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# SPECIALITY FOOD

## CONNECTING THE FINE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY




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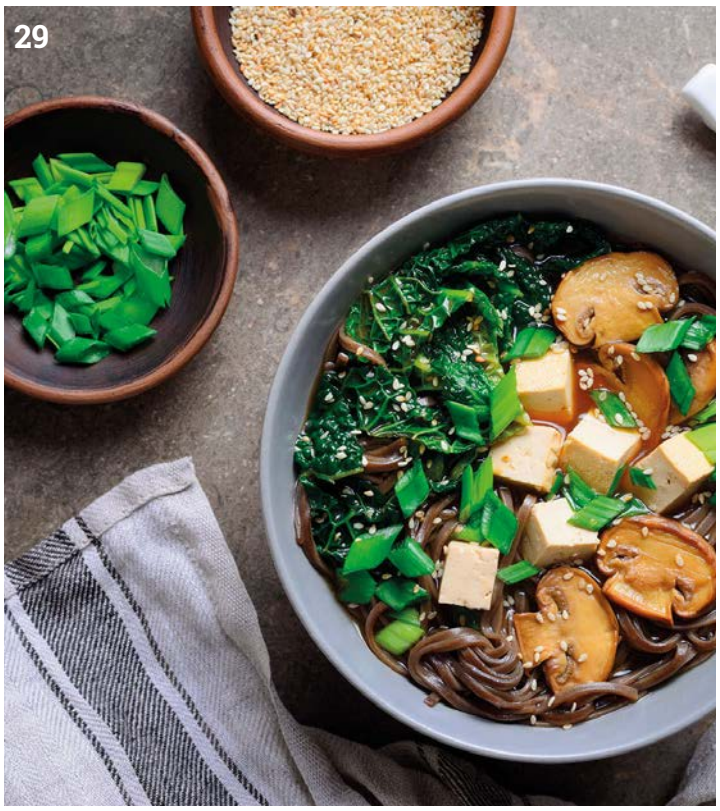
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## EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the May issue of *Speciality Food*, where we're well and truly gearing up for a much-needed positive summer season.

The past two summers have been memorable for all the wrong reasons for many of us, and while this year brings its own sizeable challenges – Covid-19 may be on its last legs but the food industry is still weathering its fair share of industry issues – we're here to inspire you to make this your best summer season yet. Think ramping up your barbecue offering, refreshing your drinks range, and topping up your oils, vinegars and dressings selection to level up the culinary adventures ahead.

You'll also find an exploration of umami, courtesy of Sally-Jayne Wright, a preview of The Source Trade Show, hitting Bristol in a few weeks' time, and a raft of some of the brightest and best products in today's sector via our Great Stock Giveaway highlights.

Plus, last but not least, *Cheese Buyer* to keep you abreast of the vital artisan cheese sector.

**HOLLY SHACKLETON** | EDITOR
**holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk**






# Will rising costs push consumers towards independent retail?

## Rising fuel, food and energy costs are disrupting the entire country, leading to another big squeeze. Will this help or hinder indies?

The majority of the public is struggling to make ends meet as we dive into spring, but Martin McTague, national chair of the FSB is especially concerned for independent retail. "Small businesses are really feeling the pinch at the moment, with spiralling energy bills, staff shortages and a recent hike in National Insurance costs. The slowing of economic growth is also ramping up the pressure, as the cost-of-living crisis takes hold of consumers' budgets."

But experts believe the current crisis will change consumer behaviour in the long-term, and push shoppers to embrace localism.

### Fewer shopping trips

Rising fuel prices are set to affect everyone in the food supply chain, but when it comes to consumers, experts are predicting there will be a reduction in the number of trips shoppers make in an effort to save money.

As Martin puts it, "Even those businesses that don't directly use a vehicle are impacted by increasing fuel costs, as delivery costs increase, or customers cut down on visits to their premises to save fuel."

However, Andrew Goodacre, CEO of Bira suggested this could tempt shoppers to go local. "There is no doubt that people will think about their car journeys and use of fuel. With this in mind there is a stronger possibility of people shopping more locally – probably doing a little shopping, but more often."

Mark Kacary, managing director of the Norfolk Deli, expanded on this, adding, "I was speaking to a customer this morning about how some people look at the price of something in an independent, feel that they could make a 50p saving by getting in their car and driving elsewhere without a thought for the cost of the fuel, wear and tear, not to mention the additional time it takes to make a tiny saving.

"If the rising fuel costs makes people think twice about the value of their trip and whether it will cost them more to travel than it will be to shop locally then that could signal a longer-term trend as it's unlikely that fuel/travel costs will come down dramatically any time soon."

### An online shopping revival?

At the height of the pandemic, delivery and click & collect services increased significantly, and with many professionals continuing to work from home, they might be less likely to make car journeys. Andrew explained, "The latest official stats show that online sales have reduced again in March, although still at higher levels than before Covid.

"If shoppers do not want to use fuel to do shopping, then online is an obvious option for them and this would be detrimental to most indie retailers. However, I believe that those people who are visiting shops (and we should remember that footfall has never recovered to 2019 levels) are enjoying the opportunity to be out and about, with public transport still a viable option to access the high streets."

"It has to be remembered that even online shopping won't be as cheap as it was during the pandemic. Fuel costs are affecting online as are the price rises we're all facing", Mark added. While we could see a localism revolution, this doesn't mean that indie retailers shouldn't be prepared for an online shopping resurgence.

As Mark explains, "Online shopping might increase, but then again if there were to be a resurgence in shopping locally possibly not. Either way, the warning signs were clear to see during the pandemic, if people stay at home more, they will shop online more. If an independent retailer hasn't invested or taken the opportunity to enhance their online presence to enable online shopping then they can't say there wasn't a significant event to give them sufficient warning."

### A reduction in eating out

Research from commerce software business Braze states that inflation is motivating 82% of UK consumers to cut back on non-essentials, with three in five of the 2,000 Brits surveyed saying they would be reducing spending on takeaways.

With consumers less likely to eat out due to fuel prices and unnecessary spending, could this mean a resurgence of cooking from scratch and premium ready meals that give the illusion of restaurant quality?

Andrew certainly thinks so. "During the pandemic, we saw a resurgence in home baking. We also know that savings accounts have more money in them than usual and I believe that if people decide to cook at home, they will want to treat themselves by using more diverse and better-quality ingredients.

"I think local food retailers should focus on marketing ideas such as recipe/menu plans, using their products and ingredients to help consumers make the choice and take away some of the 'fear' of cooking a more complex meal. Whilst many customers will want value when shopping, I also believe that many will also look to trade up for a better experience, and this is where local speciality retailers have an opportunity."

However, Mark argued this may not be feasible for all fine food retailers, "I feel this depends on the retailer. Local retailers (if they have a kitchen) could look at creating their own healthier, less processed food options. They can use social media/blogs to promote the use of fresh ingredients through the publishing of recipes that would promote ingredients available on their premises. But some small retailers will have a greater range of options and ideas available for their customer base than others."


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# *"The revolution starts here"*



**JOHN SHEPHERD**
PARTRIDGES

As we start emerging into the post Covid era, and hopefully leave the terrible virus behind, (despite current cases being at high levels), what lessons have we learned as speciality food retailers and how can we put them to good use in the future?

Over the last two years, frequently, we have been asked by customers and colleagues alike the question 'How's it all going?' Recently the question we are being asked is more along the lines of "What next"? However, before we get to that we should really ask ourselves "Where are we now"?

The answer to this is confusing. The first quarter of 2022 has been and gone in the blink of an eye. Sales at Partridges were about 3% up on 2021 which is not so great when considering the current price inflation we are experiencing.

It is difficult to gauge 2022 of course, a relatively normal year compared to its predecessor and its tiers and guidelines, and what our expectations should be. Compared to 2020, the Covid Year, quarter one sales were down by only 3% which surprises me. Because that was the year when Christmas came early... in March.

For two weeks when the first lockdown was announced, prompted by panic buying, and some degree of hoarding, sales went through the roof. 34% up in the first week and 37% up in the second. But then, just like normal, post-Christmas sales deflated like a punctured balloon. We dropped 14% on the previous year when lockdown really started to bite.

Considering quarter two in 2020 was somewhat subdued, at Partridges the sales increase overall was more modest than has been suggested in the media reports about food shops that remained open. Plus there was the added aggravation of the Great Resignation, health and safety concerns and general supply issues which made it altogether a torrid time. Our in-store café closed never to reopen.

Hopefully many of these difficulties lie behind us. So now what? In my view It is time to get creative and launch all those initiatives that have been mothballed for the past two years. It's not easy to kick start when being hard wired to caution but the revolution starts here.

For us the projects include an all-round upgrade to the deli, the front checkout areas, the café section and better signage and merchadising all round. Plus, some crash, bang, wallop ideas that may possibly go crash, bang, wallop and not work out. But one lesson that we have surely learned from the Covid era is to live and trade in the moment.

Despite the economic pressures we are all facing, despite the conflict in Eastern Europe and despite all sorts of other sad events that have occurred recently there will always be a place for speciality food in our lives and local communities.

Summer is round the corner and a memorable national celebration, the Platinum Jubilee, awaits us. Goodbye sense of dread, hello scents of spring.

Let's embrace the future even more than we have feared and endured the past. It's time to live in the moment.



# Forest Feast owner acquires Just Live a Little Granola brand

**Pioneering plant-based snack manufacturer, Kestrel Foods, has acquired the Just Live a Little Granola brand from its current owners**

Just Live a Little Granola will join Kestrel Food's award-winning portfolio of Forest Feast, ACTI-SNACK and Private Label to continue its growth within the plant-based arena.

Catering to the current climate, the Just Live a Little range includes healthier non-HFSS granola such as Whole Almond Granola, Low Sugar Coconut & Chia Granola, and Bramley Apple & Cinnamon Granola.

The deal is expected to enable Kestrel Foods to offer delicious and healthier crafted products across more categories, and it signals the business's ongoing commitment to becoming an innovative leader in the plant-based snacking market.

Michael Hall, owner and MD of Kestrel Foods, told *Speciality Food*, "The acquisition of the Just Live a Little brand is aligned to our ambition of creating an innovative snacking and granola business with a strong portfolio of brands, brilliant products, and world-class capability. We are delighted to have the opportunity to build on the legacy of the Just Live a Little brand for wholesome artisan granola and snacks."

Moreover, the business has recently invested £2.8m into its world-class manufacturing facility, which now employs 80 people at its headquarters in Portadown, Northern Ireland and exports to 26 countries.

Kestrel Foods' own flagship brand, Forest Feast, has fared extremely well throughout the pandemic with retail sales +26% YoY. Known for its high quality, crafted snacks that are both tasty and better for you, Forest Feast has recently launched ranges of Slow Roasted & Seasoned Nuts, Belgian Chocolate Coated Nuts and Chocolate Coated Dried Fruit.





For further information contact
Jess on 01206 505901
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"Great to see so many interesting brands and loved the format"
Buyer, ABEL & COLE

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Buying Manager, BOOTHS

★★★★★
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Buyer, COSTCO

★★★★★
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## *"Where are our leaders?"*



**STEFANO CUOMO**
MACKNADE

As a kid I was told we get the leaders we deserve. I look around today and I wonder who those leaders are. Far from having who we deserve, there don't seem to be any... at least not in the traditional sense!

Then, as I play closer attention, I hear the wise words of colleagues I have grown up alongside and I see the actions of peers, folk I don't even know, surmounting the daily challenges left at their doors. I see towns, within which we live and operate, rallying together to set a path for the future, and it starts to make sense.

Where we used to look up, in some perverse search for leadership 'from above', we are now looking around and within. It is a truism (but there within sits the joy!) that our community is us and we will lead it. Within this, the role of SMEs has never been more crucial, we are at the heart of our communities, providing a sense of stability and continuity in an ever-flexing world, as micro communities collide with macro issues.

It is the agility and emotive intelligence of businesses that have delivered the support of government and state, and none more so than those within the food and drink sector. Now, let's go one step further... bricks and mortar SMEs are really what count!

With megalithic delivery platforms, seemingly run on marketing budgets and pumped private equity cash, chasing valuations whilst trading at losses, it is the small and medium, long-term place makers that are keeping our communities pulsing. These are spaces people can go to reconnect, learn and build careers in, or stages to tell the meaningful stories of wonderful produce... produce that will help us balance the gluttoned consumption wreaked by the supermarket culture of past decades.

Are we moving to a binary society based on a) a delivered world with speed and price as its measuring stick and b) one where quality and community are valued and understood?!

I believe so and have seen it roll forward through my own four decades of family business.

As the big businesses of our childhood wither, and space for us to replace them grows, I return to the question of where are the leaders?

Again, it must be us. Not as individuals, but as businesses, collectives and communities.

Humanity is going through its greatest challenges, and where we have previously looked to the macro environment for answers, we must focus on the micro and what we can deliver ourselves.

Food and drink is not black and white. There is always hypocrisy within how our food is produced and consumed, but this should not put us off striving for the best, to deliver managed consumption that supports not only who we are as humans, but our planet too.

In a world where we must reduce our consumption and where consumers are actively buying less, we must ensure our narrative is heard. We can reshape the world of business with community at its heart, delivering the harmony our planet and humanity require... with the right leaders, that we all must become.



# Farming industry calls for greater advocacy of organic

### Industry bodies are pushing for the UK government to champion organic as the future of farming

The organic farming body Organic Farmers and Growers (OF&G) has published a new manifesto entitled Championing organic within agricultural policy which highlights the key advantages of the organic approach in response to the current unprecedented upheaval in the farming sector.

The manifesto calls for policy recognition of organic and highlights the key advantages of the organic approach. These include issues such as global standards, transformative farming practices, food integrity, carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancements and market opportunity.

Roger Kerr, OF&G chief executive, believes that terms like 'regenerative' and 'agroecological', which lack legally defined, whole-system standards, create increasing confusion in the industry, and greater advocacy of organic would in turn alleviate this.

With an increasing threatening climate crisis on our hands, the food industry has a big task at hand to reduce emissions and create a healthier environment.

Roger argues, "Policymakers must acknowledge organic's potential to contribute positively to the challenges we all face, in alleviating the social and environmental impacts of our farming and food system.

"OF&G is not suggesting every UK farm embrace organic conversion, but that a range of diverse approaches, including organic, will help protect our environment while delivering the resilience and adaptations necessary for UK farmers to continue to produce food in the face of the increasing climate volatility that we will see in the coming years.

"Everyone has a vested interest in supporting more benign, sustainable practices to safeguard the future. Environmentally favourable farming practices are undergoing re-invention and rebranding, however organic provides the only clear, current and verified solution."

Not only will a shift of focus to organic farming benefit the environment, it will also satisfy a growing consumer demand.

The Soil Association's Organic Market Report 2022 showed that demand for organic food is at an all-time high. The organic market has achieved its 10th consecutive year of growth, with sales increasing by 23% in the last two years to reach over £3 billion. This offers a huge opportunity for the fine food sector, as well as for farmers embarking on a transition to organic.

