWN 1.4%)

SOURCE: KANTAR WORLDPANEL (W/E 7TH OCTOBER 2018)

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Pioneers of the pantry since 1970

Despite well-intentioned work by the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil production (RSPO) – set up in 2003 – less than 20% of the world's supply is 'certified sustainable'. This means 80% is not. In 2017, Iceland's joint managing director, Richard Walker, visited Indonesian Borneo. He "saw at first hand the environmental devastation being wreaked there by illegal deforestation, industrial-scale draining of peat swamps and man-made forest fires". Unconvinced there is such a thing as verifiably sustainable palm oil, he put his money where his mouth is. In April 2018, Iceland announced it would remove palm oil from own brands by the end of the year.

WHAT ACTION ARE OTHER RETAILERS TAKING?

In January, Ocado put a palm oil-free 'aisle' on its website and app, so customers could browse over 3,000 palm-oil free products. Marks & Spencer undertook 'to ensure zero deforestation from the use of palm oil in the production of its products by 2020'. Waitrose, Tesco and Sainsbury's signed up to RSPO standards.

I'VE HEARD PALM OIL IS A DREAM PRODUCT FROM A FOOD MANUFACTURER'S POINT OF VIEW... IN 50% OF SUPERMARKET PRODUCTS

Right. Solid at room temperature, palm oil keeps packaged bread, biscuits and cakes moist and gives them a long shelf life. This versatile wonder-fat smells and tastes neutral; keeps ice cream, chocolate and mayo smooth; keeps peanut butter stable; prevents pizza dough sticking; and helps pre-cook instant noodles. Above all, it's cheap.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Palm oil comes from the fleshy fruit of oil palms which can only be grown in the Tropics. Indonesia and



PALM OIL-FREE

More and more shoppers fear palm oil use in food products is making orangutans extinct, says Sally-Jayne Wright. What's the role of indie retailers in the debate?

Malaysia produce over 85% of the world's supply. The uncontrolled clearing of rainforests for palm oil plantations has led to widespread loss of irreplaceable forests rich in biodiversity. Plantations have been connected to the destruction of habitat of endangered species, including orangutans, tigers, elephants, and rhinos (World Wildlife Fund).

THAT'S DREADFUL. WHY ARE WE STILL USING IT?

Palm oil is easy to grow and high-yielding. To produce the same amount of rapeseed, soy or peanut oil, farmers would need up to nine times as much land.

IS PALM OIL HEALTHY?

Palm oil is relatively high in saturated fat so best consumed in moderation. Ironically, partially

hydrogenated fat is more harmful than fully hydrogenated. The first process creates trans-fats, the second saturated fatty acids.

WHAT DID WE USE BEFORE?

Hydrogenated vegetable oil. Remember when spreads were marketed as healthier than butter and lard? In the early 1990s, convincing evidence linked partially hydrogenated fats with harmful trans-fats, associated with heart disease. Hydrogenation became a dirty word.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The food industry still needed a fat that was solid at room temperature. Butter was too soft, coconut oil too expensive – especially as it needed 'deodorising' – and lard was unsuitable for pork-avoiders and vegetarians. So it chose palm oil.

ICELAND'S BID TO REMOVE PALM OIL FROM OWN BRANDS BY THE END OF 2018 FLOPPED, DIDN'T IT?

Yes, it proved impossible to remove it from 17 products. Food consultant, Simon Wright, is unsurprised. It took a chocolate company he worked for two years to successfully replace palm oil with olive oil in a praline.

When Iceland's product development director, Neil Nugent, substituted coconut fat for palm oil in iced buns, the icing slid off after about four days because of 'moisture migration'. They solved the problem by adjusting the sugars. However, Nugent says the whole replacement process has been "mindbogglingly difficult".

I WANT TO BOYCOTT PALM OIL. SHALL I READ PACKETS CAREFULLY?

“As fine food retailers, we represent the very opposite of cheap processed food made from ingredients our grandmothers wouldn't recognise. But we must still do our bit, wherever we can”

By law, palm oil must be listed as an ingredient though companies don't have to declare if it's sustainable. Palm oil used in processing aids will not appear. So a quiche company can have sprayed baking trays with palm oil or a sausage maker used it to lubricate sausage skins.

How can I reassure eco-responsible and worried customers? Stock more organic products; organic palm oil is by definition sustainable. Visit the website ethicalconsumer.org to check the status of particular products, or approach the maker direct. Consider a palm oil-free section.

Recommend the free Giki app, which acts as a 'sustainable shopping companion'. Giki has a palm oil badge which tells customers whether there is palm oil in the product, whether it's sustainable, and whether the parent company is making the right decisions, based on WWF scorecard and RSPO data.

WILL CONCERNS ABOUT PALM OIL GO AWAY?

Very unlikely. Sustainability and ethics are macro-trends and Iceland's corporate activism – at considerable cost to its balance sheet – has brought the debate to the fore.

