EXCITING PRODUCTS, LATEST TRENDS, EXPERT ADVICE

2024

CONFECTIONERY & CHOCOLATE BUYER

From the publishers of SPECIALITY FOOD



TOAST TO GIFTS THAT MAKE YOU SMILE

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MINT CHOC DOUBLE DIPPED



THE WONDERFUL WORLD
OF FOREST FEAST

forestfeast.com



WELCOME TO CONFECTIONERY & CHOCOLATE BUYER



Welcome to the 2024 edition of *Chocolate & Confectionery Buyer*, brought to you by the team behind *Speciality Food*.

The past 12 months have seen producers take great strides in the chocolate and confectionery sector, innovating to satisfy the consumer demand for new flavours and formats, as well as taking steps to reduce their impact on our planet through considered sourcing and new ways of packaging their products.

That's not to say that the appetite for traditional confectionery has waned; indeed, as comfort food retains its hold over what British shoppers eat and drink, classic family favourites are still selling throughout the UK.

As well as highlighting the exciting new products hitting the market right now and sharing expert insight into each sector, in the following pages we tell the stories of a number of movers and shakers in the industry to help you make informed stocking choices.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR





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CONTENT

Editor
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505110
holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com

Content Creator
Charlotte Smith-Jarvis, 01206 505981
charlotte.smith-jarvis@artichokehq.com

Art Director
Lee Whiteford
lee.whiteford@artichokehq.com

Published by
Artichoke Media Ltd,
Global House, Global Park,
Moorside, Colchester
Essex, CO1 2TJ

COMMERCIAL

Advertising Manager
Jessica Brett
jessica.brett@artichokehq.com

Deputy Advertising Manager
Sammy Kirby

Senior Account Manager
Louise Barnes 01206 508629
louise.barnes@artichokehq.com

Accounts
artichokemedialtd@integral2.com

Publisher
Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@artichokehq.com

artichoke



A UNIQUE PROPOSITION

Thanks to its stand-out provenance, Firetree's chocolate is delighting discerning foodies across the board

Introducing Firetree: a range of multi-award-winning chocolate whose roots lie, quite literally, in the volcanic soil of islands in the South Pacific, Indian Ocean and Hispaniola.

By sourcing some of the world's rarest cocoa beans directly from single estates, whose farmers are worked with closely to secure their future – for example, Lucy, a cocoa farmer on Makira Island, was able to send her two daughters to university as a direct result of working with Firetree - the business is perfectly positioned to create truly outstanding chocolate.

"By knowing the origin of your chocolate, only then can you appreciate the sheer amount of skill and process that goes into getting these tiny cocoa beans harvested, fermented and dried on one farm, then directly shipped and expertly crafted into amazing chocolate," explains Jo Palmer, head of sales. "Our sustainable supply chain means that by going out to visit and work with our farmers, we can directly trace and be certain of the quality from bean to bar."

As a result, Firetree's customer base is an erudite – and wide-ranging – bunch, from consumers to cafe owners, as well as discerning fine food retailers. "Our consumers are the curious - the explorers, the adventurers and the indulgers," says Jo. "They are people who believe that taste comes from working expertly with quality ingredients."

Firetree's range is as varied as it is delicious. "With a low and slow roasting, then winnowing and conching our own cocoa beans, our range includes bars, thins, truffles and hot chocolate in 40% Milk right up to our critically-acclaimed 100% cocoa collection," explains Jo. "From the densely bio-rich Sambirano Valley in Madagascar to the idyllic shores of Malekula Island in Vanuatu, the cocoa beans directly sourced from each of our seven origins represent unique taste notes to excite true chocolate aficionados."

Foodies are in for a one-of-a-kind treat. "Think cherry, citrus and rich cocoa to blackberry, baked raspberry and honey – it never fails to amaze us that the same handful of ingredients yield such varied and intriguing taste notes. Much like you would expect from fine wine, whisky and coffee."

Single-estate, varied and truly unique, Firetree is a one-of-a-kind producer making waves in the world of fine chocolate.





INDULGENT MOMENTS

Despite feeling the pinch in their finances, consumers continue to treat themselves. Rather than splashing out on fancy tasting menus and expensive holidays, they're keeping it simple, looking for affordable ways to reward their hard work – and one of the things they're reaching for more frequently is confectionery, but not your standard corner shop buys. They want to indulge in single-serve, ethically-made chocolate bars, and boxes of truffles and fine pralines to share at home with loved ones after a home cooked meal. And when buying gifts, they're seeking out products that are unique and exquisite



LUXURY CHOCOLATE BARS

Insiders say consumers are dedicating much more attention to the luxury bar category, and are willing to pay more for a higher quality, single origin, sustainable bar – something they can nibble after dinner over the course of a few evenings. Try positioning premium bars near your wine selection or meal solutions.

MELT CHOCOLATES NUT & SALT CHOCOLATE LIBRARY BOX
Handcrafted in London, this plastic-free collection brings together some of the brand's most exceptional bars, from Dark Chocolate Hazelnut to Salty Milk Chocolate.
meltchocolates.com

PUMP STREET CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE 60%
Available in the craft maker's regular or new miniature formats. The bakery's cookie dough is caramelised and tumbled into its bean to bar 60% Ecuadorian chocolate.
pumpstreetchocolate.com



BARE BONES CHOCOLATE HONDURAS 55% MILK
An award-winning single origin bar made using cocoa from Honduras' Copan region. With notes of cream, fudge and raisin.
bareboneschocolate.co.uk



The desire for indulgence remains strong, and UK consumers appear willing to compromise in terms of frequency and quantity of chocolate consumption to treat themselves with higher-quality offerings. According to our survey, International's Voice of the Consumer: Lifestyles Survey (fielded January to February 2024), 30% of UK respondents are looking for superior taste in their food and drink purchases, and 19% are willing to pay more for this. The trend has attracted the attention of category players, with new product development focused on premiumisation, sharing and gift giving

TRUFFLES

Speciality shoppers are no longer satisfied by high-sugar truffles, made with glucose syrup and hydrogenated oils. They're looking for richly flavoured artisan varieties, including real cream and butter, which allow the true nature of the cocoa beans to shine through.