Liz Bowles, Soil Association's director of farming and land use, told Speciality Food, "We welcome the launch of OF&G's organic manifesto and support their efforts to highlight the advantages of an organic approach to farming – something we clearly hold dear. There has never been a more critical time to highlight the benefits of the organic sector with its clearly defined standards, especially when concerns around food security, the environment, nature and health are so prevalent.

"This is why the Soil Association has been working with DEFRA to help them support the transition to organic and agroecological farming systems, with the notable outcome of the introduction of an organic standard into the Sustainable Farming Incentive (Defra finally breaks silence). We will continue to highlight that the Government cannot disregard the weight of evidence which shows that the organic farming sector offers immense benefits for biodiversity, animal welfare and healthy soils."






# What do the sunflower oil shortages mean for independent retailers?

**The UK is rapidly running out of sunflower oil supplies as a result of the war in Ukraine, leading to higher demand on premium oils and heavy price increases**

As a result of the war in Ukraine, which supplies 25% of the UK's sunflower oil, bottlers and producers across the country are facing short supplies. Ukrainian farmers should have been sowing seeds for the October and November harvests in April, but instead, they were fighting a war to defend their homeland.

This will have a significant impact on the entire food industry for months to come, but what exactly does it mean for independent fine food retailers?

In response to the crisis, the government has relaxed labelling laws, meaning producers can switch to different oils in their products if and when needed without having to change the ingredient labels. This will relieve a huge headache for producers trying to navigate the situation, however, it could cause problems for independents.

As Andrew Goodacre, CEO of Bira explains, "Independent and specialist food retailers often use strong provenance of products as part of their USP and it will be important to retain the integrity with regards to labelling.

"There will also be a need to think carefully about replacement products being used, with palm oil often seen as an alternative but a product that carries a poor environmental reputation."

But Vicki Hird, head of farming at Sustain, argues this isn't enough. "Smaller food enterprises will be feeling huge pressure as the price and availability of cooking oils along with energy costs and labour shortages will be hitting them hard after the covid pandemic so it makes sense for government to support through measures that do not mislead consumers or risk their safety.

"Whether shortages of certain products will be long-term is hard to know, but it has been clear for some time that we need to reconfigure the food system to be less vulnerable and more sustainable."

While independent fine food retailers inherently avoid cheaper oils and focus on higher quality



products such as avocado, extra virgin olive and cold-pressed rapeseed oils, these shortages will have a knock-on effect for the entire oil industry.

Heather Parry, managing agent at the Farm Retail Association, explained, "FRA members generally sell rapeseed oil because it is tasty, healthy, versatile and because it is local. Clearly, with a shortage of sunflower oil in the world due to the dreadful situation in Ukraine, people will be turning to other oils and it will mean demand for rapeseed oil will increase, and as the product will be in more demand, prices are likely to increase."

Lawrence Frohn, business manager at Hillfarm, mirrored these thoughts. "Most small independent retailers tend to sell premium oils such as Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil. They should still be able to get their usual volume from their usual producers BUT it will cost a lot more as the seed and all other inputs are rocketing in price.

"As a grower and producer of British Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil, Hillfarm has enough seed stored in the barn to take us up to August. Within this we can manage small increases in volume but the seed we have is not infinite.

"This season there never was enough seed for the refined rapeseed oil producers and imports were always going to be needed to maintain supplies to the end of the season. With the switch from sunflower to rapeseed oil, this will mean that rapeseed oil will now run out well before the end of the season."

Martin McTague, FSB national chair, argued that "Disruption to food manufacturing and supply would be the last thing small businesses need, at a time when they are also up against an energy crisis, jobs tax hikes and mass staff absence caused by the pandemic."

Unfortunately, experts are forecasting that this crisis will cause disruption to the food sector in the long term. According to Lawrence, "the future prices for rapeseed are at a record high and it is clear that the Russia and Ukraine situation is going to be problematical for the next 18 months at least (in terms of food production).

"A poor soya harvest in south America this season and problems with labour shortages to harvest palm oil is putting pressure on the world's oil markets. The world's demand for vegetable oil is very high. The food industry will have to get used to paying high prices for oil for some time to come. This does not benefit farmers as the input costs for growing oilseeds are also rising at a very rapid rate (eg. fertilisers have increased five-fold in the last year!)."

Heather concludes, "Independent retailers have adapted and changed during Covid and we are going to have to adapt again as life continues to be unpredictable."







PARTNER CONTENT




# ICERTECH INTRODUCES AQUA-CHILL

An exciting new innovation from the temperature controlled packaging specialists



Over the last seventeen years, Icertech has grown to be one of the trusted suppliers in the chilled packaging market, supplying a range of ice packs and insulated boxes. Having built a reputation as an independent manufacturer and supplier of high quality, low cost gel-based coolants, Icertech is now very excited to announce the launch of a water-based equivalent in Summer 2022 – its 'Aqua-Chill' coolants. Traditionally, gel-based coolants have proven popular on the basis that they provide a higher level of leak resistance (and do not ruin pack contents when they do leak), and they are also simpler and cheaper to manufacture in the most efficient way. However, despite the gel contents being drain-safe, and having multiple options for re-use, there is a growing concern amongst end users over disposal. This has led many market leaders to opt for water-based coolants for their product.

There is currently a lack of choice when it comes to water-based coolants for the 'Direct To Consumer' industry, with only a couple of manufacturers in the UK offering such a product. As a result, the market pricing can be somewhat high, coupled with an insufficient level of customer service, especially for smaller businesses. Through Icertech's years of experience and development of robust and efficient internal processes, it is proud to be supporting the growing 'Direct To Consumer' market for its food and drink customers, enhancing the supply chain and driving forward competitive pricing within the industry at a time of ever-increasing prices. Icertech will be launching its Aqua-Chill with pallet prices for its 500g and 1kg coolants set at 18p/each and 28p/each respectively (Excl. VAT, Ex Works). Icertech's efficient-to-manufacture single-pouch coolant format delivers the best level of performance at the most cost-effective price for the customer.

An unprecedented amount of investment has been made on a bespoke machine built in Germany that is suited to liquid fill applications of this type. The company has performed trials on many different films from several suppliers to identify a laminate film that provides a high level of puncture and leak resistance, whilst still being 100% recyclable. Welsh tap water is taken through a triple filtration process – micron, carbon and UV – before being purified through chlorination, ensuring the coolant contents are 100% food safe, and also safe should an end user accidentally consume the contents. Icertech has also invested in its water supply system to increase capacity, with a 20,000 litre master tank that is fed from an enhanced connection to the water main, which is then delivered via a dual pump and water batching system to serve the individual requirements of our four coolant production machines.

icertech.co.uk

# Extended Producer Responsibility legislation delayed until 2024

**Extended Producer Responsibility laws (EPR) have been postponed until 2024, giving the food industry more time to prepare**

EPR is a strategy to add all of the environmental costs associated with a product throughout the product life cycle to the market price of that product. Therefore, the cost of collecting, reprocessing and recycling food packaging waste will be shifted from consumers onto producers themselves.

The new EPR legislation was due to come into effect next year, but DEFRA has announced this will now be delayed until 2024.

Despite the significant cost it will add to producers, EPR has been welcomed by key figures in the food and drink industry, as mounting pressure due to the climate crisis nears boiling point.

According to a WRAP spokesperson, "WRAP welcomes the confirmation of the ambitious move to reform the way packaging is managed in the UK. The new extended producer responsibility scheme places the responsibility for the cost of disposal of core packaging items onto the producers – a much-needed shift that the whole packaging supply chain has been calling for.

"EPR will be a powerful incentive to both encourage more eco-design into packaging and kickstart recycling rates; both of which are especially pivotal to tackling plastic pollution and are aligned with the targets of The UK Plastics Pact."

### TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE?

Despite significant praise for its introduction, the UK government has decided to delay the legislation until 2024. This month, DEFRA revealed that the reason behind the delay was that stakeholders responding to the public consultation on the proposals said they would not have enough time to prepare for the changes.

WRAP sympathised with the huge task of implementing EPR, stating: "We understand that delays in implementing these packaging reforms are frustrating, but the reforms are far-reaching, and it is essential that they are done right to bring about the change that is needed."

However, environmental groups argue this delay is a huge disappointment with time rapidly running out to change the future. Sian Sutherland, chief changemaker at A Plastic Planet explained: "It's absolutely right that producers will bear the cost of the waste they are responsible for. But why do we have to wait so long to see this happen?

"Yet again this is a watered-down, snail of a plan that will have no real teeth or impact until 2024. Somehow the reality of the UN Global Plastics Agreement has given us the excuse to slow down, when it should have been a massive incentive for rapid innovation and system change. Producer responsibility will finally take the onus off the consumer and place it firmly on the shoulders of the actual makers. We need real producer responsibility to happen within months not years."

# What's next for refill?

**Zero-waste and refill shops across the country are suffering a drop in trade as hyper convenience takes over, but what does this mean for the fine food industry?**

Vast numbers of consumers have been aspiring to more sustainable lifestyles, and Kantar predicts that 62% of the British population will be 'Eco Actives' by 2030.

### MULTIPLE FACTORS AT PLAY

But low waste and refill shops are suffering on the other side of Covid, with many either facing closure or merely breaking even. Megan Adams, Re:Store Refill, is one of those feeling the effects: "We have seen a decline in footfall and sales over the past few months and the reality is we can only just afford staff salaries at the moment so if this is a long-term trend, we won't be able to survive.

"There are so many factors at play at the moment; cost of living increases, increased expectations of 'convenience' post-pandemic, and unfortunately for some it was a 'trend' that has fallen off their radar.

"It feels like there's so much going on in the world that the climate crisis has taken a back seat, which is totally understandable, but we really need to get it back on the agenda because the issue hasn't gone away. We're still in a very precarious position and not enough action is being taken at government and industry levels, and this lack of action also influences what the public thinks is important, and what isn't.

But Catherine Conway, founder and director of Unpackaged believes there is still a high agenda for sustainable living, and independent retailers should continue to invest in a zero-waste future. "I don't think they have lost interest in zero waste lifestyles – plenty of zero waste business models are thriving in grocery, personal care and food to go.

"All the large retailers are investing in refill and reuse systems, especially as the technology develops, so I still think this is a long-term trend that is here to stay and will only grow in popularity. But there is a very real crisis amongst bricks and mortar small zero-waste shops who are struggling."

# THE STORY BEHIND THE STATS

**1.7bn**

The Extended Producer Responsibility legislation is now set to come into effect in 2024. The aim is to shift responsibility for unsustainable packaging from the consumer to the producer as they absorb the cost of dealing with it. But according to government estimates, the new laws are predicted to cost the food and drink industry a staggering.

**76%**

The latest EIT Trust Report revealed that while 76% of Europeans say they are motivated to live a sustainable life, just half (51%) take sustainability into account when making food choices. This indicates that there is a gap between consumers wanting to make choices that protect the planet, and actually make impactful lifestyle changes – known as the 'attitude-behaviour gap'.

**59%**

The EIT's latest *Trust Report* also discovered that 59% of UK respondents expressed trust in retailers. Moreover, when it came to the type of retailer in question, the public trusted smaller, local shops more than chains.

**10%**

The Organic Farmers and Growers manifesto suggests that if 10% of UK farmland was organic, we would save at least 9.4 million tonnes of $CO_2e$ in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and benefit from increased carbon sequestration worth over £188 million annually in carbon permit trading terms.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### RETAILERS LEFT WANTING MORE FROM THE SPRING BUDGET FOR 2022

Independent retailers were left disappointed as the chancellor's Spring Statement didn't go far enough to help small businesses recover from Covid restrictions, effectively signalling the end of state support for the sector. Karen Betts, chief executive of the FDF, told *Speciality Food*, "We need the government to consider other measures to cut the cost of doing business, to help stall rising prices, and stimulate growth such as removing complexity and cost from upcoming regulations. With little help from the state, Andrew Goodacre, CEO of Bira warned that 2022 may be "a very difficult year for small retailers".

### UK EGGS NO LONGER FREE-RANGE

The 16-week grace period for continued labelling of eggs as 'free-range' while hens were temporarily locked inside due to a bird flu outbreak ended on the 21st of March. This meant that from this point on no eggs were allowed to be labelled as such. As the majority of fine food retailers champion high quality, high welfare British produce, this loss of 'free-range' eggs is projected to have a significant impact. In response to this, indie retailers should be communicating with consumers to help them make the right choice and continue to purchase high-quality eggs from trusted retailers.


## Head of Operations (GM)

A fourth generation family business is looking to strengthen their team with a new senior role which will increase its overall activity, business profile, sales, and staffing levels. This is a key role for the future development of **Grasmere Gingerbread**, and the successful applicant will work alongside the owners and directors of this unique business.

**Main purpose of the job:**
The complete operational management of the business which encompasses every aspect of the business: facility, staff and customer management, production, smooth running of a very busy shop (also seen as a major tourist attraction), E-Commerce mail order department, marketing and sales administration, and external promotion.

**Days of work:**
5 days a week (one of which will be a weekend day).

**Hours of work:**
Minimum core hours 8am – 5.45pm (1 hour for lunch). No more than 48 hours a week, shorter hours in winter.

**Key tasks/job responsibilities:**
The role is a mix of both management and 'hands on' needs and includes management of the following day-to-day activities:

- Staff management
- Overseeing production
- Procurement and stock control
- ALL Health and safety, and other legal requirements and obligations
- Quality control – both product(s) and services
- Distribution (corporate and service)
- Property management
- Budget control with assistance from the Directors
- Reporting to Directors: 'updates' and operational
- Managing key communications to all the team

**In addition:**
Assist the Finance and HR functions with recruitment, training, staff reviews, working/holiday rotas and overall staff welfare.

**Other:**
To continually improve systems and processes for the future and long-term sustainability of the business.

**Demands of the business:**
Holidays: Grasmere Gingerbread® is primarily tourism dependent and the busiest trading times are during ALL school holidays, regardless of region, throughout the year. Therefore, applicants must be aware that holidays will only be granted outside of these periods.

**Salary:**
Competitive salary based on experience.

For further information and to apply for the role, please email: **recruitment@fambizcommunity.com**




# THE SOURCE ROADSHOW 2022

## Bristol's Ashton Gate hosts this not-to-be-missed event on 16th June 2022

On Thursday 16th of June, the Source Roadshow will be bringing 150 exhibitors to Bristol's Ashton Gate Stadium, for one day only. Hale Events has been organising food and drink trade shows in the South West for 15 years. Their Source food and drink trade show, which takes place each February in Exeter, has been running successfully for over 15 years, and this is the first time they are bringing it to Bristol.

Working with Taste of the West, the South West's regional food group, and BARBIE, the Bristol Association of Restaurants, Bars and Independent Establishments, along with a broad mix of trade publications, and local business press, this new event will showcase food & drink, equipment and all the services your catering, hospitality, or food retail business needs.