There's a school of thought that if the 'big boys' – Unilever, Nestle and the like – pull out of Indonesia, far less ethical companies will take over the plantations. A palm oil ban could also lead to higher food prices and shorter shelf lives.

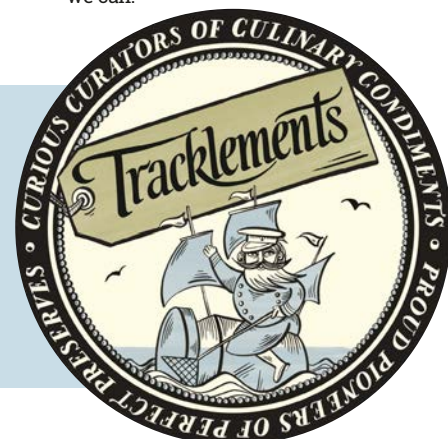
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PLANNING FOR CHRISTMAS

With the most important sales season on the horizon, now is the time to ensure 2019 is your most successful year yet

It's that time of year again when, although it feels like summer has only just arrived, we need to talk about Christmas. As the most important trading period of the whole year, it's essential to maximise every opportunity. After analysing what worked well and what didn't for Christmas 2018 at the start of this year, now is the time to put those notes into action. For food retailers it's about being honest with what could be improved on to increase sales for this upcoming festive season. Had you over-ordered on certain items and found yourself with stock left to shift in January? Have customer shopping habits changed, meaning it's time to refresh your offerings in order to maximise sales opportunities? Evaluating the reasons behind what

was successful and what could be changed moving forward will only benefit when Christmas does start drawing near.

Preparation is key

For Springvale Foods Ltd, their Christmas brochure, at over 230 pages, is a year-long endeavor, involving over 100 suppliers and more than 2,000 festive products. "We normally launch our Christmas brochure in the last week of March, which suits the speciality food buyers well since some large accounts like to have their range confirmed by May," explains Maddie Taylor, marketing and new product development. "Our Christmas brochure is so big we have to store the Christmas stock in a separate warehouse to our AYR stock, which

does make it easier logistically."

This year the business has added over 500 new lines to ensure that there are plenty of new and exciting stocking options. "We have found a handful of new brands prove popular with buyers, too," Maddie continues. "The Bottled Baking Co., which we added in 2018, was extremely popular, and when you see their delightful bottled baking mixes it's no surprise why. This year we have added The Smokey Carter, which I'd say are proving to be the most

“ We have seen a 26% increase in the sale of cheese-themed hampers, that allow the consumer to customise and add chutneys crackers, cheese straws and artisan breads ”

CHRISTINA BROWN, HEAD OF SALES AND MARKETING, B SMITH PACKAGING



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committed to coming in through the festive period." Offering samples or tasting events gives customers that extra opportunity to engage with the produce.

Make room for hampers

Hampers and gift boxes are ideal gifts for Christmas but it's important to know your customers and their purchasing habits to avoid ending up with festive-themed gifts to shift after Christmas is over. Geraldine adds that at Eggs to Apples they have found that, "Customers prefer to put together their own selections from our range of year-round goods. We also offer a bespoke hamper service, which we find works better than food gifts."

At Weetons Foodhall, hampers are a key part of their festive offerings. Keren Shaw, general manager, explains, "Seasonal periods are always busy for us due to our gifting range," she says. "Our exclusive hamper collections are very popular with our customers and those who have requirements for corporate gifting. People love the fact they can select anything from our food hall and we will wrap it up for them." If you offer pre-prepared hampers then be sure that they cater to your customers and provide a good selection of not only classic favourites but also interesting products that are less seasonal and could appeal all year round. People also like having the option to pick and choose products in order to create a more personalised gift or to cater to certain diets, so this is also something to organise early. Be sure to include quality biscuits, chocolates and wine.

Items like cheese are always a huge seller over the festive period, and can extend into early January as well with New Year's Eve celebrations soon afterwards. Be prepared by ensuring that you not only have a great selection of different cheeses but plenty of accompaniments too. This is

the time of year where customers are willing to spend a bit more on luxury items so providing delicious pickles, chutneys, premium bread and crackers is essential. Ordering products like these that have those longer shelf lives early is beneficial, as they can be stored away until needed and as they tend to not be too heavily festive these can be sold without much difficulty into the New Year as well.

Christina Brown, head of sales and marketing at B Smith Packaging, explains, "In the wider retail sector, at peak times such as Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day etc., cheese-based gifting has become another route to market for many cheese manufacturers. Incorporating market trends such as hot cheese, you can now buy complete sets for raclette and fondue experiences or even make your own Ricotta and Mozzarella. Gifting cheese and having it presented in branded cheese wrap and then in a branded box that can then be reused for cheese accoutrements adds value to the product and for cheese lovers everywhere, the premiumisation of their brand and the experience. In the farm shop and deli sector, and the e-commerce space, we have seen a 26% increase in the sale of cheese-themed hampers that allow the consumer to customise and add chutneys, crackers, cheese straws and artisan breads."

