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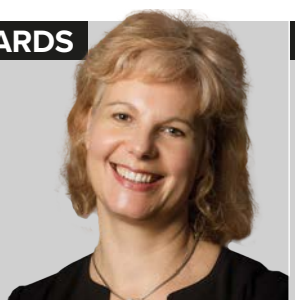
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the April edition of *Speciality Food*.

Not only are there opportunities to meet, greet, learn and be inspired on the horizon – check out the previews of Natural Food Show on p.26 and Farm Shop & Deli Show on p.28 – but there's also a cornucopia of new foods to sell and enjoy, starting (of course) with ice cream and frozen desserts. Check out some of our favourites and discover the opportunities in this sector via Ellen Manning's piece on p.36.

You'll also find insight and product picks covering the coffee, Spanish food, and cheese pairing sectors within these pages, as well as masterclasses on promoting cheese, making the most of your bricks and mortar store and cashing in on localism – as well as profiles of some of the most inspiring women in the food and drink sector today.

We've also produced for you the second edition of *Inspirational Cheese Retailers*, which I hope you'll find a valuable and enjoyable read.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR
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The Brexit effect

With Brexit now officially in full force, fine food retailers across the UK are struggling with costs and supplier issues when it comes to importing European produce. They are having to adapt to new ways of ordering and stocking these products, as well as reevaluating the types of products they order

Costs are racking up

Importing products from outside the UK is no longer a simple or cheap feat. The new regulations have caused price increases in all aspects of supply and delivery, making it more challenging than before.

Patricia Michelson, director and founder of cheesemongers La Fromagerie explained: "As we navigate the red tape and extra paperwork as well as all the costs to bring in goods from the EU, the amount of money is racking up.

"With Italian produce, we experience delays and paperwork problems which are affecting us on a weekly basis. Having to wait much longer for goods to be given the all-clear to be shipped, and worse still when one bit of the paperwork is not filled in properly - i.e., not ticking the box MADE IN ITALY for instance held up one whole shipment because one producer's paperwork missed this out."

Unreliability of deliveries

Alex Marsh, CEO of Tweakd, a pre-prepared meal and juice brand, told Speciality Food that the new regulations have made importing speciality products, like cooked meat and fish, from France "much, much harder". He said the "badly thought out, last-minute bureaucratic madness" and the "incredibly convoluted British import system" caused import times to increase from about three days to five weeks, as well as adding costs."

Similarly, Jen Grimstone-Jones from Cheese Etc., The Pangbourne Cheese Shop has experienced unreliability of deliveries and longer waiting times for European cheeses. She told Speciality Food: "The biggest headache we have experienced since Brexit has been the unpredictability of supply. Our suppliers think that a cheese is coming so we pass the information on to our customers, and then when the delivery arrives half of the order isn't there.

"The other problem is time. We used to be able to order for the same week delivery, we're now operating on a two-week lead time, sometimes three. The cheeses come across in refrigerated containers so the delay isn't causing a problem with quality but we're now avoiding ordering fresh cheeses which have a shorter shelf life."

Charlotte Nemeth of Ingleton's Seasons Bakery is struggling to import high-quality chocolate. She explains: "The best chocolate comes from abroad and we are already seeing a steady decline in availability that will only get worse with time."

Promoting British produce

Brexit has caused a plethora of issues for both UK independents and European food suppliers, and with potentially long-lasting disruptions to the supply chain from the war in Ukraine, fine food retailers need to create solutions.

Industry experts believe that indies can combat supply issues by focusing on British-made products and avoiding reliance on external trade. If anything, both Brexit and the crisis in Ukraine have demonstrated that British reliance on imported products can sometimes be a risky business, and by supporting local producers, independents can offer a stable foundation for their local food ecosystem.

This method of 'plugging the gap' with British products not only helps fine food businesses save extra costs and time but also provides customers with world-class produce.

Clare explained: "When customers come in asking for a European cheese that they know, we love to suggest the British alternative, give them a taste and see how it measures up. For example, Ogleshield in place of Raclette is usually a wonderful new discovery!

Patricia reflected this idea, "We do stock great British cheeses but I think customers would really miss the European ones if they weren't available. Nevertheless, British cheesemaking is world-class and most customers will predominately buy British. The British public like to know where their food is coming from and we have a connection with the farm or dairy where the British cheeses are produced in that we buy direct where we can."

Even British products can be affected

While focusing on Great British produce can reduce lengthy delivery times and cut costs, these products are not always immune to the Brexit effect. Therefore, it is a balancing act of talking to suppliers and figuring out the best plan for your business.

As Mark Kacary, managing director of Norfolk Deli explains: "Most of what we do champions Norfolk producers so in a number of ways we've not been as affected as a deli or business specialising in Italian or Spanish foods. However, not all ingredients are grown here so the increased prices in marmalade for example has to be closely related to the price of Seville oranges. Some of our suppliers are finding that stocks of jars and bottles (some of which come from Europe) have been harder to come by and or just more expensive. We get as many emails and letters from local suppliers telling us of increases in prices as we do from businesses located in Europe. We are fortunate in that our business is not 100% reliant on European imports, but it doesn't mean that we have not seen the effects."



NEWS IN BRIEF

NFU RESPONDS TO FINALISED UK-NEW ZEALAND TRADE DEAL

The UK-New Zealand trade deal has been criticised for not supporting or benefitting British farming. NFU President Minette Batters said: "Once again, there appears to be extremely little in this New Zealand trade deal to benefit British farmers. UK farm businesses face significantly higher costs of production than farmers in New Zealand, and margins are likely to tighten further in the face of rising input costs, higher energy bills and labour shortages."

B-CORP OPENS LONDON SUSTAINABILITY POP-UP

Ethical brand certifier B-corp created a sustainability pop-up in central London called Good News to showcase 300 ambient, fresh, chilled and frozen products from B Corp certified UK brands to the general public. The aim was to teach consumers how they can 'buy better' by shining a light on the products that have "sustainability and community at their core". Joint CEOs of Cook, Ed Perry and Rosie Brown said: "More of our customers want to shop ethically, and are seeing the B Corp logo as a stamp of credibility."

WAR IN UKRAINE COULD HAVE LONG-LASTING EFFECTS ON THE FOOD INDUSTRY

The devastating war between Russia and Ukraine is projected to have long-lasting effects on the food industry, according to experts. Karen Betts, the FDF's chief executive explained: "Past experience tells us that disruption to Ukraine's exports will have a lasting impact on global food supplies and on the price of a range of key commodities, such as vegetable oils and maize, which are important in UK food production."

What the closure of supermarket deli counters means for fine food retailers

Major supermarkets are closing their in-store deli counters across the nation, leaving a gap in the market. We explore what this means for independents



Leading supermarket Tesco recently announced the closure of all 317 of its in-store deli counters, following Sainsbury's which permanently closed all 420 of its in-store counters including meat, fish and delicatessen last year. Nick Gladding, senior UK retail analyst at IGD, explained that these closures were a result of an "accelerated decline in customer use of in-store counters" due to the pandemic. So, what does this mean for fine food retailers?

A SIGNAL FROM CONSUMERS FOR BETTER QUALITY

James Hardiman, senior retail analyst at the BRC, explained: "With some big supermarkets closing deli counters, there is an opportunity for independent delis and farm shops to capitalise on the potential gap in the market. The industry has always been incredibly effective at ensuring individual customer needs can be met by some resourceful retailer."

This is reflected by Dezi Dalton, owner of Rye Deli, who insists: "The decrease in supermarket deli counters is a significant signal from consumers. Whilst supermarkets create deli counters they tend to be filled with generic, mass-produced offerings that merely create the 'illusion' of a deli counter.

"Come to the independent Deli and that's where you'll find provenance, small-batch producers, quality, regionality and interesting offerings. Supermarkets cannot offer this. The discerning consumer 'has spoken' by placing their purchasing with the independent deli where quality, knowledge and care is a defining characteristic.

"Supermarkets across the spectrum are responding to this choice and thus the increasing closures of supermarket deli counters leaves the independent deli experts to continue to do what they do best. Trade gets stronger year on year. Customers come back loyally seeking and relying on the artisan produce sought from near and far but with the principles and practices that are meaningful to our consumers."

Shopping for meat and dairy products at delis provides the opportunity to purchase these products in a more environmentally friendly way, as consumers can only buy the amount they need from top-quality ethical sources. And with conscious consumption on the rise, this group's purchasing power is only going to grow – and fast, making delis and farm shops more important than ever.

MORE PLANT-BASED OFFERINGS?

As the demand for more ethical and sustainable food products grows, independent delis can also use mass deli counter closures as an opportunity to expand their plant-based offerings. Aside from being able to give customers the quality, knowledge and care they desire, providing these free-from products will also target customers who are reducing or eliminating meat from their diet due to environmental and health concerns.

Ana Purcaroiu, senior consumer analyst at GlobalData explained: "Consumers are shifting towards plant-based products, with 62%* of people surveyed by GlobalData actively trying to reduce red meat, or eat it in moderation— and 65% reporting the same for dairy. In this light, divesting deli counters certainly makes sense.

"People will increasingly base their choice of retailer on the availability of plant-based products, as GlobalData's survey revealed that 21% of UK millennials claim that the availability of special dietary products is the most influential factor when deciding where to do their grocery shopping.

While the closure of supermarket deli counters sadly does mean the loss of thousands of jobs across the nation, it is undoubtedly a sign of the times and independent retailers can and should capitalise on the increased interest in conscious shopping.

> "With some big supermarkets closing deli counters, there is an opportunity for independent delis and farm shops to capitalise on the potential gap in the market"
>
> **JAMES HARDIMAN, SENIOR RETAIL ANALYST AT THE BRC**



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New challenges emerge for the food and drink sector on journey to net-zero

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) has announced that the food and drink sector is delivering on its net-zero ambition according to the *Ambition 2025* progress report.

The *Ambition 2025* progress report showcases the progress made by the food and drink industry in all target areas – from food waste to transport to natural capital – to create a more sustainable food supply chain.

However, two new challenges are yet to be addressed. The first is the issue of sustainable packaging, as the current regulations just aren't doing enough. Therefore, FDF is urging the UK government to ensure legislation continues to allow chemically recycled plastic to be used in food packaging and for it to be recognised in the plastic packaging tax mass balance calculations.

Moreover, Vicki Hird, head of farming at Sustain argues that we also need to make changes at the start of the supply chain, by providing farmers with the means to transform their industry.

She explains: "Sustain welcomes the food industry's ongoing efforts - it's vital to address climate change and water protection in their operations. The challenge is, however, to tackle these issues in supply chains whilst also providing decent livelihoods in farming, something that is not happening now as farmers get less than 10% of overall food spend. Farmers need to transform the production to be water, nature and climate-friendly, but that's hard with consistently low returns and poor contracts."

While the food and drink sector has already made huge changes and is on track to deliver on targets set out to mitigate climate disasters, it appears that a supply-chain overhaul may be needed to fully address the new challenges and create a better system for everyone.

> "The challenge is to tackle these issues in supply chains whilst also providing decent livelihoods in farming, something that is not happening now"
>
> VICKI HIRD, HEAD OF FARMING AT SUSTAIN



5 world food trends to start stocking today

Stocking these five cuisines and flavours will entice your customers to try something new and could make you their one-stop-shop for their new favourite dishes.

1 JAPANESE FLAVOURS

At Waitrose, sales of the retailer's own-brand Umami Paste were up 17% compared with 2019, while sushi sales saw a 54% increase. Consumers were also keen to try their hand at making their own sushi, with 2021 sales of sushi mats up 57% and nori sales up 56% compared to the same period in 2020. Moreover, the sale of high-street Asian fusion chain Wagamama's new cookbook 'Wagamama Your Way' has sparked a new interest in cooking these flavours, especially the British favourite, Katsu curry. Stock sushi-making kits, top-quality sushi ingredients and Japanese curry pastes to capitalise on this trend.

2 KOREAN FARE

The rise of Korean food and culture has been no secret thanks to the success of the popular Netflix show Squid Game. Korean food trends like Dalgona, or sugar candy, have taken off. So too has gochujang paste, also known as 'Korean ketchup'. This Korean store cupboard staple is quickly becoming one to watch in the UK. Try stocking gochujang with other Korean ingredients nearby such as tofu, kimchi, sesame oil and soy sauce.

3 LEVANTINE FOOD

The Levant, which comprises a large area in the Eastern Mediterranean, has become a mealtime inspiration for more and more Brits. Searches for Levantine on Waitrose's website rose by more than 2,500% last year, with products like pomegranate molasses, Turkish Urfa chilli flakes and Feta parcels flying off the shelves.

4 ETHIOPIAN CUISINE

We've known for decades Ethiopia produces sublime Arabica coffee, and now it's being appreciated for its cooking, too. Waitrose magazine named Ethiopia as one of its tastes of 2021. In September, online retailer Tastesmiths launched its Ethiopian curry kit. With bold flavours and new ingredients to explore, it's one to watch for home cooks.

5 SPICE FROM ABROAD

From traditional spices like garam masala and cardamom to American-style barbecue rubs, Brits are showing a growing interest in adding a pop of travel-inspired flavour to their dishes. In fact, sales of herbs and spices at Waitrose were up 41% last year after a strong 2020. Top performers in this category include Middle Eastern spices and speciality salts. Try expanding your spice shelves with more exciting global flavours and encourage your customers to give it a go too.



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JOHN SHEPHERD
PARTRIDGES

In the rough and tumble of speciality food retailing the first casualties are generally expectations. And especially Great Expectations. Whatever you think will happen, particularly the good things, never quite turns out to be the case. Take February 2022 for example.

The preceding month of January was reasonably good. Sales were up by 8.8% although that was in comparison to a lockdown, or was it a tier time of the previous year? It was when customers had to book tables to consume alcohol and our wine and spirit sales benefitted significantly. January followed our second-best Christmas on record. Although how we managed that feat with all the stock shortages, Covid absences and Brexit obstacles I do not know. We staggered over the finishing line.

With this background our expectations for February were reasonably positive. There was the end of restrictions in sight, Valentine's Day is always a positive, and the first week of the month maintained the feel-good vibes by being 8% up on the previous year. What could possibly go wrong?

Week 2 for a start. Down 4%. Then week 3 down 10.2%, and as I started to write this article in the middle, or ides, of the month we were 6.5% down. Valentine's Day being on a Monday is never as good as Valentine's being at the end of the week. Messrs Dudley, Eunice and Franklin of the Storm variety were real party poopers. They disrupted customers visiting the shop and restricted our own deliveries. It was also the first half term for a long time when families could actually travel abroad without running the gauntlet of extensive restrictions. Frustrating stock shortages, rising prices and the threat of conflict in Europe did not help either. Heading towards Pancake Day on March 1st the mood had been as flat as a er... pancake.

But then guess what? Expectations were confounded again. A three days of good weather on the last weekend, including the best Saturday we have ever had for a February, has revived the January optimism. We may still be down for the month but at least what appeared to be a rout looks more like a sprout. Which is entirely appropriate for spring.

Our outlook for the rest of the year, although uncertain, remains positive. In March sales do pick up compared to the first two months of the year. A late Easter will lead to a Bank Holiday at the beginning of May and then there is the Platinum Jubilee weekend, when we are hoping to hold a large street party on the King's Road. If the weather is benign we tend to benefit from these national celebrations enormously. Our café and wine bar has become an increasingly important part of our speciality food offer.

There are times when running your own business is like being on a seesaw with grandchildren. There are uncomfortable bumps and frustrating slumps, but for me there is always an overwhelming desire to get back on the seesaw to enjoy it all over again.

It's those Great Expectations again.

3 ways to tackle the growing food waste problem in fine food retail

Project Drawdown, the world's leading resource for climate solutions, has labelled 'reducing food waste' as the number one solution to solve climate change



While tackling food waste can often seem a daunting mountain to climb, there are ways to be proactive around your business's food waste.

REDISTRIBUTING FOOD WASTE

One way in which businesses can ensure their food waste doesn't cause concern is by redistributing it to those in need. According to WRAP, the UK's leading sustainability charity, the volume of food surplus being redistributed has tripled since 2015. Two-thirds of this increase is from retail and manufacturing, while 23% came from Hospitality and Food Service and farms.

However, while redistributing waste is a better method than letting it go in the bin, it should not be the first port of call for fine food retailers. Marcus Gover, CEO of WRAP explains: "Priority must be given to reducing surplus and waste in the first place. This is critical for business efficiency and essential if we are to achieve our environmental objectives."

SELLING WASTE AS NEW PRODUCTS

Mark Kacary, managing director of Norfolk Deli suggests repurposing surplus or waste food into new products. He explains: "We make a lot ourselves. Slightly stale bread will become treacle tarts or bread pudding. Cheese is always being used in quiches which we make a lot of. The simple answer for a small business to avoid a lot of unnecessary waste is to make things for the business which customers WILL buy."

"Invest in a kitchen and produce your own deli produce! Creating sandwiches using ingredients we have a surplus of, or using it in products people love, means that our food waste is not zero but is in fact very, very low."

CREATE 'BARGAIN BUCKETS' WITH SHORT-DATED STOCK

In order to prevent your products from becoming waste in the first place, Mark also suggests creating 'bargain buckets' with short-dated items at a discounted price. He says the Norfolk Deli has regular baskets of '£1 a product' displays and "some people will buy things which are perfectly good to eat but have reached their best-before dates."

> "Priority must be given to reducing surplus and waste in the first place. This is critical for business efficiency and essential if we are to achieve our environmental objectives"





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THE STORY BEHIND THE STATS

58%

Since 1990, FDF members have lowered CO2 emissions by 58%, demonstrating that they are actively working towards the goal of net-zero by 2040. This means that the food sector is well on its way to meeting targets put forward by the FDF to meet targets and should achieve carbon goals ten years before government targets.

32%

The new *Food to Go Market Report 2022* from Lumina Insight revealed the food-to-go sector experienced growth of 32% in 2022, to reach a value of £21.3bn. This figure well exceeds its pre-pandemic 2019 value, demonstrating the significant importance of the market despite the fact that many professionals are continuing to work from home.

39.4%

FDF's Ambition 2025 progress report showed that members had cut water consumption by 39.4%, successfully contributing to an industry-wide target to reduce water use by 20%.

1/3rd

According to a recent report from the WWF, the food industry is the single largest global emitter of greenhouse gases, accountable for 1/3 of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions, with food waste accounting for 8-10% of this.

Product Guru to host events for challenger food & drink brands to meet big retail buyers

Dubbed as 'the trade show reinvented', Glasgow-based online platform Product Guru is hosting a series of hybrid events called Huddles featuring live meetings, video-pitching, and product sampling, with fully integrated technology for suppliers to meet with buyers.

Each event brings together up to 50 challenger brands and the biggest retailers in the UK in a one-day experience – with an optional networking evening for more casual interactions.

The company has scheduled several Huddle events throughout the year, including events for Spirits, Confectionery and Chocolate, Snacks, Hot Beverages and Beer, and brands will have eight minutes to engage with every buyer.

Simon Coyle, CEO of Product Guru explained: "We are combining the best of virtual with in-person experience, technology and product sampling, bringing something really exciting, effective and unique, for both brands and buyers."

Maddie Milton, category buyer at Springvale Foods, said: "We are so excited that Product Guru 'Huddles' will be held face to face. As a buyer, it is incredibly helpful to see products in the flesh. We cannot wait to meet people in person and spend that bit of extra time going through ranges."





How social media shopping features could give your business a boost

Social media shopping is growing in popularity, particularly the Instagram Shop feature. We explore how it could help your deli, farm shop or independent business

USE IT FOR ADVERTISING

While Instagram Shop doesn't bring in a substantial amount of direct sales, Charlie Wells, director and head of marketing at The Farm in Stratford explained it has a more important purpose – advertising. She explains: "It works as another point of advertising our products or seasonal specials, which hopefully creates a sale. It also allows advertising on Facebook shopping pages as well, which if you have a large Facebook following plus Instagram it gives you double the chance to sell through your social media channels. The Farm has a very different audience on Instagram than Facebook, so we cover all potential customers."

PROMOTING IMPULSE BUYS

By having a range of your products available to look through and potentially buy on your social media page, Instagram scrollers looking for last-minute gift ideas or payday treats can be tempted to make impulsive purchases through the app.

Mark Kacary, managing director of Norfolk Deli explained: "We put onto somebody's screen a purchasable image thus reducing one additional layer of faff to get in between the "oh that's a good idea" and "I'll buy that" action. In some ways, it is the equivalent of WH Smith putting a chocolate bar at the till for an impulse purchase. Making the image clickable with a direct link to purchasing allows for impulse purchases."

However, social media accounts and shopping pages require consistent attention and work to be a positive addition to your business. Therefore, if you do choose to use social media shopping platforms to promote and sell your products, make sure that you have the time and tools to give it the attention it needs to make it work for you.

> "It works as another point of advertising our products or seasonal specials, which hopefully creates a sale"
>
> CHARLIE WELLS, DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF MARKETING AT THE FARM, STRATFORD



Industry urges government to realise the potential of British farming

The farming industry is calling on the British government to realise the potential of the farming industry in order to prevent 'sleepwalking' into more crises.

Minette Batters, president of the National Farmers Union has demanded that the government implement a clear plan and vision for British farming and food production. The NFU has released a new report entitled 'British farming: a blueprint for the future' highlighting five key areas the government, supply chain and farmers need to prioritise.

These include: commitment and investment from both government and retail to sell more British food at home and abroad, a new economic model that drives investment back into the land, a dial-up, dial-down immigration policy and a Future Farm policy with a properly funded Sustainable Farming Incentive.

Speaking at the NFU annual conference in February, Batters said: "I want to be clear from the outset. British farming has a lot to be positive about, to be proud of, and to believe in; our high standards of food production, our net-zero ambitions, our education programme which reached a third of a million children last year.

"But the government does need to understand that we need certainty, commitment and consistency. We need a plan that pre-empts crises, rather than repeatedly runs into them. This country needs a strategy and a clear vision for what we expect from British farming. We have completely contradictory government policies. It is raising the bar for environmental standards at home but pursuing trade deals that support lower standards overseas."

This sentiment was reflected by Gareth Morgan, the Soil Association's head of farming policy, who declared: "The NFU is right to call for clarity – this is desperately needed for farmers who are facing challenges that will only worsen as the impacts of climate change are felt ever more acutely."





"What is the new normal?"