If you are buying food and drink, to reflect the ever-changing needs of your customers, there is nothing quite like a face-to-face event for you to test, touch and taste and add value to your offering. Keep up with the latest developments and spot fresh opportunities. Discover remarkable local products with fascinating provenance stories to tell and spend valuable time with passionate producers and knowledgeable suppliers face-to-face. Compare different flavours and textures, build relationships with new partners, catch up with colleagues, clients, and friends, as well as get a feel for the latest trends.

### This year's exhibitors

Just a few of the exhibiting companies are: Arthur David Food with Service, Brothers Drinks, Bristol Labels, Charles Saunders, Chunk of Devon, Clearbrew, Cobbs Cakes, Deli Farm Charcuterie, Filberts Fine Foods, Fowey Valley Cider, Foxcombe Bakehouse, Hunts Foodservice, Pattersons, RD Johns Foodservice, QTOS Catering Equipment, Rawlings, Sheppy's Cider and The Craft Drink Company. The show website has a full list of exhibitors, which will go live after Easter.

### New for 2022: Feature Space

Alongside the exhibitors, the organisers are creating a Feature Space to allow visitors to relax and kick back in between checking out the latest food, drink, and business services on offer from the exhibitors. Focussed around a fund-raising graffiti wall, created by Bristol artist Ollie Gillard of Gage Graphics, this area will have hourly tastings of local award-winning Somerset Charcuterie, matched with Ginjar's 'refreshingly twisted' gin cocktail samples. They're also bringing The Happy Mexican from Axbridge, Somerset, to delight your taste buds with authentic Mexican food. There'll be a DJ creating some background sounds for you to enjoy, while you sample.





Bristol Robotics Laboratory will be showcasing one of their robots in the Feature Space too. Bristol is a tech hub, and experts from the laboratory will be on hand to meet with producers and visitors, to explore future needs and how their robotics can help efficiencies in manufacture and the hospitality sector.

The serious side of this fun feature is that the final graffiti art piece, as well as a limited-edition magnum of commemorative Ginjar gin featuring the piece, will be auctioned off to raise funds for those in need in the hospitality sector via national charity Hospitality Action. It's the charity that offers help, advice, and support whenever times get tough for staff in the hospitality industry, to help get them back on their feet and enjoying the job again, or to prepare them for the next phase of their lives.

The organisers are also delighted to host the City of Bristol College, and Weston College, who will be at the show to introduce visitors to the next generation of hospitality stars, and how to access their skills.

> "Bristol has a thriving independent food sector, with a focus on local, organic and ethical produce, so it's perfect for us to connect more regional producers to. We want to help Bristol buyers try, taste and test even more of the best produce that the South West has to offer"
>
> **MIKE ANDERSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HALE EVENTS**

### Connecting face-to-face

Buyers should plan for a full day at the Source Roadshow! There's so much to see that it will be easy to spend many productive hours walking the aisles, meeting the exhibitors, and networking. It's just so much easier to make those all-important buying decisions when competing offerings are shown side by side. After all, you can't touch and taste on the internet, can you? There's just no substitute for meeting producers face to face and trying their products in person.

**Visiting this show is free for trade buyers, who can register now, at bristol.thesourcetradeshow.co.uk. Information about exhibiting at this show is available from James Curtis, or Paul Thomas on 01934 733433 or by emailing stands@hale-events.com.**

**NEED TO KNOW** **WHERE:** Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol
**WHEN:** Thursday 16th June, 10am-6pm **WEB:** bristol.thesourcetradeshow.co.uk



# PRODUCT NEWS

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

## New recyclable packs for Cambrook range

**Nut specialist Cambrook is going full steam ahead on its plans to make all of its packaging recyclable by the end of 2022.**

The business's 45g savoury snacking range will be fully recyclable and packaged in a new 'pillow pack' format, which reduces the amount of plastic per pack by around 20%.




The first product making the change is the award-winning Sweet Chilli Peanuts & Cashews, with the other items in the range being updated throughout the year.

Deborah Bradfield, sales and marketing manager at Cambrook Foods, said, "We are so excited about this launch as moving our products to a more sustainable packaging has certainly been a labour of love! Finding a solution that not only fitted within our sustainability plans but also keeps the integrity and life of our products has been an interesting challenge, we are delighted with the results!"

**cambrookfoods.co.uk**

## The Flavourists launch plant-based meal kits

**Start-up meal kit brand The Flavourists has launched two new product ranges into chiller cabinets this spring in order to make plant-based internationally-inspired meals easier for consumers to create at home.**

The brand's Sizzle Kits are available in Creamy Makhani Style Curry and Yellow Thai Style Curry, while the Sizzle & Stir line includes Sticky Teriyaki and Herby Green Pesto variants. Both options create meals for two that are ready in under 15 minutes.

Kyrsten Halley, creator of The Flavourists, said, "Everyone is looking for quicker and more efficient ways to cook for themselves and their families, and until now, pre-prepared, packaged, and ready meals have been the answer. Our meal kits offer so much more than that: yes, they're 'quick and easy', but they lead with intense flavours and creativity. The Flavourists mission is to break the rules of plant-based. The team are here to offer more than just functional plant-based swaps, they want to bring colour, vibrancy, and positivity to a category with a traditionally negative lexicon."




**theflavourists.co.uk**

## New plant-based pasta sauces for UK market

**A new brand of 100% plant-based cooking sauces is being launched into the UK market by The Simple Root in a bid to help consumers consume more vegetables without sacrificing convenience, taste or nutritional value.**

The first products released include dairy-free Creamy Pesto Style Sauce, which contains 70% less fat than the market-leading pesto in the UK; vegan-friendly Truffle & Ch**se Style Sauce; Spicy Satay Style Sauce; and Creamy Simple White Sauce.

The sauces contain no added sugar, artificial flavours or preservatives, and are dairy and gluten-free.




Louise Wymer, CEO of The Simple Root, said, "Cooking sauces are a very traditional category. They often contain high levels of sugar, salt and fat, and can sit in the cupboard for months. Over the last 20 years, we've seen many categories move from jars, tins and packets to fresh, including soup, juices, and most recently chocolate. It's now time for the cooking sauces category to be brought up to date, and made for how people want to eat now: fresh, plant-based and better-for-you."

**thesimpleroot.co.uk**




## Tracklements announces latest Special Edition

**Condiment specialists Tracklements have added to its repertoire of Special Edition products with the launch of a new Coriander & Chilli Chutney.**

The latest launch to the business's Special Edition range is fresh, vibrant and fragrant, and alive with hot spices, green chillies and aromatic coriander – making it a perfect complement to barbecue season.

As well as being a new way to liven up customers' cooking over the warmer months, it is both gluten-free and suitable for vegans.

Becky Vale, marketing director at Tracklements, said, "This fresh tasting, lively chutney really stands out from the crowd, we're loving its versatility and universal appeal. Because it goes with so many things it's inspiring us to branch out and try new recipe ideas and summer combos."

**trade.tracklements.co.uk/trade**

## Mooli presents authentic Indian cuisine at-home

**An innovative new way for consumers to experience India's diverse food scene is being made available to UK consumers by Mooli, a high quality, authentic Indian food delivery service.**

Mooli's Taste Explorer menu offers delicious Indian food presented on a 'thali' – an Indian tasting plate – made from naturally-fallen palm leaves.

Meals can be heated up in the oven or microwave in half an hour or less, and incorporate popular curries, snacks, breads and Indian desserts.

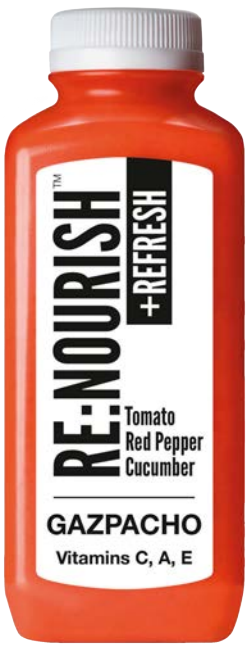



Sangeeta Patel, founder of Mooli, said, "Mooli is bringing a new, modern and fun dining experience home, providing people with new tasting experiences taken from flavours across India, with all dishes made in the UK and delivered nationwide.

A commitment to sustainability and accountability across the supply chain is also at the heart of the brand. Due to the convenient nature of the offering, Mooli plans to expand into independent retail outlets to provide authentic, tasty ready-made meals for time poor consumers who don't want to compromise on quality."

**moolifood.com**






# New functional soup from Re:Nourish

**Bottled soup brand Re:Nourish has launched +REFRESH Gazpacho, made from 78% Spanish tomatoes, so nutrition-conscious consumers can lunch healthily on the go.**

Tomatoes contain lycopene, a powerful antioxidant with many health benefits including sun protection and improved heart health.

The soup also contains vitamins A, C and E to help repair damaged collagen in the skin, and targets health issues including high blood pressure and low levels of immunity.

Nicci Clark, expert nutritionist and founder of Re:Nourish, said, "+REFRESH Gazpacho is a totally natural remedy, jam-packed full of Spanish tomatoes, which pump the skin with goodness and give you a naturally fresh glow – all whilst tasting delicious! Adding a Spanish-style gazpacho to your diet will not only add a little fresh goodness to an average lunch, but the rich tomato content works wonders for the skin."

**renourish.co.uk**




# New Scottish oat bar hits shelves

**Scottish distributor Fleming Howden has added to its snack range with the new BRAW bar.**

Packed with honey-coated barley flakes and available in two flavours – Salted Caramel and Bakewell – it's designed to satisfy the consumer hunger for a tasty snack on the go.

A spokesperson for the brand said, "Since launching, the BRAW bar has been incredibly well received and perfectly fits the place in the market for the anytime snack bar. The feedback has been hugely positive, with customers particularly loving the crunch of its delicious natural ingredients. We're expecting great things."

**brawbar.co.uk**

# Fairfields gives its Cheese & Onion crisps a vegan revamp

**Artisan crisp brand Fairfields Farm has relaunched its popular Cheese & Onion flavour crisps with an entirely vegan-friendly recipe.**

The potatoes used to make the crisps are grown on the business's independent family farm on the border of Suffolk and Essex, and renewable energy is used in their production.

Laura Strathern, co-founder of Fairfields Farm Crisps, explains, "We are all very excited to introduce our new vegan-friendly Cheese & Onion flavour crisps. The demand for plant-based snack choices is greater than ever and after the success of both our Bacon & Tomato and Rib of Beef vegan-friendly crisps, we decided it was time to launch another much-loved flavour. We're particularly happy at this delicious development because it marks our brand's transition to being entirely free of dairy and meat, as well as gluten."

**fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk**




# New pudding-inspired spirits range released

**The Real English Drinks Company, a group which runs a selection of pubs in the South Downs of Hampshire, has developed a range of after dinner spirits.**

Available in six flavours: Lemon Meringue; Sticky Toffee; Apple Crumble; Chocolate Brownie; Salted Caramel; and Vanilla Cheesecake, the products were created to offer consumers a satisfying alternative to dessert.

Neil Patterson, group chairman and master distiller, said, "Our house Toffee Vodka outsells the best-selling vodka 20-1 in our red.h group of pub restaurants. It is often enjoyed by people who don't want to eat a dessert but still fancy something sweet. Having stumbled upon this insight, we set out to not only create a 'specials board' range of shots to choose from, but to also make them available for retailers to buy and offer to their customers dining at home."

**reddistillery.co.uk**




# New look for vegan seafood brand

**TUNO, the range of tuna-inspired plant-based fish alternatives produced by Loma Linda, has rebranded its packaging and added a new flavour to its offering.**

The new Mild Curry flavour is the latest product in the brand's line up, which also consists of TUNO Mayo, Spring Water, Lemon Pepper and Thai Sweet Chili.

Made with sustainably sourced plant-based ingredients, this award-winning range is protein-rich and gluten-free and boasts the light and flaky texture of conventional tuna.

Mike Easterbrook, Atlantic Natural Food's European Agent, said, "We've invested significantly to find the right balance of flakiness and texture to provide a plant-based experience closer to that of tuna, including seaweed and DHA Algal Oil. This combination provides a fresh-from-the-sea fish flavour which we know is important to our customers.

"At Loma Linda, we are committed to developing more new products in this area, being a key innovator for ambient plant-based products in the marketplace. Our future plans will cover not just fish alternatives, but new meat alternatives too."

**atlanticnaturalfoods.com**






THE GREAT STOCK GIVEAWAY

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# GIVEAWAY *Highlights*




## DRYNKS UNLIMITED
### Smashed

Drynks Unlimited's mission is to create alcohol-free brands that deliver an authentic, natural taste and will let drinkers forget that they aren't drinking something alcoholic. Its Smashed Apple Cider won gold supreme champion at the World Cider Awards 2021 and gold at the International Beer and Cider 2021 Challenge, and its Smashed Pale Ale and Smashed Berry Cider have won Product of the Year Awards.

**drynks.co.uk**




## BANHOEK
### Chilli Oil

Banhoek Chilli Oil is a handcrafted, premium grade, artisan chilli oil made from just two ingredients: the highest quality rapeseed oil and dried Thai Birdseye chillies. It is 100% natural and contains no preservatives. This delicious, golden-hued oil delivers just the right level of spice. Whether your customers like their food fiery hot or just a tickle on the tongue, Banhoek Chilli Oil delivers that something special to stir fries, marinades, vegetarian and vegan cuisine, meat, fish, seafood, pasta, pizza and eggs.

**banhoekchillioil.co.uk**




## NOW NOW
### Durban Spice Curry Kit

For an authentic experience of South African curry, look no further than Now Now's Spice Kit. Offering a hot and fiery heat with well balanced flavour, this kit promises to feed 3-4 in just 30 minutes. The pack includes a whole spice mix and a ground spice mix, so curry lovers can enjoy the delicious taste of this surfers' favourite without the fuss – simply add onion, garlic, fresh ginger, potatoes, tomatoes and a protein of your choice and tuck in.

**nownowfood.co.uk**




## FAIRFIELDS FARM
### Cheese & Onion Flavour

Independent, family-run crisp producer Fairfields Farm has completed the brand's transition to being fully vegan with a delicious re-imagining of their popular Cheese & Onion crisps. Batch-cooked at their farm on the Suffolk and Essex border, these have all the taste and none of the allergens. They've been an instant hit for foodservice and retailers wanting to provide consumers with a full range of gluten-free and dairy-free snacks. Plus, the new packaging publicly affirms the brand's ambition to become carbon neutral.

**fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk**




## THE SHROPSHIRE SPICE COMPANY
### 'So Simple' Swahili Curry

The Shropshire Spice Company's 'So Simple' range of cook-in spice blends has been designed to deliver fabulous flavours and prepare meals in minutes. From the unique and aromatic Swahili Curry to Jambalaya and Stroganoff, each of the nine recipes are designed for family appeal so none are too hot or spicy. They are gluten-free and free from preservatives and colourings.