As you are considering what to order and when, it's also the right time to start prepping staff about how to deliver the best possible service when the season kicks in. Afterall, there are those customers that only visit independents during the festive season for gifts or to treat themselves to extra luxury produce for their Christmas plans, so ensure that they are well informed on your products and well taken care of. A great experience from a one-off visit could well turn into you seeing them again in the new year.

popular new brand for Christmas 2019. Their Cheese Lovers gift tube contains three chutneys which are deliciously different, and the packaging contains minimal plastic and is a great gift. Tipple Tails are also proving popular this year. Their boozy fruit cakes from Yorkshire are totally amazing and their gift tins or mini cupcakes are so timeless."

Planning throughout the year is also crucial at Eggs to Apples Farm Shop. According to retail manager/buyer Geraldine Turner, the shop, "Analyse sales in January, look at bestsellers that sold out too early and items that were left after the Christmas period. We predict sales for October to December in June and look at what the percentage increase on sales will be before placing orders. We also plan tasting events early to get suppliers



FROM THE EXPERT...

Jeremy Bowen, of J B Food Solutions, reveals why Christmas is a good time to add non-gifting items into your shop:

It's the same time every year and it needs to be celebrated for sure. If a retailer gets it wrong and ignores the potential, it's almost impossible to financially catch up. It's never too early to think Santa, and if you plan early and buy well you will have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New 2020.

Don't dive into red, green and reindeer marmalade and cheap chocolate. It's been done, the supermarkets do it cheaper and you will be left with your buys in January. So let's talk about my top five tips to making it happen and putting money in your till.

It's not about buying more or thinking 'food', but gifting and margin potential.

LESS IS MORE

Cut out the obvious to leave room for Santa, for example leaving your ice lolly fridge on the sales floor, and understand what generates

sales and what does not. Have a Christmas spring clean and then you are ready to visit the Speciality & Fine Food Fair in September and buy in a commercial and credible way.

MAXIMISE YOUR SALES SPACE

Take time to understand and celebrate the retail space you have and maximise every inch. Forget the Burrata (which is space-heavy if you retail it in a bowl) and bring in Ballylisk individual cheese, which is stackable with a good shelf life and the packaging has gift curve appeal. I am not saying to dump the bread, milk and butter, as your regular customers and their weekly shop needs to be celebrated, but understand space and maximize its potential.

GRAB & GO POTENTIAL

Christmas customers will delight in spending more if you make their life easier. Think individual cheeses

rather than cutting a slice that will dry out, and therefore give time to delight and eat – Berkswell Cheese and Appleby's Cheshire both offer 'Baby' at Christmas. Pre-ordering allows you and your customers peace of mind and risk-free purchase/collection, particularly on seasonal buys.

GIFTING

If you are going to pack and wrap your gift packs and hampers in-store do be careful. Understand the true cost of time and the bits of kit that you will require to make it all happen. It may be better to buy in and maximise the margin. Think Pinks for contemporary classic food gifts that you will want to keep.

FORGET FOOD

Explore and delight in a non-food buy. There's no shelf life, easy to store and display and margins are exciting. Don't dither but dive as a couple of sporadic buys will not deliver. Consider Little Soap Company and do explore the Little Beast range. It's artisan, vegan and cruelty-free and if it doesn't sell at Christmas it will at Mother's Day, Father's Day and Easter.

PARTNER CONTENT



HOW TO GET YOUR CHRISTMAS PACKAGING RIGHT

With tips and advice from leading packaging manufacturer, Saxon Packaging

With competition for commercial shelf space at an all-time high, for this festive season it is imperative for businesses today to make sure that their product stands out from the competition and resonates with the consumer. This can be achieved with high quality print and bespoke packaging design and a sustainable packaging material.

As well as eye-catching and visually disruptive designed packaging, textured print finishes can add touch and feel sensations that help deliver a memorable experience to the consumer, encouraging repeat purchase.

At Saxon Packaging, we offer high quality packaging solutions for the beer, wine, spirits and food industries, which include luxury gift packaging, shelf-ready packaging (SRP), subscription and mail-order packaging as well as other standard FEFCO packaging designs.

In line with the growing consumer concerns on the environment and a global drive toward using sustainable packaging, our experienced in-house design team are able to offer businesses the opportunity to create environmentally friendly packaging solutions for their products for both new and existing non-corrugated designs.

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Our top three tips for Christmas Packaging:

1 Plan Ahead – Start your processes early enough to ensure that your product packaging meets expectations and that it arrives with plenty of time, to enable you to package your goods and be delivered to your customers in time for the festive season.

2 Protect Your Products – Whether your products are transported via your own vehicle, courier or bulk palletised, consideration must be given to how the outer packaging will perform under varying conditions whilst keeping your newly-packaged festive products safe from damage and arriving at the destination in the same condition as they were when they left. This can be achieved with correct material use and sustainable bespoke internal fittings.