SUSIE WARRAN-SMITH
CBE

There have been lots of predictions about the food trends we expect in 2022, not least the insightful article '10 food and drink trends set to soar in 2022' in this very magazine last month. But what is the new normal once we start to get back to a post-pandemic reality? Will our customers in the independent food sector permanently change their behaviour and attitudes?

I think there is an increased sense of confidence among most of the 50+ age range who do not have underlying health conditions, are fully vaccinated and had a booster too. I am in that bracket, and I don't feel at risk at all in a retail environment no matter what new variants might evolve. My attitude does not extend to taking public transport or in densely packed entertainment venues but I do feel safe in my high street and my local shops. I may regret making that statement, but that's how I feel. Now things are beginning to get back to normal I also sense a general dissatisfaction with the media sensationalising of our predicament and how predictions seem to have been reported at the more pessimistic end of the scale.

We're all bored of the reports but there could be some upsides to the disruption we have all suffered over the last two years. I believe that all this has led to a better awareness of the link between sustainably and provenance, and possibly distrust of imported products, whether warranted or not. I want to use my hard-earned money to support the community in which I live and feel ever more inclined to patronise family businesses which have had such a hard time recently. I am sure I'm not alone.

Data from NelsonIQ shows that, "Ingredient labels on products are more important than you think. Forty percent of consumers switched to a brand's competitor in the last year because it had more robust and trustworthy information about their desired product." Research by Kerry clearly states that producers and retailers need to "demonstrate greater provenance." They also observed that globally "49% of consumers are now considering sustainability when buying food and drink." It seems to me that our local delis, farm shops and retailers are in a very good position to prove how they have ensured provenance and can shout about their long-held sustainability ideals. I don't think the supermarkets and others can demonstrate such cast iron credentials.

In promotional material, social media and at the point or purchase, make sure to highlight ingredients, provenance and the names of local suppliers. Your customers want to know and are proactively seeking this information in order to make purchasing decisions. Shout about it and make it visible!

One difficulty as we transcend recent events is the spectre of a considerable increase in inflation. We have not experienced this for some time, and it's being exacerbated by a huge uplift in utility costs. However, Eurostar Commodities have concluded that although "inflation, price increases and transport costs are grabbing all the predictions in 2002. If you look beneath the headlines there is a world of sophistication taking place with a special focus on healthy eating and clean label."

I am renowned for being an optimist, but I genuinely think this is a huge opportunity for independent retailers. The pandemic has been an awful scourge. People have died prematurely. Families separated at times when it has been very hard to bear. Businesses have gone under, and our children's education has been ruined. Mental health has taken a big hit too. But as we have all started to emerge from this, a reset button is open to us. The pandemic has allowed many people to reassess their priorities and work out what is most important to them. Health and wellbeing have become incredibly important and the willingness to support local businesses with connections into the community has too. At last!

"I want to use my hard-earned money to support the community in which I live and feel ever more inclined to patronise family businesses which have had such a hard time recently. I am sure I'm not alone"

The Great Stock Giveaway returns for second year

Speciality Food is inviting fine food producers to sign up for this year's edition of the initiative

The Great Stock Giveaway, organised by the team behind *Speciality Food*, is back to connect producers with independent retailers across the UK by putting the best new products in the sector right into the hands of buyers.

At the end of the campaign, five lucky retailers will win a pallet of stock full of exciting new products from multiple producers, offering the opportunity to try new lines and gauge interest from consumers at zero cost. If you're a retailer, keep an eye on *Speciality Food*'s website and Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn profiles to be alerted to updates relevant to your business.

Dezi Dalton of Rye Deli in Rye, East Sussex – one of the winners of last year's giveaway – loved the broad range of products received: "The dozens of parcels that arrived were full of unusual, top-quality products from ambient to chilled to frozen."

"It has given us an invaluable opportunity to try products that we perhaps wouldn't have considered, such as new vegan offerings, chilled drinks, sauces and confectionery." The new stock has not only refreshed the deli's shelves, but it has also helped Dezi identify new food and drink that customers are interested in, with some of the new products "flying off the shelves".

She continued, "We are now more informed of more things that our customers will buy, and going forward we will continue to stock them! Winning this competition gave us a great relaunch opportunity following the recent restrictions."

Holly Shackleton, editor of *Speciality Food*, said, "We are proud to announce the return of The Great Stock Giveaway for 2022. We had some fantastic feedback from both producers and retailers last year, and are excited to showcase a whole host of new and exciting products and brands to the sector again."

stock-giveaway.com

> "This has given us an invaluable opportunity to try products that we perhaps wouldn't have considered"
>
> DEZI DALTON OF RYE DELI IN RYE, EAST SUSSEX

Almost half of UK retailers aren't prepared for HFSS legislation

The landmark high in fat, salt, or sugar (HFSS) legislation is due to be introduced on the 1st October 2022, seeking to curb Britain's obesity crisis.

However, new research from GS1 UK - the global standards organisation covering 90% of UK retailers – has revealed that almost half of businesses are not prepared for the introduction of HFSS legislation.

It also revealed that just one in three have assessed their products ahead of the October deadline, and a shocking 20% of businesses are unaware of the new legislation altogether.

While the new legislation will primarily affect supermarkets with BOGOF offers on high fat and sugary snacks, the reality is that it will affect the entire food sector, fine food retailers such as delis, farm shops and food halls included. For example, independent speciality food retailers could see challenges with some restrictions on sweet bakery goods and higher fat deli items.

Anne Godfrey, CEO of GS1 UK said: "The HFSS legislation represents a seismic shift for businesses across the UK and many of our 57,000 members will be affected."

While the impending rules will cause a headache for many retailers, HFSS is supported by the majority of both business owners and consumers, with 68% of the latter in support.

Britain's farm shops shown to be crucial to the fine food industry

The farm retail industry has proved invaluable to both the fine food sector and the UK food industry, as a new report from the Farm Retail Association revealed it generates a staggering £1.4 billion in sales nationwide. The study was the first of its kind into farm retail, and the figures demonstrate the important role that farm shops play in the British economy today



Tom Newey, CEO of Cobbs Farm Co. Ltd commented: "It's fantastic to finally see some firm numbers of what our sector contributes to the national and more local economies. As a group, we were fortunate to see like for like retail sales grow over 40% during the pandemic."

New Farm Retail Association chairman Rupert Evans explained: "We knew anecdotally that consumers are preferring to shop and support local more than ever before and this data confirms just that. The trust was built up through the pandemic as farm retailers could adapt quickly to introduce Covid safe measures and people felt safer shopping in smaller environments as opposed to large supermarkets. We think the pandemic will have changed shopping habits for many and will be here to stay."

Further research revealed that customers are increasingly seeking higher quality products and excellent customer service, and with both of these in plentiful supply, it's easy to understand why consumers rushed to visit their local farm shops during national lockdowns.



Five popular foods adversely impacted by climate change

According to CIA Landlords, research shows that winds, droughts, and heavy storms are affecting key agricultural regions around the world, and causing many farms to fall short of their required product demand. But how exactly is climate change affecting some of our most loved food products and what can fine food retailers do to combat this?

1 TOMATOES IN ITALY

Italy is the largest tomato producer in Europe, supplying an average of six to seven million metric tons per year.

However, due to climate change, what was once a warm environment ideal for growing the popular crop is now becoming colder and experiencing more rain. These lower temperatures are slowing the ripening process of the fruit, and in 2019, less than half of the contracted volumes were produced on time.

If this continues to happen, prices will increase and fine food retailers could begin to see shortages of tomatoes and tomato products.

Italy's forests have also declined in recent years because cows in Italy, which are used to produce 'fine leather goods,' are needing the space to be reared. This, in turn, has decreased the amount of oxygen and CO2 in the air.

2 ALMONDS IN CALIFORNIA

California grows 80% of the world's almonds, and the industry in the state alone is worth a staggering $6 billion. However, the growing process of almonds is lengthy and requires a huge amount of both physical and human energy.

Moreover, California uses 60% of the honeybee hives in the country just for almond pollination each winter, and the cost of transporting the bees, and keeping them in cold storage until this point means that the carbon footprint of almond production is huge.

Almonds also require the most water to grow out of all nuts, just one seed needs 3.2 gallons to reach the size needed in order to be turned into milk. This is becoming increasingly difficult as the popularity of almond milk has risen - this dairy alternative makes up 63% of the plant-based milk market. Unfortunately, droughts across California are causing farmers to abandon their orchards as there is barely enough water to sustain them. The droughts have also meant farmers are having to treat the almonds with different pesticides, some of which are deadly for honeybees, an already endangered species. As a result, California could begin to see a decline in greenery and flowers, that the bees would have pollinated, and the price of almonds could rise.

Stocking other dairy alternatives such as oat, pea and coconut milk or championing British dairy milk instead could relieve pressure on almond producers and avoid shortages.

3 SOYBEANS IN BRAZIL

Soybeans grow best in warm and moist climates, however, the weather in Brazil is increasingly getting hotter, meaning farmers are having to adapt how they grow the crop. By using different pesticides, and forcing the plants to become more tolerant of different climates, farmers have been able to effectively increase the amount of soybeans produced. Consequently, it is forecasted that soybean production will decrease by 86–92% by 2050.

Soybean plants also require lots of space, so huge amounts of land in Brazil has been deforested to make way for the crop. This has primarily occurred in the Amazon, where mass fires have been lit to make room for the crops and as a result, scientists have confirmed the rainforest now emits more CO2 than it absorbs.

This is a global problem as we rely upon the Amazon to provide us with 6% of the world's oxygen supply and to keep carbon out of the atmosphere. If we continue to destroy this space, the air quality of our planet will decrease and global warming will be exacerbated. This will present itself in increased temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and biodiversity and agriculture will decline around the world.

4 COFFEE IN BRAZIL

The production of one of the world's most loved drinks, coffee, is expected to reduce by 76% in Brazil alone in years to come. This is because like soybeans, coffee plants grow at their best in moist, tropical climates, with soils and temperatures that reach around 21°C. But increasing temperatures are drying the air in Brazil, making the climate less than ideal for growth, thus causing a decline in coffee bean production.

Fine food retailers can avoid future shortages by opting to stock sustainably grown coffee beans from other parts of the world such as Italy, Rwanda, Columbia or Vietnam.

5 HAZELNUTS IN TURKEY

Turkey is the main producer of hazelnuts, accounting for 82% of global exports of the nut, meaning a huge number has to be produced each year in order to meet demand. But the erratic and unpredictable weather that Italy has been facing has caused a decline in hazelnut growth. In 2018 forest fires broke out on the Mediterranean coast, where many of the farms are, whilst devastating floods hit the north.

Independents can avoid shortages by looking elsewhere for products: choosing to stock brands using ingredients grown in the UK or other countries in less demand.



10 innovative food and drink trends that will shape 2022

The food industry has seen radical changes over the past few years, and if Wunderman Thompson's latest report is anything to go by, there are plenty of exciting innovations on the horizon. In its eighth edition of *The Future 100: 2022*, the intelligence company singles out 10 interesting trends to shape the direction of the food and drink sector for years to come



FORAGED COCKTAILS

Tapping into the local trend, cocktails using locally foraged ingredients offer consumers a range of sustainable drink options. "Whether rewilded or repurposed, foraged craft cocktails are lifting spirits. Local, self-sustained cuisine is minimising waste and reforming menus as contemporary innovators incorporate local flora into their craft," the report said.

LIQUID IMMUNITY

Wellness aficionados are quenching their thirst while supercharging their immune systems. Thanks to Covid-19, the focus on illness prevention is driving growth in the global immunity-boosting food market – the report cites a growth rate (CAGR) of 8.2% from 2021 to 2028. Plus, six in 10 global consumers are looking to food and drink to help their immune system, according to Innova's Consumer Survey 2020.

THE NEW TERROIR

"Climate change is forcing farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs to adapt and embrace new crops that would have been impossible for them to grow even 10 years ago," the report said. "New terroirs could forever change the way we think of the heritage and provenance of food."

CELL-CULTURED COFFEE

"The impetus for an alternative way to make coffee is similar to that for meat and seafood: growing world demand that's taxing the earth's productive resources," the report said. "The global coffee market was worth over $102 billion in 2020, according to Mordor Intelligence. The market—from whole bean and ground and instant coffee to pods and capsules—is marked by fierce competition and innovation."

HAUTE VEGANISM

Forget about the ultra-processed meat alternatives – vegan dining is going highbrow, with the evolution of new fine dining experiences driving demand.

NET-ZERO ALCOHOL

Global distilleries are addressing climate change by going carbon neutral. "Alcoholic brands are reinventing their processes to be more sustainable and less wasteful to combat climate change," the report said.

BLUE ZONES DIETS

Blue Zone diets are modelled after people living in areas like Greece, Japan and Italy who tend to have fewer diseases and longer life expectancies. "Signs collectively point to holistic, integrated wellness habits as the main cause," the report said. "Research shows that people living here are part of communities that focus on collective care, food in moderation, and sustainable habits."

THREE NEW INGREDIENTS

Wunderman Thompson's three ingredients to watch include kernza, a climate-friendly grain; Peruvian gooseberry, a native to the Andes with a bittersweet flavour; and tea seed oil, also known as 'the olive oil of the East'.

ACCELERATED MATURATION

"Time-consuming processes such as alcohol maturation and food fermentation are being upended by start-ups with ambitions to economise on time and output, as well as explore new taste frontiers," the report said.

EDIBLE ESCAPISM

"With travel still not possible or appealing for many, people are opting to take their taste buds for a trip, driving a wave of globally inspired eating experiences," according to the report. Home cooking is poised to remain a stand-in for far-flung travel this summer.

> "With travel still not possible or appealing for many, people are opting to take their taste buds for a trip, driving a wave of globally inspired eating experiences"
>
> **FUTURE 100: 2022 REPORT**

Fraudulent threats to our food system

Dr. Andy Zynga, CEO of EIT Food, a food innovation community, reveals the food fraud threats Europe is currently facing, and how the industry can provide a solution



Despite its resilience and adaptability, the food system has faced an ongoing threat for centuries: food fraud. Characterised by the goal of making economic gain and intentionally violating rules, requirements and legislations, fraud within the food system puts consumers' health and safety at risk, generates unfair market competition, and jeopardises consumer trust for the food system.

From the replacement, removal, and addition of ingredients to the absence, falsification and incorrect inclusion of food labelling, food fraud can take many forms and can infiltrate supply chains at many stages.

However, the food system is fighting back. The power of food innovation means there are already numerous solutions identifying and preventing food fraud, and startups are working tirelessly to scale new ideas and inventions. Digital traceability systems such as blockchain – a decentralised system for recording and protecting transactions and data – can help to track a food product's journey through the supply chain and pinpoint the origins of food fraud.

As innovation increases and new foods enter the market, and as crises such as COVID-19 challenge society, the opportunities for food fraud rise. Therefore, food fraud mitigation and prevention are as much about industry and policy intervention as awareness, collaboration, and consumer knowledge. Only by coming together can we reduce food fraud, improve consumer trust, and make the food system safer for everyone.

> "Only by coming together can we reduce food fraud, improve consumer trust, and make the food system safer for everyone"
>
> **DR. ANDY ZYNGA, CEO OF EIT FOOD**



MEET THE PRODUCER

Mash Chiles of Gourmet Partners talks us through Olina's baked-to-perfection artisan crackers, flatbreads and seeded toasts

SPOKESPERSON



MASH CHILES
SALES MANAGER

Luxury Australian producer Olina's Bakehouse uses time-honoured recipes to create truly delicious artisan crackers, which add a touch of magic to a tempting platter when entertaining.

The products are manufactured by Fine Food Holdings in Australia, and exported across the globe. And while the company only started making its delicious luxury crackers in 2015, Olina's Bakehouse is already a market leader in Australia and New Zealand with sales growing across the USA and here in the UK.

In order to bring their artisan crackers and flatbreads to the UK, Olina's teamed up with Gourmet Partners, a business that was set up to help UK-based speciality food brands to export, whilst assisting overseas brands to gain established sales contacts in the UK.

Mash Chiles, UK and EU sales manager at Gourmet Partners explains, "We were approached by Fine Food Holdings in 2019 and set about introducing Olina's Bakehouse to the UK's speciality food sector that summer. We are continuing to create opportunities for the brand into the UK's speciality wholesalers, whilst managing logistics, sales and marketing for the brand in the UK and Europe."

A colourful variety

Olina's Bakehouse offers a 14-strong selection of crackers and seeded toasts, with each variety being distinctly different. The UK product selection includes four varieties of light-textured Wafer Crackers, five different hand-baked Seeded Toasts, and their newest offering, Simply Seed flatbreads and crackers.



These crispy treats are available in several equally tempting flavours including nutty Cashew & Rosemary, fruity Fig & Almond and sweet Cranberry & Pumpkin Seed.

And for special occasions, Olina's also offer a wonderful Gift Pack containing two packs of Seeded Toasts and one pack of Wafer Crackers which on its own makes the perfect present for cheese lovers and snack addicts alike. Moreover, it would also be a great addition to a themed hamper with artisan chutneys, cheeses and charcuterie.

According to Mash, "The Olina's Bakehouse range reaches a wide variety of consumers. The core range Seed Toasts are extremely moreish eaten on their own or, as with the Wafer Crackers, are excellent with dips and cheese boards."

"Olina's is so varied that there is a product for every snacking occasion. Whether snacking during the working week, enjoying a light lunch or picnic, or entertaining guests, Olina's Bakehouse Toasts, Wafers, Flatbreads and Crackers will not disappoint. The Gluten-Free products are excellent as they do not concede taste or crunch and can be enjoyed if you are not on a gluten-free diet."

All of Olina's products would sit perfectly next to cheese displays, rows of chutney or deli cabinets – the possibilities are endless.

What makes Olina's Bakehouse stand out in the UK market?

The sign of a good cracker or flatbread is its ability to hold a wedge of cheese or dip without breaking, yet be delicate enough to not overpower its topping.

But Olina's Bakehouse crackers do more than just that, says Matthew. "Our Wafer Crackers are new to the UK and offer a light, crisp cracker with subtle flavouring that doesn't leave a floury taste in the mouth, allowing the dip or topping to really sing." On the other hand, "the Seeded Toasts are incredibly moreish and packed with fruit, seeds, and nuts," he says.

Olina's is also tapping into the growing market for 'Free-from' products and satisfying the demand caused by eco-friendly and food intolerant shoppers alike. But that doesn't mean they lack flavour or excitement, Mash explains: "The gluten-free varieties are tasty and high quality without compromise; while the Simply Seed range are excellent snacks for those following a Vegan and Keto diet."

Aside from Olina's seedy sensations being delicious, they also boast nutritional value, so they're the perfect sell for health-conscious consumers hoping to bump up their fibre or protein intake or swap in healthier snacks.

Moreover, the fun and quirky packaging, featuring a clear window that allows customers to see the product, is attractive to all ages. With images of juicy figs and colourful nuts and seeds, and a cheeky warning that the product inside is addictive, the boxes are attractive enough to fly off the shelves.

Seeds of change

Olina's has already started to sow seeds of change in the fine food sector. As Mash says, "We have already experienced encouraging growth of the brand in the UK and believe that the products offer great quality and are very competitively priced." Because consumers are increasingly opting for higher quality products with impressive ethical credentials, Olina's Bakehouse is filling this gap and could easily become your customers' new favourite snack.

But what's next for Olina's bakehouse? According to Mash, "We are looking forward to reaching more of the UK's speciality retailers during 2022 as well as launching the range into the foodservice sector and increasing sales into Europe."



> "Olina's is so varied that there is a product for every snacking occasion. Whether snacking during the working week, enjoying a light lunch or picnic, or entertaining guests, Olina's Bakehouse Toasts, Wafers, Flatbreads and Crackers will not disappoint"



PRODUCT NEWS

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

Empire Bespoke Foods brings Cholula to UK retail shelves



Popular Mexican condiment Cholula Hot Sauce has been introduced to British shelves by speciality food distributor, Empire Bespoke Foods.

The sauce, named after the oldest still-inhabited city in Mexico and North America, is a blend of local arbol and piquin peppers and a flavourful variety of regional spices.

There are two Cholula Hot Sauce products in the Empire Bespoke Foods range: Cholula Original, which provides a perfect balance of flavour, heat and tang; and Cholula Chipotle, which offers a rich, smoky flavour and sweet barbecue notes. Both sauces can be used as an ingredient as well as a condiment.

Phil Nicolle, sales and marketing director at Empire Bespoke Foods, said, "When it comes to world cuisines products, consumers are looking for authenticity, and Cholula brings that to UK retailer shelves. As the world's number one and the UK's fastest growing hot sauce brand, we are delighted to be the official retail distributor for Cholula Hot Sauce.

empirebespokefoods.com

Ouse Valley Foods launches literary-inspired chutneys

Ouse Valley Foods, the Sussex-based producer of award-winning jams, preserves, chutneys and pickles, has launched a new range of products boasting quirky character-based packaging.

The new Spread the Word condiment range consists of Three Fruit Marmalade: a slightly bitter and well-balanced blend of oranges, lemons and grapefuit; Potager Pickle: a subtly-spiced pickle with warmth and sweetness; and Plum Jam: a traditional jam made using Victoria plums.







Julian Warrender, founder of Ouse Valley Foods, said, "We couldn't be prouder of our latest launch, our Spread the Word condiments. With their delicious flavour profiles and quirky characterful packaging, they're sure to stand out on the shelves of discerning independents. Their literary inspiration adds something extra special to this range of preserves and pickles, making them a great gifting option for something special for foodie customers."

ousevalleyfoods.com



New meal solution sauces from Stokes

Suffolk-based Stokes Sauces has launched a new range of products which allow customers to enjoy restaurant-quality meals at home.

The newly-launched EASY range utilises simple ingredients, authentic flavours, delicious aromas and culinary twists from around the world to create meal-making sauces inspired by Japan (Katsu Curry), France (Red Wine & Green Peppercorn), Mexico (Salsa Roja), and Italy's Mediterranean coast (Pomodoro).

Each jar contains an easy three-step recipe on the label as well as a web link to more recipes and ideas created by Stokes' resident chef, Andy.

Rick Sheepshanks, founder and MD of Stokes, said, "The joy of home-cooking is one of the few positive trends to grow from recent adversities, and one we're sure is here to stat. Time spent pottering in the kitchen is such a valuable opportunity to extend our foodie interested. So, we have created Stokes EASY to help 'budding' home chefs develop simple skills to create extraordinary worldly meals in their own kitchens."

stokessauces.co.uk

London start-up releases gourmet vegan mayo range

New London-based producer Barries has created a five-strong range of egg-free mayonnaise which promises to satify all tastebuds.