HIGHLAND CHOCOLATIER COFFEE PAIRINGS

Velvety truffles and pralines, chosen by chocolatier Iain Burnett to match perfectly with a range of coffees. A wonderful gift. Comes complete with a coffee pairing guide.

highlandchocolatier.co.uk





THE CHOCOLATE SOCIETY MARC DE CHAMPAGNE TRUFFLES

Super smooth, sensuous chocolates, made with single-origin milk chocolate and real Champagne. Finished with a dusting of icing sugar.

chocolate.co.uk

TRWFFL BARTI SPICED RUM CHOCOLATES

These delectable truffles are made in small batches in Pembrokeshire, using natural ingredients. They're whirled with local Barti rum, infused with spice and laver seaweed.

trwffl.co.uk



PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

FATSO

Tired of the same old, boring dark chocolate? FATSO is here to shake things up. They're not just chocolate; they're a movement. We're talking about true, single origin Fino de Aroma chocolate from their farmer friends in Colombia. Ethical, chunky, delicious chocolate that's unapologetically indulgent. Forget the serious, stuffy stuff. FATSO is all about fun, flavor, and breaking the rules. Join them in shaking up the world of chocolate, one chunk at a time.

sofatso.com





> Comfort food is here to stay. As we head into the winter, and financial tightening of household finances, indulgences may be the one thing that remains in the shopping basket

BEN DAVIES, FOUNDER AND CEO OF VYPR

GORGEOUS GIFTING

When buying gifts in speciality retail, consumers want access to an array of products they won't find on the high street. Look for brands that offer limited edition chocolate and sweet collections of the highest order.



CHOCOLATIA CHLOE'S SIGNATURE COLLECTION

A collection of Chloe Oswald's award-winning chocolates, including Coconut & Lime, Hazelnut Latte and Isle of Sky Sea Salt Caramel.

chocolatia.co.uk

CHOCOLATE AND LOVE CHOCOLATE NAPOLITAINS

Within the intricately illustrated botanical tin, discover 30 pieces of Fairtrade chocolate to share, from Rich Dark 71% to 55% Sea Salt.

chocolateandlove.com





WOOD ROW CHOCOLATE SEASONAL COLLECTION

Chef Simon Woodrow's chocolates are glossy and visually stunning, layering handmade mallows, caramels, pralines, truffles and pate de fruits. Bars are also available.

woodrowchocolates.com



CHAMPION & REEVES SOFT NOUGAT

Satisfyingly chewy pieces of nougat, made using Spanish orange blossom honey and Italian candied orange peel.

championreeves.com

HILL STREET NATURAL FRUIT PASTELS

Presented in the confectioner's pretty pastel pink boxes, these soft, intensely fruity pastels are made with real ingredients in flavours spanning blackcurrant to passionfruit.

hill.st





LAVOLIO VEGAN FOREST CHOCOLATES

These are charming. A tin of handmade Italian candies, including toasted almonds, pistachios and hazelnuts, covered in chocolate, and finished with a crisp sugar shell.

lavolio.com

SENSATIONAL SWEETS

Think outside the box when curating your sweetie collection. Go beyond bon bons and fudge and excite your customers with brittles, hand pulled soft rock, fine artisan jellies, Turkish delight, comfits and pastels. Packaging matters here, especially as this category is ripe for gifting. Getting it right will pay dividends during the key present giving seasons.



AN HONEST APPROACH

In a challenging climate, Summerdown is paving the way towards a sustainable future

It's safe to say that 2024 has been a turbulent year for the confectionery sector. With global price increases hitting 300%, chocolate pricing has been significantly affected with knock-on effects for producers, retailers and consumers alike.

"Everyone working with chocolate is having to look at ways to counteract the cocoa price increase," says Jo Colman, chief mint officer at Summerdown, English peppermint growers and producers of award winning peppermint chocolates. Thankfully, the Summerdown team has found a way to minimise price changes for their stockists and customers without sacrificing the quality of peppermint treats they are renowned for. "We have been working closely with our manufacturing partners to monitor this volatility, and not compromising on our ingredients or our supply chain has been vital to ensure our peppermint products continue to delight and bring joy to our customers," says Jo.

Building a connection

With British consumers recognising the value of quality more than ever before, Summerdown's product range is sure to remain popular despite the modest price increases 2025 will bring. "Customers are looking for something with more character, they like to see that their products are made, and in Summerdown's case, grown, harvested and distilled in the UK."

Naturally, sharing the story behind the products has proven to be a recipe for success. "As a business we have diversified and are now offering tours of our farm so customers and stockists can walk through our peppermint fields, see the distillery in action and even stay in one of our shepherd's huts on the farm," continues Jo. "Our B Corp certification is also a reason to buy, as it shows our priorities as a business are to put planet and people alongside generating a profit."

Education is key to the Summerdown mission, explains Jo. "We invest in sampling and seasonal displays, and we love to educate our stockists so they can talk to their customers about Summerdown, the farm and the history behind our award-winning range."







MAKING SIMPLE MOMENTS SPECIAL

Booja-Booja's new Chocolate Wonders bring chocolatey delight to everyday occasions

With consumers living busier lives than ever, every opportunity for a moment of self-indulgence is welcomed with open arms. Enter Booja-Booja's innovative new range – Chocolate Wonders – which not only satisfies the growing demand for on-the-go treats but upholds the business's stringent quality and sustainability credentials.