3 Promote Yourself – After investing all the time and effort into producing the best product and marketing it to your customers, you don't want to fall at the last hurdle by missing out on opportunities. Consumers want to buy into values, not just make a purchase, and products need to reflect their branding in order to create positive experiences with your customers. With a variety of print processes, print finishes, bespoke packaging design and sustainable material you can ensure that your packaging reflects who you are as a brand and that it stands out from the competition. Even transit packaging – once purely functional – has become a way to reinforce branding and influence purchasing decisions.

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“Businesses have recognised the fact that packaging is what encourages consumers to lift the products off the shelves over its competitors”



CONDIMENTS 2.0

In the flavour-packed world of condiments, there's a myriad of options to choose from. So what should you stock to get the best bang for your shelf?

Ah, the condiments shelf. Get it right and it'll have flavour-seeking foodies breaking down the door, get it wrong and it'll be attracting tumbleweed and dust bunnies. How do you make your condiments selection sing? With a combination of traditional favourites, inventive taste sensations and formats which allow for versatility and ease.

As we all know, shoppers are looking for convenience now more than ever – and if you can offer

them a flavour-packed bottle or jar which gives their food a boost with minimal fuss, you're onto a winner. Think redcurrant jelly; its deep, fruity sweetness bringing richness to gravies and an enlivening burst of berry flavours to roast lamb. Or storecupboard stalwart Worcestershire sauce (available from Hawkshead Relish, if you're looking to avoid supermarket stalwart Lee & Perrins), which brings depth of flavour to dishes in a few splashes, saving a few hours in the process.

It's all too easy for the condiments corner in your establishment to go unloved, visited only by horseradish fans prepping for their roast beef, but there are plenty enough exciting new products in the market today to give those shelves a boost.

Innovation meets tradition

The fine food industry's penchant for innovation is rightly welcomed by independents and speciality shoppers, but it can be hard to know exactly how to utilise never-before-seen products and flavours. Potts Partnership's solution? To offer exciting taste variations within a familiar format, to help elevate consumers' everyday meals. Their recently-launched, six-strong range of mayonnaises – spanning Proper, Miso, Saffron with Thyme, Honey Chipotle, Roast Garlic & Herb and Harissa Spiced – combines deliciously inventive flavours with a comfortingly versatile and familiar condiment.

"The wonderful advantage that the independent food industry has over the multiples and large corporations is that we can create and sell a more diverse range of interesting, exciting and inspiring recipes. This is one of

the main reasons we have focused on supplying independent retailers and why we have such a large range, which we continue to add to," explains Michelle Potts, co-owner of Potts Partnership. "As passionate foodies we, like our fellow food lovers, get a lot of pleasure from discovering new products and flavour combinations and therefore we get a real buzz when we launch new recipes."

"Like us, a lot of people have more global palates having travelled, eaten in the growing variety of ethnic restaurants and discovering the expanding range of ethnic sauces and foods our independent stores and markets have to offer," co-owner Owen adds, "and we wanted the mayonnaise range to reflect this. Mayonnaises are such an easy and versatile way of transforming sandwiches, salads and meals and to give them a fusion twist."

Maria Whitehead, owner and director of the Lake District's renowned Hawkshead Relish, is no stranger to innovation. One of their

most iconic recent additions to the range, Black Garlic Ketchup, was created following a trip to Japan, where Maria discovered black garlic for the first time. She took it home to husband and co-owner Mark, who over the course of a year tweaked and perfected to obtain the ultimate balance of flavours just right. Of the importance of innovation for the established business Maria comments, "For us it is important that we are looking at trends and in some cases creating them. With this Black Garlic range" – now spanning Original Black Garlic Ketchup, Smoky Black Garlic Ketchup and a spicy Black Garlic Pickle – "we were the first company worldwide to bring this product to the market, and now we are seeing it being used in many kitchens around the globe – which is stunning for a small company in the Lake District to achieve."

"There are so many producers in the marketplace, so we are constantly looking at ingredients, developing new flavours and creating new products is essential in





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order to stay a step ahead of our competitors. Having said that, we are all about looking for things that really work; creating layers of flavour whilst being true to our ethics of handmade, not using nuts, gluten or any artificial flavourings, preservatives or colouring. We never add water or cheaper ingredients to extend the product and proudly produce everything at our 16th century barn on the edge of Esthwaite Water in the Lake District."

That's not to say that traditional condiments are out. Becky Vale, marketing director of Tracklements makes a case for the classics, saying, "Traditional condiments are still very popular. In this world of new flavours and new tastes, it's easy to overlook how popular traditional condiments like Strong Horseradish Cream, traditional mint jelly and rich redcurrant jelly are." Shoppers aren't blinkered against traditional towards trend-led, she explains: "There's still a growing demand for well made, top quality, classic flavours to accompany ethically reared, superior meat. As people get more discerning about the meat they eat, they also look for natural, speciality condiments to complement that meat which highlight rather than disguise flavour."