There are five varieties on offer, all in 300ml glass jars: Original, Miso & Sesame, Smoked Paprika, Rosemary & Thyme and Scotch Bonnet, and all are free from stabilisers, preservatives and additives.

Ned Barrie, co-founder of Barries, said, "I'm a mayonnaise obsessive, so when I managed to turn our family recipe into a vegan one, we had to share it! Our aim with Barries is to encourage consumers to use this range instead of their traditional mayo. That's why we created a 100% additive free range with five different varieties – there's something for everyone."

Roddy Perkins, co-founder of Barries, added, "Barries is a British brand launching what we believe to be the next generation of vegan mayonnaise. This marks a huge leap in innovation for the category and will allow consumers to enjoy one of the nation's favourite condiments without compromise."

barriesonline.com







Tims Dairy partners with Wilkin & Sons to create Jubilee-inspired yogurt

Tims Dairy, makers of 'proper' Greek style bio-live yogurts since 1949 have partnered with Tiptree jam producers Wilkin & Sons to create a limited edition Strawberry yogurt to celebrate the upcoming Platinum Jubilee of HRH Elizabeth II.

The new launch is an indulgent blend of Tims Dairy's fresh and creamy Greek style yogurt and Wilkin & Sons' Strawberry with Champagne Conserve, offering classic summer flavours for a celebratory treat in a 450g pot ideal for sharing.

Chris Timotheou, managing director of Tims Dairy, said, "This is a special moment for the entire country and commonwealth, and to help us all celebrate in true style this spring and summer we have got together with Tiptree, whose products and business heritage and ethos we have long admired, to create a superb new indulgent Greek style yogurt. It has been such a pleasure working with a like-minded food producer with such enthusiasm who shares our values of great taste and quality without compromise. I can't tell you how thrilled we are with the result – we think you're going to love it."

Scott Goodfellow, joint managing director of Wilkin & Sons, said, "It's great to work with like-minded companies who have a strong heritage and who value quality. We are thrilled that Tims Dairy chose to use our Strawberry with Champagne Conserve in their yogurt to mark this very special occasion, it is a perfect pairing and we think that it's delicious! I look forward to enjoying pots of this special yogurt with strawberries from our Tiptree farm."

timsdairy.co.uk





Tracklements announces world flavour-inspired chutney

B-Corp certified producer Tracklements has created a new chutney inspired by traditional Japanese chutneys made with umeboshi soured plums.

Simultaneously tangy, hot and peppery, this vegan-friendly and gluten-free chutney – which finishes with notes of ginger and garlic – is surprisingly versatile, and can be used to lift grains and tofu as well as curries, strong cheese and venison and duck dishes.

Becky Vale, marketing director at Tracklements, said, "A perfect way to add the taste of the Orient and liven up meals. It has a unique flavor profile and distinctive heat, which is going to wow food lovers. I'm addicted to just spooning it onto rice crackers."

tradetracklements.co.uk

Ahmad Tea announces decaf range

Family-owned UK tea company, Ahmad Tea, has announced the release of a new Decaffeinated Tea range that taps into the wellness movement-led demand for full-flavoured decaf tea.

There are four full-flavoured teas in the new range: Decaffeinated Pure Black Tea, Decaffeinated Pure Green Tea, Decaffeinated Earl Grey, and Decaffeinated Indulgent Selection (Cinnamon, Vanilla, Caramel, Chocolate & Hazelnut).

Dominic Marriott, master tea taster at Ahmad Tea, said, "With health and wellness booming, the decaffeinated market is set to surge over the next few years as consumers look for the comfort of a decaf brew to refresh and recharge. However, when it comes to taste, all too often decaf teas don't stand up to scrutiny.

"Our new Decaffeinated Tea range is exciting as we're offering health conscious consumers a depth of flavour that really does deliver – from our bold Black Tea to our Indulgent Dessert Inspired Selection, the new range offers the same signature depth of flavour that consumers expect from a cup of Ahmad Tea, with a fraction of the caffeine.

"At Ahmad Tea, we have some of the world's best Tea Tasters on our team who sample up to 500 cups each day to ensure the blends are perfectly balanced and the taste is consistent. Our new Decaffeinated range is testament to this; from the light and delicate Green Tea to the elegant Earl Grey, decaf tea is elevated to a new level."

uk.ahmadtea.com



"Pack design. What do you think?"



LAWRENCE BARNETT
WONDERLAND DESIGN

Ask anyone about a brand's pack design and they'll usually offer an opinion. Yet when it comes to your brand, your pack, it's not so easy!

One of the most difficult parts of the process for brand owners is the most critical – how to select a pack design route from a range of design concepts.

Judging creative work is not a science. It's tricky to find ways to quantify the merits of a pack design but there are some steps that you can take that will help make judging design work more objective.

1 HAVE A VISION

If you're re-designing your branding and pack design, then be clear about your brand's vision. How do you want your brand to be seen in three to five year's time? Your brand's vision will act as a constant reminder as to what your pack design will need to support.

2 CHECK OUT THE COMPETITION

Look at the competitive set and their packaging design. Be clear about where your brand fits in the category. And whether it's there to disrupt or simply be a better offer than your key competitors. A long standing client of ours always insists on producing studio mock-ups for each design route and spending time in a store evaluating them. There's no substitute for seeing packs in the environment they will be appearing in.

3 THE ART OF BRIEFING

Writing a design brief is an art. Too many 'design' briefs are heavy on category data but light on design direction. Designers want to understand what the pack design needs to achieve – is it going to be a tidy up or should it be more adventurous? What should be the scope of creative exploration? What visual equities need to be maintained? Does the brand have a well-defined personality? Go through the brief with the designer (not the account manager!) and understand what needs to be clearer.

4 TO RESEARCH OR NOT TO RESEARCH

Like it or not, research is part of the design process. Whatever form that may take. There are a number of research tools available now. From face to face small groups to larger online groups where chat boxes can be used to capture instinctive responses, through to consumer panels that can be used to thoroughly evaluate designs. And, of course, trusted colleagues or receptive buyers can provide invaluable feedback. But don't be tempted to research or share too many options.

5 YOUR DESIGNER IS AN IMPORTANT PARTNER

Choose a designer or a design agency that you trust or has good experience of working with packaged brands. Briefed well, they will have a good eye for what is right for your brand and how it will best perform on shelf and online.

6 TRUST YOUR INSTINCT

No one knows your brand better than you. Take your time to review them, live with the design options for a few days. Put them up on a wall. Review them again. A period of reflection can crystallise your thoughts. But most of all, trust your instinct.

The design process should be an exciting and enjoyable part of brand management. But it can become frustrating if some of the brand planning, design objectives or processes are vague or lack clarity. Get them right and it's a rewarding process where you can feel confident – and excited – about the decisions you make.



COMMENTATORS



LAURA WILLOUGHBY
CLUB SODA



MIKE BUCKLAND
HIGHLAND SPRING GROUP



LOUISE CHEADLE
TEAPIGS



ALICE FISHMAN
WHOLE FOODS MARKET



GARETH BATH
DISTIL VENTURES

THE RISE OF LOW/NO

A new generation of beverages is quenching the growing consumer thirst for soft drinks created for mature palates

It's fair to say that during its advent a handful of years ago, the no and low alcohol movement had its fair share of naysayers. Although it undoubtedly ticked a lot of boxes for the swelling ranks of abstainers, the pioneers of the movement were considered by some to be a flash in the pan. At this point in the proceedings, we can all agree that low/no is here to stay – and a vital stocking point for food and drink stores across the UK.

"It's a really great story of growth, innovation and world domination," says Laura Willoughby MBE, founder of mindful drinking movement Club Soda. "It is clear that the UK's acceptance of alcohol-free drinks as a positive lifestyle choice is changing fast and the quality of the products in the market is a big part of the reason for cross-generational acceptance.

Club Soda, which recently hosted a pop-up alcohol-free off license, has found that the customer base for low/no products is wide. "We have seen a really diverse range of customers, from proper moderators to Muslims looking for something more sophisticated. We have over 100 brands available to sample and we are finding retailers and venues are popping in with their teams to work out what they should be stocking next."

"In recent years, the no- and low-alcohol sector has surged in popularity, growing a colossal 506% since 2015 [Nielsen]," explains Clare Gibson, marketing director at Intercontinental Brands. "Recently, we have noticed trends towards alcohol moderation and mindful drinking have intensified following widespread health concerns in the wake of the pandemic, leading to a record high – almost half of UK adults (49%) – revealing they don't drink any alcohol or are planning to cut down soon [Club Soda report]. This has led to the no- and low-alcohol now holding an impressive 3.5% volume share of the total alcohol industry [IWSR Drinks Market Analysis], making it an increasingly important category for retailers to pay attention to."

Seasonal opportunities

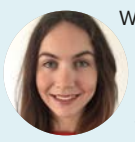
For Mike Buckland, marketing controller at Highland Spring Group, the continuing growth of the low/no market and the upcoming summer months make now the ideal time for retailers to consider the options available on their shelves. "Nearly one third of consumers opt for low or no alcohol drinks on a 'semi regular' basis and consumption is expected to grow 31% by 2024 as consumer mindsets shift towards healthier options," he says.

If your customer base tends to lean conservative when it comes to trends, quality soft drinks offer a strong option. According to Mike, "Consumers are increasingly looking for soft drink brands with strong health credentials and natural ingredients that will quench their thirst and taste good. The Sparkling Water category has grown 6% in the last 12 weeks and as the temperature creeps up, sales are expected to grow." Highland Spring has a few suitable options available to independent retailers, including their flavoured can range, available in a range of flavours including Blackberry, Plum & Hibiscus; Pear & Elderflower and Rhubarb & Ginger.

The adult soft drink category opens up a raft of occasions for consumers to indulge. "Sparkling water is often seen as a treat or as a product for a special occasion, however this is not the case," says Mike. "Stockists should ensure they have sparkling water in a range of sizes all year round to cater for BBQs, gatherings or a refreshing afternoon treat – but they should also take into

BEHIND THE COUNTER

Alice Fishman, speciality buyer at Whole Foods Market shares the retailer's experience of low/no



We really saw the low/ no alcohol trend ramp up in the last three years. After lockdowns we have seen a continued increase as customers have become more aware of the amount of alcohol they consume and are trying to be more conscious in their drinking habits.

DOES IT HAVE LONG-TERM REACH?

Absolutely, seltzers for example have made up more than 55% of Whole Foods Markets sales in the ready-to-drink pre-mixed drinks since launching and continues to grow. *The Whole Foods Market 2022 Trend Report*, a report written by more than 50 Whole Foods Market team members anticipating the biggest trends for 2022, predicted that 'Buzz-Less Spirits' would still be an ongoing trend. With the sober-curious mindset here to stay, the new line-up of drinks that provide the taste and sophistication of cocktails without the buzz will no doubt keep consumer interest in this category.

WHO BUYS LOW/NO ALCOHOL PRODUCTS? WHAT DO THESE SHOPPERS FIND ATTRACTIVE ABOUT THE LOW/NO PROPOSITION?

Our biggest customer group are millennials and Gen Z (age 18-41), as they put their health and wellbeing first and are attracted to low/no alcohol products due to the lower calories and it being better for their overall health. We stock a wide range of quality, unique flavoured low/no alcohol such as the East London Liquor Company 0.5% Gin and Tonic which our customers find attractive due to the unusual flavours and vibrant packaging.

WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR LOW/NO PRODUCTS IN WHOLE FOODS MARKET'S RANGE?

Our most popular low/no products across our seven London stores are the White Claw Hard Seltzers. We have seen a whopping 120% YOY growth in the brand and we are hoping for another strong summer.



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Gareth Bath, managing director of Distill Ventures



The no and low sector has seen unprecedented brand growth and shows no sign of stopping, with the category expected to reach a value of 1.3 billion Euros by 2025 [IWSR *No and Low Alcohol Strategic Study 2021*]. This has been driven by curious amongst consumers looking for more non-alc options - in 2021 alone, worldwide searches for "non alcoholic" grew by 10% compared to 2020. The category is keeping up with the increase in demand too, with 10 new brand launches recorded in the UK last year and retailers broadening their offering of low and non-alc liquids to provide consumers with greater choice.

Whilst the UK continues to be a gin-driven market, with 'non-alcoholic gin' topping Amazon searches, it's a promising sign for the industry to see the launch of new tequila, rum and whiskey alternatives. Last year there were numerous new zero proof 'aged' spirit offerings hitting the market around the world, including the likes of Ritual Tequila Alternative, Spiritless Bourbon, and Caleño Dark & Spicy.

When non-alc spirits initially hit the shelves several years ago, they were considered straight spirit replacements, but as the category evolved we saw further exploration of flavour, as curious consumers sought more experimentation. This led to the development of more non-alc offerings – such as aperitifs - that were suited to all manner of occasions, and what we're now seeing is the opening up of functional non-alcoholic drinks (including ingredients such as adaptogens, nootropics and caffeine) that are better placed to enhance consumers' mood without alcohol.

The category has demonstrated that it's clearly here to stay. According to IWSR, 60% of consumers now drink both full-strength and low or non-alc products on the same occasion – showing a desire for drinks that not only feel more special than soft drinks, but that also help consumers maintain a healthy lifestyle. Mindful drinking is being incorporated into consumers' alcoholic drinking repertoire, rather than supporting a trend for teetotalism, which includes seeking out functional non-alcoholic drinks too.

consideration the increase in day-to-day consumption. As people look to satisfy their thirst for fizzy drinks, healthier options have experienced a boost, and this is showing no sign of slowing."

The kombucha effect

According to Louise Cheadle, co-founder at tea taster at teapigs, a generation of consumers looking to celebrate an occasion with something a little outside the traditionally-favoured options are behind the rise in kombucha: "it's no surprise that the UK kombucha market grew by a third last year," she says. "In fact, by 2025 the European kombucha market is expected to increase by a whopping 222% according to market data forecasts!"

Well made, kombucha is a refreshing and complex drink which offers health benefits, making it a healthier alternative to conventional soft drinks. "Over the last few years of lockdowns, lots of us consumers have been experimenting with adventurous tastes and flavours and now we're allowed back out again that demand for interesting, premium products is stronger than ever," says Louise. Created using fermented tea, it's a natural progression for the quality tea brand, which now offers 'booch' in three flavours: Original, Ginger & Lemongrass and Peach & Mango.

STOCK CHECK

2022 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



AMPLIFY NON-ALCOHOLIC SPIRIT

A blend of sweet orange with notes of lemon and bittersweet orange. Ginseng, earthy juniper and lemongrass provide a slight bitter edge.

drinkamplify.co.uk



GOOD EARTH POMEGRANATA & BLUEBERRY KOMBUCHA

A fermented kombucha with a burst of refreshing pomegranate and blueberry.

goodearth.co.uk



SMASHED APPLE CIDER

This alcohol-free cider offers pure refreshment with a perfect balance of sharpness, sweetness and bite.

drynks.store



TEAPIGS LEMONGRASS & GINGER KOMBUCHA

Craft brewed ginger and lemongrass kombucha made with teapigs teas.

teapigs.co.uk





A HOT TOPIC

We all experienced the sea change in the coffee industry brought about by the pandemic, but what's the shape of the sector now? We speak to the experts to find out

COMMENTATORS



JAMES HAGGERTY
PRESTO



LORRAINE BRIDDEN
OWENS COFFEE



SCOTT RUSSELL
PADDY & SCOTT'S



REBECCA BISHOP
TWO MAGPIES BAKERY

Whether you're a fan of a cup of Colombian made in a stovetop moka, a mellow roast from a cafetiere, or are part of the coffee machine clan, there are some elements of coffee-drinking that are universal. A major player is sustainability; a topic at the forefront of public consciousness for a couple of years now, with the food industry experiencing immense pressure to evolve to shore up a better future for the planet and its people.

Coffee has long been recognised as a standout Fairtrade product, but a recent Opinium survey commissioned by the Fairtrade Foundation found that while surprisingly few UK consumers recognise the connection between climate resilience and decent incomes for farmers, the British public is passionate about addressing inequality caused by climate change and exploitative trade.

According to the data, over 60% of the British public are unaware of the threats that climate change poses to UK suppliers of coffee – meaning that the opportunity is ripe for brands and retailers to champion sustainability when it comes to coffee.

CIA Landlords research has found that production in Brazil alone is expected to reduce by 76% in the years to come as a result of climate change, which is drying out the air and negatively affecting the moist, tropical climates that coffee plants are best suited to. Contrastingly, and in good news for Brazilian bean fans, Italy's rising temperature is leading farmers to believe that they might be able to produce the variety themselves due to the rising temperature of their country.

A sustainable cup

With shoppers across the UK becoming increasingly conscious about where and on what they spend their money, independent retailers must be smart about the coffee products they sell and how they promote them – and feeding into the necessary move towards conscious consumerism.

According to James Haggerty, founder of ethical coffee start-up Presto, sustainable credentials are "vitally important" to Britain's coffee industry, with brands and retailers needing to be more aware than ever of the grass roots of the product they're selling to satisfy consumer interest. "All coffee drinkers will have noticed a price hike in their cup of coffee and will hopefully know this is down to reduced consistency of supply via climate change. Consumers are also demanding recyclable and compostable packaging options as they know brands can do more to make alternative packaging that doesn't end up in landfill."

So much more than a simple box-ticking exercise, sustainable credentials have become a "hygiene factor, rather than a novelty" for consumers, says James, whose business has gone out of its way to do the right thing from the start. "Presto is now B-Corp Certified," he begins. "We spent over a year analysing, improving and questioning every area of our business. We're also 1% For The Planet members, and on top of that, donate to charities such as takingroot.org. All of our packaging is 100% kerbside recyclable and we are moving our entire range to being Rainforest Alliance Certified. But we realise even all this isn't enough and are planning on becoming a Certified Net Zero business and working more directly with coffee farmers to help tackle specific sustainability issues."

Lorraine Bridden, managing director of Owens Coffee, a Devon-based roaster, says that while sustainability has been at the heart of her business since it started roasting in 2010, at first the spotlight in the South West was on its local provenance. "This has changed," she says, "so too has the reach of our coffee. During the pandemic, people have become more aware than ever of the types of foods they associate with good health, the environment and sustainability – this is reflected in the demand we've seen for a sustainable offer in the coffee industry.

"Consumers want reassurance. They want to buy from companies that share their values. Waste and the environment, working conditions and social ethics, fair prices – these issues matter to people, and they are making sustainable choices with their money." From Lorraine's experience, shoppers are putting their money where their mouth is. "Customers ask us where our coffee comes from and about our eco credentials. We've seen a general rise in demand for single origin organic coffees across our own range; typically, single origins give coffee drinkers additional buying confidence because they know the beans come from farms with close relationships to the roastery – we can tell them, 'here is the farm and its farmers, they are paid a fair price for their beans, given the tools and education to scale and improve and experience good working conditions'."

For James, consumer education plays a key role in the healthy future of the sector. "We all have a role to play," he says. "50% of the CO2 (or equivalent) comes from the brewing and consumption of coffee, heating the kettle, adding milk and sugar etc. Swapping to plant-based milks and only heating the water required can have a sizeable impact on energy consumption."

The role of coffee shops

In amongst the noise about sustainability is current data showing that the coffee shop market is booming, with 25,000 coffee shops in the UK (Allegra Wold Coffee Portal) and British consumers drinking around 98 million cups a day (British Coffee Association). According to Project Café UK 2022, a report on the British branded coffee shop market from World Coffee Portal, bean counters have reason to celebrate. The research showed that the segment has grown 43% over the past 12 months, ultimately regaining 87% of its pre-pandemic



> Throughout the pandemic we've seen coffee venues playing a vital role in the lives of British consumers and communities across the country, which should provide much optimism for the next decade

market value and achieving an unexpectedly high sales rebound of £1.3bn. Jeffrey Young, Allegra Group founder and CEO, said of the news, "I am heartened to see the UK coffee shop market proving so resilient in terms of incredibly difficult trading. Throughout the pandemic we've seen coffee venues playing a vital role in the lives of British consumers and communities across the country, which should provide much optimism for the next decade of trading."

The key to running a successful coffee shop is all in the way you make the customer feel, says Scott Russell of Paddy & Scott's. "Consumers know an awful lot about coffee but how you treat the customer, interact and make them feel is still our most popular flavour and is the key to always keeping the customer happy."

Positive customer experience played a vital role in the survival and success of independent food and drink outlets throughout the UK, and coffee shops still have an important part to play in a community. "Your neighbourhood coffee shop has always been the bedrock of happy communities, but what's changed is how people work and how much time they spend in their coffee shop," he continues. "It's become a meeting place for business, study and play. Our challenge is to make our stores their first choice, not gauge our success on average transactional volumes or minimising dwell time.

Pleasurable locations and a high quality offering also go hand in hand at Two Magpies Bakery – a Suffolk-based run of independent coffee shop cum bakeries run by Rebecca Bishop. "We have expanded rapidly as a business in the last five years, taking on sites with more covers that offer more of an eat-in and brunch experience," she begins. "Our customers like the fact that we are independent and we are well supported in all our locations by them." The premium price of the coffee Two Magpies sells brings with it an expectation to impress, says Rebecca. "Our customers want to see quality in the coffee we use (Allpress) and skill in the way the coffee is made. They expect a really well made coffee as they are paying a premium price – and they want to see good non-dairy options to serve with their coffee."

For a final flourish, Rebecca suggests taking the time to get the milk right before worrying about latte art. "A perfectly steamed, velvety aerated milk is much more enjoyable and tasty with just a dot on the top. Focus on the basics first." For Scott, ending the customer's experience on a high is the cherry on the cake: "as you pour, show your customer the artwork you're creating, smile and serve with pride and a big high five!"