Renowned for their innovative free-from truffles for 25 years, Booja-Booja is truly one of a kind and dedicated to providing only the very best for its customers. "We're the only producer of premium chocolate truffles and ice creams that are dairy free, gluten free, vegan and organic. We don't compromise on any of those things and we don't compromise on taste or quality either. We only bring products to market when we're happy that they really are absolutely delicious," explains Louise Collins, marketing co-ordinator. This focus on taste has earned the business a passionate following. "We've put deliciousness at the forefront of everything we do for more than twenty years and that's why we have such a loyal customer base."

Chocolate Wonders offer all this and more. "We know that lots of people love our chocolate truffles but only buy them as gifts for loved ones or as treats for very special occasions. We wanted to give those Booja-Booja lovers something for themselves and bring a little Booja-Booja deliciousness to every day. That's why we created Chocolate Wonders; they're designed for self-treating and easy sharing," says Louise. "You get all the deliciousnes and the free from credentials, because they're made on the same site, with the same premium, organic ingredients as our truffles, but they're smaller and packed into pouches so they can be enjoyed on the go, more informally."

> "Chocolate Wonders are made to bring little chocolatey smiles to simple moments"

Chocolate Wonders are available in four irresistible flavours: Hazelnut, a chocolate hazelnut ganache rolled in rich chocolate flakes; Cookie Dough, special little nuggets of chocolate chip cookie dough rolled in rich chocolate flakes; Salted Caramel: chocolate salted caramel chewy ganache rolled in rich chocolate flakes; and Raspberry Scrunch: raspberry chocolate ganache with caramel scrunch rolled in rich chocolate flakes, so there's something to satisfy every simple, self-treat moment.





A TASTE OF THE PAST

Nostalgia is a key trend in food and drink right now, as shoppers crave the comfort of traditional foods and flavours from their childhood. As well as investing in premium craft chocolate bars, they're interested in artisanal fudges and brittles, made the old-fashioned way, with real butter in copper pans. They're loving hand-pulled candies that hark back to yesteryear, and the retro favourites their parents will have stashed away in the cupboards when they were little, from peppermint chocolate thins to chocolate liqueurs. Also showing surprising growth are chocolate-covered fruit and nuts, with new brands carving out a niche here, bringing to the market products which feel familiar but are crafted using the very finest ingredients to appeal to the discerning modern consumer



FUDGE & TOFFEE

The soft, yielding texture of a piece of fudge or a snappy bite of toffee is often enough to tug on the nostalgia strings, conjuring memories of fairgrounds or seaside holidays. Lean in to the playfulness and traditional nature of these sweets by choosing brands with a strong sense of heritage.

DEVON COTTAGE ORGANIC SEA SALTED FUDGE

An award-winning fudge, with sea salt crystals added to enhance and contrast the buttery sweetness with mineral notes of the sea. **devoncottagefudge.co.uk**

WALKER'S NONSUCH ORIGINAL CREAMY TOFFEE SLAB

A huge 400g sharing slab of the traditional confectioner's creamy toffee, made with natural ingredients, including real butter. Comes with a novelty hammer. **walkers-nonsuch.co.uk**



SECOND STREET ROASTED HAZELNUT TOFFEE BRITTLE DARK CHOCOLATE

The Irish maker's irresistible plant-based toffee brittle, enhanced with hazelnuts and coated in smooth Belgian dark chocolate. **secondstreetbakeshop.com**

"Well-loved old time classics and revamped childhood favourites are becoming a real hit with consumers. Sweet treats, cocktails, milkshakes and meals that provide a sense of nostalgia have a wide appeal. And given that consumers are going through turbulent times and facing change, demand for nostalgic and comforting food and drink is something we expect to see grow"

BIDFOOD

CLASSIC GIFTS

Food is a conversation starter – especially when it sparks memories. Within your gifting range, be sure to stock up on those classic favourites which you know will appeal to multiple generations, encouraging them to share stories of lunches, dinners and Christmasses past.



ANTHON BERG CHOCOLATE COCKTAILS
In all-new packaging, expect nothing but the best. The finest, bar-style cocktails, made with premium branded spirits, in a crisp chocolate shell.
worldofsweets.co.uk



LOVE COCOA PATISSERIE CHOCOLATIER SELECTION
An assortment of 21 truffles to share, made using ethically sourced cocoa and with fillings based on classic puds, from Birthday Cake Caramel to Billionaire Bite and Lemon Cheesecake.
lovecocoa.com

SUMMERDOWN DARK CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT DOMINOES
Moreish, svelte dark chocolate thins which can be snapped down the middle for two perfect bites. Each infused with the farm's single-estate Black Mitcham peppermint oil.
summerdown.com





FRUIT & NUTS

We expect the coated fruit and nut category to grow over the coming year. Many of the products emerging are HFSS compliant, and chime with consumer interest in more natural treats that are high in protein. Set your business apart by looking for products with a point of difference. Chocolate dates are on the up, as are sweet trail mixes, combining chocolate pieces with nuts, dried fruit and seeds.



FOREST FEAST PEANUT BUTTER AND MILK CHOCOLATE DATES
A seriously indulgent way to enjoy dried fruit. The finest North African deglat nour dates are double dipped, first in peanut butter, then in smooth milk chocolate.
forestfeast.com

CAMBROOK HAZELNUTS – SALTED CARAMEL DARK CHOCOLATE
Hazelnuts are tossed and coated in Cambrook's Italian caramelising pans for a pleasing, toasty crunch before being smothered in smooth dark chocolate.
cambrookfoods.co.uk





NIBBLE SIMPLY LUX CHOC NUTTY MANGO MIX
The brand's award-winning low sugar 81% Madagascan chocolate chips marry with toasted hazelnuts, almonds and dried mango in this HFSS compliant snack.
nibblesimply.com