Versatility is king

With time at a premium these days, and savvy shoppers opting for quality over quantity, it's worth stocking a core range of versatile condiments rather than an overly extensive selection. Paula Briscoe co-founded Briscoe's Artisan Jellies with her partner Jon to create an 18-strong range of innovative and surprisingly versatile sweet and

savoury jellies – from Gorgeous Garlic (delicious on roast potatoes and pasta) to Marvellous Mint (great with barbecued pineapple as well as it's time-honoured partner, lamb) and Lovely Lavender (delicious paired with afternoon teas and goats cheese).

Use the versatility of traditional condiments as a selling tool. Fiona Pink, owner of Pink's Foods, suggests a myriad of uses for pesto on her website, and recommends *Speciality Food* readers, "Use wild garlic pesto on garlic bread, spoon over chicken or fish then bake in the oven, mix with cream cheese for a dip or add a twist to pizza by spreading on the base." Hawkshead Relish's Black Garlic range is just as versatile, partnering well with barbecued meat, vegetables, fish, cheese and Asian dishes. And of Tracklements' classic condiments, Becky says, "Such is the popularity of these Tracklements that we've witnessed their usage grow beyond the traditional to the new and unconventional – our strong horseradish is often partnered with smoked fish and a fan recently introduced us to rich redcurrant jelly melted over a goats cheese salad."

and methods. Everyday condiments are now being used as glazes, marinades, dips, dressings and even in cocktails. We are seeing a lot of customers looking for provenance in the condiments we sell. We like to support smaller, artisan producers and in doing so we are able to work with some really great small batch producers who often grow the ingredients on their own land.

ARE TREND-LED PRODUCTS AS POPULAR AS THE CLASSICS?

No, I think the classics or the classics with a modern twist sell best. For example, upcycled fruit/vegetables being used in ketchup, small batch ales used to soak mustard seeds, ghost chillies in what is usually a milder chilli sauce.

FROM THE RETAILER...



We catch up with Jessica Abela, new product developer at Selfridges, to talk all things condiments

WHAT'S INFLUENCING THE FLAVOURS WE'RE SEEING IN CONDIMENTS RIGHT NOW?

The influx of street food and people travelling more is meaning that there is a growing market for those wanting to try something a little different. They might want to recreate a dish they tried on holiday or even just try something new from one of the amazing cookbooks currently on the market. There is a lean towards Middle Eastern flavours such as zhoug, as well as clean flavours from Japan such as yuzu.

Bold, smoky American flavours are ever-popular and we are seeing quite a surge in hot sauces. The constant flavour that people always reach for is truffle. It is a little bit of luxury that you can add to the most simple of dishes for a bit more of a wow factor.

WHAT ARE SHOPPERS LOOKING FOR FROM THE CONDIMENTS THEY BUY?

Condiments are doing really well at the moment as customers are experimenting more with home cooking and different cooking styles



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TASTES OF THE U.S.

Debating whether to stock brands from across the pond? Here's why and how to sell American products in your store

When talk turns to American food, often the image that is conjured up is of burgers, big pretzels and plenty of brightly coloured confectionary. While this can still be the first initial picture that comes to mind, the U.S. food and drinks market is actually varied and exciting, with a whole variety of artisan makers and quality ingredients coming together to create premium products that will also appeal to the UK market. There are of course the iconic products that will continue to be popular, such as Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Lucky Charms cereal, but it's not all sugar and 'unhealthy' treats; there is also a plethora of exciting brands and innovation out there to enjoy.

Reasons to stock

With America being a long-haul flight away, social media, films and TV programmes are the main resource for consumers discovering brands and products. For those who do travel there however it's an exciting opportunity to try those recognisable food and drink items, often for the first time. Empire Bespoke Foods source and distribute specialist food and drink and supply a full range of authentic American products. Marion

FROM THE RETAILER...

Terence Dominique, store controller at Partridges, reveals what brands are popular in-store and online:

Some of our most popular American brands are Nabisco, Pepperidge Farm, General Mills, Duncan Hines, Betty Crocker and Aunt Jemima, probably due to family popularity.

Customers are able to order American products online and the bestsellers are Pepperidge Farm: Goldfish Crackers (Cheddar), Nabisco: Triscuit, and Nabisco: Original Premium Saltine Crackers.

Lebreton, senior brand manager, explains that it's a mixture of these experiences that has increased interest in American food and drink brands in recent times, "The sale of U.S. products has surged in past years, which was mainly driven by more people travelling to the U.S. for their holidays. Subsequently, people are really interested to find the iconic food and drink brands that they have tried during their travels or seen on American shows. American food and drink has thus become more popular in the UK with consumers looking for authentic American brands in-store. They want to experience American culture through its famous flavours.