STOCK CHECK



KOPI HOUSE NANYANG KOPI POWDER

Authentic Singaporean Nanyang coffee, full bodied with notes of cacao and burnt toast.

kopihouse.co.uk



FiXX COFFEE

FiXX features superb coffees from around the world, all award-winning.

fixxcoffee.com



OWENS COFFEE DART

Mellow and sweet, this is a darker roasted blend from South America and Africa.

owenscoffee.com



MARSHALL & BROWN BLUE MOUNTAIN COFFEE

a distinct world renowned coffee, which has mild, subtle nutty undertones with a delightful balance of aroma, signature sweet aftertaste and complexity of flavours.

marshallandbrown.co.uk



DARKWOODS COFFEE UNDER MILK WOOD

A medium roast delivers familiar and crowd-pleasing caramel sweetness.

darkwoodscoffee.co.uk



TAYLORS OF HARROGATE RICH ITALIAN COFFEE BAGS

A rich and sophisticated blend with notes of chocolate and almond.

taylorsofharrogate.co.uk



NORLO CAFFEINATED BLEND

Notably smooth and full-bodied, offering delicious notes of jasmine, bergamot, chocolate with a healthy hint of blueberries and stone fruits.

norlo.co.uk



MODERN STANDARD COFFEE COLOMBIA AROMAS DEL SUR

Perfectly balanced offering with sweetness, spice and pleasant fruit notes in the acidity that breathe life into the cup.

m**odernstandardcoffee.co.uk**



BOTTLESHOT OAT MILK ICED COFFEE

An award-winning, dairy-free canned coffee with natural sweetness.

bottleshotbrew.com



CHEERFUL BUDDHA REISHI COFFEE BLEND – DEFENCE

Infused with antioxidant reishi mushrooms, organic MCT coconut oil, ashwagandha, and cacao to help the body maintain health and vitality.

cheerfulbuddha.co.uk



Be a one-stop-shop for your customers' storecupboard stock-ups with this range of ambient foods

1 SEGGIANO
SEMI FRESH HERBS

Seggiano's Organic Semi Fresh Herbs are grown on a single-estate family farm near the Amalfi coast and partially cured in Italian rock salt and organic extra virgin olive oil. This innovative process captures the delicious aromatic flavour of fresh herbs, with all the convenience of long shelf-life dried herbs.
seggiano.com

2 MR ORGANIC
ORGANIC BEANS

Mr Organic's beans are produced in-house on their own organic tomato farm in Italy and overseen by a specialist bean connoisseur to ensure the highest possible quality. Carefully selected based on flavour, appearance and taste, all 15 delicious varieties of beans are naturally low in sugar and salt and high in protein.
mr-organic.com

3 GAROFALO
PREMIUM ITALIAN PASTA

The strength of Garofalo is their ability to preserve artisan knowledge on an industrial scale. Under the Garofalo brand umbrella, there are traditional wheat, organic wheat, organic whole wheat and gluten-free pastas – all made with only the best ingredients, all high in protein and all vegan.
pasta-garofalo.com/uk



4 BALLANCOURT
PÂTÉS

Ballancourt Fine Foods specialises in a wide range of quality French Foods. All products can be provided with bespoke labelling at no extra charge and have the added benefit of long shelf life. The extensive range of ambient pâtés, terrines and rillettes is second to none with a variety of jar sizes to suit all needs.
ballancourt.co.uk

5 KUHNE
PREMIUM GHERKINS

Kühne's award-winning range of gherkins and cornichons are grown by mostly third generation farmers, who handpick the best produce to guarantee the delicious taste and quality Kühne is famous for. The range includes favourites such as gherkin slices, and the new Gourmet Selection cornichons infused with honey, chilli, or herbs.
rhamar.com

6 TAKE STOCK
BONE BROTH

Take Stock Bone Broth is an award-winning, premium broth that is 100% natural and delicious. Made from responsibly sourced bones, herbs, and vegetables, they are dairy and gluten-free and have a shelf life of up to 24 months. They are perfect for sipping or cooking, low calorie and low fat, and high in protein and collagen.
takestockfoods.com

7 GORDON RHODES
GOURMET SAUCE MIXES

Gordon Rhodes' award-winning gluten-free blends include Jolly Fine Stuffing's, Drop Dead Gorgeous Bread Sauce, Gourmet Sauce Mixes and V and Easy Gourmet Vegan Sauce Mixes, specifically created with busy households in mind. They are perfect for cooking up a wide variety of dishes that the whole family can enjoy, whatever their dietary needs.
gordonrhodes.co.uk











SHOW PREVIEW

NATURAL FOOD SHOW 2022

The long-awaited trade show for natural, organic and sustainable food and drink is finally back at ExCeL London, 3rd-4th April

After a two year wait, the show is open to thousands of retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers looking to discover the best choice of natural fine food innovations from around the world.

The Natural Food Show (part of Natural & Organic products Europe) is the annual showcase for quality speciality food and drinks products. Due to a dramatic rise in conscious consumerism, it's garnered a loyal following of over 10,000 buyers, retailers, health-store owners, wholesalers, importers and exporters from across the UK and beyond. They come to meet over 800 exhibitors, from plant-based innovations to free-from, natural, organic, and sustainable food and drink packed products for retail, as well as clean and conscious ingredients for foodservice professionals.

Event organisers Diversified Communications report that 'visitors are now eager to get back to business' and since registration opened, many senior professionals have already signed up to attend including senior representatives from IKEA, Planet Organic, Better Food, TK Maxx, Holland & Barrett, Wholefoods Market, Waitrose, and more.

Event Director Carol Dunning says: "This year we have a focus on the importance of reuniting the sector once again. If anything, the pandemic has taught us that nothing compares to meeting friends, clients and colleagues face to face, and for many, the show is the place to do this. We have worked hard to create a seminar programme that will focus on current trends, challenges and ways to recover and adapt after the pandemic and deliver an unforgettable show experience for our attendees."

She continues: "Natural & Organic Products Europe has always championed brands and processes that help to protect people and the planet – and we know that tackling the climate crisis is imperative right now, for all industries, which is why there's never been a better time to be part of this wonderful industry."

Worldly flavours

As well as leading local brands from the UK, there's no shortage of diverse speciality food and drink products from across Europe and the rest of the world, including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Singapore, Spain, and more.

Discover a range of suppliers on dedicated pavilions from Italy, Greece, Chile, Thailand, Turkey, Philippines, and USA. The Soil Association will also return with its Organic Hub and new for 2022 – the 'Ingredient Zone' will feature an array of natural and organic ingredients for the foodservice industry.

A big appeal to the show is the opportunity to meet new brands emerging onto the market. Brands making their debut at the show this year include Be Hundred Percent, Outstanding Foods, Olivers Cupboard, Just Real Food, Eurofins, Quinola, Freedom Confectionery, Vrsna Chocolates, Jay & Joy, G.G. Hellenic Aloe, The Celtic Bakers, KABA Herbs and many more. Whilst other big names like Tree of Life, Suma, Essential, Windmill, Bake City, Hodmedod, Pukka Herbs, Alpro, Booja Booja, Nutland B.V, Creative Nature, and Clearspring will be returning to the show.

The global organic market continues to grow

Organic farmland and retail sales both continued to show strong growth worldwide, according to data published by FiBL and IFOAM – Organics International. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, the global market for organic food showed its highest growth ever in 2020, exceeding 120 billion euros – a total increase of 14 billion euros. The importance of organic is still prevalent, and as well as the Soil Associations Organic Hub, the show floor will feature new organic products from Liberate Foods, Tiana Fairtrade Organics, Organic Greece, Clearspring, Alara, Planet Organic, Sun & Seed, Organico real foods, Doves Farm foods, Clipper tea, Mr Organic, Fresh Organic, Organic Superfruit and more.

As well as the best choice of organic across the show floor, don't miss dedicated talks about the organic market in the show's free-to-attend seminar programme. Alexis Carey, Director for International Trade, Organic Trade Association USA will take to the stage to talk about The U.S. Organic Market: Consumer trends and trade opportunities. This session will cover the landscape of the U.S. organic market, consumer preferences and understanding of organic labelling, along with trade opportunities for U.S. and European exporters.

> "Natural & Organic Products Europe is bursting with energy and innovation. It´s a great place to network, discover new exciting products and meet our suppliers"
>
> **BEN WIGLEY, BIGGREENSMILE**

As well as this, don't miss Craig Sams, founder, Carbon Gold and Director, Soil Association Certification talk on Organic Food Goes Mainstream: How carbon pricing will drive organic farming in the Natural TALKS Theatre (4th April at 12:30pm). He will discuss the positive implications of how a carbon price will make nonorganic food more expensive and organic food cheaper while bringing reduced greenhouse gas levels, more biodiversity, cleaner air and water and myriad other benefits.

Alison Muirhead (Soil Association), Al Overton (Planet Organic), Steph Norman (Norlo Coffee) and Vijairahul Janakiraman (Vedic Essentials) will host a talk entitled 'The post pandemic market: Making the most of the changing landscape for organic through growing routes to market'. During this panel discussion, Muirhead will look at some of the latest insights from the Soil Association's *Organic Market Report 2022* and consider key differences for the year ahead. Visitors will also hear from businesses that have evolved by developing strong online and consumer channels and get top tips on how to develop across online.

> "Natural & Organic Products Europe is a fantastic place to meet new and existing suppliers, find new products and gain inspiration for our store"
>
> **DILETTA MEDINI, PLANET ORGANIC**

The power of plant-based

Many industry experts predict that plant-heavy diets will continue to drive consumer interest this year as an emphasis on the need to reduce meat and dairy consumption is at the forefront of conversations, due to the climate crisis.

"This is also likely to lead to consumer demand for more plant focused meals and snacks making use of sustainable ingredients. This will also include a focus on using a diversity of plant-based protein sources with a focus on sustainable sources, traceability and locally

sourced," says nutritionist and author Christine Bailey:

Alan Martin, owner of Food for Thought health store, comments: "The big opportunity is getting on board with the massive amount of brand innovation that is happening out there, eg plant based foods. This is no longer confined to just producing a vegan version of a non-vegan food. There are massive opportunities for our industry too, as consumers become more conscious of the impact of dairy production on the environment."

Visitors can expect to see the latest vegan food and drink products to hit the market in the show's biggest Vegan World area - from plant-based burgers to vegan cheeses, innovative meat-free alternatives and dairy-free desserts.

Event Director Carol Dunning says: "We have always championed plant based 'wholefoods' across the show, and over the years the popularity for vegan products has increased rapidly. The Vegan Society are long-standing show partners, and so we rebranded The Vegan Society's pavilion to a much larger 'Vegan World' area. This allows all vegan brands to exhibit together, putting them in front of buyers seeking out the very latest vegan products. We have the biggest Vegan World area to date, so we can confidently say we are Europe's largest plant-based trade show and therefore worth a visit."

Big names to join the list include: The Vurger Co, The Booja Booja Co, One Planet Pizza, Follow Your Heart, London Nootropics, Creative Nature, Smart Organic, Just Wholefoods, Raw Press, Sauceman, Happy Cheeze, De Smaakspecialist, Better Nature, Vivo Life, Plant Alternative, Quinola, Just Real Food and many more.

The Vegan Society will also host an exciting panel titled 'Vegan food trends: Past, current, and future insights' in the Natural Products TALKS theatre. This unmissable session will help visitors stay ahead of the curve with plant-based consumer food trends and where the sector is heading in the year ahead.

NEED TO KNOW

WHERE: ExCeL, London
WHEN: 3rd-4th April
WEB: naturalproducts.co.uk

NEW LAUNCHES

The show is the place to see the latest products before anyone else. Here's only a small handful of launches and new products to see at the Natural Food Show:

- **Mekhala** is launching Mekhala Organic Asian Cooking Pastes and Condiments. Made with certified organic ingredients, their range of Asian cooking pastes are vegan and gluten-free and come in six flavours - Red Curry, Green Curry, Yellow Curry, Tom Yum, Miso Ginger and Lemongrass Turmeric paste (stand 758).
- **Brand Organic** is introducing its range of completeorganics fermented vegetables, full of probiotic life, raw and unpasteurised (stand Z73)
- **NKD Living** is launching its NKD Living Chocolate and Peanut Keto Bar. This low-carb chocolate brownie base is covered with smooth and creamy peanut butter studded with peanut pieces and enrobed in an indulgent chocolate coating with natural sweeteners (stand V89).
- **LIMBUA** is introducing its BBQ Roasted Organic Macadamia nuts (stand S86).
- **BE 100%** is launching its Raw Spicy Jerky, A delicious tangy, spicy and slightly sweet 'pick-me-up' packed with enzymes, probiotics, prebiotic fibre, vitamins & antioxidants that can help promote long-term health & longevity. Made with fruits, apple cider vinegar, fermented vegetable juices and spices, it is dehydrated at below 42°C to retain the live enzymes and bioactive compounds (stand W77).
- **Honeyrose / Kent & Fraser gluten-free** is introducing its gluten-free and vegan digestives, with a warm touch of caramelised molasses. Baked by hand in their London family business craft wholesale bakery that is one of London's oldest.
  Waza Tropical is showcasing its Organic Pineapple, ginger and lime jam (stand U51).
- **Sanmik Food** is exhibiting its vegan Mung Bean Meatball range, in BBQ, Goulash and Yello Curry flavours (stand W28).

To view the exhibitor list, please visit: **naturalproducts.co.uk**

For even more new products, don't miss the New Product Showcase, where new products (launching at the show, or in the last six months) will be on display in a special showcase area. Visitors can also cast their votes here on which products they would like to win in the Natural & Organic Awards Europe 2022.

> "Natural and Organic is the number one trade show for the natural food industry. It's an excellent event to stay informed about the latest trends, taste delicious products that are good for you, and network with likeminded people"
>
> **HELEN WANG, ABAKUS FOODS JUJUBE FRUITS**







FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW 2022

The must-attend event is back at the NEC, Birmingham, 25th-27th April

Farm Shop & Deli Show is set to return to the NEC, Birmingham in April 2022 (25th-27th) as part of the UK Food & Drink Shows, bringing the very best from across key industries back together for an unrivalled three days of trends, innovation, networking and insight.

With a recently completed survey revealing that 94% of respondents consider attending Farm Shop & Deli Show as important to their business, and an exhibitor line-up comprising a hotbed of innovative movers and shakers who are disrupting the market and making waves in key trend categories, this event, which brings together the great and good of the UK speciality market, is a must-visit.

A bustling show floor made up of hundreds of innovative exhibitors, business boosting live seminars, and awards – including the brand-new Farm Shop & Deli Product Awards and prestigious Retailer Awards – will shape the three-day trade show.

Exhibitors

Following its success in 2019, Healthy & Natural returns to the show this year as a dedicated section championing free-from, organic, vegan, vegetarian and nutrition brands alongside a complementary platform for non-food and drink lifestyle products that offer a sustainable, ethical and eco-friendly message. Expect to see brands such as James White Drinks (Stand G211) – makers of non-alcoholic juices and cordials, Lowther (Stand J195) – Lake District honey, NuGo (Stand J232) – nutrition bars and cookies to go, Andros Chef (Stand K211) – 100% natural fruit ingredients for pastry and desserts professionals and Radnor Hills Mineral Water (Stand L141).

Visitors looking for further inspiration will get the inside track on this year's latest, greatest launches, alongside the chance to see, sample and secure a fast track to profitability.

From chocolate specialists Cocoba (Stand B140) and 80Noir Ultra (Stand D178) to eco-friendly solutions such as Fill Refill Co. (Stand H229) and NaturePac (Stand H210), as well as quality spirits from Beeble (Stand F220) and the Highland Liquor Co (Stand B141) and gourmet treats from La Sablésienne (Stand E149) and Godminster cheese (Stand M131), there's a whole host of fantastic exhibitors preparing for the show.

Don't miss:

The Hawkshead Relish Company (Stand B161), an artisan producer of over 100 handmade preserves and relishes, based in the heart of the English Lake District. Launched in 2021, Hawkshead Relish will be showcasing their range of new jams at the show including: Rhubarb & Ginger, Blackberry & Apple and Strawberry & Rhubarb Jam.

Spice Kitchen (Stand D131), a family-owned artisanal spice and tea company, will be offering ten carefully curated spice collections, including an award-winning Indian Spice Tin with Silk Sari Wrap, a range of single spice blends, mulling spices, hot chocolate and masala chai.

Known for bespoke branded reusable bags across the UK, **EcoBags' (Stand D181)** latest innovation is fold-up bags made from 100% recycled plastic bottles. Featuring 100% design coverage using a CMYK full colour process, the branding opportunities are endless.

Brindisa Spanish Foods (Stand H133) has spent 34 years selecting the very best Spanish ingredients. Discover their new gazpacho recipes, ibérico ham, charcuterie, artisan cheeses, iconic olives, pulses and more on stand.

From loyalty and gift systems to price signs and accessories, **Reward-It (Stand E128)**, is a quality provider of retail solutions. Their loyalty schemes and gift card solutions are designed to improve retention rates and increase revenue whilst a comprehensive price sign display solution allows retailers to revolutionise their counter displays.

English Tea Shop (Stand A151), an organic premium tea brand with a Sri Lankan tea story infused with British traditions. Showcasing their Christmas Advent Calendar with 25 Loose Leaf Tea Pyramid Bags as well as a selection of organic teas with the benefits of superfoods, fruits, herbs and spices.

Carbon negative drinks specialists, **Devon Rum Co. (Stand A143)** offers a unique blend of rums infused with natural Devon spring water, and a special recipe of natural aromatic spices, pepper and citrus zest, which gives the rum its great taste and unique local quality resulting in two spiced rums that won gold in the Taste of the West Awards 2021.

Sessions

A series of events to discuss and debate the key challenges facing the industry will be a focal point throughout the three days. Discussing everything from sustainability and the latest trends, to boosting profits and customer satisfaction, the seminars will leave no stone unturned.





The makings of a Farm Shop will be under the spotlight on day one when Lisa Hogan reveals what it's like to be in business with Jeremy Clarkson running the Diddly Squat Farm Shop. Find out how they put pedal to the metal to grow a thriving Cotswolds business highlighting local produce, in 'The Road to Diddly Squat Farm Shop: Live Interview with Lisa Hogan', Monday 25th April, 11.50am, *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live.

Broadcaster Louise Minchin will be exploring what matters most to the food and drink industry right now in 'The View from the Top: Where are we now?', (Monday 25th April, 12.40pm, *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live). Join her along with Karen Betts, CEO of the Food & Drink Federation, Tony Sophoclides, strategic affairs director, UK Hospitality and Richard Lim, CEO of Retail Economics, for all the latest insight on pressing issues and key trends across the hospitality landscape.

Hear from forecasting experts from big brands and insight specialists to explore top tools and products retailers can use to find their next shelf superstars in 'Trend Forecasting: Lifting the Veil', (Monday 25th April, 2.20pm, *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live).

The Grocer's Adam Leyland leads an in-depth interview with Henry Dimbleby, who, as well as co-founding Leon and The Sustainable Restaurant Association, is the independent lead of the National Food Strategy. Find out what the industry has told him and what to expect from a wide-ranging strategy set to shape everything from tech, health and food security (Monday 25th April, 1.30pm, *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live).

'Purpose and profits: how values add value to your business', is set to be an inspiring panel session centred on the positives and pitfalls of embracing a more ethical approach with brands that have done just that. (Tuesday 26th April, 12.40pm at *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live).

Find out what customers really want in 'Walking in their Shoes: What Customers Really Want – hosted by This Is Cumbria. A fun, interactive session led by Maria Hawkshead, MBE, this is all about thinking like a customer. What are the pain points and preferences of speciality food and how can suppliers adapt accordingly? (Wednesday 27th April, 12pm, *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live).

The Dragon's Pantry returns by popular demand and will see brave entrepreneurs experience the ultimate retail test. Game-changing start-ups will have 15 minutes to pitch their ideas to a team of fearsomely-experienced industry 'dragons' and impress with their ideas, strategy and understanding (Wednesday 27th April, 3pm, *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live).

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: Farm Shop & Deli Show
WHERE: NEC, Birmingham
WHEN: 25th-27th April
WEB: farmshopanddelishow.co.uk





AWARDS

Throughout the three days, a series of awards will celebrate the great and the good of the speciality market.

On Monday 25th April, the retailers leading the sector in customer service, innovation, community involvement and sustainable initiatives will be crowned in the Farm Shop & Deli Retailer Awards, whilst Nigel Barden catches up with some of the previous esteemed Retailers of the Year, discussing the last two years and how they continued to drive business forward.

For the first time, the show will also host the presentation of Meat Trade Journal's Butcher's Shop of the Year Awards 2022. The only UK awards dedicated to recognising this vital sector, don't miss the winner announcement on *The Grocer* Talking Shop Live stage at 3.15pm, Tuesday 26th April.

Farm Shop & Deli Show Product Awards are set to be a real show highlight. Developed to recognise and reward the best in specialist food and drink products, in their inaugural year the awards were open only to products not available in national supermarket chains. A key aim of the awards is to showcase quality products sold in farm shops, delis and specialist food retailers. Across six categories (Meat, Condiments, Bakery, Beverages, Confectionery, and Preserves) an esteemed panel of judges will consider criteria such as sustainability, ethical brand stories and provenance as well as appearance, taste, texture, aroma and value for money before announcing the winners. Farm Shop & Deli Product Awards will showcase quality products that are grown, reared or created exclusively in the UK.

Join bakery's upper crust at British Baker's Britain's Best Loaf 2022. Attendees will see expert judges deliberate on loaves across six categories including sourdough, gluten free, white, and wholegrain to find the best bread the nation has to offer. Be sure to grab a slice of the action and stick around to find out which loaf takes home the ultimate title at 2.30pm, Monday 25th April.

With thousands of visitors expected – drawn to the variety of products on show, the insight from expert panels and the



opportunity to take stock of the market in person for the first time since the pandemic hit – Farm Shop & Deli Show is firmly in the diary as the event to attend in 2022 to reignite business while rubbing shoulders with some big industry names.

Andrew Reed, managing director – Wine & Exhibitions at William Reed, said, "When Farm Shop & Deli Show opens this April, expect a show like never before. From established brands to exciting start-ups, it's set to be a jampacked show floor showcasing the best the industry has to offer. As you might expect there'll be a huge range of speciality food and drink brands on show but more diverse categories that cater for the sector in other ways, including technology, eco-friendly options and in-store solutions are also set to be a focal point this year.

"I have no doubt that visitors and exhibitors alike will benefit from the insight, innovation and trends on show at Farm Shop & Deli Show. The entire industry has had a tough time of it over the last two years and I'm so glad we're able to bring people back together to share new products, create networking opportunities and celebrate the fantastic business that is hospitality."

Encompassing four key sectors across the industry, Farm Shop & Deli Show, National Convenience Show, Food & Drink Expo and The Forecourt Show are unrivalled in their ability to bring people together, build and foster better relationships, discover business building insight and celebrate innovation, all with the support of the multi-award-winning William Reed brand. **Register for your free badge today at farmshopanddelishow.co.uk**

> "A series of events to discuss and debate the key challenges facing the industry will be a focal point throughout the three days. Discussing everything from sustainability and the latest trends, to boosting profits and customer satisfaction, the seminars will leave no stone unturned"



6 MUST-STOCK SPANISH PRODUCTS FOR YOUR FINE FOOD BUSINESS

Ramp up your Mediterranean offerings with these products that will instantly breathe new life into your shelves

Spanish cuisine is a treasure trove of delicious artisan produce, and by stocking even just a few of its delicacies, you'll be able to harness the culinary power of Spain. We've compiled six must-stock Spanish products you need to start selling in your fine food business now.