73% OF UK **CONSUMERS** ARE **LOYAL** TO THEIR **FAVOURITE** BRAND OF **CONFECTIONERY**, WITH **GEN Z** AND **MILLENNIALS** EXPRESSING THE **HIGHEST** LEVEL OF LOYALTY. THEY CONSIDER **PACKAGING** ONE OF THE MOST **IMPORTANT** ATTRIBUTES FOR CONFECTIONERY PRODUCTS

MORDOR INTELLIGENCE

10 NOSTALGIC SWEETS TO STOCK

- Flying Saucers
- Sherbet Bon Bons
- Rhubarb & Custards
- Jelly Babies
- Liquorice Allsorts
- Wine Gums
- Gobstoppers
- Lollipops
- Barley Sugars
- Fruit Rock





A WORLDWIDE ICON

As the UK's sole distributor of Anthon Berg's renowned confections, World of Sweets is proud to bring its historic range to fine food retailers

> “With a wide range of spirits from globally-recognised brands contained within the famous bottle-shaped premium chocolate – vodka, whisky, liqueur, rum, cognac and tequila – it’s no wonder that Anthon Berg is world-renowned for this range”

At the heart of World of Sweets’ mission is to provide independent retailers with the very best confectionery from around the world, and Anthon Berg is the perfect example of a premium confectionery brand that is taking the fine food world by storm with the distributor at its helm.

A historic brand

Founded in 1884, the first Anthon Berg shop was opened in Copenhagen. It soon found fame as a premium chocolate maker, and in 1924 the business’s iconic chocolate liqueur bottles were produced. These world-famous confections have gone on to help position Anthon Berg as a market leader – with a 22% market share in its native country, now is the perfect time to share its outstanding range with British consumers.

The brand’s liqueur chocolates are a particular highlight of the selection, with sales increasing by 95% in the past decade. With a wide range of spirits from globally-recognised brands contained within the famous bottle-shaped premium chocolate – vodka, whisky, liqueur, rum, cognac and tequila – it’s no wonder that Anthon Berg is world-renowned for this range. Its high quality helps this product stand out from the crowd; the producer has invested in one-shot technology as well as a secret recipe to ensure that there is no sugar crust to keep the chocolate and alcohol separate, meaning that consumers can enjoy an optimum taste experience.

With UK consumers more interested than ever in the sustainability of the products they consume, Anthon Berg is proud to source only 100% Rainforest Alliance-certified chocolate for its range. The brand’s packaging has had an eco-friendly revamp, too. “More and more buyers and consumers are asking about the sustainability credentials of our packaging, and so in late 2022-early 2023 the owner of Anthon Berg, Toms Group, decided to remove the plastic and make all of our packaging recyclable,” says Chris Smith, partner brand manager at World of Sweets.

The perfect gift

While liqueur chocolates are a must-stock during the festive season, they are also suitable for gifting throughout the year. Anthon Berg’s multiple pack formats mean that every occasion is covered, from birthdays and anniversaries to national celebrations such as Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day.

Plus, with Christmas on the horizon, Anthon Berg has the perfect showstopping product to catch shoppers’ eyes: advent calendars filled with its premium confections. With two products in the range – a Chocolate Liqueurs Advent Calendar and a Marzipan Advent Calendar – consumers are sure to be delighted every day in the run-up to Christmas Day.

Catering for all

Younger shoppers are catered for in the form of Anthon Berg’s cocktail-filled bottles. This on-trend concept is suitable for year-round selling, and combines high quality dark chocolate with smooth alcoholic fillings – including Cosmopolitan, Mojito, Espresso Martini, Vodka Mule, Pina Colada and Lemon Drop. Inspired by international bartenders and expertly shaken and stirred by Anthon Berg’s chocolatiers, these are a vibrant addition to any confectionery display. “The cocktail range has a slightly sweeter flavour than the rest of the range, so it’s the ideal way to introduce new customers to alcohol-filled chocolates,” says Chris. “The fact that Anthon Berg has partnered with world-famous brands to create these cocktails means that they’ll appeal to a wide audience, too.”



For lovers of whisky, Anthon Berg has the ultimate treat: a Whisky School (Tasting Journey) gift pack of chocolate bottles filled with an varied selection of whiskies offering varied tasting notes. From light and delicate to rich and smoky, five of the world’s most renowned single malt scotch whiskies are shared with consumers in this innovative occasion-ready format.



While Anthon Berg is best known for its alcohol-filled chocolate bottles, there’s a wide range of other premium confectionery products in its range. As well as a varied selection of chocolate gift boxes, the business specialises in Fruits in Marzipan. A true taste of Danish culinary tradition, this range brings together fine chocolate, marzipan and fruit jam with liqueur in individually-wrapped confections – perfect for gifting and sharing.

A modern icon

New for 2025 is Anthon Berg’s exciting collaboration with Baileys cream liqueur. As the UK’s leading cream liqueur brand, Baileys is the perfect match for Anthon Berg’s 140 year-strong expertise in high quality marzipan production. Taking the form of a marzipan round covered in milk chocolate with an attractive swirl of dark chocolate and the unmistakeable taste of Baileys cream liqueur, this is a new launch not to be missed. Eight individually wrapped pieces are presented in the dual-branded gift box, making this the ultimate indulgence for chocolate lovers throughout the year.

With Anthon Berg perfectly balancing tradition and innovation, and catering for today’s consumer palate with expertise and style, now is the perfect time to indulge in their ranges via World of Sweets.



THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS

The world of confectionery never stands still, with key trends across the food industry having made a huge impact across multiple categories in the last year. We're seeing the emergence of confectionery products infused with functional and adaptogenic ingredients in response to growing interest in the wellbeing sphere. HFSS regulations have ushered a wide range of natural fruit snacks into the arena, where they are standing up to traditional sweeties. And there are fun new formats popping up every single month. Make your mark by seeking out something a little bit different for your aisles this season



FUNCTIONAL

More and more producers are thinking about the ways they can introduce functional ingredients into their ranges – from adaptogenic, stress-relieving mushrooms to herb and spice blends, superfoods, vitamins and minerals, and gut-friendly bacteria. This trend is starting to cross over into confectionery, and is definitely one to watch.