"At Empire Bespoke Foods we make a point of bringing products

that are authentically made in the USA and leaders in their categories. That is why our portfolio includes Malt-O-Meal cereals, with their iconic Marshmallow Mateys, Tootsie Roll "Making the world sweeter since 1896", Mike & Ike produced by Just Born since 1923 or Stubbs the no.1 premium BBQ sauce in the USA."

Take advantage of holidays

Holiday occasions are big business across the pond, and planning stock and displays around key times in the calendar not only makes customers aware of brands but also increases sales potential. Terence Dominique, store controller at retailer Partridges says, "We feel that it is important to



“ For big American occasions such as 4th July and Thanksgiving, we dedicate a large table or gondola at the front of the store to create a massive merchandise display which is always in a prominent place ”

OFFER A TASTE OF THE U.S. WITH QUALITY HOT DOGS FROM MEICA



Proving that offering popular American fast food doesn't mean you have to skimp on quality, Meica – a family German business that has been making top-quality sausages since 1908 – offers a range of products that are ideal for shoppers looking to create the perfect hot dog at home. Made from only quality cuts of pork, Trueman's American Style Hot Dog sausages – like the rest of the Meica range – offer full traceability and are prepared without the addition of flavour enhancers, colourings, lactose or gluten.

"Meica is Germany's best-selling ambient sausage brand, accounting for almost half of all sales in their home country, and no country is better known for producing quality sausages than Germany," explains Philip Marx, brand manager for Meica at fine food distributor

RH Amar, which supplies the Trueman's brand to speciality wholesalers throughout the UK. "All Meica sausages are pre-cooked and ready to eat once warmed in water, so they are a perfect treat for discerning shoppers looking to enjoy the original American fast food experience at home."

Look out for Trueman's Turkey & Chicken Hot Dog sausages, which will be making their UK debut via speciality wholesale soon. More information on the Meica range – including the brand's Frankfurters – can be found at meica.de/en.

For further information visit rhamar.com.



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give customers a variety of genuine product choices – brands, flavours, organic, gluten-free and fat-free – as we have a range of customers, such as families and expats, that shop with us and have different needs. Additionally we think about the occasions throughout the year, such as Pancake Day, birthdays, 4th July, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Over the years, we have found that there is a huge demand during Thanksgiving and therefore we have a whole display for this at the front of the shop. Not only this, we have a number of customers providing enquiries and opinions about our American products and most of the times, it increases the sales. Their opinion is vital when deciding what

American brands should we order and have on display. For example, many customers were requesting for Swedish Fish and Red Vines, which have now become popular lines. We also try to stock products that customers cannot find anywhere else, as our American department has been described as “a small shop in a big shop.”

“ People are really interested to find the iconic food and drink brands that they have tried during their travels or seen on American shows ”

Marion at Empire agrees that holiday occasions are key trading times: “Seasonality is key for U.S. products, and American holidays are perfect occasions to attract new shoppers to the fixture and to bring enjoyment to the ones who already love authentic American products. At Empire Bespoke Foods we support our customers through range recommendations – it is important for shops to offer a full range of products covering all the eating and drinking occasions, with chocolate and confectionery, snacks, spreads, cereals, sauces and drinks. Our extensive portfolio covers all these categories with the most authentic speciality products.”

Create eye-catching displays

Stocking shelves high with brands from the U.S. is one thing, but creating an inviting display that encourages sales is something else. Terence from Partridges has this advice: “Our American products are placed in eye-catching areas. We have found that once customers enter the store and

look to their left, it is evident where all of the American products are. For big American occasions we dedicate a large table or gondola at the front of the store to create a massive merchandise display which is always in a prominent place. This helps our American customers find all of the essential products that they would need for their festivities. With American brands, their packaging is always vibrant and colourful so it makes merchandising easier.”

Creating a bespoke section in-store does help to set these products apart and catches the eye of customers. Taking a chance on new brands, especially those that may be unfamiliar, can feel like a bit of a risk but education and communication is the key to clinching those sales. Why not consider giving out some samples to encourage that initial conversation. Some American brands may still have a bit of that ‘novelty’ factor about them, so clearly communicating to your customers that you stand by the quality of the products and their ingredients really goes a long way.

Meica

Trueman's, the Top Dog

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customerservices@rhamar.com

FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR...



Adrian Beale, sales and marketing director at Buckley & Beale, on the trends and products making waves in the UK:

WHAT FOOD AND DRINK TRENDS INFLUENCED BY AMERICAN FOODS ARE POPULAR IN THE UK AT THE MOMENT?

It may come as a surprise to those that still think of American food as largely unhealthy, but plant-based foods, vegan alternatives to familiar meat products, fermented food and drink, CBD and hemp, ancient grains and ‘free-from’ products are all huge in the U.S. at the moment, as well as a major push towards responsible sourcing and packaging.

WHAT AMERICAN BRANDS ARE SUCCESSFUL IN THE UK?

In the speciality food world we are doing great business with our core producers such as McClures Pickles, Butternut Mountain Farms Maple Syrup and Pancake Mix, and despite

numerous local competitors, our Koeze Cream Nut Peanut Butter remains in our top three.