**shropshire-spice.co.uk**




## ISLAND BAKERY
### Organic Original Oatcakes

Island Bakery's Organic Original Oatcakes are made using the right combination of whole oats, oatmeal and extra virgin olive oil to create the ideal oatcake. Made in small batches with care, they are baked slowly in unique wood-fired ovens on the Scottish Isle of Mull. The Oatcakes are pressed into shape to give a rustic appearance. They are available in three varieties, making them the ideal accompaniment with cheese, dips, pâtés and more.

**islandbakery.scot**




## TEAPIGS
### Kombucha

Tea experts teapigs are the first recognised tea brand to make kombucha, having launched their very own range – Original, Ginger & Lemongrass and Peach & Mango. Each flavour in the award-winning range is brewed in small batches in the UK with a live SCOBY, along with top quality tea sourced by trained tea taster & co-founder Louise Cheadle. teapigs kombucha is 100% natural – you won't find any artificial flavours or sweeteners in those cans! Plus, 5p per can is donated to teapigs' ethical scheme which supports vulnerable young people in Rwanda.

**teapigs.co.uk**




## SKOULIKAS BEDFORD
### Sunita

Sunita stands for one word – "quality" – which reflects the ingredients used, the traditional recipes and the consistency of the products. The Skoulikas Bedford team strives to find unique products from Greece and Italy to give customers an authentic experience. Collaborating with some of the best regional manufacturers, their ranges are authentically and carefully prepared. If retailers are knowledgeable, they will share their passion with confidence.

**skoulikasbedford.com**

# GIVEAWAY *Highlights*

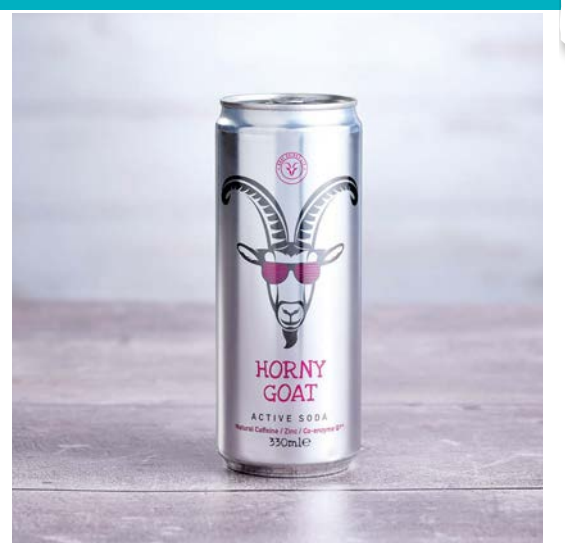
THE GREAT STOCK GIVEAWAY
SPECIALITY FOOD

## GOAL POWER
### Strawberry Oat Bar

Launched in 2022 by the team behind The Protein Ball Co., the wider initiative behind Goal Power is to get kids up, out, and active. For the delicious children's oat bars, Goal Power uses only the best natural ingredients. Choose from either Strawberry or Blueberry; these tantalising treats make snack time delicious, nutritious and fun! As well as being gluten-free, dairy-free, high in fibre and refined sugar-free, the team has also worked hard to ensure they are HFSS compliant and under 100 calories.

**goalpower.co.uk**




## GOAT DRINKS LTD
### Horny Goat – Active Soda

A lightly carbonated, refreshingly aromatic Active Soda for grown-ups who want to have fun. Horny Goat is about being an adult and being inclusive. It's not for kids, nor is it reserved for mountain climbing, marathon running, skydiving adrenalin junkies. It is for anyone wanting a boost of energy in a great tasting Active Soda.

**goatdrinks.co.uk**

## AAGRAH FOODS
### Karahi Tarka Sauce

With a rich restaurant heritage spanning over 40 years, Aagrah Foods brings you amazing tasting authentic cooking sauces that are proving a massive hit with consumers. Utilising the 'Tarka' method of frying spices until they sizzle and pop to release those wonderful flavours, these really are Every Indian Chef's Secret®. To complement the sauces, they have an ever-expanding library of recipes to provide consumers with variety and create more usage occasions. This is a must-stock item in the International Foods category.

**aagrahfoods.com**







## THE REAL OLIVE COMPANY
### Organic Wild Garlic & Basil Olives

The Real Olive Company's exceptional olives are picked on the shores of the Mediterranean by people who believe in the unhurried rhythms of the olive tree. To create this popular blend the business marinates fresh, pitted Greek green olives in wild garlic, basil, and cold-pressed oil. The Real Olive Company's olives are always slowly marinated using cold-pressed oil to keep them at their freshest whilst maintaining the oil's goodness.

**therealolivecompany.co.uk**

## STEENBERGS
### Organic Rose Water

Steenbergs' Rose Water is made through a simple water extraction of classic Persian Damask Rose blossom, grown in Bulgaria, where the rose water is made with the freshly picked rose petals directly on the farm. Part of the business's popular home baking range, this is delicious with all sorts of puddings, including icings, ice creams, custards, fruit salads and chocolate puddings.

**steenbergs.co.uk**







## HUNTER & GATHER
### Olive Oil Mayonnaise & Unsweetened Tomato Ketchup

Hunter & Gather's 100% Olive Oil Mayonnaise is made in the UK using a carefully crafted blend of 100% light olive oil, British free-range egg yolk, apple cider vinegar, and a pinch of Pink Himalayan salt. The result is a mayonnaise that's all natural and free-from sugar, grains, milk, and inflammatory seed oils. Meanwhile, the brand's Tomato Ketchup is made using only organic tomatoes and a blend of vinegars and spices – offering a distinctive taste without sugar, dates or sweeteners.

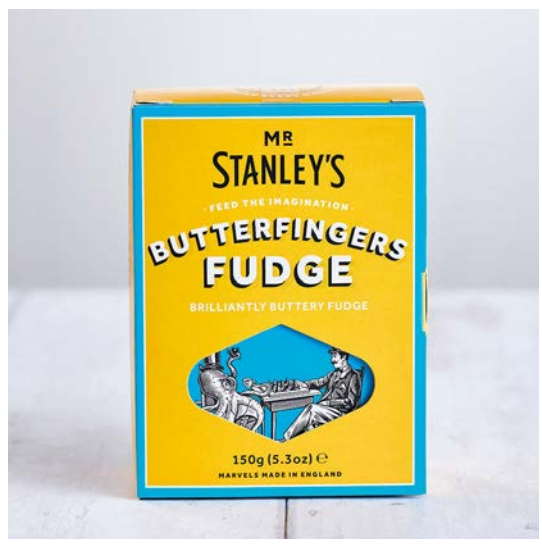
**hunterandgatherfoods.com**

## SIMPLEAS SNACKS
### Smoky Paprika Pea Curls

Simpleas is on a mission to make snacks we can all feel good about eating. Made from 100% sustainably sourced and harvested Great British peas, which are lovingly baked and not fried, Simpleas' delicious pea powered curls are supearior little bags of good stuff. Available in four delicious flavours, each of which is plant-based, high in protein, high in fibre, gluten-free, and only 88 calories per bag.

**simpleas-snacks.co.uk**




## GOURMET CANDY CO
### Mr Stanley's Butterfingers Fudge

Mr Stanley's Butterfingers fudge is a creamy and crumbly butter fudge that melts in the mouth. This delicious fudge is made in England and contains a luxurious 18% butter content with just the right amount of sweetness for everyone to enjoy. Presented in a vintage Mr Stanley's 'book style' gift box design, for maximum impact on the shelf. Don't let these fine morsels slip through your fingers. One of the finest of Mr Stanley's wide range of confections.

**mrstanleys.com**

# CENTRE




Welcome the warmer weather with these delicious alfresco options

## 1 CLEMENCY HALL CHEESE

The Clemency Hall range brings quality, value and exclusive cheeses to the independent retailer with pre-packed artisan cheese that is full of character and made by local producers. The selection of pre-cut cheeses provides the opportunity to still offer speciality and premium products, even when space is limited.
**rowcliffe.co.uk**

## 2 CLEMENCY HALL ANTIPASTI

Clemency Hall also boasts a selection of the finest antipasti which has been hand-selected from artisan producers in the beautiful Mediterranean regions, featuring olives, semi-dried tomatoes, and chargrilled artichokes. These delicious vegetables make the perfect addition to any summer picnic hamper and offer a true taste of the Mediterranean.
**rowcliffe.co.uk**

## 3 STAG BAKERIES CHEESE STRAWS

Luxurious cheese straws, including Dunlop Cheese Straws that combine the nutty and creamy taste of matured cheese with the flaky and light texture of Stag Bakery's all-butter pastry, and Strathdon Blue Cheese Straws, which are made with aged blue cheese that is flavoursome, aromatic and pairs perfectly with the buttery pastry. Indulgent, light, flaky and utterly delicious.
**stagbakeries.co.uk**

# SPREAD






**4 PETERS YARD**
**SOURDOUGH BITES**

Savour the crunch of these sourdough bites, made using Peter's Yard's signature sourdough starter that's slowly fermented for 16 hours. Crafted from Shipton Mill flour, they're hand-baked and generously seasoned with all-natural ingredients. Available in three flavours: West Country Sour Cream & Chive, Suffolk Cyder Vinegar & Sea Salt, and Anglesey Sea Salt & Cracked Pepper.
**petersyard.com**

**5 SOHO JUICE COMPANY**
**JUICES**

The award-winning SOHO soft drinks range features big, bright and fruity flavours which are low in sugar and free of fizz. Preservative-free, gluten-free and vegan certified with 100% recyclable cans. Available in refreshing Cucumber, Mint, Lemon & Lime; classic Blood Orange, Raspberry & Ginger; and the unique Apple, Honey & Lemon. Perfect for picnics!
**sohojuice.co.uk**

**6 FLOWER AND WHITE**
**MERINGUE**

Flower & White are innovators of light and indulgent, low-calorie meringue products. No additives, no E-numbers, just all-natural deliciousness. As well as being the lighter way to enjoy sweet snacking, their award-winning meringue products are gluten-free and packed in paper recyclable packaging. There are even vegetarian and vegan-friendly options too!
**flowerandwhite.co.uk**

**7 DR WILL'S**
**CAESAR DRESSING**

Made with natural ingredients, Dr Will's creamy Caesar Dressing is the perfect addition to any picnic, for dressing salads, dipping crusty bread into or adding some extra indulgence to homemade coleslaw. What's more, it is vegan-friendly and naturally sweetened, without compromising on taste or texture, making it the ideal sell for the whole family.
**dr-wills.com**

**COMMENTATORS**



**BECKY VALE**
TRACKLEMENTS



**CHARLES COLEMAN**
THE SAUSAGE MAN



**OLIVIA SINCLAIR**
EATPLANTED



**RICK SHEEPSHANKS**
STOKES

# CASH IN ON BARBECUE SEASON

## The warmer months herald the arrival of many food lovers' favourite outdoor feasts; here's what to stock to make the most of the opportunity



Often regarded as the jewel in the crown of summer eating, the Great British barbecue is undoubtedly a highlight on the calendars of the UK's food-loving public. A barbecue is an occasion whatever the weather – us Brits will happily power through a rainstorm for the promise of a perfectly charred burger – and with more shoppers than ever keen to treat themselves to better quality produce, barbecue season offers a tasty opportunity for fine food independents. Indeed, with National BBQ Week on the horizon (4th-10th July), now is the perfect time to cash in.

Al fresco eating became more popular than ever during the pandemic, with the British public urged to only socialise out of doors for a period, and restaurants closing their doors. "Since the beginning of lockdown in 2019 the UK has become a nation of barbecuers," agrees Becky Vale, marketing manager at Tracklements. "Barbecue season has become more reliable thanks to the lockdown side effect of upgrading our outdoor spaces and has consequently grown in importance as a retail opportunity." The numbers speak for themselves: "In 2020 we saw a huge increase in the number of households barbecuing with a record 190million barbecues held in the UK and during the warm weeks in early June last year searches for barbecue ready foods rose by 488% [source: Google Trends research by Eat Great Meat."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, familiar flavours were especially popular during the challenging two years just passed – a trend which Charles Coleman, sales director at The Sausage Man, can attest to. "The pandemic highlighted a particular demand for familiar, comforting foods; industry research has revealed sausages have soared in sales and are a favourite choice," he says.

Indeed, the pandemic-driven need for at-home eating meant that sales of popular meat products went through the roof. "Research from Mintel shows 'sales of processed meat products, including processed poultry and red meat main meal components have skyrocketed by 18% during 2020 and are estimated to be worth £3.7 billion," he continues. "Breakfast and barbecue favourites bacon (+18%), sausages (+20%) and burgers (+26%), all benefited from the rise in scratch cooking and a shift towards eating at home'."

With its range of gourmet sausages including Bratwurst, Frankfurter, Wagyu beef and Iberico pork, The Sausage Man has experienced the growing hunger across the UK for quality barbecue options. "We have become a nation of foodies with a keen curiosity for new flavours, and our younger, digitally driven, generation have embraced better food offerings, showing interest for regional specialities that not only taste good, but are also produced with care and preferably instagrammable too," he explains.

### The plant-based opportunity

That's not to say that all barbecuers are looking for just meat and/or fish options. Chargrilled vegetables have long been a mainstay of the British barbecue season, and now there's an extensive menu of plant-based meat alternatives on offer. Freshly launched into the UK market,





Eatplanted offers a range of meat-free products that are perfectly suited to barbecue season – and it's not only the growing vegan consumer segment that can benefit. "The EU's Smart Protein project in 2020 found that 37% of UK consumers are eating less meat versus a year ago, with a further 36% saying they plan on reducing their meat consumption in the future," explains Olivia Sinclair, UK marketing manager at Eatplanted. Flexitarians are rising in number, but the idea of changing habits – ie, stepping away from a sizzling barbecued sausage come summer – is often blocking shoppers' proactivity when it comes to making the change. "The study also looked into barriers facing consumers and plant-based products, revealing that 40% of UK consumers didn't want to change their eating habits or routines. Thankfully, we couldn't agree more – and have a range of original chicken and pulled pork that can be swapped into consumer's existing favourite recipes without having to do anything new. For us, it's all about making small swaps, and making them as easy and delicious for the consumer as possible so there are no downturns on taste and experience.

"In the past, vegetarians and vegans have often drawn the short straw when it comes to barbecues; being offered the side dishes or perhaps a Portobello mushroom, as meat substitutes were either not available or not considered," Olivia continues. Thankfully, Eatplanted's range will satisfy plant-based and meat eaters alike, bringing together a BBQ-marinated pulled pork-style product (delicious in a soft bun) and soon-to-launch herbed spicy chicken-style skewers.

## Far-flung flavours

For retailers looking to stock exciting new flavours from further afield, there are plenty of options on the market. Speciality food distributor Empire Bespoke Foods is proud to host a wide range of products which are ideal for barbecue season and fit perfectly with this year's flavour-packed trends. Edward Rayment from the team talked us through the business's must-stock products. "Celebrating 75 years of pickling the perfect gherkin, Mrs Elswood gherkins are the perfect crunchy snack and accompaniment to any picnic or BBQ," he begins, and there's bound to be plenty of noise around the brand this year. "2022 is a big year for Mrs Elswood – the Nation's #1 Gherkins – as not only is there a comprehensive modernisation of the brand, the folks at pickle central are working on some exciting new products that will help Mrs Elswood brighten up meals across the UK." It's not only gherkins that are popular come barbecue season; anything pickled and crunchy works perfectly alongside grilled meat and livens up any mealtime, and Empire Bespoke Foods has complemented its popular Mrs Elswood offering with Fallot, traditional French cornichons and Mezzetta, quintessentially Italian American pickled vegetables.