SPELLBOUND STATE OF ZEN BOTANICAL TRUFFLES
Delicate, natural raw dark gianduja truffles infused with wild orange essential oil and lemon balm, designed to alleviate tension and anxiety.
wearespellbound.co.uk

TULA CODE MUSHROOM CHOCOLATE BARK
This bar is naturally sweetened with dates and filled with adaptogenic lion's mane and cordyceps mushroom extracts, alongside berries, lucuma, grapes, pecan and ayurvedic spices.
thetulacode.com



TWEEK SWEETS SMOOTHIE CHEWS
Juicy, fruity, smoothie flavoured sweets, containing 95% less sugar than comparable products and packed with added fibre.
tweeksweets.com



"Products with less or no added sugars are more common now than ever before, while functional foods with added health benefits such as fibre, gut health and immunity support have also continued to enter the market"

EMILY KEOGH, FOUNDER OF PALM PR

FABULOUSLY FRUITY

These certainly aren't traditional, but there's a great deal of interest in fruit snacks which can take the place of sugar-filled sweets. Natural, lower in calories, and made without anything artificial, they are a perfect fit for larger stores looking for something interesting that fits in with HFSS regulations. A hit with parents, they're worth exploring if you have a large family following as well.

SQUISHED BLUEBERRY RESCUE FRUIT BALLS
Each 40g pack is made with 50 blueberries 'rescued' from becoming surplus waste. With no added sugar, gluten or nuts.
wearesquished.uk





SOUL FRUIT DRAGON FRUIT CHIPS
Unique slices of 100% natural dragon fruit, dried to a crisp. A single serve is one of your five a day.
soulfruit.co.uk

TRUFRU NATURE'S RASPBERRIES
Ripe, fresh raspberries, frozen, and drenched in lashings of white chocolate, then finished in a dark chocolate shell.
trufru.com



PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

SCHOOL YARD KITCHEN

Unleash your taste buds with School Yard Kitchen, a forward-thinking Scottish producer redefining indulgence! Savour the irresistible flavour waves of the award-winning Munchy Dark Chocolate Chilli Pretzels and artisanal Chocolate Bars, crafted with care using ethically sourced ingredients from Ghana. Each bite delivers a perfect blend of sweet, salty, and spicy. But it's more than just taste. As a social enterprise, every purchase helps combat child labour by funding education for farmers' children in Ghana. With each treat, consumers experience exceptional flavours while making a meaningful impact on lives and communities.
schoolyardkitchen.com



> "Healthier snacks continue to be a big opportunity. Consumers want more information on these in store from retailers, and many are happy to pay more for them"
>
> **RICHARD CAINES, PRINCIPAL ANALYST, UK FOOD & DRINK RESEARCH**

FUN FORMATS

Eating chocolate is supposed to be a pleasure. Introducing formats shoppers might not have seen before, and excellent quality novelty items is a good way to start conversations in store.



RUSSELL & ATWELL DIRTY BLOND
All natural truffles to stock in your chiller! This irresistible addition to the range blends sustainable cocoa and fresh cream with white chocolate, finished in a blond chocolate shell.
russellandatwell.com

THE CHOCOLATE DETECTIVE 12 ROBIN EGGS
Part of a series of speckled chocolate bird eggs which make wonderful gifts. Made in France using Ecuadorian cocoa, each little shell if filled with fine hazelnut praline.
chocolatedetective.co.uk





CHOCOCO OLLIE THE DUCK
This will go down a treat in farm shops and garden centres. Ollie is made with oat milk and 43% Colombian cocoa. He's also gluten-free and arrives in a 100% plastic-free box.
chococo.co.uk

THE GLOBAL FUNCTIONAL MUSHROOM CATEGORY IS PREDICTED TO RISE FROM $24.9 BILLION IN 2022 TO $47.2 BILLION IN 2028

HOLLAND & BARRETT

> "The concept of adaptogens has made a big and exciting shift in the food market. Since the pandemic, customers have become a lot more invested in their health and wellbeing and how, as intelligent consumers, they can proactively support their wellbeing through their food and drink choice"
>
> **SARA ROONEY, ADAPTOGENIC APOTHECARY**

LA DOLCE VITA



Just Gourmet Foods is the ultimate destination for sweet Italian indulgence, says Gianfranco Perri, CEO

It is no secret that Italians have a sweet tooth. We have created a myriad of opportunities to sweeten any given moment with a delicious confection, beautifully presented. At Just Gourmet Foods, we are focused on bringing the best of artisanal Italian food to an array of discerning UK retailers; we have a small but perfectly formed selection of all year round dolci, from amaretti and cantucci, chocolate dipped biscuits and candied fruits, to the more seasonal lines of nougat, panforte and panettone.





Our soft amaretti from Marabissi, a Tuscan pasticceria which has been perfecting baked goods for 60 years, have the ability to stop you in your tracks with their soft pillows of sweet almond flour, delicately dusted with fragrant powdered sugar. No everyday biscuit, their exquisite presentation will comfortably sit on the dining table as an after dinner treat (if the host doesn't squirrel them away) or make a wonderful gift for that foodie friend. With many different baked confections, our customers love the versatility of the Marabissi range and how it presents so beautifully on their shelves.

Another all-year-round favourite with our customers are the chocolate dipped biscuits from Officina Nobili Bonta. Their Baci di Dama ('Lady's Kisses') are the perfect bite sized morsel to satisfy niggly sweet cravings. We love their chocolate dipped grissini, which are incredibly moreish. Italian biscuits are often made with nuts – almonds of course, but also pistachio and Piedmonte hazelnuts – which balance sweetness and turns them into an accompaniment which goes as well with an espresso as with an aperitivo.

