SPECIALITY FOOD

CONNECTING THE FINE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY

SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR
10–11 SEPT 2024
OLYMPIA LONDON
25 YEARS

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR

Join us at the UK's leading showcase of artisanal food & drink from **Tuesday 10 & Wednesday 11 September** at Olympia London for a sensational celebration of fine food & drink!

Scan to register

SPECIALITYANDFINEFOODFAIRS.CO.UK | @SPECIALITYFAIR | #SFFF24

HARVEY NICHOLS
SHIRLEY AUBREY: HOW TO PLAN FOR CHRISTMAS
P. 14



THE NORFOLK DELI
MARK KACARY: WHY YOU SHOULD SELL LOCAL CHEESE
P. 24



SUFFOLK FOOD HALL
NICK PUNTER: ADD VALUE WITH HOMEWARES
P. 30



In this issue





4 John Shepherd
Partridges

8 James Grant
No.2 Pound Street

REGULARS

11 Trend Watch

12 Product News

20 Centrespread: Cheeseboard

22 Cheese Uncut

24 Counterpoint

38 Last Words

FEATURES

14 'Tis the Season

17 Essential Products

26 Cheese Report 2024

30 The 5: Homewares

32 The Spice of Life

34 Everything You Need To Know About Grains & Pulses

36 Dare To Diversify: Ludlow Farmshop



EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the July/August issue of *Speciality Food*, my first since returning from maternity leave – and my goodness how the sector has evolved during these past 12 months.

While I wasn't completely out of the loop during my absence, I returned to my desk amid a truckload of exciting new products, producers and innovators within the sector, all of which goes to show that the fine food and drink sector never stands still (and is the best possible industry to work in).

On to this issue, within which we have a plethora of news, views and features to whet your appetite for the season ahead. Yes, while we might be in the thick of summer as consumers, our professional thoughts are very much focused on Christmas, so we're sharing the first of our festive features for 2024 – all about planning ahead for party season (p14).

We also explore the world of homewares and speak to retail experts who suggest you do the same (p30), and release our Cheese Report 2024 (p26) – within which we discuss the biggest issues having an impact on today's fine cheese sector with the people who know it best.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR
holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com





How Labour can 'unlock' growth in retail, food and farming

As a new prime minister enters Downing Street, food and retail sector insiders share their thoughts on how the Labour government can make an impact on these critical industries

Last week, the Labour party won the 2024 General Election and Sir Keir Starmer became the UK's new prime minister.

Although the result was widely expected, the significant moment of change has prompted retailers and food industry groups to consider the party's manifesto pledges with fresh eyes and outline how the new government can supercharge growth in their sectors.

Here's how the retail, food and farming industries reacted to the 2024 General Election result.

Retail 'can make a big contribution' to Labour's goals

The retail sector is a significant source of employment and investment throughout the country, and the British Retail Consortium's chief executive Helen Dickinson said that through the sector's "scale and reach" it "can make a big contribution to Labour's policy goals. Finding ways to unlock this contribution over the next five years should be a shared endeavour between the new government and the retail industry."

Labour's manifesto made "crucial commitments for retail," she continued. Reforming business rates is high on the sector's priority list – Helen called it "the number one thing in the way of increased retail investment, which could unlock growth across the economy".

'A reset moment for British agriculture

The NFU highlighted the potential of the new government's 'change' mindset. "This is a reset moment for British agriculture as we work with Sir Keir Starmer's new government to drive our sector forwards and grow," said NFU president Tom Bradshaw.

"Labour's manifesto recognised that food security is national security, but it is business confidence which forms the foundation of this. With British farmers and growers ambitious for the future, what they – and the public – need are practical policies that revitalise farm business confidence and deliver on our shared mission of food security," he continued.

Soil Association CEO Helen Browning welcomed Labour's "desire to improve access to nature, promote biodiversity, decarbonise the energy system, and protect our landscapes and wildlife while supporting farmers to shift to more sustainable and nature-friendly farming practices"

Time to move 'further and faster' on sustainability

Food and drink manufacturers can create opportunities for individuals, communities and the economy if they're able to overcome big challenges, said Karen Betts, chief executive of the Food and Drink Federation (FDF).