1 CHARCUTERIE

Charcuterie is a quintessential part of Spanish culture and stocking a luxurious range of the country's best produce will ensure you're on trend.

One must-have charcuterie addition is Iberian ham, a gourmet product carefully produced in the southwest region of Spain, from a specific breed of black Iberian pigs in the Dehesa region. The Dehesa's unique ecosystem is essential to the production of Iberian ham, as this is the only place where pigs can feed on the organic acorns found in the area that give Iberian ham its distinctive and flavoursome taste. The lengthy curation process is carefully watched over to ensure that the final product gives consumers the delicious and unique flavour that characterizes Spain's gastronomical crown jewel.

For something a little hotter, treat your customers to N'duja – a spicy, spreadable pork salami perfect for serving with bruschetta or melted onto pizza. It is typically made with shoulder and belly meat, as well as tripe, roasted peppers and a mixture of spices.

No charcuterie board would be complete without chorizo. The famous cured sausage comes in an array of variations but is traditionally seasoned with garlic, salt and pimentón (smoked paprika). The UK is the main destination for chorizo approved by the Spanish Chorizo Consortium, and in the first quarter of 2021, imports increased by 28% compared with the previous year. Be sure to stock ready-to-eat chorizo as well as cooking chorizo to cover all culinary bases.

2 SHERRY WINES

A favourite of chefs and foodies, sherry is a truly unique offering for speciality and deli retailers – it's a versatile product exclusively produced in the wine-growing region of Jerez, in the South of Spain. Carmen Aumesquet, marketing director at DO Sherry Wines explains: "Cream sherry is made by blending Oloroso and Pedro Ximénez and is full-bodied and velvety in the mouth with well-balanced sweetness, making it an elegant choice for retailers looking to delight their customers.

"It can be sipped on its own, as part of a cocktail or paired with fish, meats, cheeses, salads, soups or snacks." Carmen recommends that consumers swap their usual bottle of white wine with a glass of Cream sherry to enhance their dessert course, served with ice and an orange slice.

3 OLIVE OIL

As the country has seemingly endless olive groves, it is no surprise that Spain ranks as the world's largest producer of extra virgin olive oil. It is also home to exceptional artisanal producers creating the highest quality and early-harvest oils, which will ensure your offerings are world-class.

Extra virgin olive oil is a staple of the Mediterranean diet and considered by many to be the most important ingredient in any Spanish kitchen, so no Spanish produce display would be complete without it. Try stocking a selection of different olive varieties such as Picual - the most commonly grown olive in Spain with high levels of antioxidants, or Arbequina – a light, fruity oil with apple and almond notes.

4 CHEESE

Spain is home to over 100 different varieties of cheese, and each region boasts its own speciality, ranging from fresh to cured and everything in between.

Manchego is arguably the most popular Spanish cheese, made in the La Mancha region of Spain from the milk of sheep from the Manchega breed. With an ageing process lasting between 60 days and two years, there's a wide variety of options to choose from to suit your customers' palates.

Other luxurious varieties of Spanish cheese include Pasiego, a soft cow's milk cheese that is buttery and acidic with milky and yeasty flavours, and Moluengo, a lactic goat's cheese log that is creamy under the rind and denser in the core, with lactic and hazelnut flavours.

Stocking these uniquely Spanish cheeses will elevate your dairy offerings and embrace your customers with the taste of the Mediterranean.

5 CONFECTIONERY

Spain might not be best known for its confectionery, but that doesn't mean that there's not a raft of sweet Spanish indulgences to enjoy.

One of the most iconic Spanish treats is turron, absolutely essential for any Christmas or Easter meal but available all year round. Made from honey, egg, sugar and toasted nuts, these sweets are absolutely irresistible. Why not spice up your usual offerings and introduce your customers to the versatility of turron with decadent gift boxes featuring different flavours including chocolate, caramel, and vanilla?

Other delicious Spanish desserts to champion in 2022 include Mantecados – rich, crumbly anise-scented drop cookies, and flan – a velvety egg custard topped with luscious caramel sauce.

6 SPICES

Spain is home to two of the most vibrant spices in the world: saffron and paprika. Saffron may be the most expensive spice in the world, but it is absolutely essential for an authentic, rich and flavoursome paella. Stocking it will enable your customers to explore the true taste of Spain from their own kitchen.

The silky red powder of smoked paprika, or pimentón, is the signature spice of Spanish cuisine and is favoured by home chefs to add colour, flavour and smokiness to dishes. It has grown in popularity over the past few years, and while it is available almost everywhere, stocking the highest quality paprika will give your business the edge.

> "Spanish cuisine is a treasure trove of delicious artisan produce, and by stocking even just a few of its delicacies you'll be able to harness the culinary power of Spain"



HOW TO PROMOTE CHEESE

Great promotion – from counter displays to social media content – can make the difference between a walkaway and a sale. Here's how to master it

For cheesemongers and delis navigating a post-Covid world, it can be difficult to figure out the best ways of promoting cheese to existing customers and prospective buyers. We spoke to two industry experts who revealed their top three ways of marketing and promoting cheese.



Get your customers excited about cheese

The key to promoting and selling cheese is arguably to get your customers excited about it. The best thing about this is that it is relatively easy to do – Brits love cheese.

Izaak Edge, manager at The CheeseWorks in Cheltenham explains: "[Cheeses] all look so different and so appealing in so many different ways that it's harder NOT to be excited about cheese. We also do lots of tasting evenings and in-store tasting experiences. These let people try loads of different things they otherwise wouldn't have, and if people like them, they always tend to come back for more!"

Gemma Williams, owner of The Little Cheesemonger in Rhuddlan has found that engaging with her customers about different cheeses and showing her passion has been extremely effective for this. "I regularly 'go live' on Facebook to introduce a cheese or if I'm excited about something", she explains.

"Going live seems to reach more viewers and they become more engaged in watching the video rather than scrolling past. I then get people coming into the shop saying "which cheese were you talking about on Facebook?" Sometimes almost instantly if they work or live locally. I often leave this till the end of the day when it tends to be quieter so I won't be interrupted and I've had someone come under the half-closed shutter before, desperate to get some of the cheese I'd just been talking about. He'd literally run from his house as I was closing for the day because he just had to have some."

Go digital

Unfortunately, with the decline of the high-street, cheesemongers and delis can't purely rely on organic footfall and passer-by trade. Gemma explains how she took to social media to maintain trade: "That local shopping era doesn't exist anymore. I'm part of an online group called 'Shop Local' and our County Council has a digital project called 'Shop Local' to help local businesses reach more customers to attract them to buy in the county. That tells me that customers need to be constantly reminded that we are here and what we do. I suppose it's a bit like the market traders shouting about each others "£1 a pound" but now we all have to shout digitally."

Similarly, Izaak values Instagram over everything else. "For me, the single best way to promote cheese, just for its current impact and potential outreach, is Instagram. Vaïk, who runs our Instagram, has been doing an amazing job with keeping people up to date with all the ongoings at the shop, cheese of the weeks, sales, things like that.

"In this day and age, I can't really put into words how important it is. Everyone is online now, and that will only grow, so establishing yourself on these platforms is really paramount. It's also a really good way to see what others are doing, get ideas for new stock and such, it's really great."

But using social media for marketing isn't as simple as posting a photo of cheese and hoping that customers come flooding in. There are dozens of hoops that platforms such as Instagram want you to jump through in order to be a social media success – otherwise known as the algorithm. Gemma has learnt this the hard way. "It's all about the algorithm changes; they want you to pay for advertising so make it harder for you to reach without doing that" she explains.

"This just means I have to work around the algorithm, what it likes, what it's changed. Keeping up to date. If the paid advertising was successful I'd certainly do that and save myself a lot of time. Personally, I think paid digital advertising is convoluted. Made that way to keep you spending, just like those grabber machines on the seaside front – you can see them grabbing the toy but the grip is loose; you feel like you almost had it and might try again until you eventually give up. Organic reach is more sincere and people like that."

> "Everyone is online now, and that will only grow, so establishing yourself on these platforms is really paramount"

Make use of windows and display units

While digital marketing is an increasingly important tool for promoting cheese and drawing in customers to the store, in-store promotion is equally important and can persuade customers to buy after setting foot inside.

In-store at The Cheeseworks, says Izaac, "We have labels for literally everything to do with the cheese, what milk type it is, what animal it's from, whether it's vegetarian or not, etc. We are also now allowed to give people samples of stuff should they want, and if there's anything particularly good, we can have it on the counter for a while for people to try. And that's not even touching on the staff's expert knowledge of the cheeses that we have in stock."

If you have window space, Gemma explains the importance of using this for displays: "We have seasonal window changes to catch the eye of passersby and boards in the windows with a 'cheese of the month'. The proof is evident enough when customer after customer comes in asking "can I have some of the cheese in the window?". They've read the description and seen the photograph before deciding to come into the shop to buy."





Quicke's launches new smoked cheese

The Devon-based cheesemaker has release a smoked twist on Double Gloucester cheese: Smoked Double Devonshire Clothbound Cheese.

Made using milk sourced from Quicke's own Home Farm grass-fed cows and smoked using oak chips from trees felled on the family's estate, the new cheese boasts the features the original territorial cheese is known for – a deep orange colour, creamy texture and mellow flavour – and simultaneously adds a buttery complexity to the cheese's flavour profile. The oak chips add a perfectly balanced caramel smokiness.

Aged for four to six months, Smoked Double Devonshire Clothbound Cheese is made using heritage starter cultures, cheesemaking methods that have been passed down through generations, and the expertise of a team that share over a century of cheesemaking experience between them. It is available for retail in 1kg and 1.5kg cuts as well as pre-packed wedges weighing 200g.

Mary Quicke, managing director at Quicke's, said, "As one of the few cheesemakers still producing traditional clothbound Cheddar, we have enormous respect for the territorials and their place in British cheese history, so it's very exciting to take one in a new direction. While our Smoked Double Devonshire can trace its roots back to Gloucestershire, it is Devon through and through.

"The milk is the perfect expression of the land, the cows and the seasons, our heritage starters and traditional methods go back a long way, and the oak chips provide a smoke that is unique to Home Farm. We're delighted with this new addition to the Quicke's offering and hope it adds something a little different to the rich tapestry of British cheese today."

Rowcliffe celebrates Platinum Jubilee with new cheese

Fine food wholesaler Rowcliffe have developed a new vintage Cheddar truckle in celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Limited Edition Clemency Hall Victorious Jubilee Vintage Cheddar is the latest launch in Rowcliffe's Clemency Hall range – a selection of quality artisanal cheeses which proudly celebrates the best British and European cheeses, many of which are award-winners.

Boasting a rich and long-lasting flavour with a hint of sweetness, the vintage Cheddar has a creamy texture with and an occasional bite from calcium lactate crystals.

Lisa Kerr, head of marketing at Rowcliffe, said, "We are thrilled to be introducing this limited edition product to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, into our Clemency Hall range, which is all about quality and heritage."

The Clemency Hall Victorious Jubilee Vintage Cheddar is available exclusively from Rowcliffe and available to order from 29th March 2022.



Parmigiano Reggiano sees sales soar in 2021 – but not in the UK

The UK was one of the few international markets which saw a dip in sales of Parmigiano Reggiano during 2021, with sales down 15.6%, compared with the 10.4% boost the cheese's sales saw in the United States.

The dip is thought to be caused by ongoing issues caused by the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

Consumer turnover for the iconic Italian cheese hit an all time high of 2.7 billion euros in 2021 – a boost from 2020's 2.35 billion euros – and production also hit impressive numbers, with 4.09 million wheels of cheese, equivalent to around 163,000 tonnes, created.

The United States is the biggest international market for Parmigiano Reggiano, accounting for 21% of total exports. The UK is the cheese's fourth largest market, with an export share of 11%.

Nicola Bertinelli, president of the Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium, said, "Despite the pandemic, our sector has managed to increase consumption and achieve price stability at production over the last year.

"As we emerge from this phase following the WHO's announcement that the improved situation in Europe could be heralding the end of the pandemic, we will need to address Covid-19's consequences on the market. Among these is the risk of excessive supply due to an increase in production driven by prices and demand.

"The Consortium's new marketing and production plans, agreed upon in December 2021, will be integral tools in addressing these potential challenges, setting Parmigiano Reggiano on track for a long-term strong growth trajectory."

Artisan cheeses threatened by salt reduction plans

The Government has announced plans to reduce the salt in food products, but artisan cheesemakers could be an unexpected victim of the rules, which target "unhealthy" levels of salt.

"These salt reduction measures unfairly target and put pressure on some of the nation's much-loved cheeses, and would see Britain at a huge competitive disadvantage with other European and international cheesemakers whose products would not be subject to the same rules," Dr Judith Bryans, CEO of Dairy UK, wrote in a letter to MPs that was published by the Daily Mail.

"Not only this, but a continued reduction in the levels of salt will lead to serious concerns over the safety and the quality of cheeses, given salt's central role in preventing the growth of harmful organisms and in developing defining cheese characteristics, such as flavour, texture, colour and crust," she wrote. "The cheese sector has already made great strides in reducing the salt content of its products, but salt continues to play a fundamental role in the cheesemaking process after hundreds of years, for sound technical and safety reasons, as well as taste.

"It is right that public health measures to reduce salt content focus on discretionary and nutrient poor foods, but they should not endanger nutritious and traditional foods such as blue cheese," the letter concluded. The group is calling on the Government to exclude Blue Stilton from salt reduction measures.



How to judge cheese



Sarah de Wit, founder of the Virtual Cheese Awards, explains how to judge a cheese to ensure your customers experience it at its best.

When judging a cheese, you always make sure that it has been left out at room temperature for about an hour. The temperature of the cheese can really affect the taste. Leaving it out so that it's not fridge cold allows all the volatiles of the cheese to really come through.

Cheese judges also need to have a pretty firm understanding how they uniquely taste, whether their palate can pick up all the basics tastes of salt, sweet, bitter, acid, umami; as a judge you have to pick up all the nuances.

Then upon looking at the cheese, you start by assessing the overall appearance. Starting with the good points; what things are aligned correctly to that type of cheese, is it how you would expect a Red Leicester to look for example. You would then also look for potential production faults and how this may have altered the colour, texture and overall appearance of the cheese.

Once cutting into the cheese you can start to delve into judging what textures you can see as well as the aromas. Putting the cheese to your nose to get a flavour of what aromas are there helps to anticipate the taste before eating.

Once you try the cheese you will then begin to establish what sort of flavour profile it has and whether the cheese matches up to its type. The taste will change over time as will the texture which will help to establish whether the cheese is creamy, fatty, bitty or whatever that is.

Passing of Judy Bell MBE, Shepherds Purse founder

The team at Shepherds Purse has announced the passing of the cheesemaking business's founder, Judy Bell MBE.

In an announcement made in mid-March, the team said, "It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of our founder, the mother of Shepherds Purse, Judy Bell MBE.

"Judy was all things to us at Shepherds Purse, our founder, our colleague and friend. Loving wife to Nigel, proud mum of Caroline, Katie, Justin and the late Jonathan, and a devoted and proud Grandmother.

"Judy was an inspiration and continued to give her support generously, not only to us at Shepherds Purse after she handed over the reins to her girls in 2012, but to many others across the cheese, food and farming industries. She will be remembered as an ambassador for independent business, a pioneer of the food industry and a champion of all things Yorkshire. A true force of nature.

"Donations to Cancer Research UK in Judy's name would be appreciated should you wish."



"Subsistence, sustainability & animal husbandry"



JAMES GRANT
NO2 POUND STREET

As the world begins to open up after the dark Covid clouds pass, the clear skies are bringing truth about food and drink that for too long many people were unaware of.

Physical barriers had kept a lot of us isolated from the outside world, our digital platform use doubled on video calls and massively increased on various social media platforms. People started to learn more about real food. I am sure that the "eureka realisation moments" in real artisan food and beverage can be attributed to the lockdown years.

As a deli owner and restauranteur for more than three decades, achieving great customer service has always been my goal.

Supermarkets got the first lockdown wrong, and as people rushed to their computers to order food from the big four, the supermarkets were not ready.

But guess what? Small independent delis were ready and boy how they captured the hearts of the community. No2 Pound Street immediately offered free delivery of local and national artisan food. A lot of people had no idea about real cheese. For example, Red Leicester that actually tasted brilliant with a sweetness, great acidity and savoury bite (Sparkenhoe Leicester of course). This is a country mile away from the tasteless, characterless and extruded supermarket rubbish masquerading as Red Leicester.

No2 Pound Street went online within 24 hours and (amongst other things) I became a delivery driver along with my wife and some of the team. It was an amazing experience to meet our audience and many newbies on their doorsteps. During these times we helped to make people's anniversaries, birthdays and lives better by providing great service with brilliant produce.

We put on video tastings for our customers, both new and old. The secrets of great cheese and wine were being told to an ever-increasing circle of people that wanted to learn more. The shambles of mass production and its harm to our landscapes and livestock is finally being realised.

In our cities, towns and villages and the rural areas more independent shops and farms are springing up. These new-age farmers are adopting methods that were used hundreds of years ago whilst embracing all that is good with technology to aid their evolution. Herbal lays and heritage grasses are becoming more commonplace as sustainability, ecological and ethical practises are finally being realised as the only right way forward.

Labour forces in our communities are also benefitting thanks to these small producers and independents often employing as many as the huge cheese factories do! Take Montgomery Cheddar for example. Jamie Montgomery turns out 120 tons of cheese and employs 12 people. Jamie owns his own cows and is pretty self-sufficient. Let's compare to another Cheddar producer who only employs 12 people to press buttons and produces 52 tons of cheese a day. You do the maths and realise the economies of scale. Subsistence, sustainability, animal husbandry – these are the foundations and attributes that help make our artisan cheese makers and other small producers brilliant.

When you open the door to your customers each morning, enjoy that warm, fuzzy, happy feeling, because you are part of the real food and beverage revolution that is happening right now. Keep spreading the word.

> "Supermarkets got the first lockdown wrong, and as people rushed to their computers to order from the big four,the supermarkets were not ready. But guess what? Small independent delis were ready and boy how they captured the hearts of the community. When you open the door to your customers each morning, enjoy that warm, fuzzy, happy feeling, because you are part of the real food and beverage revolution that is happening right now. Keep spreading the word"

COMMENTATORS



JAMES GRANT
NO2 POUND STREET



DEBBIE AND SIMON JONES
FOREST DELI



MARIA WHITEHEAD
HAWKSHEAD RELISH



TIM COLLINGS
ROWCLIFFE



DANIEL SMITH
STAG BAKERIES



PERRY WAKEMAN
RENNET & RIND



MASTERING CHEESE PAIRING

While great cheese often leads the way, a few choice accompaniments can be the difference between a good cheeseboard and an unforgettable one

As artisan food lovers, we are all well aware of the joys of the perfect cheeseboard. But, with a myriad of individual preferences – not to mention reams of delicious products – to contend with, the art of pairing cheese with its perfect partners can seem an insurmountable task. That's why *Speciality Food* spoke with some of the pre-eminent professionals in the fine food sector right now, to find out the techniques they use to create flavour-bomb combinations and uncover their favourites.

For James Grant, owner of No2 Pound Street, the process of seeking new flavour combinations to delight his customers with is a pleasurable one. "As a cheesemonger my palate is constantly searching out new flavours, including textures that stimulate the senses," he says. He's not one to turn away great taste experiences in the name of purity. "In the purists eyes a cheese must be left to enjoy on its own and eaten at the right temperature," he explains, "and whilst I agree cheese is brilliant on its own, what many cheese connoisseurs may not have experienced is the perfect condiment that brings another taste sensation to the palate. Recommending condiments should come naturally, as soon as a decision has been made on a cheese make sure to mention what condiment works well with that cheese."

At Forest Deli, run by Debbie and Simon Jones, the format of their bricks and mortar site means that conversation around pairing suggestions comes naturally. "For us at Forest Deli, the layout of the shop and the cheese counter means that we are always directly engaging in conversation with customers so we can ask if they need anything else to go with their cheese board," explains Debbie. "If a customer asks what would be a good accompaniment we'll suggest different things depending on the cheeses they have selected."

Branching out

With deli shoppers often being a little more adventurous than the conventional consumer, there's plenty of scope to excite their palates. "We find it's always a good idea to encourage customers to try combinations that they wouldn't normally try – this works particularly well with regulars who now trust our recommendations even if sometimes if does seem a bit left field! One of our best-selling accompaniments is Candied Jalapenos from one of our local suppliers The Preservation Society; people are often sceptical and then return the following day for more!"

The Forest Deli team has found that floral notes pair surprisingly well with punchy cheeses. "We have a lovely locally made elderflower jelly which matches really well with a strong Cheddar," she says, but "if a customer is unsure or less adventurous then having a good go to familiar and great quality product is a great way to build up trust for the next recommendation." Debbie's tip for a mouthwatering, failsafe pairing? "For us a local Apple & Ale Chutney together with Peters Yard original sourdough crackers is a bestseller."

How to upsell

We all know to position cheese accompaniments in full view of the cheese counter to inspire additional purchases, but Debbie and Simon have found that "in terms of merchandising it's always a good plan to put higher value accompaniments next to the till. For example, our Slow Roasted Dottato figs are situated next to the till directly above the serve over chiller and people often ask what they are, providing a great opportunity for upsell."

"In terms of shelving layout," continues Debbie, "we've deliberately placed all the biscuits, chutneys and pickles together, that way if a customer is looking for a particular item to go with their cheese than all available options are in easy eye line and it makes it easier for us to direct them from behind the counter."

Many independent fine food purveyors have a condiment

CREATING THE ULTIMATE CHEESEBOARD

Maria Whitehead, co-owner of Hawkshead Relish, talks us through her ultimate pairings



Many could argue cheese doesn't need any form of accompaniment but for obvious reasons we'd like to totally disagree. Indeed, we feel that quite the opposite is true – cheese needs a little something by way of a helping hand, and the fruitier the better! Here are some fruity pairings to try with alongside your cheeseboard selections:

Cheeseboard Chutney is fabulously fruity, bursting with fresh figs, cranberries and apples, finished with a drop or two of Pinot Noir to add a real depth of flavour – is just perfect with Baron Bigod, made by Fen Farm Dairy is an English artisan made brie style cheese with a nutty, mushroomy rind, a deliciously smooth and creamy delicate, fresh and citrussy centre which come into their own with this totally fruity chutney.