The Rango collection is confectionery based upon dried and candied fruit, dipped in chocolate (from white to dark, depending on the base) and really do hit the sweet spot. The Dried Figs in Dark Chocolate with Rum are beautifully balanced and a sophisticated gifting option. Candied fruits are not just for Christmas – but it is a perfect time to treat yourself!

Your customers will thank you for introducing them to the sweet side of Italy, and Just Gourmet Foods are here to help.



> "Your customers will thank you for introducing them to the sweet side of Italy, and Just Gourmet Foods are here to help"



LIGHT INDULGENCE

As innovators in the confectionery sphere, Flower & White are proud purveyors of better-for-you sweet snacks





While lower in calorie confectionery has historically had a reputation of being bland, Flower & White's Meringue Bars have turned that on its head. Since launching in 2009 with Brian and Leanne Crowther at its helm, the innovative company has been synonymous with delicious treats that simultaneously offer indulgence and light, better-for-you snacking moments.

Flower & White's award-winning range is not only supremely light – each item in the Meringue Bar range contains under 100 calories – but vegetarian and gluten-free, too, and is made using the best quality ingredients, including free range eggs, British sugar and natural colours and flavours.

The range is extensive, and includes Lemon Meringue, Raspberry Crumble, Salted Caramel, Chocolate Crunch, Caramel Gold, Birthday Cake, Chocolate Dipped Strawberry (vegan), Double M*lk Chocolate (vegan), and Orange Chocolate (vegan).

Flower & White's deliciously light meringue bars are an excellent choice for today's health-conscious consumers. "Our bars are crafted with high-quality ingredients and offer a light, under 100 calorie indulgence," says Leanne, founder. "They are also gluten-free and vegetarian friendly with a selection of vegan friendly flavours, making them suitable for a variety of dietary preferences. Additionally, our bars are portion-controlled, offering a light treat that doesn't compromise on taste. With increasing consumer demand for mindful snacking and transparency in food sourcing, our meringue bars align perfectly with these values."





The brand's vegan range is perfect for Veganuary, offering plant-based customers a lighter way to indulge in sweet snacking. "The vegan lifestyle has become more prominent in recent years, and we wanted to offer a meringue-based snack that aligns with those values without compromising on taste or quality," says Leanne. "Packaged in recyclable paper, our vegan range is crafted using innovative, plant-based ingredients that mimic the light and airy texture of traditional meringue. Made using creamy oat milk chocolate and all natural colours and flavours, these are treats that can be enjoyed by vegans and non-vegans alike. This range reflects our commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that everyone can experience the joy of our products."



A TREAT FOR EVERYONE

Any good artisan retailer knows they should have in stock a range of free from goodies, ready to satisfy the sweet tooth of those who, perhaps, need to reduce their sugar intake, can't tolerate gluten, or who've chosen to follow a plant-based diet. HFSS regulations have pushed producers to explore reduced and sugar-free options more seriously in the last two years, with delicious results. While the backlash against UPF has also been taken into account, seeing confectionery manufacturers reformulate their free from ranges. The overarching message from shoppers is that they want to enjoy free from sweets and chocolate, but in a more natural way, without excess sweeteners, or artificial ingredients



FREE FROM SUGAR

There's been a sizeable shift in the sugar-free market, which is lifting out of health food stores and into the mainstream, impacted by HFSS regulations. It pays to put thought into this category, especially considering NICE predictions that there will be nearly 5 million people living with diabetes in the UK by 2025. Individual bars, sharing bags, and sugar-free gifting options are worth investing in.

TRUEDE NO ADDED SUGAR TURKISH DELIGHT – MIXED FLAVOUR

Customers avoiding sugar don't have to miss out. They can indulge in this box of authentic Turkish Delight, handcrafted by artisans in Istanbul.

truede.com

STOCKLEY'S SWEETS RHUBARB & CUSTARD

Surely the ultimate nostalgic flavour? Creamy, vanilla-rich custard and zippy rhubarb come together in a sugar-free boiled sweet.

stockleys-sweets.co.uk



FREE'IST DARK CHOCOLATE 70% COCOA WITH MINT

This bar is a breath of fresh air in the category. Made without sugar or artificial flavourings, and crafted using ethically sourced, single origin cacao from Colombian farmers.

myfreeist.com



"Those companies who change their recipes and adapt their portfolios now will be contributing to a healthier, more productive population for the long term, and that has to be better for business, and better for everyone"

BARBARA CROWTHER, SUSTAIN

FREE FROM DAIRY

Around 8% of the UK population is said to be lactose intolerant, but add to that the number of people actively avoiding dairy for health or dietary reasons and the figure rises considerably. Make your dairy-free choices fun, ensure they're just as delicious as 'the real thing', and think about your family audience, as many parents are choosing to limit dairy products in their children's diets.



WELL & TRULY CRISPY QUINOA OAT M&LK CHOCOLATE

Nuggets of crispy puffed quinoa are swirled with oat milk chocolate to form the base of this indulgent bar, which is then smothered in dark chocolate.

wellandtruly.co.uk

BOOJA-BOOJA RASPBERRY SCRUNCH CHOCOLATE WONDERS

Little morsels of scrumptious chocolate truffle with a sweet hit of raspberry. New this year. Gluten, dairy, and soya-free.

boojabooja.com





CREATIVE NATURE SUPER SALTED CARAMEL MAGIBLES

A crunchy dairy, gluten and nut-free alternative to the main branded malted chocolate balls – and with 39% less sugar too.

creativenaturesuperfoods.co.uk



49% OF UK ADULTS ARE TAKING DELIBERATE STEPS TOWARDS MORE MINDFUL AND CONSCIOUS EATING

MINTEL

VEGAN

The conversation around veganism has changed in the UK recently, with those following a plant-based diet becoming more and more cynical about processed vegan foods and their impact on health. They're looking for clean ingredient decks which put real, natural ingredients first.