"With the right conditions, our industry can boost investment, productivity, innovation and growth across our economy. There is huge scope to improve trade too, and to grow skills everywhere throughout the country, offering more people good jobs and great careers in a sector that's central to everyone's everyday lives," she said. "This will improve the resilience of our sector and food security in the UK, as well as contributing to food security in other countries."

Central to this is the sector's vision for sustainability, on which Karen says the FDF is keen to work closely with government "to move further and faster towards a more sustainable food system, which achieves net zero and protects nature, while improving our environment by driving up recycling and establishing a successful circular economy".

'Plant the seeds of small business growth'

"Supporting and growing small businesses is good for jobs, good for communities in all parts of the country and good for the whole economy," said Tina McKenzie, policy chair at the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

There are a range of policies the FSB hopes the new government will bring forward, including measures to ease the cost of doing business and support investment and expansion. Tina also called for a Small Business Bill "to enshrine in legislation much-needed changes to better support small firms and the self-employed."

Swift action can create hospitality 'powerhouse'

During the campaign, Labour recognised hospitality's role in the 'everyday economy' and its place in the heart of communities right across the UK, and Kate Nicholls, chief executive of UKHospitality, said this must be followed up by action in the government's first 100 days.

"Delivering on manifesto commitments to replace business rates and reform the Apprenticeship Levy would be a clear sign that the government backs hospitality as the central pillar of the everyday economy," she said.

Hospitality businesses pay three times their fair share of rates as a proportion of turnover, UKHospitality said, and a cliff-edge currently looms in April, when relief is set to end and rates are due to increase. UKHospitality has called for the introduction of a permanently reduced multiplier for hospitality and tourism, at a rate of 30p to the pound.

Regarding the Apprenticeship Levy reform, Kate said introducing more flexibility through the planned Growth and Skills Levy would "transform the way we are able to invest in skills." With the right support, the sector can grow by 6% each year for the next five years, creating half a million new jobs, UKHospitality said.

"Hospitality, with its presence in every constituency, can act as a powerhouse for driving economic growth, creating new jobs and regenerating our towns and cities."

Share your thoughts via holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com



Flaming Jejune



JOHN SHEPHERD
PARTRIDGES

Whatever happened to flaming June? Traditionally June is our best month in the first half of the year and third best month of the entire year after November and December.

But June 2024 presents a stark contrast to June 2023 and previous Junes in terms of both weather and sales – a fact which highlights once again the strong connection between speciality food and drinks and the weather in our neck of the woods. This reminds me of the word Jejune.

I first recall hearing it in the Woody Allen film Bananas when two pretentious New Yorkers were accusing each other of being Jejune. It basically means dreary, boring and as dull as ditchwater. Not unlike the weather in London in June 2024.

For some idea of the context the London temperature for June 2023 registered only five days below 20 degrees Celsius whereas June 2024 had 14 days. June 2023 showed no significant rainfall whereas June 2024 had three days of it. June 2023 experienced 16 days of temperatures above 25 degrees Celsius whereas June 2024 has had just four. Plus there was no national celebration or festivity as in previous recent years.

This was of course reflected in terms of retail sales at Partridges in that June 2023 was 11.7% higher than June 2024 and the customer count was 6.4% higher.

So, after a disappointing May and June it looks like the second quarter of the year is going to be something of a damp squib. This is not an unheard-of experience and the weather is something beyond our control, and as the Stoics would advise us no need wasting time worrying about it, but it is another reminder how much our shop depends on hospitality and feel-good factors.

Fortunately, we did have a memorable feel-good factor festivity in May courtesy of the Chelsea Flower Show.

This event increases footfall in the local area enormously every year but is enhanced by the local Chelsea in Bloom Competition created by the Cadogan Estate which encourages local businesses to create floral displays outside shops.

This year there were 103 entries bedecking the Sloane Square area. At Partridges we created a giant floral Chelsea Bun outside the front door to coincide with the World Chelsea Bun Awards which we run every year.

We did not win an award for floral design however we did sell over 1,000 Chelsea Buns during the course of the week, and our Saturday fine food market recorded some 50,000 visitors apparently.

Feel-good factors are, of course, important for morale but the old adage that 'sales are vanity, profit is sanity' is always a good one to remember.

So as we head towards the second half of July and the month of August, traditionally fallow sales periods for Partridges, we now look forward to the sunny sales uplands of September and the Autumn with some degree of sanity.