WHAT DO YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF U.S. PRODUCTS IN THE UK MARKET?

For the right product with the right story and a clear message the potential is huge. We are already seeing this with one new producer – The Jackfruit Company – and can see many more to come later this year and into 2020. Every major retailer in the UK is sending buyers to the U.S. trade shows and consumers on both sides of the pond are driving the demand for innovation and transparency. This can only help all of us as it improves the quality of our food as well as supporting those that make it.

The final word
on fine food

THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Richard Bainbridge, chef and owner of
Benedicts in Norwich



Benedicts is a restaurant that celebrates the very best of local and regional produce. In Norfolk we have some amazing suppliers and at the restaurant we create our dishes around the finest ingredients. We get blackwater potatoes from North Norfolk from truly passionate potato growers. We get 80% of our bio-dynamic and organic vegetables from Thornage Hall; the quality of the produce is truly stunning and some of the best produce I have ever had. Our fish comes from the North Norfolk Fish Company, affectionately known as 'John the Fish' who gets the freshest

fish direct from the day boats out of Wells and Cromer. Tim Allen supplies beautiful rare breed dry-aged pork from the South Creak village, Clarkes Butchery supply Southdown lamb farmed on the Norfolk/Suffolk border and our beef comes from ex-dairy cows from Fenn Farm.

The Norwich market is fantastic to have that direct contact with the producers – we head down to the market once a week to pick up fresh produce. I could have opened my restaurant anywhere, but I chose

to open it in Norwich because I'm passionate about what the county produces and I'm delighted and honoured to be able to showcase this within the restaurant.

As for Norwich itself, there are many fantastic independent retailers. Pono is a superfood bar which is the perfect breakfast stop, it's super healthy and natural produce with everything made on-site. One of my favourite restaurants is Shiki Japanese, which won a rave review by Jay Rayner. Run by a husband and wife team, the sushi is amazing and is unique to Norwich. The Grosvenor Fish Bar is an institution and has

been in the same family for 120 years. Unlike most fish and chip shops, it's very progressive in their offering. The produce is locally sourced and of the highest quality.

Bread Source is an independent artisan bakery in the heart of Norwich who use local grains and mill their own flour, too. They have a couple of shops and a market stall on the legendary Norwich market. My favourite is their bottomless bread counter for just £3.50, where you can enjoy as much as you wish with a choice of any spread imaginable. In the centre of town, you'll find Strangers Roastery. Fig Bar is a delicious dessert bar, and Jamie the owner makes some amazing cakes and pastries. He also pairs plated desserts with wine.

Archer's Butchers is a customer-facing butchers that serves wonderful locally-sourced meat. The shop has been in the same family for generations and is now run by a couple of brothers. City Fish is a market stall which gets fresh fish delivered direct from the day boats, from Cromer crabs to mussels and wild seabass.

To learn more about Richard's career and take a look at some of his recipes, visit greatbritishchefs.com.

TWITTER POLL

Is your shop planning
for the Christmas
season yet?

YES
51%

NO
33%

IN
PROGRESS
16%

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

The next issue of
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- Christmas Puddings & Fruit Cakes
- Chutneys & Pickles
- Christmas Drinks
- Creating a Xmas Cheeseboard
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TALKING SHOP



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specialityfoodmagazine

Something that has made a real impact on me since I became part of the food and drink industry is how important the stories behind the brands and products that we taste and enjoy every day truly are.

It's one thing to sit back of an evening and delve into a beautiful bar of raw chocolate from a fine food brand, for example, and appreciate the difference in quality from other brands that can be picked up in the supermarkets. It goes to a whole other level, however, when you understand and appreciate what has gone into that chocolate – where it has come from, the origin of the ingredients and who has made it in some cases.

Persuading customers to part with their hard-earned cash when it comes to fine food and drink is not always easy, even when they are actively looking to purchase. What makes a difference is not only when

customers understand that quality equals better taste, but when they have been affected in some way by the background of the product, the company message or even just the experience that was had when purchasing.

I recently had the chance to experience this first-hand at a recent visit to the meat counter in a farm shop. Being a vegetarian it was my other half who was perusing for something to cook up for a barbecue later that day on a bit of a whim. The attentiveness and service we received was second-to-none and being informed that the produce had come from another local farm, alongside the enthusiastic

recommendations from the butcher, led to us deciding to purchase from there over the supermarket and to go for something that may not normally have been chosen! Information and passion for the produce really does go a long way for customers that may be on the fence about whether to spend that little bit extra.

When it comes to food and drink sometimes it's that farm-to-fork connection that seals the deal. Minskip Farm Shop, for example, is a business that I consider to be

getting this right. As a grassroots farm shop selling their own produce, a big part of which is eggs, they are involving their customers from the minute they arrive. The message that the shop puts out is that they are a business that cares about the welfare of their hens and the quality of the eggs, and customers are able to see that the hens milling around for themselves. That offers the opportunity for visitors to see where the eggs come from with their own eyes and know the story

behind them. I know that I for one would enjoy my eggs so much more in the morning if I was recalling a lovely day out at the shop when I bought them, assured of the care and commitment that goes into them.