BIONA SOUR SNAKES

Award-winning lip-smacking sweet snakes, made with natural organic ingredients and no artificial colours or flavours. Suitable for vegans.

biona.co.uk

FREEDOM MALLOWS MINI PINK & WHITES

An innovative recipe means these vegan mallows are just as fluffy and puffy as their counterparts. They're also free from gluten, dairy, egg, fat, soy, nuts, palm oil and corn syrup.

freedommallows.com





SWEET LOUNGE VEGAN FIZZY WATERMELON SLICES

A classic sweet shop favourite – made vegan. These refreshing treats are all-natural and sold in compostable pouches.

sweetlounge.co.uk

> "In 2023 products affected by HFSS legislation accounted for £18 billion of the food and drink market, representing 16% of all sales. In a 12-week period during the same year there was a steady movement of £82 million away from products within the HFSS categories, with £34.4 million going towards healthier alternatives"

KANTAR

44% OF RETAILERS AND MANUFACTURERS SURVEYED BY IGD IN 2023 SAID THEY HAD ALREADY RESPONDED TO HFSS RULES WITH REFORMULATIONS OR NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

CONFECTIONERY FOR THE FUTURE

Consumers, especially Gen Z, are continually thinking about the impact their diets have on the world around them. They want to know that what they put in their basket has been made in a considered way, with ethical, sustainable ingredients, by people paid a fair wage. They're more frequently being drawn to products (especially treats and snacks) sold in plastic-free, compostable or recycled packaging, and the confectionery industry is sitting up and taking notice. A clear sense of environmental purpose is being demonstrated by many artisan brands, who are putting sustainability front and centre of their future plans



SUSTAINABLE COCOA

With sustainability so high up on the list for today's chocolate lovers, it's worth spending time getting to know makers to truly appreciate and understand their offering. Look for producers who aren't simply paying lip service to sustainability; seek out those with strong ties to cocoa plantations and farmers, who can ensure good practice has been followed throughout the supply chain.

FIRETREE SOLOMON ISLANDS MAKIRA ISLAND 75%
A gorgeously dark bar made with cacao sourced from the remote Solomon island of Makira. With hints of grapefruit, raisin and caramel.
firetreechocolate.com

WILLIE'S CACAO PISTACHIO & DATE
This 100% cacao bar is sweetened simply with fruit and nuts, which marry beautifully with the Rio Maranon beans. It demonstrates just how good dark chocolate can be.
williescacao.com



ISLANDS CHOCOLATE 55% MILK CHOCOLATE BUTTONS
Giant dark milk buttons, crafted with the brand's own intensely flavoured St Vincent cocoa, with aromas of malt and toffee leading to buttery creaminess.
islandschocolate.com



"It's no longer enough for a chocolate bar to be packaged in recycled, biodegradable or compostable packaging, consumers are increasingly looking for chocolate made with cocoa beans from farmers who are paid sufficient income to stop and reverse the loss of forests and biodiversity. They are also beginning to understand the difference between 'working towards' this aim and actually sourcing beans from truly eco-friendly sources"

KATHRYN LAVERACK, CHOCOLATE EXPERT

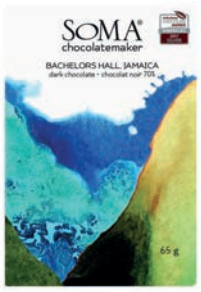
BEAN TO BAR

Making bean to bar chocolate is a finely honed skill that begins with selecting the finest cocoa, treating it with respect throughout the process to usher out its nuanced aromas and flavours. This type of chocolate can range in taste from toffee, butterscotch and banana to honey, red berries, tropical fruit and toasted nuts. Sample it in-store with your customers and open the door to a whole new world for them.



TOSIER
70% COLOMBIA COFFEE
A multi award-winning single origin bar, balancing sustainable cocoa from the world's top 5% producer with single estate Monmouth Coffee from the Narino region.
tosier.co.uk

SOMA CHOCOLATEMAKER BACHELOR'S HALL
A stunning 70% dark chocolate bar, made with Jamaican beans sourced from the unique spring water-fed valley between the Blue and John Crow mountains.
somachocolate.com





SOLKIKI
70% CHUAO
Outstanding award-winning chocolate made in very small batches using rare cocoa beans from the world's first protected cacao domain. Has notes of citrus, nut and spice.
solkiki.co.uk

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

POLMAC
CONFECTIONERY GIFT BOXES



Discover the ultimate in high quality, sustainable packaging with Polmac (UK) Ltd beautifully crafted, wood veneer round boxes – proof that premium packaging for chocolates and confectionery can be both affordable and accessible! Polmac's round gift boxes merge exceptional quality with eco-friendly sustainability, offering an irresistible appeal that sets your products apart and will keep your customers coming back! Available in two versatile sizes – 100mm and 150mm diameter. Customizable with your logo or text, Polmac's boxes come in natural, non-lacquered finishes, or enhanced with stunning wood and colour stains to perfectly align with your branding vision.

polmacuk.com sales@polmacuk.com

POLMAC (UK) LTD

THE INDUSTRY IS ADDRESSING THE **COSTS** OF PRODUCING **ENVIRONMENTALLY**, **SOCIALLY,** AND **GOVERNMENTALLY** (ESG) FRIENDLY SNACKS MORE **COLLABORATIVELY**. GROWING CONCERN OVER **CLIMATE CHANGE**, **COMMUNITY WELFARE** AND **FOOD SAFETY** HAS RESULTED IN **HIGHER DEMAND** FOR RESPONSIBLY PRODUCED SNACKS. CONSUMERS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN COMPANIES THAT PRODUCE **SUSTAINABLY**, SUPPORT LOCAL **COMMUNITIES**, AND ARE **CHARITABLE**

EUROMONITOR

ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING

Chocolate doesn't need to be wrapped in plastic, and we're seeing more and more brands innovating and moving away from it, choosing instead card or compostable options which chime with consumers.