Of course, no barbecue is complete without an array of condiments to add pep to any dish, and Empire Bespoke Foods is home to a range of American classics. "To accompany the BBQ season, our condiment and sauces portfolio brings the finest American products to the table," explains Edward. "Stubb's is America's #1 premium BBQ sauce, and comes from Texas – the culinary home of the BBQ movement. Jardine's is the finest US small batch salsa brand – also from Texas. Frank's Red Hot is a great addition to make any dish that little bit spicier, while French's classic mustard is a bestseller in the iconic yellow bottle. Complementing our hot sauce portfolio and new this year is Cholula – the quintessential Mexican hot sauce."

For an exciting step towards international flavours this barbecue season, Tracklements' latest Special Edition offerings are well worth stocking. "There's something about the barbecue that brings out our culinary sense of adventure," explains Tracklements' Becky. A barbecue naturally brings a sense of generosity and hosting; you don't often hear of a consumer 'barbecuing for one'. "The barbecue chef is never lonely," agrees Becky, "and barbecues are generally more social occasions, so chances are that we're catering for a variety of diets and cooking a variety of options. All of which puts table sauces centre stage – after all, who can imagine a barbecue without a varied selection of sauces and relishes alongside to sit every palate."

While it's always a safe bet to stock classic flavours such as mayonnaise and tomato ketchup – Tracklements' year-round best-seller Sweet Mustard Ketchup sees a significant sales spike when barbecues come out – experimental foodies would relish the opportunity to try more exotic-tasting flavours. "Barbecues provide the perfect opportunity to dollop several Tracklements on your plate and slather a different relish on every mouthful," says Becky. "It's this unique sense of 'a bit here and a bit there' that gives the opportunity to try bolder flavours – enter Tracklements' summer special edition Coriander & Chilli Chutney with its burst of bold, fragrant heat which makes it perfect on barbecued lamb steaks."

## PRODUCER INSIGHT



### Rick Sheepshanks, owner of Stokes Sauces, talks us through the must-stock condiments this barbecue season

When we think about barbecues, our natural tastes turn to the plethora of BBQ sauces that are so readily available. Stokes have multiple such BBQ Sauces with sweet, smoky, sticky, spicy and Oriental variations to enjoy.

Tomato Ketchup is a classic side to any barbecue. Stokes Tomato Ketchup is thick with masses of sun-ripened tomatoes. Its sister variations have deeply smoky chipotle heat, simple red chilli spice, and all the ingredients of a Bloody Mary for hot dogs with a smile.

Traditional condiments should never be overlooked, playing a huge part in the marinade, caramelisation and flavour of grilled meat, fish and vegetables.

The cleansing heat of Classic English or Dijon mustard cut through the cinders of a subtle sausage. Stirring grilled sausages in Cider & Horseradish Mustard with a drizzle of honey is a fine twist on a great classic, with mustard seeds popping, a gentle horseradish finish and sweet honey undertones.

Mint Sauce made with sweet garden mint and just a little white wine vinegar adds so much to lamb koftas and patties. Or, add some to yogurt with chopped cucumber for a cooling raita to ease spicy lamb chops. A well-cooked (as in properly) rump steak, cut into strips with caramelised sweet onions and Creamed Horseradish warmth in the garnish gets thumbs up all round.

Mayonnaise offers so much to grilled fish, prawns and calamari. On a bun layered with salad and topped with a juicy burger, mayonnaise contrasts well with Chilli Jam or Red Onion Marmalade. With Stokes flavour sensations, twists on their 'Real Mayonnaise' original, try gentle aioli-style Garlic Mayonnaise; a zesty, aromatic Sicilian Lemon & Dill variation; refreshing Mustard & Honey Mayonnaise; and fiery Habanero Chilli Mayonnaise – the classics twist this way and that for barbecue food with real attitude.



# MEET THE PRODUCER

For Rory Bruce and Chiara Bedini, descendents of the original founders of Babingtons, heritage with a splash of wit is the name of the game

If you find yourself walking through Rome and hankering for a refreshing taste of tradition, Babingtons Tea Rooms is the ultimate place to satisfy your thirst. The iconic site located at the foot of the city's historic Spanish Steps was originally founded by the distinguished Anna Maria Babington and Isabel Cargill in 1983, and has been a must-visit for tea lovers since then. Indeed, with 30,000 Italian visitors every year – not to mention 50,000 international clients – Babingtons has made a confident name for itself in the world of fine tea.

Thankfully, the descendants of these two pioneering Victorian ladies – Rory Bruce and Chiara Bedini – have not only brought this taste of the Eternal City into the modern age, but are presenting it to discerning tea drinkers in the UK and around the world. Babingtons Blends was launched in the UK in January 2022, presenting 10 of the most-loved, delicious and super-premium tea blends sold in Rome.

## Classic with a premium twist

Having spotted a gap in the UK market for fantastic quality tea with a unique story, Babingtons offers an exciting proposition for independent fine food retailers. Offering a combination of delicious teas, eye-catching contemporary packaging, charming eccentricity and wit, and authentic heritage, this tea brand certainly stands out on shelves. "We don't sell tea, we sell the unique experience and story of Babingtons in a cup," explains Chiara.

The stunning Babingtons tea caddies provide attractive impact and visual appeal on-shelf, positioning the products as not only a premium alternative to mainstream teas but also a luxury gifting option.



"In a crowded category, of equal significance is of course the unique, compelling, and inspiring story of the brand," says Chiara. "We know that once a customer experiences Babingtons Blends, they come back time and time again."

It's not only via discerning retailers that the business is driving its premium message; high class hotels, restaurants and cruise ships are getting the Babingtons treatment too, meaning that there's a myriad of ways your tea-loving customers can become familiar with the range.

And what a range it is. Consisting of 10 all-natural, hand blended, super premium blends – all available in loose leaf format and with eight also sold in teabag form – there's something to suit every palate. With a black tea, two scented black teas, two green teas, one white tea and three herbal blends – with standouts including the Breakfast Special Blend, Earl Grey Imperial, Karha Chai, Madame Blue Lady and Forest Fruits – they're sure to add tasteful colour to your shelves.

## A considered approach

The family's philosophy has always been to ensure the sustainability of the people and environments where their tea was being grown. Putting this into practice, in partnership with local government and agencies, Chiara set up The Darjeeling Foundation in 2018 to put 50 students per year through an education programme, with certification ensuring these young people remained within their community, fulfilling valuable roles ranging from nursing to hospitality.




"The Babingtons customer is a person of the world," continues Chiara. "They are lovers or arts, culture, diverse experience, and of course they are passionate about food and drink". In fact, fans of Babingtons' tea blends share a number of attributes with fine food shoppers, seeking quality alongside an authentic taste, aroma and flavour. "Predominantly female, they care for their own and their family's health and wellbeing, as well as for the environment," says Chiara.

It's not only tea lovers that benefit from partnering with Babingtons. With an easy, efficient and professional trade service with the benefit of strong eco and sustainability credentials – not to mention unimpeachable product quality – *Speciality Food* readers are sure to be satisfied.

## Taste of the future

The future looks bright for Babingtons. This year the team is launching an online subscription offering, as well as developing its gift bundle collection to complement the existing four options: The Full Montea; Sweet Dreams Are Made of Tea; The RoyalTea and Let Them Eat Cake.

With a passionate focus on quality, a unique heritage and truly delicious range of teas, Babingtons is an exciting new arrival on the British tea scene.






> We don't sell tea, we sell the unique experience and story of Babingtons in a cup





# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS

Harnessing the power of social media, building rapport and providing engaging sampling are three ways to ensure you create a successful relationship with your customers

An important factor for success as an independent retailer is building solid relationships with your customers so that they become regulars as well as potentially ambassadors for what you do. We spoke to cheese experts to find out how they interact with their customers to build positive relationships.

## A personal touch

Webb Freckingham, co-owner of The Cheese Shop Nottingham, recommends treating your customers as friends and trying to make them feel warm and wanted. "I believe that's the key to it, as not a lot of people like shopping anyway so if you can make it more friendly, happy and cheerful people will always come back because they like a smiley face. They don't want someone that's miserable! Offer them samples, that's always the best way. And if we get a new cheese in, we talk about it, champion it, and give them a taste. That's the way forward."

Allowing your customers to taste your products is something Fraser MacLellan, owner of Froth and Rind, also recommends, as it enables you to build a relationship based on their likes and dislikes. "Getting to know your customers and their tastes really helps.

"We always engage with the customers, offer tastings or make recommendations based on what information they give us. Over time we can use this to make more tailored suggestions and serve them cheese we're confident they'll enjoy. In doing this, the customer learns to trust us and our suggestions as they've had good experiences in the past. We also like to give them an extra cheese for free at times, especially if it's one that they might enjoy but we're not 100% sure or it's perhaps a little outside of their regular choices. This gives them a chance to try new cheeses without it costing them."

## Getting your customers excited

Once you've got customers through the door, the next step is to get them engaged and excited about your cheese selection.

Webb recommends keeping your customers involved with things going on in your shop. "If you've got a cheese in for a week, do a 'cheese of the week' promotion. People look at it and say, 'Ooh what's the cheese of the week?' It might not to be to everyone's taste, but nine times out of 10 if you've come to a cheese shop it's because you love cheese, so half the battle is already won. We give them a taste and hopefully they take it on board and that's how we go forward."

"We have a core range of cheeses, but about 20% of our counter regularly changes and we love getting in cheese from smaller suppliers that our customers may not have tried", Fraser explains. "Anything a bit different always catches the eye and builds interest. We've found that pairing cheese with some of the drinks we sell is a great way of generating excitement, especially if those pairings are a little off the wall. We're constantly trying cheeses with beer, wine, rum, gin and more, and we've come up with some really quirky pairings that are really good."

## Using social media to build interest

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter can be used to help build rapport with your customers and also spark interest to entice them to pop in and see your offerings.

According to Webb, "Social media can be a big help but it can also be a hindrance. It helps because it's a free advertising stream, and if a lot of people like you and follow you, they see new products and see stuff that you've got in. So, they'll say 'I saw on Instagram or Facebook or Twitter that cheese you were talking about – what was it?' So, it does spark interest."

Fraser mirrored these thoughts, explaining, "We do a lot of different things on social media to keep our customers aware of what's going on. We have our products on there, especially new ones, but we find that a more personal touch really drives interest. Posts like 'meet the team' or our Christmas videos have really driven a lot of interest and let our customers see a slightly different side to us than the usual face behind the counter. We also get customers involved in helping us choose new products or menu items via social media and that has generated a lot of interest too."

> "There's always somewhere else to shop so it's important to make the customer want to come to you"

## Why relationships are so important

Webb explained why having a rapport with customers and having conversations about your products is essential to independent success. "All the supermarkets are taking out their meat counters, cheese counters, deli counters, there's no fishmonger anymore. We win in that sense because we've got the knowledge, we've got skill, we can talk to customers about the products, we can suggest things, whereas if you go to a supermarket or big retailer you can't get that – everything is pre-packed on the shelf. You've got to have a certain level of knowledge and skill to sell it from a fresh counter but anybody can put an item on the shelf pre-packed out of a box."

As Fraser puts it, "Relationships are what keep independents going. There's so much competition out there, whether it's supermarkets, online, or larger chains, the relationship and the personal touch is the main USP for an independent so it's vital to build on that and use that to keep the customers happy. There's always somewhere else to shop so it's important to make the customer want to come to you."





# Dairy crisis threatens spiralling costs of cheese and milk

**With fuel shortages and rising costs set to have a lasting effect on British supply chains, the UK's leading farming experts have warned that the price hikes to dairy products, including cheese and milk, are likely to be permanent.**

Paul Tompkins, vice-chair of the National Union of Farmers dairy board, has warned price increases were being driven by the spiralling price of feed, fuel and fertiliser, and that higher shop prices for dairy products are likely to stay for the foreseeable future.

Speaking to GB News, he explained, "It takes me two and a half years to get a calf from being born on our farm to be actually producing milk, and that incurs a lot of costs over those two years.

"Even if things were to return to normal, even if we were to reduce our costs now and be paid a fair price for milk, the implications of what we're going through now is actually going to be for the medium to longer term."

A dairy farmer's main costs are feed, fuel and fertiliser, and all of these have been subject to sizeable price hikes over the past few months. "Last year I was paying 62p or 63p for the diesel I use in the tractors; the last load I bought was £1.29," says Oxfordshire dairy farmer David Christesen. "It's come back a bit but, notwithstanding that, it is a huge increase."

David's family business manages a herd of about 1,000 cows and he reported that costs were already going up as a result of the upheaval caused by the pandemic and Brexit, but the war in Ukraine has "turbocharged inflation to levels the like of which I've never seen in 30 years of farming".

It's not just fuel costs that are affecting the supply chain, as fertiliser costs are also skyrocketing. NFU President Minette Batters said, "Farmers are experiencing unprecedented costs when buying fertiliser, alongside tightening supplies, and it's critical that government put in place measures to mitigate some of these effects.

David has seen these price increases firsthand. "This time last year I was paying about £310 or £315 a tonne, but I've just got a price this morning and it is £930." This would increase his fertiliser bill over a year by £60,000.

Britain's largest dairy co-operative Arla has sounded the alarm as the financial squeeze forces UK milk production to fall – a trend that could threaten future milk supplies according to farming experts.

It is feared some farmers may consider quitting the industry as the picture just keeps getting worse. "These are big numbers," explained David. "For many years we've absorbed smaller increases by becoming more efficient, by scaling – which is how we've coped with a deflationary milk price. The reality is when you get to these sorts of numbers, you just can't absorb those, so something has to give."

> "Even if things were to return to normal, even if we were to reduce our costs now and be paid a fair price for milk, the implications of what we're going through now is actually going to be for the medium to longer-term"

# Zero-carbon cheese plant to open on Welsh island of Anglesey

**A new £20 million cheese factory is preparing to open on Anglesey with the people behind the project saying it will have a major impact on the Welsh dairy industry for generations to come.**

The net-zero dairy will be powered by renewable energy and raise standards by implementing traditional and cutting-edge methods to manufacture Edam, Gouda, Cheddar, and a range of other artisan cheeses using milk from local farms.

While visiting the new site, Lesley Griffiths MS, minister for rural affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd, commented, "It's been great to visit Mona Dairy, there is real potential for it to boost our dairy industry.

"As the first zero carbon emissions cheese plant in Europe it is a cutting-edge development with Wales's food and drink industry once again a leading light."

The factory is set to open in June 2022, and will be capable of producing 7,000 tons of Welsh and continental cheeses every year.