Have a good Summer!

> "We look forward to the sunny sales uplands of September and the Autumn with some degree of sanity. Have a good Summer!"



"Food waste costs you twice" say ReFood

Food waste from all sectors is still a shocking 10.7 million tonnes in the UK, according to WRAP, 70% of which was intended to be consumed by people (while 30% accounts for 'inedible' food). This food could have gone on to make the equivale of over 15 billion meals, or enough to feed the entire UK population three meals a day for 11 weeks – instead, it wound up in landfill.

Food packaging producers are making strides to move away from single-use plastics – but change isn't happening overnight. Plastic packaging in the UK accounts for nearly 70% of our plastic waste, WRAP says, and we throw away around 290,000 tonnes of plastic bags and wrapping every year in this country.

Across grocery retail, it's estimated that the equivalent of 190 million meals worth of waste is thrown away every year, amounting to more than 100,000 tonnes in total, says Philip Simpson, managing director of ReFood, a food waste recycler in the UK.

"Despite being seen as a 'necessary evil' to operating within the supply chain, food waste remains a major issue for speciality stores," he says. "From bruised products and damaged packaging to out-of-date produce (which alone is said to be responsible for 87% of all retail food waste), the cause of this waste varies from store to store. However, it's important to note that food waste costs you twice – firstly in lost revenue, but secondly in waste disposal costs."

According to Philip, landfill tax has risen to £126.15 per tonne, so the sector is paying more than £12.5 million every year to discard wasted stock.

The first step to addressing this waste, he says, is to adopt best practice measures across your shop. "From tightening up stock rotation processes and inspecting deliveries at the point of receipt, to improving labelling, increasing cold chain efficiencies, optimising forecasting and applying discounts in good time, amending processes can deliver immediate benefits," Philip says.



How to support mental health amongst your staff

From neurodiversity to struggles with stress or depression, the food and drink sector must do more to help workers in retail and hospitality thrive, industry insiders say. Here, Kris Hall, CEO and founder of The Burnt Cheese Project, outlines a 10-step plan for supporting an employee struggling with mental health:

1 FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- **Promote open communication:** Encourage employees to talk about their mental health without fear of stigma.
- **Lead by example:** Share your own experiences with mental health if comfortable, showing that it's okay to discuss these issues.

2 RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

- **Be observant:** Look for changes in behaviour, performance, or mood.
- **Respect privacy:** If you notice potential signs of struggle, approach the employee discreetly and respectfully.

3 OFFER SUPPORT

- **Check-in:** Regularly check in with employees to see how they're doing.
- **Active listening:** Listen without judgement and offer empathy and understanding.

4 PROVIDE RESOURCES

- **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP):** Ensure employees know about and have access to EAPs which offer counselling and support.
- **Mental health days:** Allow for mental health days just as you would for physical health.

5 ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL HELP

- **Normalise seeking help:** Encourage employees to seek professional help and provide information on how to access services.
- **Be supportive of therapy:** Allow flexibility for therapy appointments and necessary time off.

6 CREATE A FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- **Flexible hours:** Offer flexible working hours or remote work options if possible.
- **Workload management:** Monitor and manage workloads to prevent burnout.

7 MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

- **Respect privacy:** Keep any discussions about an employee's mental health confidential.
- **Anonymous feedback:** Allow employees to provide feedback or voice concerns anonymously if they prefer.

8 TRAIN MANAGERS AND STAFF

- **Mental health training:** Provide training for managers and staff on how to support colleagues with mental health issues.
- **Crisis management:** Equip staff with the knowledge of how to respond to a mental health crisis.

9 IMPLEMENT WELLNESS PROGRAMMES

- **Wellness initiatives:** Introduce wellness programs that include stress management, mindfulness and physical health.
- **Regular breaks:** Encourage regular breaks and ensure employees take their leave.

10 FOLLOW UP

- **Continuous support:** Regularly follow up with the employee to see how they are progressing.
- **Adjust support:** Be ready to adjust the support you provide based on their evolving needs.

NEW

Mochi Rice Bites

(Chilli Rice Crackers just got interesting!)

Unbelievably Crunchy and Crispy - welcome to our new range of puffed, sticky rice bites. Now in three memorable spicy Asian flavours!