Spiced Apricot & Cranberry Chutney is jam packed full of apricots, orange and cranberries, combined with onion, garlic, ginger and spices to deliver a rich and spicy chutney – simply has to be paired with Apatha, a delicious goat's milk cheese made by Cumbrian makers Martin Gott and Nicola Robinson. This washed-rind goat's milk cheese delivers bags of floral sweet notes, which are perfectly enhanced by the fruit and spices in the chutney.

You might imagine a Bloody Mary Chutney might be something of an acquired taste but as you will discover this is a total cheeseboard sensation! Tomatoes, celery, red chillies and a splash of vodka add a little sophistication to proceedings – divine with Fellstone made by Tom and Clare Noblet at their farm at Hutton Roof, on the edge of Cumbria. This is a traditional old Yorkshire Dales Wensleydale style cheese with bags of flavour and a deliciously firm texture that is amazing with the tiny hit or boozy tomatoes and chilli heat provided by this tangy chutney.

> "Cheese needs a little something by way of a helping hand, and the fruitier the better!"

producer or two on their doorstep, and highlighting the local credentials of such products is another way to up the ante on cheese accompaniment sells. "Our range of local chutneys and pickles are clearly highlighted if they are locally made as this is often a key purchasing decision," explains Debbie.

It's not only accompaniments presented on the cheeseboard itself that benefit from a local approach. "We also stock a wide range of local beers and ciders, some which are exclusive to us," says Debbie. "It's important to remember people's evenings are no longer just cheese and wine, so it's about matching lighter beers with lighter cheeses, especially during the summer months."

Perfect pairing

Perry Wakeman, sales director at Rennet & Rind and Virtual Cheese Awards 2022 judge, recommends pairing Ashcombe with Malt Loaf (Pain 'epice).

"I've always been a big lover of Malt Loaf, usually with a big slab of butter, but I have no idea why it took so long to make the leap over to subbing butter for cheese," he says. "After a testing/tasting session of several British cheeses, I have discovered the best to go with Pain d'épices style bread. Ashcombe. A British Morbier style cheese with a striking ash line through the centre. Milky, nutty and delicate with a smooth pliant texture pairs perfectly with the sticky treacle raisin loaf. Level it up by sticking it under the grill for three minutes. Visually striking, and a pairing that is off the charts."

MUST-STOCK CHEESE ACCOMPANIMENTS



James Grant, owner of No2 Pound Street, lists his two top pairing suggestions

Honey

For a cracking creamy blue with a piquant salty and spicy finish, recommend a good local raw pouring honey or chunk of honeycomb. This adds to the mellow creaminess of the cheese and cuts through the spice beautifully.

A serving suggestion for honey is to have good pieces of honeycomb stacked next to the uncut wedge of cheese. This looks gorgeous and tempts you right in. Then scatter some roasted nuts, another essential condiment for cheese. Make sure you have a selection of awesome raw nuts always available. Do upsell and describe how you would prepare and serve the nuts and explain why. I explain by roasting nuts they become crunchy and intense in flavour as the moisture is drawn out. Then scatter them whilst still warm on to your cheese board. Walnuts work well with cheese when roasted and add a pleasing crunchy texture.

> "A serving suggestion for honey is to have good pieces of honeycomb stacked next to the uncut wedge of cheese. This looks gorgeous and tempts you right in"

Medlar jelly

One favourite condiment of mine that I regularly upsell to my customers that is also getting a long and overdue renaissance is the medlar jelly. The Roman legions brought them to the U.K. Medieval people considered this fruit to be important during feasts and famine. Chaucer mentions medlar, once known as openarses, in the Canterbury tales.

Serve medlar jelly in a ramekin or small glass dish alongside your cheese. If you can get a whole fruit use this as a garnish (fully bletted). Medlar is best picked after the first frost and then stored in a cool, dark place as they will then begin to soften and sweeten. This slow decay is called bletting and converts starch to fructose. In the medieval period they were eaten by squeezing ones openarse so the pulp could either be picked or sucked out. The taste of medlar is like a toffee apple and a little bit like apricot it lends itself well to most cheese and especially stinky softs.

DRINKS PAIRING



Tim Collings, an area sales manager at Rowcliffe, shares his favourite beverages to partner with great cheese

At Rowcliffe we are passionate about our cheeses and ensuring our customers know the best ways to enjoy them and the drinks that compliment them. The partnership of cheese and wine is as old as time itself and over recent years the nation has seen a steady rise of dedicated cheese and wine deli's, bars and restaurants who are all offering expertly paired, well researched menu's so the customer gets the most from their cheese experience.

When devising menus for my restaurant customers, there's always great thought given to the pairing of the cheese. Wine, beers, ciders, whiskey, gin and cocktail tastings are all now appearing regularly on cheese menus and boards across the country and the possibilities are endless.

When you have hundreds of different cheeses and the same amount of drinks to choose from, the prospect of accurately matching them can seem daunting but it needn't be. You can have a whole lot of fun working it out!

If in doubt one of the things I like to do is match cheese and beverages by their corresponding regions. There is so often an automatic synergy if the cheese and drink production are conceived from the same terroir and it gives an interesting story and eating experience when tasting them together. Some great examples of this are right on our doorstep too. Farmhouse Cheddars from the West Country like Pitchfork, Quicke's and Westcombe are absolutely superb served with Somerset and Devon ciders and some fresh apple slices.

Other stella pairings include soft cheeses like Waterloo, Tunworth and Baron Bigod with southern British sparkling wineries like Chapel Down, Langham Estate and Three Choirs. Scottish cheeses Minger, Morangie Brie and Strathdon Blue are all excellent with malt whisky too. And when looking to continental Europe the options just keep coming. Italian Taleggio and the sparkling Franciacorta from Lombardy, Manchego and the flint dry Verdejo from central Spain and Munster paired with Gewurztraminer from the Alsace region are all excellent examples of what grows together goes together.

> "When you have hundreds of different cheeses and the same amount of drinks to choose from, the prospect of accurately matching them can seem daunting but it needn't be. You can have a whole lot of fun working it out!"

PAIRING CRACKERS & CHEESE

with Daniel Smith, sales and marketing manager at Stag Bakeries



One of the most satisfying parts of creating a cheeseboard is pairing your crackers of choice with different types of cheese. To that end, we spend much of our time mulling over combinations with the aim of bringing the best out of a wide variety of cheeses.

HARD CHEESE

We always look for a cracker with some extra kick when trying to create pairings with hard cheeses such as Cheddar or Parmesan. A tried and tested favourite with our team is our Salt & Pepper Water Biscuit with a hearty slice of Cheddar. The extra seasoning provided by the cracker adds a lovely warmth to the tangy flavour of the cheese. We also find that crackers with a little extra spice go beautifully with hard cheeses – chilli crackers work well here, and we designed our Cajun Water Biscuits with this type of cheese in mind.

SOFT CHEESE

Soft cheeses are a particular favourite of ours and so finding the right biscuits to complement them is a labour of love. We always enjoy pairing herby crackers such as our Rosemary Water Biscuits with cheeses like Brie or Camembert. The flavour of the rosemary balances nicely with the creamy texture of soft cheeses while not overpowering the flavour of the cheese. Our Seaweed Water Biscuits also work particularly well with soft cheeses as the saltiness of the biscuit provides a great foil for the delicate flavour of the cheese.

BLUE CHEESE

For rich blue cheeses, our first port of call is finding a cracker that can offer a nice neutral base to bring out the full flavour of the cheese. One of our favourite combinations is pairing some Stilton with our Original Water Biscuits. A simple, classic combination that lets the flavour of the cheese shine. We also enjoy pairing blue cheeses with crackers made with grains or seeds to provide some extra texture. Another favourite among the team here is our Multi-Seed Water Biscuit with Roquefort.



HOW TO SELL: ICE CREAM

Far from a season-specific indulgence, 2022's ice cream scene shows that there are opportunities aplenty in the frozen dessert sphere, finds Ellen Manning



COMMENTATORS



CHRISTINA VEAL
NEW FOREST ICE CREAM



SAM NEWMAN
HACKNEY GELATO



SASHA YOUNG
HOORAY'S BRITISH GELATO KITCHEN



VIV THYER & LYNNE JOHNSON
GALLONE'S



SUSIE DAVIS
ODI AND MOO



KATHRYN BRICKEN
DOUGHLICIOUS

When it comes to food with universal appeal, it doesn't get much better than ice cream. From young to old, as a sweet treat or a comfort food, the category is a firm favourite with British consumers. According to some figures, an estimated 3.15 million people in Britain ate ice cream two to three times a week in 2020 – with 4.57 million eating it once a week. Like many categories, ice cream and frozen desserts thrived during the Covid pandemic, with many of us turning to them for comfort. The change in the way we snack has seen ice cream sales continue to rise, with figures from Kantar showing that take-home sales of 'handheld' ice creams and desserts like sticks and filled cones grew in 2021, taking the category's worth to £1.3 billion. And it's not just sales of sweet treats for home that have risen over the past few years, but our enjoyment while out and about, with PwC noting a 20% year on year rise of ice cream parlour openings in 2020.

Ice cream: the ultimate treat

Britain's love affair with ice cream and frozen treats is a long-running one, but what drives it? For Christina Veal, director at New Forest Ice Cream, which supplies to stockists including farm shops and delis as well as restaurants, pubs, cafes and kiosks, it's about finding the "ultimate treat". "Despite the recent surge in demand for healthier ice creams, those looking for luxury and indulgence when it comes to a take-home treat still remain one of the largest subcategories in ice cream," says Veal. "Many consumers still look for that ultimate treat when it comes to ice cream." Sam Newman, founder of Hackney Gelato, which sells direct to consumers as well as via larger multiples, agrees. "Ice cream brings unbridled joy to children and adults alike. In our minds truly happy holiday memories revolve around strolling along the seaside in the sunshine with a cone of the good stuff in your hand. It's the feeling we hope to bring to everyone when they eat our gelatos. Whether they're strolling in the sun or eating it in their pyjamas in their living room, it should be a pleasurable, happy experience."

Sasha Young, who runs Hooray's British Gelato Kitchen in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire alongside mum Sara, thinks one of the keys to ice-cream's ongoing popularity is its universal appeal. Hooray's produces Italian style gelato using entirely British ingredients sold in their shop as well as to other outlets. "Our customers are anyone and everyone," says Young. "It's grandparents who love a knickerbocker glory, a child with their first taste of ice cream and everyone in between. We get people coming here on dates, we've had a couple who had their first date with us then we hosted their engagement party and did a party after they got married. School groups come in, we do lots of children's birthday parties, baby showers, hen parties. Ice cream is great for celebration so our customer base really is lots of different people." On top of that, the Covid pandemic reminded us of the value of an edible treat, adds Young. "People felt they were missing out on a lot so they grasped on to the treats that they could have. There was a lot you couldn't do, but you could give your family a treat by coming in for an ice cream or having ice cream at home."

A changeable feast

Sales may be buoyant, but the popularity of ice cream and frozen desserts are still affected by various factors – including seasons. Situated in a popular tourist area, Hooray's has felt the loss of international tourists in recent years, but the local community has stepped in and helped it thrive, says Young. There's also the difference between summer and winter trade. "We have quite a short season which starts in April and ends in September, with a huge quantity of our sales during that time." Seasonal variations are something Viv Thyer and Lynne Johnson, who run the Leamington Spa branch of Gallone's, notice. As well as serving traditional Italian ice cream made at Gallone's in Northampton, they serve bubble waffles, pancakes and other sweet treats. In summer, they have queues out of the door but while trade dips off in winter, they make up with ice cream parties for children. They have also benefited from the surge in use of delivery services, says Thyer, with people keen to order ice-cream delivered to their door.

The love of ice-cream and frozen treats may be longstanding, but that doesn't mean its producers have stood still. Changes to our diets – including the rapid growth in vegan and free-from eating, as well as a constant search for the new and exciting, has helped drive innovation. In 2020, UK ice cream parlours were asked by the Ice Cream & Artisan Food Show what their best-selling products were, prompting 36% to say vegan ice creams were the most significant new product varieties, followed by dairy-free and reduced sugar at 5% each. At the time, Zelica Carr, CEO of the Ice Cream Alliance, said the range of flavours were "testament to the creativity of the industry". In her words, ice cream makers were "in tone with prevailing taste trends" given the number producing 'free from' products such as vegan, dairy-free and reduced sugar – as well as reduced calorie and gluten-free.

> "Whether [customers are] strolling in the sun or eating it in their pyjamas in their living room, [eating ice cream] should be a pleasurable, happy experience"

> "Retailers need to make sure they provide a selection of innovative, exciting flavours. Offering a selection of both flavours and varieties means you cater for each individual who steps foot into your store"

That growing awareness by consumers of what they're eating has seen an expansion of certain ranges, says Young, who offers a range of vegan and dairy-free products at Hooray's. "People are more aware of what they're eating, doing more research and trialling what they're eating. People are choosing to eat differently and having that range is creating an inclusive environment for them." New Forest's Veal, whose company has introduced three additions to its certified vegan range to cater to the vegan diet, including two sorbets, agrees, saying: "Catering for all audiences is key when it comes to ice cream. Retailers need to make sure they provide a selection of innovative, exciting flavours. Offering a selection of both flavours and varieties means you cater for each individual who steps foot into your store."

The value of NPD

When it comes to innovation, it's not just about healthier products, but those that will meet the need of an audience endlessly on the hunt for the next best thing. "New product development is really important to ensure we are keeping up to date with trends and always bringing something new to the table to excite customers," adds Veal. "All of our ice cream recipes are carefully developed and we are constantly thinking of new flavours and ways of mixing it up!" The same goes for Hackney Gelato, which recently launched a limited edition Hot Cross Bun gelato. "We have always used our knowledge of flavour combinations to drive innovation and coming from a chef's background has helped us take those ideas and make them into something delicious," says Newman. "Having both grown up in Italy, some of the recipes we've developed are a love letter to the gelatos we grew up eating there. Other times we've been driven by the desire to create something unusual and show off our craft, like when we took a classic British cake like the hot cross bun and turned it into a gelato."

Susie Davis, founder of Birmingham-based Odi and Moo, which was born in the first Covid lockdown when she and business partner Jimmy Thewlis borrowed an ice cream machine from their local pub, offers a core range but adds regular seasonal specials such as a Cadbury Creme Egg flavour for Easter and tangerine and Prosecco in warm weather. "Our range is by no means traditional," says Davis, who supplies to farm shops as well as other outlets including pubs, restaurants and vegan cafes. "We are handcrafted and quite quirky. Some of our core range consists of white chocolate pistachio brittle, blueberry maple syrup cheesecake, brown sugar vanilla, toast and Honey, chocolate chip cookie dough and our very first flavour – Jammie Dodger. Our vegan range just keeps growing, our most popular flavours are dark chocolate sorbet and peanut butter banana crumble. Christmas is a fun time for us – we make homemade mince pie,



brandy butter Christmas pudding pudding, white chocolate cranberry cheesecake cake and for our vegans, gingerbread salted caramel." Odi and Moo also works with other independents to invent new flavours – including a Pandan flavour especially for a local Vietnamese restaurant.

The desire to innovate extends to frozen desserts too. London Dough Company Doughlicious, which has its own bespoke range of Dough•Chi a twist on Japanese Mochi balls – stocked in independent retailers as well as larger names, is extending its range with a new vegan flavour. Founder Kathryn Bricken says: "There is growth in the frozen desserts market and in particular handheld ice cream and multipacks." Citing figures showing growth in the frozen dessert market, including a 21% growth in snacks – where Dough•Chi fits – she says it's down to a number of factors. "The pandemic encouraged more customers to explore the frozen food aisles, looking for products with a longer shelf life, whilst an effort to reduce food waste and enjoying more indulgent meals at home translated into strong growth for frozen desserts. Handheld frozen snacking has also seen quite a bit of innovation, particularly in this segment which is capturing consumers' imagination and taste buds. People also like the fact that these kinds of snacks are easily portion-controlled, in that they can enjoy one and put the rest back in the freezer."

"AN ESTIMATED **3.15 MILLION** PEOPLE IN **BRITAIN** ATE ICE CREAM **TWO** TO **THREE** TIMES A WEEK IN **2020** – WITH **4.57 MILLION** EATING IT **ONCE** A WEEK"

It seems the love affair is far from ending. But what does the future hold for a category that somehow retains its traditional roots while continuing to adapt and innovate? "The trend of adhering to a plant-based diet is skyrocketing, along with healthier snacking," says Veal. "Consumers are now on the hunt for new innovative flavours and a variety of different food options to be readily available to them as they explore the vegan diet. This is an area that is only going to grow in the coming years and it is one that we will be taking very seriously."



STOCK CHECK



SIMPLY ICE CREAM HEAVENLY HONEYCOMB ICE CREAM
Thick, creamy, luxurious honeycomb ice cream swirled with crunchy pieces of homemade honeycomb.
simplyicecream.co.uk



PURBECK ICE CREAM WEET FENNEL
Aromatic and delicious, sweet fennel creates a wonderful flavour and is a natural aid to digestion.
purbeckicecream.co.uk



CECILY'S LOVELY LITTLE BITES VANILLA & DARK CHOC
No more waiting for the ice cream to soften. These unique Lovely Little Bites are snackable straight from the freezer.
cecilys.co



FIELDFARE SUMMER FRUIT MIX
A seasonal celebration of juicy raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants.
field-fare.com



NOBLE HOUSE PREPARED APPLE CRUMBLE
Traditionally stewed Bramley and Braeburn apples, with a rich butter crumble and a hint of cinnamon.
noblehouseprepared.com



BLAS AR FWYD STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE
With the perfect crumbly biscuit base, tangy cream cheese and a sweet strawberry sauce, it's no surprise this moreish dessert is also a Great Taste award winner.
blasarfwyd.com



JUST DESSERTS LOTUS BISCOFF® GATEAU
This handcrafted dessert is a collaboration with the world-famous Belgian biscuit brand.
just-desserts.co.uk



NUSH CHOCOLATE FUDGE POT
Smooth, creamy and thick like a ganache, balancing the richness of Belgian chocolate with cocoa and Nush's specially crafted coconut caramel.
nushfoods.co.uk



JERSEY DAIRY LUXURY CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM MIX
Jersey luxury chocolate ice cream mix made with Jersey milk giving it a superior creamy taste which is naturally thicker.
hbingredients.co.uk



JUDE'S VEGAN SALTED CARAMEL ICE CREAM
Oat based with a salted caramel swirl and cinder toffee pieces.
judes.com

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

The rise of local shopping isn't stopping any time soon – and that's great news for independents. Helen Renshaw explores how independent and specialist food retailers can ride the localism wave

COMMENTATORS



ANYA CLAYTON
RASSASY



RUPERT EVANS
FRA



HEATHER PARRY
FODDER



RASSASY FARM SHOP AND DELI

If Anya Clayton seems a touch weary when we speak, it's hardly surprising. The day before, Anya hosted an art-and-wine afternoon at Rassasy, her deli and farm shop in Ferring, West Sussex which she set up with her partner, Mike – and the event took on a life of its own.

It was just one of the many diversification experiments Anya has trialled since opening Rassasy in 2019, and it proved another roaring success.

"We had eight people in the shop, painting, drinking wine and chatting," she says. "They were having such fun they stayed three hours longer than planned. I had to chuck them out in the end! When you see people so happy and engaged, you know you're doing something really worthwhile in your community."

And such initiatives aren't just great for local people – it turns out, they can be spectacularly good for business, too. A renewed appreciation of local shopping, with growing numbers embracing the independent food shops in the towns and villages where they live, is a trend that was supercharged by the Covid pandemic.

Over the past two years, delis, farm shops and food halls across the country have found creative new ways to serve their communities through hard times, won over loyal customers as a result and seen their businesses prosper. And now the pandemic is (fingers crossed) on the wane, evidence is mounting that the localism trend isn't stopping any time soon.

A 2021 Barclaycard report found that nearly two-thirds of consumers in the UK chose to buy closer to home in the previous year, with more than nine in 10 saying they would continue to do so post-pandemic.

And brand new research from the Farm Retail Association paints an equally rosy picture. The research found that 89% of farm shops report an increase in sales since 2019, and 64% expect sales to increase further in 2022.

"We knew anecdotally that consumers are preferring to shop and support local more than ever before and this data confirms just that,' says FRA chairman Rupert Evans. "We think the pandemic will have changed shopping habits for many and will be here to stay."

Reasons to be cheerful for independent retailers, for sure. But how best to keep the positive momentum going?

We explore six ways you can ride the localism wave.

"**89%** OF **FARM SHOPS** REPORT AN **INCREASE** IN **SALES** SINCE **2019**, AND **64%** EXPECT SALES TO INCREASE **FURTHER** IN **2022**"

SOURCE: FARM RETAIL ASSOCIATION

1 MAKE YOUR SHOP THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

According to Anya, you need to work hard to maintain a positive relationship with your community the pandemic recedes. And she knows a thing or two about getting it right – despite such a recent opening, *Guardian* readers last year voted Rassasy one of the UK's Top 10 farm shops.

"When we opened in November 2019, it quickly became obvious that this was something the community had been crying out for," says Anya. "The community was quite disjointed – people getting on with their lives alongside each other, rather than together. People left the village to do their shopping at big supermarkets, and there was a void where the heart of the community should have been.

"At the beginning, we provided a novelty element. But when Covid hit, the shop became essential to the community almost overnight. We were inundated by people wanting to help, and became known as the 'war office'. And it turned us into a really strong community.

"Working from home can be very isolating, and during lockdown some people just came to the shop to chat. Since things have opened up, some have melted away. But many have stuck around as regular customers – people who might once have just done a big supermarket shop have realised what Rassasy has to offer and keep coming back for more."




FODDER FARM SHOP AND CAFE

But maintaining such loyalty means a determined effort to stay connected to all things local. Anya has thrown herself into local activities like a Halloween 'Scarecrow Trail' that raised £700 for charity. When the Ferring Christmas lights were turned on, she was on hand with a pop up serving mulled wine and soup, and this year she's planning a mini music festival to celebrate the Queen's jubilee.

Covid may have put your shop at the heart of community. But to stay there, you need to continue proving your community creds.

2 EMBRACE ONLINE

Much as consumers have fallen back in love with visiting their friendly local store, they've embraced the convenience offered by online shopping, too.