COX & CO
BEE POLLEN & HONEY
Available in large bar and mini format, in fully sustainable packaging, this craft chocolate bar blends 61% cacao with honey and a sprinkling of sweet bee pollen.
coxandcocacao.com



FATSO
SWEET TART
Ethically sourced dark chocolate with sweet cherry and almond inclusions. New this year from this fun brand, and sold in plastic-free packaging.
sofatso.com



FLOWER & WHITE
CHOCOLATE CRUNCH MERINGUE BAR
An all-natural decadent chocolate meringue bar, smothered in sustainable chocolate and sold in paper recyclable packaging. Only 92 calories per bar.
flowerandwhite.co.uk



"Bean-to-bar producers have really made the consumer think about the cocoa process and what they're eating. They've woken up the consumer to understand more about flavour profiles. Considering the cost-of-living crisis, people seem to be prepared to pay just that little bit more for something they wouldn't eat on a day-to-day basis, and savour and enjoy it. People are more aware of mass market, thinking about provenance and appreciating the nuances of good chocolate"

A GUIDE TO BUYING BEAN TO BAR CHOCOLATE

- Is the packaging appealing?
- Does the brand align with your values – for example, does it use ethically sourced cocoa, is it free from palm oil and sustainably packaged?
- Check for vanilla in dark chocolate, which can mask the taste of inferior cocoa
- Can the producer tell you more about the origins of the cocoa – how transparent are they?
- Pay attention to the ingredients list. Cocoa beans as an ingredient indicates higher quality over cocoa liquor or cocoa mass



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PRIDE OF AUSTRALIA

Deliciously sweet, moreish and an Aussie icon – no wonder Darrell Lea's liquorice is making waves in the UK

When a brand you stock is a household name, you know you're onto a winner. This is certainly the case with Darrell Lea, which has been much-loved across Australia for generations. While this iconic Australian producer of soft-eating liquorice isn't – yet – as well known on British shores as it is in its home country, it's only a matter of time before its growing UK customer base hits the big time thanks to its representation in the UK by fine food importer Sapphire Brands.

With a history dating back to 1927, when its founders created the brand's world-famous soft-eating liquorice in a small factory located under an arch in the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Darrell Lea's range has become a favourite sweet treat for all generations.

An Australian icon for nearly a century

While the business has its roots firmly embedded in Australia, the story of Darrell Lea begins much closer to home. In 1888, Harry Lea made the three-month journey from England to Sydney with his mother and seven siblings, following in the footsteps of his father. Described as a "jolly, dapper man selling a barrow of fruit and vegetables" by his contemporaries, after nearly 20 years of making and selling confectionery the business was registered as Darrell Lea – named after one of Harry's sons, Darrell – and boasted countless shops across Australia.

Much innovation followed; the world's first coconut ice was created, alongside the renowned Rocklea Road – a moreish combination of toasted marshmallow, roasted peanuts and milk chocolate. However, the product Darrell Lea is arguably best known for, its soft-eating liquorice, was created by virtue of a happy accident. When, in 1957, the iconic Batch 37 went wrong and was handed out in brown paper bags to passers by for free, the team were surprised to find their latest 'invention' was a hit. Darrell Lea's Batch 37 Fresh Soft Liquorice is still a popular choice decades after its creation.

"Available in Traditional Black and Strawberry varieties, the product is a step apart from the traditional liquorice sold as sticks in old fashioned British sweet shops. Soft and sweet with a moreish chewy texture, this liquorice is loved by consumers of all ages across the UK and the world," says Ian Food, MD at Sapphire Brands.



"We are incredibly excited to share our most famous soft-eating liquorice to even more people across the UK," says Lili Despotovic, marketing manager at Darrell Lea. "For nearly a century we have been creating sweet moments and shared memories with loved ones in Australia. Now, we're thrilled that UK consumers can also experience the joy of our delicious products."

The sustainable choice

Since its launch Darrell Lea has always prided itself on the quality of its treats, and in 2024 this dedication to offering discerning customers the best liquorice on the market is naturally connected to its sustainability efforts. "With the eco credentials of food businesses making headlines in 2024, and more consumers than ever looking to reduce their carbon footprint via the products they buy, Darrell Lea's decision to reduce the plastic content of its packaging by up to 20% (compared to 2023) is undoubtedly a step in the right direction," explains Ian.

Sustainability is also front and centre of the business's move to support developing cocoa farming communities. Paying a premium for the cocoa beans from which they produce their range of chocolate products, as yet unavailable in the UK, means that these communities are able to invest in their future. No longer concerned that they might not make it through the next harvest thanks to the fair wages paid by Darrell Lea, families are sending their children to school and women are able to explore opportunities that previously would not have been open to them.

With its proud history and moreish flavour, it's no wonder that consumers and retailers alike are tempted by Darrell Lea's delicious liquorice range.







> With a history dating back to 1927, Darrell Lea's range has become a favourite sweet treat for all generations

100 YEARS OF HERITAGE

NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS OR FLAVOURS | NO PRESERVATIVES | PALM OIL FREE

PROUDLY AUSSIE MADE

AUSTRALIA'S MUCH LOVED SOFT LIQUORICE



Darrell Lea®

MAKES IT BETTER

— SINCE 1927 —

Our most famous invention is our soft-eating liquorice that we invented in a small factory under the iconic arches of the Sydney Harbour Bridge! **100 YEARS** on, this Aussie made Darrell Lea treat is proudly exported to the UK. Deliciously chewy, soft liquorice.

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