# Caws Cenarth receives Royal Warrant of Appointment to HRH the Prince of Wales

**Renowned Teifi Valley artisan cheesemaker Carwyn Adams has received a Royal Warrant of Appointment for his Caws Cenarth cheese, lasting for five years.**

The award is a mark of recognition for people or businesses who have regularly supplied goods or services to HM The Queen or HRH The Prince of Wales and/or their households.

A second-generation cheesemaker, Carwyn is following in the footsteps of his parents, Thelma and the late Gwynfor, who created Caws Cenarth as an alternative source of income following the introduction of European milk quotas in the 1980s.

Speaking about the honour, Carwyn said, "My parents created a business that changed the course of our lives and the cheese industry in Wales. Caws Cenarth has built a legacy for soft cheese and traditional artisan cheese in the UK."

Carwyn was "delighted" with the announcement, and described the award as "the pinnacle of Caws Cenarth's story so far".





# Virtual Cheese Awards announces live final on 13th May

**The UK's first and only online cheese awards, which supports and celebrates the best of British cheese, has announced that its live final will take place on Friday 13th May.**

With over 200 entries this year, the Virtual Cheese Awards, now in its third year, is yet again showcasing new and seasoned British cheesemakers.

The live final on Friday 13th May will see entries across a range of classes, from Best Speciality Cheese to Best Territorial Cheese, with the addition of the new Excellence Awards which welcomes nominees for categories from Young Cheesemaker Award to the Sustainability Trophy, amongst other categories.

This year's expert judges range from industry professionals to artisan specialists. The list includes cheese experts from Booths, Paxton & Whitfield, M&S, Harvey & Brockless and many more big names in cheese.

Sarah de Wit, co-founder of the Virtual Cheese Awards, said, "We are so excited for the final of this year's Virtual Cheese Awards. We are still a very new awards and only in our third year, we are so happy to have received over 200 entries of your amazing British cheeses.

"It is going to be a great day full of celebrating the diversity and quality of the British cheese industry and we are thrilled to be welcoming such a wonderful array of experts who are coming on board to judge too!"

Hosted by broadcaster and journalist, Nigel Barden, a lover and specialist in all things British ingredients and artisan producers, the day is going to be packed with judging, panel discussions, interviews and tasting with exciting special guests yet to be announced.

Nigel commented on this years event, "Cheese is something that in this country that we do well, really well in fact. It is an industry full of innovators and inspiring people who are truly passionate about making great cheese and they deserve all the praise we can give them!"

Unlike last year, the Virtual Cheese Awards 2022 can be viewed by anyone. The free live stream on the day of the event will be available through the Virtual Cheese Award's website, Youtube channel and Facebook page from 10:30am to 5pm.

> "It is going to be a great day full of celebrating the diversity and quality of the British cheese industry and we are thrilled to be welcoming such a wonderful array of experts who are coming on board to judge too"

# Paxton & Whitfield to host online Platinum Jubilee cheese tasting

**London cheesemongers Paxton & Whitfield are hosting a live online tasting dedicated to The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, focusing on some of their favourite artisan cheeses during her reign.**



Expert cheesemonger Simon at Paxton & Whitfield will be discussing the tasting notes and history behind these remarkable cheeses in a live streaming event. Priced at £45, this includes entry to the live tasting event, a packet of Paxton & Whitfield artisan crackers, and a chilled delivery of five different styles of artisan cheese so that customers can taste along with Simon for the full experience on the evening.

Each cheese tasting delivery is carefully hand-cut, wrapped and packed by cheesemongers into a Paxton & Whitfield branded transit box – insulated with Woolcool; a revolutionary, totally compostable and biodegradable insulation and chilled with fully recyclable and reusable ice packs.

The cheese will be delivered on Thursday 19th May 2022 – in time for the live tasting which will take place at 7 pm on Friday 20th May 2022.

## *"Batten down the hatches"*



**JAMES GRANT**
NO2 POUND STREET

As we batten down the hatches to help us better weather the increased costs of living, it is clear that many households are now more than ever being careful with spending, especially when it comes to food.

So this month I am writing about how, as suppliers of exceptional, sustainable, economical and ethical produce, we are changing up to show our audience added value.

The sadly standardised and industrial cheese that line the supermarket shelves generally cost far less than those specialist cheeses made by hand on a farm or small artisan unit. However, there is a massive quality difference and one that needs to be shouted from the rooftops.

Certain unnamed producers of supermarket cheeses generally buy huge amounts of milk from hundreds of farms and also often buy milk from continental Europe. All of the milk is then pooled into massive closed vats with pre-determined cultures. This is conveyor belt production that quite frankly annoys me. Sadly, this is where the majority of cheese sales fall and they are still considered the holy grail by the masses. The decision to buy this type of cheese is often based on price, a good-looking brand that is well advertised and often through television.

However, what those big brand cheeses don't do is talk about how ethical, sustainable and economically viable their method of mass production really is. Imagine the demand on one of those dairy farmers supplying them with milk. What impact does this have on their livestock? Have you considered how much water and energy is needed to facilitate the production of industrial cheesemakers, which often make over 60 tons a day? Did you know that hydrogen sulphide is a bi-product from the breakdown of organic waste and this is potentially lethal when inhaled? There are so many examples of how industrial dairy producers fail on the proper management of waste. This method of production is detrimental to environmental sustainability and clearly needs more stringent guidelines from our government. When next in Cornwall breathe deeply, and if you smell rotten eggs beware... would you not prefer to smell the beautiful fresh country air that we are all so wanting back?

Something that my business is now doing is investing time with artisan cheesemakers and buying cheese that is both cost effective for my business but also for our lovely customers. Artisan cheesemakers (as I have said before) often employ the same number of staff as industrial. This means that they have a lot more to pay out and are left with a far smaller net profit. Most artisan producers that I deal with are happy with subsistence as are the majority of people that are truly passionate about what they do.

The number of cheeses that we hold at No2 is significant. However, there is something for everyone. The difference and a key selling point over industrial and cheaper offerings is taste. This is where artisan wins hands down. I remember my mum using up to 400g of supermarket extra farmhouse holy grail vintage to mix with her bechamel for the cauliflower cheese to be served with Sunday lunch. Today I use possibly 150g and a sprinkle on top of Teifi Mature or Keens Mature, or a mixture of both.

When you put value for money and value of product together artisan wins hands down. You only need to use small amounts to begin with, also you can rest easy as the production methods are second to none and it is better for the environment. Buy entrance level artisan cheese and see how they compare; they will have a far better and long lasting taste.



**COMMENTATORS**



**PEV MANNERS**
BELVOIR



**ANDY HOPE-JOHNSTONE**
CAWSTON PRESS



**RACHAEL WINTER**
DAYLESFORD

# WHAT TO DRINK THIS SUMMER

## The warmer months are finally upon us, which this year means stocking up on drinks showcasing great taste, versatility and health credentials

At long last, the chill has left the air and we can all start to look forward to summer and its associated culinary pleasures, from picnics and barbecues to outdoor get-togethers and a chilled glass of something special in the garden. Summer 2022 is doubtless looking a little different to the past couple of summers; with no restrictions in sight retailers and consumers alike are delighted to return to 'normality' – which means that right now, the time is ripe to add some fizz to your summer drinks selection.

We all know that sales of white and rose wines will rise, as will those of lighter-flavoured beers and fruity ciders, but what's new for 2022 is the focus on simple DIY-style options, drinks with health benefits – and the great taste needed to back them up – and beverages showcasing the three musts of the fine food shopper: quality, heritage and provenance.

For quintessentially British beverage company Belvoir, the start of summer heralds elderflower season, which provides a bounty of the brand's arguably most iconic ingredient – and offers retailers with a simple and delicious step into the foraging trend. "For almost 40 years we've been creating premium cordials and sparkling drinks on our family farm, all born from working closely with nature, respecting the countryside and supporting sustainable farming," begins Pev Manners, managing director of Belvoir. "Seasonality goes hand in hand with the production cycle and summer is our busiest time, where the annual elderflower harvest gets underway from late May. It's one of our most important events on the calendar, when our entire team and local community come together to collect elderflower, and it's where the business first started." Elderflower used to spill over into the garden and, hating to see anything go to waste, Pev's mother and father – John and Mary Manners – hit on the idea of transforming it into pure fruit cordials free of additives. This classic cordial is still made to Mary's original recipe, along with almost 30 other delicious soft drinks sold across the UK and around the world.

### Perfect for all summer occasions

"Our new low calorie Botanical Sodas in three interesting flavour profiles are perfect for summer entertaining, either to drink as an alcohol alternative or to mix with spirits and into cocktails," begins Pev. "Floral Fizz makes a great non-alcoholic alternative to a floral G&T, Bitter Orange Spritz delivers an invigoratingly bitter and citrusy orange sparkling drink inspired by Mediterranean-style aperitifs, or swap a traditional Dark & Stormy for aromatic Spicy Ginger Fizz."

Of course, 2022 is the year of the Jubilee, which offers a raft of opportunities for fine food retailers. "Perfect for this year's Jubilee street party and garden party celebrations, we've designed two limited edition 'Best of British' bottles to mark the occasion," says Pev. "Add a splash of Elderflower Cordial to summer dessert recipes, cocktails and mocktails, or on top of beer for a refreshing Elderflower Top. Ready to drink Sparkling Elderflower over ice makes a cooling long drink on its own or mix with Prosecco for bubbles with a floral twist.

"Meanwhile, for mocktail and cocktail lovers, Passionfruit Martini, J&T and Peach Bellini are all deliciously alcohol-free to enjoy on their own, but are also equally delicious mixed with a favourite spirit or as an cocktail component."

### Inspired by kitchen gardens

A truly versatile seasonal drink is the workhorse of the summer drinks trolley, and this is something that ever-popular drinks company Cawston Press has in spades. With a heritage dating back to 1986 and a focus on producing delicious drinks inspired by the kitchen garden, its range is ideally positioned for conscientious thirsty shoppers.

"All our drinks are made from real ingredients with no added sugar, no sweeteners, no concentrates – just simple fresh pressed juice," explains Andy Hope-Johnstone, channel manager – out of home – at Cawston Press. "Where a lot of other drinks brands take shortcuts using additives and concentrates, we choose to keep a clean set of ingredients which helps ensure we give people the best tasting drink we can."

These credentials suit today's consumer perfectly, and mean the range sits comfortably alongside other carefully considered products on *Speciality Food* readers' shelves. "There is a clear signal from consumers that they are after quality in both their food and drinks," agrees Andy. "As a premium soft drink our range sits so well among all the other incredible food independent delis and food halls offer. If you're focusing on bringing the best the UK food industry has to offer, you have

> "Summer 2022 is doubtless looking a little different to the past couple of summers; with no restrictions in sight retailers and consumers alike are delighted to return to 'normality'"

> "If you're focusing on bringing the best the UK food industry has to offer, you have to support it with a quality drinks range"





to support it with a quality drinks range."

Cawston Press's delicious Sparkling Rhubarb is the business's "hero" drink – "once you try it you can see why," says Andy – with an intense, fruity rhubarb nose, slight sweetness and the addition of apple juice to sweeten and balance the rhubarb's acidity. The website offers a range of recipe ideas to inspire customers to experiment with it (as well as other Cawston Press favourites), including Rhubarb Spritz, and Rhubarb & Gin.

While its one litre ambient juice range has long been popular with the speciality food and drink sector, the business has recently launched tomato and orange juices to add diversity to retailer shelves, while its kids-friendly cartons are the ideal option for out-and-about enjoyment throughout the warmer months. Soon to launch are Cawston Press's 750ml sharing bottles – "a must for summer," according to Andy.

By offering a selection of 'ingredient' drinks products – those which can be enjoyed either as is or combined with other drinks to make a cockail, either alcoholic or non- – plus catering for those customers who plan to consume their drinks away from home, perhaps in an al fresco setting, you can help your establishment become a valuable source for discerning shoppers looking for delicious refreshment this summer.

## **BEHIND** THE COUNTER



**We catch up with Daylesford's Rachael Winter, head of food buying and Jemma Coombe, head of food product development, to find out what they're stocking for the warmer months ahead**

In summer, the best-selling drinks in our range include refreshing craft beers, rosé, rosé frizzante and Prosecco, which are ideal for barbecues and enjoying al fresco.

Summer is the season of picnics and festivals, so drinks in convenient formats are popular such as our canned sparkling wines and ready-to-pour, pre-portioned cocktails. Canned wine was not previously considered a 'luxury' drink but we were able to capture the quality of our ever-popular Léoube rosé in cans, which helped elevate its appeal.

Our range also has plenty of thirst-quenching low- and no- alcohol options that are great for hot weather, including sparkling soft drinks, gut-friendly kombuchas, as well as cold-pressed juices, smoothies and shots. We recently launched cold-pressed, fresh organic orange and apple juices in large 750ml bottles which are delicious as mixers or on their own.

We are launching a new range of organic tonic waters – the first organic tonic waters to be made in the UK – along with Organic Fig Leaf Gin and Organic Hop Vodka in April 2022, ready for summer.

While many of the drinks in our range are available year-round, we do highlight seasonal preferences such as refreshing rosé and sparkling elderflower in the summer, hearty reds in autumn/winter, and immunity-boosting and restorative juices in January.

We go to great lengths to maintain organic credentials across our ranges. When we were developing our new range of tonic waters, which launch in April 2022, we worked with our supplier to develop a unique recipe using dandelion extract instead of traditional quinine. This innovation kept the drinks organic while achieving the same bitter flavour notes and mouthfeel you would expect in a quality tonic water.

We have an in-house nutritionist with whom we work closely to develop many of our ranges, such as our cold-pressed fruit and vegetable juices. Wellbeing is always a hot topic at Daylesford and we have a number of drinks with strong health credentials. For example, our award-winning kefir is good for gut health and is made in our own Creamery on the farm.

## STOCK CHECK




**HIGHLAND SPRING FRUIT FLAVOURED WATERS**

Created using 100% natural ingredients, these cans contain no added sugar and just 35 calories.

**highlandspring.com/products**




**PINKSTER SPRITZ**

A light, refreshing drink made using locally-grown raspberries and exotic hibiscus flowers, this contains reduced alcohol and lower calories.

**pinkstergin.com**




**GARIBALDI ASTRAL GRAPE JUICE**

Fruity grape flavours and aromas from a vibrant violet-red hued juice.

**garibaldiwinery.com**




**PUREARTH MANGO, PASSIONFRUIT & TURMERIC WATER KEFIR**

100% organic and vegan, made using fermented kefir grains.

**purearth.co.uk**



## STOCK THE FINEST QUALITY VINEGAR FROM MAZZETTI

**Fine food distributor RH Amar is a proud supplier of Mazzetti: one of the world's leading producers of Balsamic vinegar of Modena**

Here to distinguish the bold from the bland, Mazzetti L'Originale, Italy's leading producer of Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, has been hand-crafting the finest balsamic vinegars using their collection of family recipes for over three generations. With a carefully curated range, each bottle brings a unique drop of distinctive flavour and Italian inspiration.