So don't shy away from promoting what makes you as a business special. Increase signage, promote the story behind your produce on social media and even just start conversations more often with your customers – I know that worked for me.

Are you proud of the customer service you provide as a retailer? Do you want to shout about staff training techniques you've implemented that have been successful? We would love to hear from you – just email lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk.

“ When it comes to food and drink, sometimes it's that emotional connection that seals the deal ”

DIARY DATES

July

26th - 28th
THE GAME FAIR,
HATFIELD HOUSE
Hertfordshire
thegamefair.org

30th - 31st
INTERNATIONAL
CHEESE AWARDS
Nantwich, Cheshire
internationalcheeseawards.co.uk

September

1st - 3rd
SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR
Olympia London
specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk

8th - 10th
TOP DRAWER
Olympia London
topdrawer.co.uk

10th - 12th
GLEE
NEC Birmingham
gleebirmingham.com

14th
FROME AGRICULTURAL & CHEESE SHOW
West Woodlands Showground, Frome
fromecheesesshow.co.uk

19th - 20th
LUNCH!
ExCel, London
lunchshow.co.uk

October

5th - 9th
ANUGA
Cologne, Germany
anuga.com

3rd - 4th
BREAD & JAM
Institute of Directors, London
breadandjamfest.com



5 MINUTES WITH... ELSPETH BILTOFT, OWNER OF ROSEBUD PRESERVES

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

I'd be working on local environment issues – biodiversity and volunteering.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I worked as assistant to the designer at the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Nature – it never disappoints.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

Packing pills for GlaxoSmithKline as a student.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

Talking to customers and working on one-off projects that make a real difference.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

Some of the necessary repetition you need to do to run a business, like dealing with paperwork!

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

The food industry has changed so much in the 30 years since I

started Rosebud Preserves. Certain aspects are heading in the right direction, such as the focus on sustainability, organic, vegetarian/vegan, provenance, quality, local food and ingredients. It's so much more thoughtful today.

TEA OR COFFEE?

Both – green tea or a good quality cappuccino.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

A selection of really fresh salads followed by a summer pudding, which I love.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

Do your best and don't give up.

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

Chinese century eggs that came in a pot that were preserved in clay. I only ate a little bit of one!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

I love the work of Thomas Hardy. My favourite is *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Savoury every time.

TRIED & TESTED



HOLLY, EDITOR

ENJOY! MAGICAL MINT BUTTONS

Not too long ago, free-from confectionery wasn't my go-to when I was craving an indulgence. Not having any intolerances myself, I had been spoiled by the taste and texture of conventional treats, and when free-from options crossed my path I can't honestly say I was ever truly wowed. Having said that, when a pack of Enjoy! Magical Mint Buttons landed on my desk with the promise of being free-from and delicious, they delivered. Truly delicious, creamy dark chocolate buttons filled with a punchy mint caramel which everyone can enjoy? What's not to love?

joyofenjoy.com



LOST SHEEP COFFEE CAPSULES

I love coffee, I'm a fan of convenience, and I'm trying to do my bit to avoid using products with non-recyclable packaging. Enter Lost Sheep Coffee and their newly-launched Nespresso-compatible capsules made from lignin, a waste product from the paper industry. Certified biodegradable and compostable – and with a couple of tasty options, kept fresh thanks to their air tight format – this range of pods mean I can reach for the coffee machine every morning without having to stress about the environmental impact of my chosen brew.

lostsheepcoffee.com

THE CAN-D FOOD CO. CANDIED SMOKED SALMON

For lovers of salmon after something a little bit different, the dry cured Candied Smoked Salmon from The Can-D Food Co offers just that. It has a chunkier and more robust texture than the smoked salmon we're used to, and gets its sweeter flavour from being brined with maple syrup then air-dried and smoked over old whisky barrel oak – a combination you might initially assume wouldn't work but it does. This would work well with crackers and a good goats or cream cheese, and would make for a unique and flavourful canapé option.

can-d.co.uk



PLANTSY VEGAN ALGAE PROTEIN DRINK

This is a product I never imagined I would be trying one day! I am always looking for quick and easy ways to up my protein intake throughout the day so this was an intriguing product for me. It's powered by algae protein which contains all the essential amino acids, and is also free from added sugar and gluten, making it a nutritious, good-for-you beverage that I sipped on easily throughout the morning. Naturally flavoured with either Blood Orange & Grapefruit or Rhubarb & Ginger, it's well worth a try.

plantsy.co.uk



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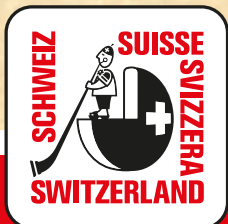
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