Many adopting the online habit during lockdown, and research from Attest indicates that the UK will continue to balance online and physical shopping post-pandemic, with 50% of those surveyed say they 'mostly' or 'always' shop online..

Embracing online can be daunting. But Heather Parry, MD of award-winning Harrogate farm shop Fodder, urges bravery. "At first, the pandemic was a challenge - we had to adapt very quickly,' she says. 'And somehow, we managed to pull an online offering together within 48 hours. We'd never done it before, but people were ringing in desperation, saying they couldn't leave home, or

> "According to a Retail Economics study, the most important sustainability issues for grocery shoppers are reducing plastic, food waste and animal welfare – all areas most independents can really shout about"





> The desire to shop sustainably means consumers are not afraid of abandoning brands which do not meet their expectations – so reaching out to local foodie contacts and innovating around new products can be a win-win

get a supermarket slot. We had to work together to get food to people who needed it.

"At first, it was pretty scrappy – we stuck to a five-mile radius of Harrogate and were driving deliveries around in our own cars. But our staff were amazing, and the customers appreciated it hugely. What we gained was customer loyalty and a community that came together.

"The pandemic kickstarted our online journey, too. From scrappy beginnings, our local online offering began to take shape, and now we plan to launch nationwide in April."

Online shopping has grown in popularity within the context of local shopping, too. Staple purchases like bread and milk are being delivered straight to doorsteps, with a variety of sustainable and ethical choices available online.

Box schemes are also growing, with companies such as Oddbox working with local farmers to combat food waste by delivering fresh produce to the customers' door. Anya Clayton was also quick to embrace home deliveries for her Rassasy customers, offering a range of deli boxes that can be either picked up or delivered locally.

Consumers have grown used to the convenience of online and home deliveries – and independents will benefit adapting to customer expectations if they plan to ride the localism wave.

3 SHOUT ABOUT YOUR GREEN CREDENTIALS

Localism taps into the wider UK trend towards conscious consumerism – according to a Retail Economics study, the sustainable consumption and production of food has become a critical issue for consumers, influencing their choice of where to shop.

NEARLY **TWO-THIRDS** OF **CONSUMERS** IN THE **UK** CHOSE TO BUY **CLOSER** TO **HOME** IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, WITH MORE THAN **NINE** IN **TEN** SAYING THEY WOULD **CONTINUE** TO DO SO **POST-PANDEMIC**

SOURCE: BARCLAYCARD

The study found that over half (53%) of all UK consumers now take environmental credentials and ethical sourcing into consideration when food shopping.

This is excellent news for independents, which are perfectly positioned to tell a compelling story about provenance and environmental credentials.

Drilling down into the research provides even more reasons to be cheerful. According to the Retail Economics study, the most important sustainability issues for grocery shoppers are reducing plastic, food waste and animal welfare – all areas most independents can really shout about.

"At the beginning of the pandemic people who'd never normally visit a farm shop started coming to Fodder because they couldn't get a slot in the supermarket," says Heather Parry. "Lots of those people have stuck with us. And being around a farm shop has fuelled their interest in food and the environment. We're definitely seeing a growth of interest in the quality, provenance and environmental credentials of food."

For Anya Clayton, many of her Rassasy customers are on a journey in terms of learning about the provenance of their food - and she's more than happy to be their guide.

"I constantly talk to people about the food they're buying, and it's the implications for the planet,' she says. 'You have to be diplomatic when talking about these issues, but they are conversations we need to have. People are genuinely interested, so they appreciate it. Knowledge is empowering."

Whatever green creds you have, it will pay to shout about them loudly if you want to ride the localism wave.

4 REFRAME THE NARRATIVE

One barrier to customers – and a huge one during a full-blown cost-of-living crisis – is the common perception that independents are more expensive than the big grocers. But that's often not the case.

Reframing the price narrative is likely to become increasingly important in the coming months and years.

"Lots of our Fodder customers tell us that shopping here saves them money," says Heather Parry. "Take eggs, for example. 'We sell a dozen free range eggs from Ian up the road, for £1.10. At the supermarket, they'd cost £1.60. All that packaging, transport and branding costs a lot of money.

"Right from the beginning, our target market has been normal people – hard working families for whom cost is a major consideration. Our aim is to provide quality food to those people at prices they can afford.

"We know we have a great story to tell – the quality of the food, the benefits of shopping locally, the experience of shopping in a place where the staff will remember not just your name, but your dog's name too! And we let them know that they can have all that at prices that are doable for ordinary people."

To ride the wave of localism, the message that independents can be just as affordable as supermarkets needs to be broadcast loud and clear.

5 GET CREATIVE WITH NEW PRODUCTS

The localism trend has opened opportunities for lots of creative thinking around new products within your local community.

The desire to shop sustainably means consumers are not afraid of abandoning brands which do not meet their expectations – so reaching out to local foodie contacts and innovating around new products can be a win-win.

At Fodder, 85% of the produce on sale is sourced in Yorkshire, and that's the store's USP. But when Heather noticed that customers could buy pretty much everything to whip up a delicious pasta dish, apart from the pasta itself, she reached out to the local farming community.

The result? The Yorkshire Pasta Company, an artisan pasta company launched in 2019, is now proudly displayed on Fodder's shelves.

"The demand for locally sourced products has rippled out and started new businesses, which provides us with new products to shout about," says Heather.

This kind of thinking becomes a virtuous circle, feeding a healthy local ecosystem to help you ride the localism wave.

6 MAKE YOUR PLACE A DESTINATION

For those with the space to do it, turning your place into a destination for more than shopping is a must. One of Anya Clayton's most successful initiatives has been opening up The Snug, a micro pub in had once been a living room at the back of the shop.

"The Snug looks out on the shop acts as a kind of shop window celebrating our range," she says. "It's brilliant – a completely different vibe to a normal pub, where women feel just as comfortable to meet up for drink as men. We have a bunch of regulars who come in every day. Firm groups of friends have emerged - it's been a huge success."

Fodder, meanwhile, has a café showcasing the food sold in the farm shop and an Airstream caravan selling food and drinks: "We've capitalised on the fact that we're on a dog walking trail," explains Heather.

For Anya and Heather, such innovations have provided more reasons for local people to come to their shops – great for the customers and brilliant for business, too. There may not be a lot of good news around, but the rise of localism definitely provides a reason to be cheerful for independents and specialist food shops. If you adapt and ride the wave like Anya and Heather, that is.



COMMENTATORS



STUART GATES
THE SEASONED GROCER



ROBERT UNWIN
ROAST MUTTON



SHANE GODWIN
MACKNADE



LAC HINCU
REVEL BAKERY



ROSIE JACK
BOWHOUSE

THE BRICKS & MORTAR OPPORTUNITY

E-commerce may have been the runaway success of lockdown, but there's plenty of scope to maximise walk-in stores too, finds Ellen Manning

The way consumers buy their food has changed beyond imagination over the decades. From small, artisan shops to huge multiples, then back again as people rediscovered their love for quality, artisan food produced and sold on a smaller, more personal level. The buying process itself went from choosing meat, bread and cheese from a counter to picking up pre-packaged offerings from a supermarket shelf. People have paid more, paid less, and now for many products are paying more, either out of choice or necessity. Shopping have moved from the high street to cavernous out-of-town locations, changing the shop experience beyond recognition. But despite all those changes, one thing has remained constant – the ability to buy food from a shop. To walk through its doors, browse a display of some form or another, and walk out with goods.

Until 2020, when the simple act of walking into a shop became either forbidden or worrying. The shift of the way shoppers shop due to the Covid pandemic has been well documented. An unprecedented situation saw a surge in online shopping – including in the speciality food sector. As online sales soared, fine food businesses who had previously swerved the world of e-commerce embraced it, setting up websites and marketing their wares to an audience desperate for the comfort of their favourite meat, bread, cheese and other artisan products in whatever way they could get their hands on it.

The shift helped myriad small businesses survive the pandemic, but where would it leave the future of bricks and mortar within the fine food sector? In December, Simon Latham, a senior manager at 4C Associates, predicted in *Speciality Food* that the growth of grocery sales made via online channels had presented an opportunity to minimise and optimise utilisation of bricks-and-mortar premises. His predictions might have sparked a shiver of fear in some business owners, but figures suggest while online sales are still high, customers may still prefer the in-person experience that is particularly enjoyable when it comes to shopping for food. Data shared with *The Grocer* by NeilsenIQ in October suggested that fresh food's share of online grocery sales still lagged behind store sales, with NielsenIQ's new Ecommerce Benchmark finding that fresh food accounted for 34.9% of sales online compared with 43% in-store.

How to sell IRL

Food retail expert Stuart Gates, there is still very much a place for bricks and mortar in fine food. For Gates, who advises and mentors artisan producers, retailers need to look at the overall picture, rather than seeing their physical shop as separate from an online presence, and also separate from any food service aspect they may introduce. "Often retailers see a shop on one corner, the internet ~ on another, and possibly a café on another, rather than an overall strategy.

When Covid happened in 2020 most delis and speciality food shops had been concentrating on their food service offer rather than the internet. They hadn't come up with their marketing and that side of the business so there was a lot of focus on that. But I think people still want to visit a shop so if you're clever you use your retail shop as a showcase and the shop can be used to drive your internet business or seasonal business. You use the fact people

> "It's no secret that having a physical shop is incredibly challenging in the current climate but it's also very rewarding. It gives you a chance to engage with the community you are part of and gives your business an identity that people can easily recognise"





FRESH **FOOD** ACCOUNTED FOR **34.9%** OF SALES **ONLINE** COMPARED WITH **43%** IN-STORE

SOURCE: ECOMMERCE BENCHMARK, NIELSENIQ



> “Our shop has been slowly growing and six years later we couldn’t be happier with its evolution. Even though we think adapting to new technologies and embracing new ways of trading is important, having a shop is vital for us and our community”

love coming to a shop to then encourage them to fill a card in or get their email address and then drive that customer loyalty.”

In Gates’ view, the key is in making bricks and mortar valuable – giving customers what they want from a food shopping experience. “I don’t think speciality food retailers need to be afraid of price, because if it’s good enough and tastes good enough, people will spend money on it. But I think people want to be excited when they come into shops. They don’t come into shops because they don’t want to – they want to buy something, they want to look or be thrilled or discover something new.”

He cites speciality cheese shops as a good example, selling products people can’t get elsewhere, but also doing what they do well, offering customers a unique experience and great products. “The main thing is you have to be good at what you do, communicate what you do and be proud of what you do.”

A chance to connect

When it comes to butchers’ shops, the bricks and mortar experience allows the building of a rapport and relationship between customer and butcher that is much more difficult to build virtually, says Robert Unwin, owner of Kendal-based Roast Mutton. “If you go back 60/70 years nobody went to a supermarket, people went to their butcher, which meant the layman on the street was quite well versed with different cuts, especially cheaper cuts to fit budgets. But the growth of the supermarkets means a lot of that knowledge has been lost, so I see the bricks and mortar shop for a butcher’s shop as an educational piece as well. There’s a lot of communication, a relationship to build with the butcher, and obviously it’s not as easy to doa online.

That knowledge and education is particularly important in the aftermath of the pandemic, says Unwin, which has seen the rekindling of an interest in cooking and ingredients. Having people in a shop allows a bucher to advise on different cuts and alternatives, says Unwin, who also offers regular butchery classes, enjoys the aspect of explanation. But it also allows him to inspire, either through his display or through conversations and suggestions with customers. “I put different cuts out and that starts a conversation. The physical shop is really so we can talk to someone in person. I’m not saying it can’t be done online but it’s a hell of a lot easier to speak to someone – you build a rapport straight away.”

Shane Godwin, managing director at Macknade, agrees. “Being able to create a space that our customers are comfortable to spend time in is something that we understand and we believe in,” he says. “These face-to-face experiences help to build communities in the physical space, increase dwell time and allow our team to have a prolonged customer experience themselves, adding to their enjoyment. While online continues to grow and us with it, finding the balance between transactions online and physical experiences is something we are achieving and want to do more of.”

On top of in-person rapport, there is the basic logistics of online trading to take into account, says Unwin. “It can be a false economy. Someone can come into the shop and spend maybe £150-200 at the weekend. They come in, pay the money, and walk away with their meat. With online you have the order, then you may have to have a conversation, then you have to organise delivery and logistics.” On top of that, a small artisan butcher could get lost in the sea of businesses that can be found online, compared to the ability to stand out if in the right location. “I’m sure there are pros and cons, but when buying meat online, someone really has to want to buy meat from you.” In contrast, Roast Mutton’s physical Lakeland location, where a lot of its meat is from the local area, is a draw for customers and allows it to stand out.”

For Lac Hincu, owner of the Revel Bakery in Rugby, Warwickshire, which sells online but also shows off its wares in its shop, Revelicious, the benefits of bricks and mortar are extensive. “Our shop has been slowly growing and six years later we couldn’t be happier with its evolution,” she tells *Speciality Food*. “Even though we think adapting to new technologies and embracing new ways of trading is important, having a shop is vital for us and our community.” That importance of community was highlighted in the last couple of years, says Hincu. “A large number of our customers are elderly who felt comfortable visiting our shop in a safe manner. Many of them didn’t feel comfortable shopping in big supermarkets and don’t have access to an online ordering system and they would’ve been completely excluded if we only offered online shopping for example. At the other end of the spectrum we usually employ very young people in our shop. For many this has been their first job or come and help during university breaks. This is incredibly rewarding for us and important for the economy in general.”

That personal connection to the community aside, Hincu echoes Gates’ view that it’s all about experience. “Visiting a bakery is an experience in itself. It’s about the smell of fresh bread and pastries, the visual of the cakes, chatting with the people behind the counter – something that just clicking ‘add to the basket’ can’t replicate.”

A rewarding investment

Operating a bricks and mortar presence in the current climate isn’t easy, Hincu will admit, but is important not only for her own business but for the bigger picture. “It’s no secret that having a physical shop is incredibly challenging in the current climate but it’s also very rewarding. It gives you a chance to engage with the community you are part of and gives your business an identity that people can easily recognise. Another plus is that it helps the local economy and makes the town centre look diverse and more attractive for people to visit which is vital for any small market town if we don’t want another ghost town centre.”

At Bowhouse in Fife, a hub for food production and development that aims to connect makers with local suppliers and shoppers, the in-person experience is clearly important. Bowhouse is home to seven independent businesses including a flour mill, brewery and butchery, and also holds monthly market weekends. Its newest project is the transformation of its courtyard space to create three new production units to create three new production units which can be used for small-scale retail and production of local food and drink. While bricks and mortar is at the heart of what it does, like many other businesses Bowhouse had to adapt during the Covid pandemic, says manager Rosie Jack. “When lockdown measures were in place, our customers and producers were struggling to trade using the bricks and mortar experience so we founded the Bowhouse Link, a virtual food market on the Open Food Network. We will continue to offer this service as there is still a market from our users who visit Bowhouse and want the easy access to locally produced food and drink for home delivery or collection from the food hub each Saturday.”

Despite that, the bricks and mortar experience remains vital, especially when it comes to speciality food, she says. “A bricks and mortar experience at Bowhouse is so important for engaging conversations and food and drink. Having a physical unit means consumers can visit the production space, meet the maker and purchase onsite rather than only having access to a description from an online listing. Sharing the story behind a product, the people involved, where the ingredients come from and how they have been prepared are vital tools for speciality food makers in order to help consumers make an informed decision and support sustainable food and drink production.”

So where does the future lie for bricks and mortar? “As online continues to grow, there is a balance to be struck, as customers still desire the physical experiences,” says Godwin. “For small businesses, the online investment required to compete with the bigger operating models can be prohibitive, but more importantly, simply providing the same products online doesn’t necessarily transfer into sales online. The market for online customers for an independent, SME is seldom the same as within the physical space and the balance here is where skilled operators will embed themselves to thrive.”

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THE RISE OF NOLO WINE

Traditionalists turn up their noses at zero and low-alcohol wines yet there's a growing market reports Sally-Jayne Wright

Majestic, the UK's largest specialist wine retailer, launched its first 0% wine range in January 2020. And when Trend Watch walked supermarket aisles this spring, it seemed everyone from Tesco to Marks & Spencer had a no- and low-alcohol wine range, often at astonishingly low prices.

It's not just the multiples who are recognising demand.

"We identified this trend towards responsible drinking in mature markets 15 years ago," Miguel Torres Maczassek, fifth generation member of the wine-producing Torres family, Spain, told Master of Wine (MW) Peter Richards (*Decanter* magazine, January 2020). "So we started to experiment." Sarah Jane Evans MW reports that Torres' low-alcohol range is "pretty good".

WHAT'S BEHIND THE TREND?

Drinking less but better is a global health and wellness trend across all age groups and in Dry January 2022, mindful drinkers outnumbered abstainers.

Not drinking – like going vegan – has become cool. In the UK, one in three 16-24 year olds is teetotal (Office for National Statistics) and one in five adults. There's even a no- and low-alcohol, pop-up off-licence called Club Soda just off London's Regent Street, and a Mindful Drinking Festival.

Just as new vegans don't want to miss out on burgers, the 'non-drinking community' want adult-looking and tasting beverages.

HOW ARE SO-CALLED NOLO WINES MADE?

Producers make a normal wine, extract the alcohol and replace the weight alcohol provides with sugar or grape juice. They may add flavouring, too. Low-alcohol wines are either partly de-alcoholised or blends of both regular-strength and de-alcoholised wines.

WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE WITH THAT?

Alcohol provides aroma, flavour profile, texture and mouthfeel. Plus, while a regular off-dry white will have about 4-7 grams of residual sugar per litre, many nolo whites have the same quantity in 100ml – not ideal for weight watching. This is why they can taste too sweet.

ZERO-ALCOHOL BEERS WORK. WHY IS MAKING ZERO-ALCOHOL WINE SO TRICKY?

Beer averages 5% ABV compared with wine's 8-17%. So with wine, you're removing more of the element responsible for structure, mouthfeel, aroma and complexity. Absence of alcohol is more noticeable in reds because they usually have more body than whites.

WHAT'S ESSENTIAL TO KNOW ABOUT THE NOLO MARKET?

Customers fall into two camps: abstainers want to avoid; moderators – a far bigger market – want to cut down. Abstainers are much more likely to enjoy zero-alcohol wines because unlike moderators they don't expect the doctored versions to taste like 'full fat' wine. It may be wise to steer moderators towards lower alcohol wine such as German Riesling or Italian sparkling. Or sell them alternatives – kombuchas, sparkling teas and vinegar-based drinks – created for the wine-drinking occasion.

HOW ARE RESTAURANT SOMMELIERS SOLVING THE TEETOTAL CHALLENGE?

At Clare Smyth's Core in Notting Hill Gate – and also at Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason – there's a product invented by award-winning wine writer, Matthew Jukes, Jukes Cordialities. Nine 30ml bottles come beautifully packaged in a box for around £40. "We were sceptical at first," reported Freddie Holt, general manager of Nysa Wine & Spirits, "but they're selling well."

Drinks expert, Christine Parkinson, finds the red wine-alternative, Nine Elms No.18, "brilliant with food". "We are going to be seeing more products like this," she advised sommeliers.

WHOSE PRODUCTS DOYOU LIKE?

Red Sea, a red wine-alternative made by Sharab Drinks, sold well online and we enjoyed the palate-cleansing properties of their latest launch, Rubayyat, with meat and cheese.

YES, BUT THESE NEW DRINKS DON'T TASTE LIKE WINE, DO THEY?

If you're trying to compare wine-alternatives with your usual bottle, you're likely to be disappointed. Imitation isn't the point. Innovation in the adult soft drinks sector is the name of the game.

> "If you're trying to compare wine-alternatives with your usual bottle, you're likely to be disappointed. Imitation isn't the point"

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE MOST OF THE TREND?

- Get advice on what to stock from a specialist teetotal trade retailer such as Wise Bartender.
- Cater for mums-to-be. Vinada's new zero-alcohol Iberian Gold Bubble served in a champagne flute would be a great swap for prosecco at a baby shower.
- Expect zero-alcohol sparkling to outsell still wine.
- Move free-from and low alcohol wines around the store to see which positioning works best.
- Don't carry anything too cheap. There's a reason Seedlip non-alcoholic spirit is as pricey as gin and that's to do with consumer expectations.

WILL THE TREND LAST?

The no/low alcohol drinks market is forecast to grow more than 10 times as quickly as regular alcoholic drinks with low-alcohol outpacing zero (IWSR). We expect to see ever more new products aimed at 'joy-seeking balancers' who like wine.

Peter Richards MW says: "Whether such drinks will successfully replicate fine wine is another matter." We agree with him that it's worth producers using technology and imagination to have a go as 'there will be rewards aplenty for the pioneers'.

Watch this space.



NOT DRINKING – LIKE GOING VEGAN – HAS BECOME COOL. IN THE UK, **ONE IN THREE 16-24** YEAR OLDS IS **TEETOTAL** (OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS)



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IS THIS THE END OF THE CHEAP FOOD ERA

Speciality Food speaks to Patrick Holden, founding director of The Sustainable Food Trust, about what the future holds for food retail

COMMENTATOR



PATRICK HOLDEN
SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRUST

The conversation around sustainability in the food and drink supply chain has picked up in the past few years, with more and more food industry players acknowledging that changes must be made to improve the sector's eco credentials.

"I think there is probably not a retailer in the country today who is not mindful of the challenges of climate change and nature and the need to improve public health," said Patrick Holden, founding director of the Sustainable Food Trust. "In the same way that retailers are thinking about these issues, so are farmers, and the best way for farmers to respond is to transition to practices which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and farm in harmony with nature," he continued.

As agriculture and intensive farming have long been part of the problem, he adds, they must now "become part of the solution. But the question is how?" In the UK, a system of mixed farming, which moves away from chemical farming towards biological farming, is one answer, Patrick said.

"My definition of sustainable food would be food from farming systems which operate inside planetary boundaries, which address climate change, restore nature, and are healthy and health promoting. And that means adopting principles like the circular economy, avoiding chemicals and ideally, processed and distributed more locally," Patrick said.

Despite sustainability being in the public eye as an issue that more and more consumers care about, Patrick acknowledged that this is not always an easy sell. "I think people want to use their purchasing power," but he added, "I don't think it's going to be very easy because much of what I've said has price implications. It's hard to adopt the kind of diet I've been advocating without having to pay more for your food."