Forget what you think you know about dipping and drizzling balsamic, the versatility of the Mazzetti range opens up a whole new world of possibilities. With several varieties of Balsamic to choose from, Mazzetti is the inspiration for your experimentation, and partner to your passion for food. The Signature Series goes from the light and zesty Yellow Label to the full bodied, lush and intense Black Label, with each special blend helping to signpost how and when to use Mazzetti for optimum effect.

The new gifting range is made up of three tiers – the Experimental Series, a premium twin pack to introduce foodies to the world of Mazzetti. The Artistry Edition, Mazzetti's top quality three-year barrel aged Balsamic Vinegar that celebrates the craftmanship and history of Aceto Balsamico di Modena, and "Tradizionale," Mazzetti's "Black Gold," harvested, hand crafted and aged in the heart of Modena following its centuries old traditional blend and production methods.







UPSELLING THE STORECUPBOARD:

# OILS, VINEGARS & DRESSINGS

From the classic EVOO to a zesty vibrant dressing, there is plenty to get excited about in the oils, vinegars and dressings sector. But how can independents make sure they are catering to demand?

As a result of the pandemic, a new generation of home cooks adapting to hybrid working has emerged. This presents a prime opportunity for retailers to offer something different and exciting when it comes to store cupboard staples such as oils, vinegars and dressings.

"During the pandemic consumers' lunchtime and dinner occasions in the home increased significantly," Lucy Mackenzie, founder of Lucy's Dressings explains. "As well as this, shoppers were willing to spend a little more on treating themselves at mealtimes. By adding a fantastic quality dressing, vinegar or oil to their salad, pizza or fresh ingredients, they were able to transform a simple dish into something really delicious. In other words – great dressings, oils and vinegars provide the perfect short-cut to add instant flavour."

Jennie Palmer, marketing manager at Charlie & Ivy's, adds, "The biggest impact for us was that people suddenly had time – people that maybe hadn't before. And it appeared that with this newly available time, a lot of the country headed to the kitchen, and invested those moments into creating something new, learning new recipes and generally enjoying getting to know food. This, in turn, increased people's interest in looking for new products to try – suddenly they had the time to look further afield for ingredients that they maybe wouldn't have had the opportunity to look for before.

"The category has always been a mainstay, however maybe not explored in too much of an adventurous way. The situation that was created by the pandemic has, in my opinion, allowed people to grow in confidence to try different flavours, and ingredients in their everyday cooking."

## Simple is winning

As the world opens back up and the public goes back to work, Jennie believes "consumers are looking for products that are simple to use. Post-pandemic, a lot of people have gotten used to having the time to experiment with food, but in practical terms, they are getting busier again. Simple products that can easily make something delicious are a winner."

And it's not just time that dictates what products consumers will buy, as Jennie explains. "I also feel like there has been a big shift in people eating together. The pandemic made us really value those connections, and food is often at the centre of it, so products designed for sharing I think will work well."

Mark Kacary, managing director of Norfolk Deli reflects this idea of universally liked, tried and tested flavours being popular. "There are classic dressing flavours which are always in demand. We make dressings that we feel are good enough to consume without it even being added to anything else and we find that the most successful products are those which generate repeat sales."

## Thinking outside the box

Georgie Abbott, founder of CBD olive oil brand Drops of Heal, notes that the rise of social media has inspired consumers to be more experimental with their oils, vinegars and dressings. "We are able to see what people eat from all around the world, so naturally we are more curious to try new flavours. Also, due to Covid, people are more versed on health and wellness – it's all about getting the most benefit from what you are consuming. Drops of Heal is crossing two very trending times – with the rise in demand for high-quality oils and CBD, we have landed on an exciting product."

"I think people are starting to think outside the box in what they create," Lucy agrees. "With the increase of chefs and food influencers online, I think we're more likely to see people experimenting further and that will



lead them to use new specialist products."

Moreover, oils, vinegars and dressings are now being used for a multitude of purposes. "Consumers are becoming much more aware of the diversity of products and how they can be used, Lucy explains. "For example, dressings are no longer just for salad leaves, they can be used as a marinade in a stir-fry, to roast or added to a curry, soup, rice or pasta dish."

Mark mirrors this thought. "Our dressings are not only perfect on a salad, but they are also great for dipping breads into with an antipasti platter. The effect this has is that oils, dressings and vinegars are no longer confined under the heading of salads or used solely for roast potatoes.

"Cooking without oils and vinegars can be boring, and as we still all learn about the cuisines of other countries, we will find new uses for flavour combinations we would have never used previously."

## Provenance is key

While home cooks are looking for new and exciting ways to use store cupboard staples, Jennie insists that the age-old question of provenance still plays an integral role in the choice of these products. "I think provenance has become something that consumers are really aware of, certainly in the speciality market.

"A lot of our customers like to know where their products are made, and more importantly who by. That connection with the roots of a brand makes consumers feel like part of it. That's not to say the product has to be British, I think people are just becoming more aware of supporting smaller, independent brands and those brands will always be able to communicate their provenance more."

However, Mark believes provenance isn't the most important factor for selling oils, vinegars and dressings. He explains, "I'm not 100% convinced that people are always looking for something which is made locally. I believe offering new taste options, and challenging the norm is as important, which in itself offers local producers the opportunity to do something different. What customers seek is something that tastes good."

Taste is what Lucy champions too, adding, "Consumers are really interested in finding out where and how products are made but above all what they really want is wonderful flavours and a taste sensation. They are also keen to find out any additional information about the health benefits and usage. Flavours wise, we've seen a huge increase in demand for chilli, Middle Eastern and Asian flavours."

## Looking to the future

While the oils, vinegar and dressings sector is sometimes overlooked when it comes to innovation and experimentation, there is an exciting future ahead.

Jennie is positive about what's next for oils, vinegars and dressings. "The future looks bright! I think there is a real opportunity to continue to engage consumers that discovered speciality brands through the pandemic and grow their audience too. I think as producers we have to take responsibility to continue to inspire and engage our audiences, and if we successfully do this, I think there are a lot of opportunities for growth."

Georgie agrees. "This is a really exciting time for the industry, consumers are seeking the best of both worlds meaning they are both delicious and functional."

Consumers looking for more than just a dressing is something Lucy also sees for the progression of the sector. "In the future, there will be an increased focus on health, natural ingredients and provenance. Traditional, homogenised, over-sweetened and unnatural products will become a thing of the past."

Ensuring that your oil, vinegar and dressing offerings cater to these key trends in the sector could just lead to store cupboard success.




## STOCK CHECK




### SCARLETT AND MUSTARD ORNAMENTAL GINGER AND SOY

This dark, rich and moreish Oriental dressing uses fresh ginger to create an intense, zingy flavour, paired with soy sauce and a hint of sugar.

**scarlettandmustard.co.uk**




### HUNTER AND GATHERER ORGANIC COLD-PRESSED EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Perfect for drizzling and dipping, this Organic EVOO made from Spanish Olives is 100% Pure and Cold Pressed to retain its delicious natural flavour.

**hunterandgatherfoods.com**




### SCOTTISH BEE COMPANY RASPBERRY & THYME VINEGAR

In this delicious pairing, the tangy taste and smell of thyme brings out the sweetness of the juicy raspberries.

**scottishbeecompany.co.uk**




### DR WILL'S CAESAR DRESSING

This creamy caesar dressing is actually vegan-friendly, without compromising on taste or texture. Perfect on the traditional salad or for adding some indulgence to dishes.

**dr-wills.com**




### CRUSH SMOKED CHILLI OIL

Grown in Norfolk, this slowly infused cold-pressed rapeseed oil has a deep smoky flavour with a hint of chilli.

**crush-foods.com**




### MR ORGANIC BALSAMIC VINEGAR

From the vineyards of Modena, northern Italy, comes Mr Organic's sweet and tangy Balsamic Vinegar.

**mr-organic.com**




### COTTAGE DELIGHT BASIL PESTO DRESSING

A fantastically fresh tasting dressing packed full of delicious basil, rich cheese and a splash of lemon juice for a zesty finish. Perfect for drizzling over pasta salads or roasted vegetables.

**cottagedelight.o.uk**



### BURREN BALSAMICS BRAMLEY APPLE INFUSED BALSAMIC VINEGAR

This delicious Bramley Apple infused balsamic vinegar is the ideal accompiament for pork, and of course, as a classic salad dresssing.

**burrenbalsamics.com**



COMMENTATORS



**DHRUV BAKER**
TEMPUS FOODS



**TARA SMYTH**
SUNDAY CHARCUTERIE



**PAUL HEASMAN**
ROWCLIFFE

# CHARCUTERIE IN 2022

## The future looks bright for the UK's artisan makers taking on one of the Continent's most popular exports

Charcuterie has long been a pillar of the fine food industry. With quality options showcasing artisanal methods, time-honoured skills, fantastic ingredients – likely demonstrating provenance – and lest we forget, delicious flavours, how could it not? Our European neighbours have long been masters of cured meats, and products like pancetta, Prosciutto di Parma and chorizo are now well and truly established in the culinary repertoires of cooks across the country, but what of the British charcuterie market?

Thankfully, the UK has many of its own charcuterie makers to be proud of. Whether they're creating Continental-inspired products or their very own inventions, one thing is for certain: there are plenty of options for discerning fine food retailers to choose from... and the best is yet to come.

### An expanding market

"What I find most exciting about the charcuterie industry in the UK is the opportunity to create something really meaningful in the long term, in the same way that the British cheese and wine industries have done," begins Dhruv Baker, co-founder of Tempus Foods. "As we don't have a huge amount of heritage when it comes to charcuterie (and I mean that in the sense of air-dried, 'continental' meats as opposed to cooked or hot smoked products) there is almost a blank canvas upon which to create the definition of 'what is British charcuterie' going forward."

The Tempus product range is impressive, including King Peter Ham (a speck style air-dried ham cured with juniper, bay and peppercorns), Spiced Coppa/Collar, Smoked Coppa/Collar (smoked over chestnut wood), Spiced Loin, House Salami (with black peppercorns), Achari Salami (with fennel seed, black peppercorns, nigella, mace and fenugreek), Ex Dairy Bresaola, Smoked Jowl (guanciale) and Tempus Number 8 (a spreadable salami flavoured with Mexican chillies, fennel, mace, orange zest, garlic and chives). "The technical style is undeniably from Italy as that is where Tom Whitaker (co-founder) did all his training, but the flavour profiles are uniquely Tempus, drawing heavily on my background and love of spices," Dhruv explains. "We feel that this blend of tradition and innovation encapsulates what we do."

For Tara Smyth, co-founder at Sunday Charcuterie – a new player in the sector – the British charcuterie sector is an exciting place to be. "We were incredibly excited to join an industry that still held so many opportunities," she begins. "We also felt that there was a real gap in the market for charcuterie that went further than 'made using British pork'." The business's base in Suffolk, an area famed for its pork production, certainly helps. "Across East Anglia there are some amazing smallholders/farmers rearing Britain's rare and native pig breeds, working with impeccable welfare standards on a sustainable scale (the largest farm we work with has only 15 sows) and we were more than excited to showcase how delicious charcuterie made using this pork could be."

While setting up shop in any sector comes with its challenges, Tara has found the UK's charcuterie scene to be welcoming and supportive. "As a small industry we have found it to be incredibly supportive," she says, "not only through our interactions with other similarly-sized charcuterie businesses, but the response from our customers has been fantastic. This is an inexcusable pun, but there is clearly such an appetite for provenance-led, small batch salami and cured meats."

The Sunday Charcuterie range is a celebration of great quality pork. "We like to keep things simple, creating variations on traditional recipes that allow the incredible flavour of our high welfare, slow grown, rare breed pork to take centre stage," she explains. "We exclusively practice whole-animal butchery, so we really are able to work with a nose-to-tail ethos, producing a charcuterie range that extends from Guanciale to Ham Hock Terrines."

### The role of retailers

As with a lot of fine, artisanally-produced foods, education is paramount when it comes to selling British-made charcuterie. "I think the main misconception is that charcuterie is a commoditised or homogenous product type (ie all salamis are created equal – which is 100% not the case!) and therefore purely down to price point," says Dhruv. "I would urge people who are interested in charcuterie to look at the source of animals and the associated welfare standards, look at the air miles, look at the ingredients (if there are a myriad of ingredients you don't understand that's probably not a good sign). And taste lots – don't be afraid of trying different things to discover the ones you love."

For Tara, the length of time it takes to produce charcuterie is the main point needing to be explained to customers in order for them to fully appreciate the products. "Charcuterie is definitely not an endeavour for the impatient. From our interactions with customers, they can often be genuinely quite shocked that a salami can take two-plus months to make, a Coppa could be upwards of three months and then Prosciutto is a minimum of 12 months."

What does the future hold for the sector? In Dhruv's eyes, this is an exciting but as-yet-unknowable question. "Currently the market is made up of a large number of relatively small, artisan producers of varying levels of quality. I would imagine that a few of those producers will grow to a level which is large by British standards but nowhere near the scale of our Continental counterparts but after that it's anyone's guess – but that's the exiting part." *Speciality Food* retailers have a part to play: "As long as the quality and consistency continues to increase and people's understanding continues to grow then we are on the right track," he says.

In the more-than-capable hands of Britain's independent fine food retailers, the burgeoning homegrown charcuterie market can be assured that intrigued consumers will be expertly guided through the exciting options on offer. But how will domestic options compare with those made on the other side of the Channel, using Continental techniques passed down through generations? Tara is confident. "In the same way that Fen Farm Dairy's Baron Bigod has become the first choice for many over a more traditional French brie, I hope that British charcuterie will prove itself to be not only equal to but often better than a lot of the imported options."

> "In the same way that Fen Farm Dairy's Baron Bigod has become the first choice for many over a more traditional French brie, I hope that British charcuterie will prove itself to be not only equal to but often better than a lot of the imported options"

## DISTRIBUTOR VIEWPOINT

### For fine food distributor Rowcliffe, showcasing the very best of the charcuterie markets in both the UK and Europe is of vital importance

Representing Britain's charcuterie scene is Suffolk Salami Co, a producer of award-winning charcuterie products made using RSPCA-approved pork raised on the family business's own Suffolk farm. Rosemary, Fennel and Red Wine & Cracked Black Pepper salamis are available in small and large sizes, while the range also includes Suffolk Mortadella and whole and diced Suffolk Chorizo – an East Anglian take on the Spanish staple – plus soon to be launched Coppa and a three-meat sharing platter.

London's Bearfields adds traditional British ham and gammon to the range, while El Pozo and Caula's tapas snack packs – consisting of olives, Manchego cubes and slices of chorizo – provide Spanish flair, Reinarts brings a taste of premium German meat products, and the much-loved Negroni brand brings a high quality taste of Italy that has been enjoyed by the country's food lovers for over a century.