Amidst a cost-of-living crisis, this becomes even more challenging. A recent survey revealed that the vast majority (85%) of Brits have noticed an increase in the cost of groceries, and 42% of households are expecting their financial situation to get worse this year.

But Patrick believes there are solutions available. "I think that governments can act to do something," he said. "I think we're reaching the end of the cheap food era, and we have to pay the true cost of our food.

"We don't want to inflate it; we don't want people to be profiting unreasonably from producing proper food, real food. But what we do want is to pay the fair, true price of food. At the moment," he explained, "the food that most people are buying in supermarkets is dishonestly priced. And by that, I mean that the price label doesn't reflect the true cost of production, plus the damage that the production of that food has done to the environment, to climate change or to public health. If you add in those costs, the price wouldn't look cheap at all," he said. "So this idea that there are hidden costs behind our food is a nettle that needs to be grasped, and if that means we have to pay more for good food so be it."

Despite the challenges this presents for consumers, retailers and producers alike, he believes the future is bright for sustainable food production. "I'm optimistic because I think there's a wind of change afoot amongst the public," he said. "I think all of us now are worried about climate change."



> "This idea that there are hidden costs behind our food is a nettle that needs to be grasped, and if that means we have to pay more for good food so be it"

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15 WOMEN TO WATCH IN FOOD & DRINK

In every part of the industry women are powering progress. Anna Blewett salutes 15 very different players

If ever there was a sector wired for diversity and inclusion it had to be food and drink. Ingredients, ideas and people from around the world have enriched our food culture since time immemorial, while women have so often been the originators, manufacturers and distributors of food in communities of every size. And yet sexism and inequality dogs this industry as it does others, with commercial board rooms, factory floors, fields and offices rarely reflecting the ubiquity of women in domestic food settings. According to a report published in May 2021 by membership organisation Meat Business Women, just 36% of the meat industry workforce is female, with 14% of board-level directorships and only five percent of CEO posts held by women. According to stats from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) only 17% of farmers are female, though women now reportedly outnumber men two to one on agricultural higher learning courses.

There's plenty of room for improvement. Each International Women's Day we celebrate the female chefs, chief execs and entrepreneurs who have reached the top in food and drink, though we have to ask ourselves why, in 2022, these women remain rarities. This year's theme, announced by organisers at the UN, was 'gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow', recognising the role women play in adapting to the many challenges facing our modern existence. In the UK food and drink scene we have some fabulous women forging progress, whether it's beer journalist and consultant Melissa Cole challenging stereotypes in brewing (and calling out sexist branding and behaviours from brewers as she does), chef Asma Khan championing all-female kitchens and demanding higher conduct standards from her male counterparts, or food writer Angela Hui advocating for marginalised experiences in the Chinese food industry.

> "People from around the world have enriched our food culture since time immemorial, while women have so often been the originators, manufacturers and distributors of food in communities of every size"



1 GEORGINA HAYDEN, FOOD WRITER AND STYLIST

"The feeling of creating a recipe that people cook and hopefully love is everything. Writing my second book was a huge achievement; so many Greeks and Greek Cypriots reached out to tell me they'd never seen the recipes their families cooked written down in that way. It's an honour to be able to log these to hopefully be passed down and tell people's stories, so it's a brilliant industry to be a part of.

I'd love to see more female cooks and chefs on telly. I don't just mean as guests – I mean having their own shows. So many of the 'chop and chat' style shows we watch are presented by men (predominantly white, middle-aged men), the irony being who is it that historically did the cooking? Women! Mums! And yet it's mostly men 'teaching' us on TV. It's a shame."

2 JO WHITFIELD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF CO-OP FOOD

One of the biggest jobs in UK FMGC retail must have been made



immeasurably harder by Brexit and the pandemic, but Jo has found time to campaign for front line workers' rights. Beside calling for legal protections for store staff facing abuse, Jo has also championed women in retail via the Girls Out Loud campaign. Last month she struck another blow for women aspiring to hold the highest posts in grocery, announcing her intention to take four months of unpaid leave to support her sons through their exams. In 2018 she told the *Evening Standard* "to be great at work, you have to have your family life in great shape", and she continues to break new ground for women and men in pursuing a healthy work/life balance in this pressured sector.

3 JACK MONROE, CAMPAIGNER AND FOOD WRITER

Long known for her budget-busting recipes and advocacy for people living with food poverty, Jack Monroe (AKA The Bootstrap Cook) has made a huge contribution to the public debate over food inflation in recent weeks. Besides reminding householders of the huge value of cooking from scratch with simple food-cupboard staples, she's forced a rethink of the way inflation is calculated – even by the Office for National Statistics – with her viral messaging on food prices. While Asda has u-turned on price rises in its basics ranges, Jack continues to encourage her mighty online following to question supermarket



@JACK_MONROE

deals and find better value through savvy shopping, buying loose and meal planning. As the cost-of-living-crisis escalates her influence and relevance will surely only grow.

4 NYANGA MENDY, CO-FOUNDER OF DARK SUGARS CHOCOLATES

There are some exciting moves afoot to highlight unsung origins of some of our most iconic and exquisite ingredients, and Dark Sugars – an African-owned confectioner with three outlets in London – is on a mission. "I usually wake up at 7am and turn into an octopus until 11pm at night!" says founder Nyanga Mendy, whose family connections to Ghanaian cocoa inform every element of the business. "Basically, that means I do literally everything and anything that is related to the business: paperwork, calls, team meetings, ordering, creating, making the chocolates... Even though I have a great team I'm still very hands-on in my business. I love the people I meet, the challenges I face, the passion for my concept... My ambitions for the next five years are to keep making people happy and to grow Dark Sugars so that everyone recognises African cacao."





5 AMAEZE MADUKAH, REGISTERED NUTRITIONIST AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE DIVERSE NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

The quest for better health and wellbeing has been a huge macro trend in consumer behaviour over the last decade, and thanks to a global health emergency and growing desire to age well, this focus looks set to continue. Amaeze Madukah is one of a growing wave of nutritionists addressing health inequalities and decolonising public health messaging. As a co-founder of The Diverse Nutrition Association – fronted by three young, black women – she's helped create The African and Caribbean Eatwell Plate, an infographic that celebrates foods such as ackee, yam, cassava and plantain within a healthy balanced diet. It's also a helpful alternative to European-centric public health advice that often fails to reach key UK communities. "The bottom line is, if we are not considering a variety of cultural foods as part of the conversation of health, and only focusing on European foods, we are failing as health professionals," says Amaeze.

6 ROSE GRIMOND, CHEESEMAKER AND FOUNDER OF NETTLEBED CREAMERY

"Making cheese has an authenticity about it – there's no 'emperor's new clothes' about it. It's either superlatively good or not so good, so that nakedness is glorious. And just making something is very gratifying. That's an elemental pleasure – turning liquids to solid. There's a childlike wonder to that.

"My responsibilities are to oversee the production of the highest quality of food, and to do that in a framework of responsibility towards the environment. I used to be elbows deep in curd, then I spent most of my time in front of a laptop. Now communication is a large part of what I do. That's certainly been a change over the last seven years."





7 MINETTE BATTERS, FARMER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

Recently re-elected for another two-year term as NFU president, Minette is at the very heart of British farming's fight for a level playing field with importing nations and a sustainable future for domestic farming. Thanks to Brexit, accelerating efforts to slow climate change and fierce public debate around the ethics and health of our food, Minette has become a high-profile advocate for farmers across the British Isles. "I'm truly honoured to lead the NFU at such a crucial time for British food and farming," she said upon her re-election to one agriculture's most important posts. "I have a vision of a sustainable and resilient food industry with a new economic model which ensures a fair return from supply chains and drives profit back into the land, enabling us to maximise the potential for sustainable food production and environmental delivery on farms."

8 RAMONA OBAFEMI FOUNDER OF ABERDEEN-BASED BOX SCHEME MAD POTATO

"Although I grew up in a very small coal mining village [in Romania], my parents always pushed me to dream big and work hard. I've always believed that through hard work you can achieve anything, but that along the way in your journey you should help as many as you can.

"The part I love the most about the British food scene is exploring the new exciting growers and producers; there are so many exciting independent businesses out there. We are now delivering to the whole of the UK; the more orders we get from an area, the quicker we will be able to build an ecosystem serving them with local, independently-owned farm produce close to their home. We are also building our tech platform and looking a giving our customers a new type of experience never seen in UK."



9 NATASHA ISHAQ (RIGHT) CO-OWNER OF THE GOOD STORE, AN ORGANIC AND PLASTIC-FREE SHOP IN EDINBURGH

"My sister Jamila and I both manage the day-to-day running of the shop. On top of that, probably the most important thing is keeping up-to-date with the ethical market and striving to change the way some products are produced. It's a job that requires many hats but between us both it's manageable... just! We wanted to create a space where people can shop ethically and healthily, knowing every product in-store has been ethically sourced and is free from harmful plastic toxins and pesticides. It's been tough but we feel like we have achieved it.

"We're looking forward to expanding the shop and personally I'd like to continue being a positive role model for young people of colour who may find the idea of starting their own business in Scotland intimidating. Scotland could benefit from the creative and entrepreneurial skills of a more diverse business community."



10 SINEAD FENTON, CO-FOUNDER OF AWESIDE FARM IN EAST SUSSEX

Speaking for a next generation of small growers with big ambitions, Sinead has won followers' hearts with her video bulletins on the highs and lows of life in the polytunnel. Fresh optimism and honest heartbreak are served up via Aweside's Instagram feed, sharing the triumphs and tribulations of growing top-quality organic herbs and edible flowers. A typical post sharing the satisfaction of growing beautiful herb bouquets runs: "You'll be seeing a lot more of this next season as we follow our hearts with these and explore further! The new propagation tunnel is full of amazing herbs; rosemary's that smell like ginger, tarragons that have a twang of fruit salad sweets, mints that smell like pineapples and strawberries, sages that taste like blackcurrant and tangerine!"



11 SHOKOFEH HAJAZI, HEAD OF INSIGHT AT THE FOOD PEOPLE

"It's my job to understand and predict trends in the food and drink world, managing a team of trendspotters who are constantly gathering information from around the world. Basically my task is to cut through all the noise out there, to explain how today's consumer eats, drinks, shops and dines out – as well as what they will do in one, three, five, or 10 years' time!

I'm constantly amazed by the work ethic, creativity and agility of people who work in the food industry. It's not always easy, and the last couple of years have been a huge test for many businesses. The purpose of my work now is to help food and drink businesses connect with the power of trends, which drive innovation in the industry. It helps businesses be better prepared for whatever the future holds."



12 JANE COOK, AN INDEPENDENT PR CONSULTANT BASED IN WALES

"I'm so lucky in that my passion became my job; I've been writing about food and sustainability since 2014, via a blog I set up on a whim. Finally, in 2019, I decided to leave agency life and start working for myself, and now I help sustainably-minded food businesses and organisations to communicate their offerings more effectively, and gain more attention for the good things they do.

"The last few years have been transformative; I feel like I've gone from being the only person in the room talking about sustainability, to one of hundreds (thousands, even). It's been amazing to see how consumer habits are changing, and I'm excited to see how this accelerates the pace of change for the better."



13 SARAH HOLMYARD, HEAD OF SALES AND MARKETING AT OFFSHORE SHELLFISH

"Our family company is small, so my job is very hands on. I just do whatever's needed! At the moment I'm handing the exports; that's meant a lot of paperwork and politics over the last couple of years as well as sales. When I can I go out on the boat and work on the deck harvesting mussels with the crew. It's a really physical job!

My whole career has been in seafood – I worked on a fishing boat as a teenager, for Inverawe Smokehouse, in Loch's Fyne Oysters' French office, for Seafood Scotland, but I've come back to the family business. It's sustainable, regenerative aquaculture that has a great product and creates stable local jobs. I grew up on a mussel farm, so I'm really passionate about



14 CHARMAIN LOVE, CO-FOUNDER AND ACTIVIST IN RESIDENCE AT B-LABS UK

"I spend a lot of time working with B Corps to find out where leadership is emerging and how business can stretch further, dig deeper and work more closely together to solve some of the interconnected challenges we're facing right now. Trying to understand what businesses do, how they're doing it and how they could collaborate more often. I see myself as an activator – activating change. Positive framings matter. I love the word 'heliotropy' – the tendency of plants to grow in the direction of the sun. I believe humans are no different; we grow taller and faster and stronger when we're motivated by things full of warmth, light and positivity. We need to stay rooted to the reality of the challenges we face but the trajectory and fuel we use has to be positive."



15 JOANNA PARMAN, STRATEGIC INSIGHT DIRECTOR AT KANTAR WORLDPANEL

"Using data, I work with clients to unpick sone of their big questions, from 'How do I grow my category?' to 'Why do shoppers choose one brand over another?'

It's about using information we have about shopper behaviour to see how businesses can develop their proposition.

It's crucial to start off with the right question – it's easy to get sucked into the data and find interesting things, but you have to look for what we call the 'so what?' What's the impact of that data on your decisions? That's the gold.

"I really do believe if businesses were able to have some of their big questions answered there would be a lot less waste in this industry.

"Working with people and helping them solve problems is the most energising thing I do. That motivates me massively."



@AWESIDEFARM



FINAL CALL

There's a posivity currently pervading the *Speciality Food* camp which I have a quiet confidence extends out to the wider fine food industry, and of that I am glad. You will have read time and time again about the struggles facing retailers and businesses across the sector – indeed you're likely to have endured some hardships yourselves, and I sincerely hope that this publication has provided some helpful resources and advice during these testing times – but brighter times are well and truly ahead, and I'm not just talking about the advent of spring and summer.

As I write, I am looking forward to attending the upcoming trade shows, not least because it gives me an opportunity to travel beyond the confines of my desk and come face-to-face with the industry in ways that have been few and far between over the past couple of years.

The *Speciality Food* team is forever pushing to be a more valuable read to you all, and that passion pushes us forward into this more positive period, but I am interested to hear what plans you are making for the coming year and beyond. Are you feeling this wave of proactivity and positivity also, and how are you making the most of it?

Of course, there will be some businesses which haven't been able to lift their heads from the impact of Covid-19 just yet. In fact, there's a number of fine food and drink companies which didn't survive the pandemic.

There are a great many challenges facing the sector right now, from the current war in Ukraine causing sleepless nights and all sorts of hardships for millions of people across the globe to inflation rises and the still-present Covid pandemic.

But with the new-style normality returning for many of us, I feel that now is the right time to celebrate and collaborate in any way we can. Here's to a more positive, proactive season ahead.

We love hearing from our readers. Do you have a story to share or expertise to pass on? Please get in touch with us via holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

5 MINUTES WITH

NAT COOPER, SENIOR TRADE LEAD AT SIMPLY ROASTED



WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
Attempting the World Record for crossing the channel in a pedalo.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?
Working as a cashier for my local Waitrose which I enjoyed. It gave me a lot of confidence talking to different people every day.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?
A challenger brand genuinely shaking up the category.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE EVER DONE?
I had a temp job testing that a satellite navigation's battery worked. It involved carefully unpacking the TomTom device, turning it on/off and then repacking it. I lasted until lunchtime then left.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?
Seeing the product you've developed hit the shelves.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?
Admin. Sales professionals are notorious for it. We love focusing on the highs of the win versus the form-filling that comes afterwards.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
I struggle with its environmental impact, especially the expectation that mainstream brands and start-ups should be equally responsible in their sustainability commitments.

TEA OR COFFEE?
100% coffee. I treated myself to a SAGE Barista Pro last year and it's a game changer. The adjustable grind size, monitoring extraction time. Yeah, I'm one of those.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?
Breakfast is simple: A toasted hot cross bun with butter, an oat flat white and a Moju Ginger shot. Lunch: Nut Roast Xmas dinner with all the trimmings, courtesy of the culinary wizard, my mum. Dinner: A traditional Panang tofu curry with rice paper rolls dipped in peanut sauce. Nightcap: An old-fashioned.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?
"Happiness only real when shared" – Christopher McCandless

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?
I've been vegetarian since I was 10 so nothing too crazy. On a school trip to Italy in the 90s, they were very confused with what to feed me. I ended up with a lettuce and salad they had 'warmed up'.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?
Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

SWEET OR SAVOURY?
Crisps have a special place in my heart. Savoury is the front-runner.

BE CONNECTED

"Increasing confidence about heading out and about, combined with the return to the office, means we're starting to see *pre-pandemic shopping patterns* once again"

FRASER MCKEVITT, HEAD OF RETAIL AND CONSUMER INSIGHT FOR KANTAR WORLDPANEL DIVISION, UK

SPECIALITY FOOD

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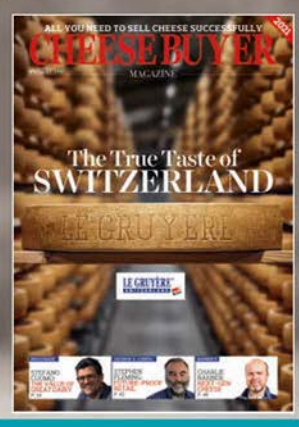
The Summer Special issue will include:

- Oils, Vinegars & Dressings
- BBQs & Accompaniments
- Summer Drinks
- Yoghurt, Butter & Cream
- Crisps & Bagged Snacks
- Picnic Food



CHEESE BUYER 2022

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For further information contact Jess on 01206 505901 or jessica.brett@aceville.co.uk

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Great quality olive oil is a boon to any keen cook's kitchen, and in this olive oil I have not only found an oil which tastes fantastic and is impressively versatile – so far I've cooked steaks with it, whizzed up some aioli and made a delicious zesty salad dressing – but one which offers up an incredible story, too. Founder Paul Harris is passionate about offering a true taste of unspoiled Corfu, and I can't imagine a finer one than this.
wisetreeoil.com

SURREAL CEREALS

There are some childhood culinary loves that it's hard to shake, and breakfast cereal has long been one of those for me. However, not keen to revisit old favourites – I like to think my understanding of dietary requirements have developed since the last time I indulged in those – and not finding anything on the market which ticked the necessary boxes, my cravings went unanswered until I came across Surreal. Deliciously sweet and moreish but containing zero sugar, high levels of protein and boasting vegan credentials, these are the grown up versions of the cereals you loved as a child only better in so many ways.
eatsurreal.co.uk



NO EVIL NUTRITION

We all know that January is key detox time, but there's no reason why healthy habits should stop in their tracks come midnight on the 31st January. For those of us determined to develop a healthier mind, body and soul long into 2022, No Evil Nutrition's powders are worth their weight in gold. Packed full of high quality superfoods, each blend – the range currently consists of Organic Mushroom Blend, Organic Super Greens and Organic Vegan Protein – is a versatile way to add some extra goodness to your menus (and I think we could all do with a bit more of that).
noevilnutrition.com



THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Dorian Janmaat, executive head chef at The Idle Rocks Hotel



The demand for fresh, local and seasonal cuisine is now more prominent than ever, and given The Idle Rocks' waterside location, it must be about offering the best locally sourced seafood and ingredients possible to our guests.

With my team, . It's a true celebration of Cornwall and offers an unforgettable culinary journey, with a strong emphasis on seasonal flavours, keeping true to our sustainability ethos. We are lucky enough to have some of the best independent producers and suppliers on our doorstep. It's clear that when it comes down to what you can create on a plate and serve your guests, the locality is almost always a key factor, especially with the increase in demand for fresh and sustainably sourced produce. Lockdown gave the opportunity for the local food system to come into its own and served the needs of local people in our community really well. The potential has been there for a long time, but the crisis showcased what the local food system really can do.

When developing our menus, we know that our fish and shellfish are delivered fresh every morning and served to our guests the same day, so we set our prices to reflect this. From our St Mawes Native oysters handpicked by St Mawes fisherman, James Brown, to our amazing fresh fish from Matthew Stevens based in St Ives, when it comes down to it, working with independent producers becomes more than just picking something that looks nice, it's a partnership, where you can really understand the true provenance of the ingredients you are getting.

Of course, the focus is not purely on seafood, at The Idle Rocks, our other key independent suppliers include Cornish Saffron Company, who use only natural fertilizers including seaweed from the Roseland Peninsula coast. We source our eggs from St Mawes Hens, who deliver the best eggs, and Foote's Pastured Produce hand-reared chickens in Truro are also an incredible addition to our menu. This produce is always perfectly accompanied by an abundance of heritage vegetables from Zucca Farm on the Lizard and the smaller accompaniments from Trevibban Mill winery near Newquay, such as the finishing delicate sauces and wine that is served to our guests in the restaurant.

At The Idle Rocks, we will always aim to shop independently and source the majority of our produce from the local area. We want to ensure that every guest leaves with a culinary experience they will never forget.

> "We have designed a menu around stories brought to fruition through carefully developed relationships with local suppliers, fishermen and farmers"

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Garofalo



COMFORT AND STYLE

Italian cuisine offers foodies a rare opportunity to be comforted and excited, all in one fell swoop

It's not for nothing that Italian favourites such as lasagne and spaghetti bolognese have topped the UK's 'favourite dish' surveys for generations. From speedy weeknight suppers to low and slow ragu-based dishes bubbling on the stove on weekend afternoons, an Italian-inspired dish is often just what the doctor ordered – comforting, familiar, and usually reassuringly simple.

That's not to say that Italian cuisine is as cut and dry as the average Joe's menu would attest. Indeed, there are myriad ways to push the boat out and try something a little different, whether your customers would prefer to keep it safe – in which case, invest in the kaleidoscopic array of high quality pastas available or provide ingredients for a DIY pesto and pasta sauce – or fancy doing something extra special.

Of course, a well-stocked supply of good quality basics is the cornerstone of any retailer's Italian offering. Dried – and fresh, if you have refrigerator space – pastas for all occasions are a strong start, and a range of jarred pasta sauces and pestos, antipasti and snacks will stand you in good stead.

Oils and balsamic vinegars are a must, but be considerate of the range now available across supermarkets great and small and be sure to offer something different. There's a reason why cheap oils are cheap – highly processed, they fail to offer even a hint of what great Italian oils are all about – and why there's such a wide range of balsamics on the market, so do your research and provide an option for shoppers purchasing for any occasion.

Italian cheeses have become a mainstay in British households, so building your range to incorporate the classics like Parmigiano Reggiano and Gorgonzola Dolce is a must, but it's well worth getting hold of cheeses like Taleggio – punchy and creamy, and delicious on pizzas and melted into pasta dishes – for customers keen to try something new.

Delicious, familiar, and offering plenty to explore – it's time to give Italian cuisine the spotlight (and shelf space) it deserves.

Are you passionate about Italian food and drink? Get in touch via holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk.



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