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# AN APPETITE FOR UMAMI

## Flavour-boosting ingredients add oomph to dishes and profits alike. Sally-Jayne Wright takes a look

Who would have thought monosodium glutamate (MSG) would come back into fashion? You'll find it on the Souschef website, described as umami powder, a cult ingredient. "Try adding a pinch to soups, stews and sauces to add extra body and depth" reads the copy.

**WHAT IS UMAMI?**
It means 'pleasant savoury taste' in Japanese. Until 1907, there were thought to be only four basic tastes: sweet, salty, bitter and sour. Then a Japanese chemist called Kikunae Ikeda identified a fifth which occurs naturally in a variety of everyday foods and is imparted by glutamates and ribonucleotides. By isolating sodium glutamate, he created MSG.

**AM I LIKELY TO HAVE TASTED UMAMI?**
Yes, if you were breast-fed, have tasted Marmite, asparagus, steak with mushrooms, or pasta with a rich tomato sauce and Parmesan cheese.

**DO CONSUMERS UNDERSTAND THE WORD?**
Increasingly. Christopher Dawson, CEO of Clearspring, says, "Foodie influencers are using the term and popularising it amongst an engaged foodie audience." TV chef Tom Kerridge talks of "big umami flavours" as he blends white miso and porcini powder into his umami butter. May's *Good Housekeeping* magazine describes a recipe for Miso aubergine noodles as "packed with rich umami depth'". You can now buy Kallo's Umami vegetable stock cubes at Tesco and U-Me Umami spice shots at Sainsbury's.

**WHAT'S BEHIND THE TREND?**
Key drivers are plant-based eating, wellness and interest in world cuisines. Glutamate-rich ingredients such as seaweed and dried shitake mushrooms give meat and dairy-free dishes a flavour leg-up while fermented foods like miso, kimchi and pickles are associated with wellness. During the Tokyo Olympics, Waitrose reported a 10% uplift (year on year) in sales of Japanese ingredients.




**I THOUGHT MSG, ALSO KNOWN AS E621, WAS A BAD THING?**
There's only anecdotal evidence for MSG allergy but allergy-prone or older customers who remember 'Chinese restaurant syndrome' may be wary. So read packaging carefully. Clearspring avoid this controversial ingredient. It's ironical that LGM crispy chilli oil, a buzz product with younger foodies, contains manufactured umami or MSG.

**ISN'T UMAMI JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR SALTINESS?**
No. Naturally-occurring glutamate brings out the sweetness and saltiness in a dish without increasing salt content. It can contribute up to 50% salt reduction in foods while retaining desirability.

**HOW ELSE IS IT HELPFUL?**
While eating sugar appears to increase the craving for carbs, eating umami may drive the appetite for protein-rich foods – useful in coaxing people with failing appetites to eat.

**I'VE READ THAT AGED CHEESE AND CURED MEATS ARE RICH IN UMAMI COMPOUNDS. IS THAT RIGHT?**
Yes, that's why one slim slice of Parma ham or a heel of Parmesan in a vegetable soup gives tremendous savoury depth.

**MARMITE AND WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE WORK WELL, TOO.**
Absolutely, and in 2020, an estimated 6.7m people used Marmite (Statista). If Marks & Spencer can sell Marmite and cheese hot cross buns, so you can try Marmite and cheese scones in your café.

Instead of the ubiquitous Lea & Perrins sauce, why not try Henderson's Relish. At IFE in March, interest from deli owners was keen. We can't believe that this modern-looking product with its black lettering on orange labels dates from 1885. It contains no anchovies so is vegan and is popular in Japan.

**WHAT'S UMAMI PASTE?**
A handy product with which cooks can add a pop of flavour to underwhelming dishes. It's a concentrate of glutamate-containing ingredients such as soy sauce, mushrooms and tomato. Helen Best-Shaw of the fussfreeflavours website swears by Clearspring's Ginger and miso umami paste and puts "a big blob into dressings to perk up a boring salad". Food writer Orland Murrin favours Laura Santtini's La Bomba Tomato Puree.

> "The adventurous foodie is experimenting with how umami can enhance everyday dishes"

**HOW DO UMAMI FOODS HELP IN PLANT-BASED COOKING?**
Miso imparts deep savouriness to broths, dressings and roasted vegetables. Customers still need some hand-holding so provide recipes on your blog and display cookbooks such as those by Bonnie Chung of Miso Tasty.

**WHICH BRANDS SHOULD I STOCK?**
To steal a march on the supermarkets, go for novelty as with Clearspring's new Chickpea Miso, or choose products which deliver a double whammy such as the award-winning Black Garlic Miso from Craic Foods. Craic also make three miso-and-salted-caramel sauces; the sweet-savoury combination is hard to resist. Luxuries like these make great foodie gifts. We were very pleased with a present of Delizie al Tartufe (black) Truffle Sauce – £6 for 80g – and have already repeat-purchased. The importer is Arrosto Meats Ltd of Fulham.

**WILL THE TREND LAST?**
Clearspring's Christopher Dawson says, "The adventurous foodie is experimenting with how umami can enhance everyday dishes. We want to take it to a much wider audience. There's lots of potential."

Once we've mastered Umami, we can move on to the Sixth Taste, Kokumi. Seriously. They discovered it in the 1980s.



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# FINAL CALL

Joining *Speciality Food* at such a turbulent time in the food industry has been an eye-opening experience. Fuel prices are sky high, and food shortages are threatening to cause disruption for the next year and a half, affecting businesses across the board. Of course, the heartbreaking situation in Ukraine has affected us all, both emotionally and economically. And with no tangible end in sight (at the time of writing), we will all need to work together on a solution that not only brings peace but a stronger supply chain to safeguard the future.

But as a newcomer to the fine food industry, I can see lots to be optimistic about. Just as independents were resilient in the face of Covid, once again fine food retail will rise to the challenges that will emerge over the coming months. Moreover, many of the retailers, brands and experts I have spoken to are looking to a greener, more sustainable future for this sector. This is an exciting time for fine food retail, and innovation seems ripe.

EIT Food's latest *Trust Report* for 2021 saw small independents as the public's most trusted retailers for knowledge, care and openness – reaffirming the power of localism as the public returns to the high street.

I'm excited to get fully immersed in the sector and learn more about the hardworking, passionate and kindhearted retailers selling high-quality produce to a constantly evolving consumer. It must feel like an impossible task!

Spring is now in full bloom, with lighter evenings and warmer weather putting a gorgeous sepia haze over everything, this also brings al fresco eating, barbecues and picnics galore – my personal highlights for the coming season. Embrace the positivity of spring, and make it your goal this month to really connect with your customers. What's the worst that could happen – we've already gone through a global pandemic!

**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 victoria.smith@aceville.co.uk**

# 5 MINUTES WITH

## CATHY MOSELEY, FOUNDER OF BOUNDLESS ACTIVATED SNACKING



**WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?**
I'd love to start a fashion blog. Unfortunately, I'm pretty rubbish on Instagram, so that won't be happening for a while.

**WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?**
Working in an Elderly Care Home after school, preparing dinner – I used to love it.

**WHAT INSPIRES YOU?**
Honestly, doing what I'm doing. I love the thought of Boundless being a moment of pleasure for someone, that they truly enjoy the snack I created.

**WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?**
Cat-sitting when I was a teenager – I am soooo not a cat person.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?**
Working with my team – we're super close, and so we all get to see each other's wins. It's a really special environment.

**AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?**
Stickering. There are no egos at Boundless, but I've got to admit that after stickering my eight-thousandth bag on a Saturday evening I do have to question my sanity.

**HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?**
Love – watching innovative products arrive on the scene. Hate – false claims. I think this year will be a really exciting and eye-opening time for the industry.

**TEA OR COFFEE?**
Herbal tea – I don't drink caffeine.

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?**
If today was my last supper it'd be: aubergine fesenjan served with almond and pomegranate baked rice. I looove Persian cuisine, I guess you can tell that from Boundless' flavours! Then I'd follow up with a pint of cider and a bag of our Activated Chips – delish!

**WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?**
F*ck it, we'll find a way.

**WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?**
I'm willing to try most things; how do you know you don't like it if you don't try it? The weirdest set-up for me was in Rajasthan, a women making curry in a Dulux paint pot. Best curry I ever had!

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?**
*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde.

**SWEET OR SAVOURY?**
Savoury, always!

## BE CONNECTED

"It is key that retailers stay on top of social media food trends at the moment as they have such a *huge influence* on consumer habits"

HELENA BUSH, DIGITAL MARKETING ASSISTANT AT SOUS CHEF

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FOLLOW SPECIALITY FOOD ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO HEAR MORE FROM FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY VOICES

**Editor**
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505981
holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

**News & Digital Editor**
Victoria Smith 01206 505969
victoria.smith@aceville.co.uk

**Group Editor**
Charlotte Smith
charlotte.smith@aceville.co.uk

**Head of Commercial**
Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk

**Advertising Manager**
Jessica Brett 01206 505901
jessica.brett@aceville.co.uk

**Account Manager**
Louise Barnes 01206 508629
louise.barnes@aceville.co.uk

**Accounts**
Sue Carr 01206 505903

**Art Director**
Lee Whiteford
lee.whiteford@aceville.co.uk

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01293 312188
specialityfood@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

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Tel. 01778 392464






# TRIED & TESTED

### BIO & ME SEED & NUT GLUTEN-FREE GRANOLA




We're all familiar with granola these days – as a breakfast option, to add texture to desserts, and for snacking – but it's fair to say that most of the products on the market aren't quite the healthy option they're made out to be. All too often laden with sugar and additives, the time was ripe for a nutrient-dense and genuinely beneficial granola to hit the sector. Enter Bio & Me's Gluten-free Granola. Delicious, not too sweet and with a satisfying texture, it has been formulated to benefit gut health so is bang on trend, too.
**Bioandme.co.uk**

### HUMANITEA MATCHA OAT MILK LATTE

There is an increased focus on functionality when it comes to drinks, as well as a growing interest in the benefits of matcha as consumers want more from their drinks. Humanitea definitely delivers on this. The canned Matcha Oat Milk Latte offers natural energy without a caffeine crash – ideal for busy customers looking to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing. What's more, it tastes delicious with a hint of sweetness from organic agave nectar and caters to free-from customers.
**humanitea.co.uk**



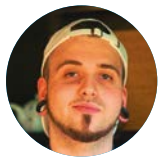

### KARU CACAO CASHEWS

Brazilians have been crazy about cashews for centuries, as these nutritious nuts are native to Brazil's forests and full of plant-based protein, vitamins, and minerals. But Brits aren't quite as mad about cashews...yet. These sweet and salty cacao-dusted cashews are utterly addictive while providing health benefits, making them perfect for hybrid working customers looking for a desk snack. Suitable for vegans and gluten-free too, these nuts cover all your customers' needs without compromising on taste.
**karu.co**




# THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Mattia Aranini, head chef, Sushi On Jones



I was born Rome, Italy, in 1994. I chose to be a chef as my grandfather and my mother were both chefs of two restaurants, and they started to bring me along to my mum's restaurant when I was 14 to show me her work.

A Vietnamese chef showed me my very first cooking techniques and recipes of Asian food, and I fell in love with Asian food from that moment – especially when he showed me what sushi was. At that time in Italy nobody knew anything about sushi.

When I turned 20, I decided to move to London and study with real Japanese sushi chefs, which is what I have done for the last eight years of my life. Now, my sushi service and omakase menu is a mix of the chefs that taught me the real traditional sushi omakase service with a little hint of Italian – for instance, adding lemon zest, truffle or even basil. This keeps the traditional taste of the experience while giving a little twist here and there.

Sushi on Jones is a project born and developed in New York. It offers an affordable approach to a very traditional way of eating sushi – the "omakase" – which literally means "I leave it up to you". Though this, customers can taste very good quality ingredients like fresh wasabi root from Japan, Wagyu beef, caviar and sea urchin, while keeping it affordable for everyone.

The restaurant is an extension of this beautiful idea, which I have supported from day one when this job was offered to me. We are located at the very centre of London in King's Cross, a five-minute walking distance from the underground station on Goods Way, inside a beautiful music venue.

All my products, including fish and vegetables alike, are sourced in England, Ireland or Scotland. Fish like salmon are from a farm from Scotland and my mackerel, seabass, seabream and others, like squid or cuttlefish, are from the beautiful Cornish side of this country. I couldn't ask for a better source.

I meet our producers personally each month to check for availability and in-season products that I can use in the restaurant. I have met and discovered each one through my eight years working as a chef here in England.

The menu planning starts at Billingsgate market fish vendor, where I search for products to use for the menu. I select the best and most reliable vendor that can always deliver the same quality and freshness for all the products.

I want to keep my ingredients local as a matter of cost, sustainability and because I can choose the fish going to market. Throughout the restaurant, I only use one pre-made product: soy sauce. All other ingredients are strictly made in house. Lately, after falling in love with the curing and ageing process, I've used different techniques to offer a very intense and different tastes on my omakase sushi experience.

My favourite time of the year is winter because it is when the fish have a particular quantity of fat that makes them even better to eat and to create with. This helps to create my signature dish on the menu – yellowtail belly cured in kombu kelp and served with thin sliced truffle from Italy.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



# ITALIAN STORE CUPBOARD ESSENTIALS

The traditional staples consumers need to craft classic Italian dishes

There is a variety of ingredients that should take pride of place in every Italian lover's store cupboard. Whether whipping up a quick but delicious pasta or a more complicated dish, there are certain ingredients that have become as essential in British households as in Italy. For retailers, it's key to have a good stock of these British-Italian basics in order to become a one-stop-shop for your customers, with quality in mind.

### EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

You simply won't see a great Italian kitchen without at least one bottle of premium oil. Extra Virgin is the most natural form of olive oil, made by crushing the olives and extracting the juice without the use of chemicals. It's worth stocking both a mild-flavoured one for cooking and another, more distinctly-flavoured option for drizzling on salads and other dishes.

### PASTA

No store cupboard would be complete without a few different varieties of dried pasta. Look further afield than the classic shapes such as penne and spaghetti, and experiment with orecchiette, tagliatelle and boccole. Moreover, short-cut pastas such as orzo and maccheroni are ideal for not only soups but stews and salads as well for a true taste of the Mediterranean.

### BALSAMIC VINEGAR

Traditional high-quality Balsamic vinegar has so many different uses. It can be poured over salads, used as a dip for breads and drizzled on vegetables. The older, sweeter varieties are delicious drizzled over ice cream – don't knock it until you've tried it!

### HERBS AND SPICES

Whether cooking a rich, herby ragu or decorating a salad with fresh basil, herbs and spices are essential to Italian cooking. Herbs such as thyme and oregano add a delicious Italian flavour, and good quality options will go a long way.

### TINNED PRODUCE

Tomatoes are used as a base for a variety of pasta dishes, bakes and soups. Quality is key for that authentic flavour, and whole peeled tomatoes are considered to offer the best. It is also beneficial to stock a range of beans used in Italian cooking such as cannellini and borlotti.

**Are you passionate about Italian food and drink? Get in touch via victoria.smith@aceville.co.uk.**



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