150g sharing bags

Our original Chilli Rice Crackers in a new bag

✓ Plant-based ✓ Palm Oil Free ✓ MSG Free

✓ Your customers will love them!





01458 833744

sales@filbertsfinefoods.co.uk

www.mrfilberts.com

William Tullberg, founder of Tracklements, dies at 91

Champion of the speciality food scene and revolutionary of Britain's condiment category, William Tullberg, has died at the age of 91.

William founded Tracklements in 1970, and during his 35-year career there he was instrumental in forging the business's innovative approach to condiments – including the invention of wholegrain mustard, a widely appreciated result of following his endless food curiosity.



He was a stalwart supporter of specialist retailers, slow food and artisan manufacture, and was passionate about the UK's food revolution within which he played a major part.

Constantly excited by the number of brilliant new artisan food businesses springing up across the UK, William was a passionate and inspiring 'bon viveur' who will be sadly missed by the fine food industry.



Inflation hits 2% target

Food price inflation fell in May for the 14th month in a row, official figures have shown.

The rate of inflation of food and soft drinks dropped to 1.7%, down from 2.9% in April, helping drive down headline inflation to its lowest rate in nearly three years. Inflation has now hit the Bank of England's target of 2% for the first time since 2021.

Inflation has been in the spotlight as debates around the cost-of-living crisis heat up.

"It's encouraging to see food and non-alcoholic drink price inflation continue to fall, which is welcome respite for households and important for business recovery," said Karen Betts, CEO of the Food and Drink Federation (FDF).

However, Karen warned that "the resilience of our sector isn't a given".

"With agricultural commodity prices and energy costs rising once again, parts of the food and drink supply chain remain vulnerable and there's little slack to cope with the impact of extreme weather events on harvests or further rises in shipping costs," she continued.

Indeed, the decrease in food price inflation wasn't consistent across all food and drink products. For example, while prices fell for jams and marmalades, whole milk and butter by 6.2%, 5.5% and 4.4%, respectively, olive oil is up by a whopping 39.1%, cocoa and powdered chocolate has risen by 19.5% and sugar is up by 9.8%.

People around the country would "breathe a sigh of relief" as the inflation rate fell, said Kris Hamer, director of insight of the British Retail Consortium (BRC). The news raised hopes that the Bank of England would cut interest rates.

Lower inflation rates for energy prices, clothing and furniture were all welcome news for consumers too, he said.

But politicians can't take this inflationary progress for granted, Kris warned. "Retailers are working hard to limit price increases for their customers, and the next administration must play their part in reducing cost pressures on retailers and the customers they serve," Kris said.

And the UK isn't out of the woods yet on inflation. Food prices are still a quarter higher than they were at the beginning of 2022, and fine food retailers will still be feeling the pinch when it comes to their energy prices and certain products whose prices remain stubbornly high.

What's more, Jake Finney, economist at PwC UK, warned that if prices continue to rise at the same month-on-month rate that they did this month, headline inflation will be back over the 2% target next month.

WHILE THE FINAL **13%** OF **SHOPPERS** ARE PROVING **TOUGH** TO WIN OVER, ONLINE **SALES** ARE NOW SHOWING A **CONSISTENT** POST-COVID **"NEW NORMAL"**. E-COMMERCE ACCOUNTED FOR **27.2%** OF ALL **RETAIL** SALES IN **MAY** AND **87%** OF **BRITS** BOUGHT **ONLINE** LAST YEAR

Fairtrade Foundation calls for a 'resilient' trade system

In its 2024 manifesto, the organisation called on the new government to build fairer and more resilient trading partnerships in the face of a changing climate

Following Labour's landslide election win, the new prime minister has much work to do to transform the food and drink sector in line with the party's manifesto promises. At the same time, organisations have released their own manifestos to set out their priorities for the new government.

Alexander Carnwath, head of public affairs at the Fairtrade Foundation, said it was "crucial" that the new government "builds a fairer and more resilient trade system that works better for both UK consumers and those who produce much of our food in low-income countries."

The Fairtrade Foundation's 2024 manifesto sets out three key asks. The first is for political leaders to develop trade policy that works for people and the planet. These policies, the charity said, must improve resilience for the smallholder farmers and workers producing food overseas, as well as support innovative business approaches to enhance environmental and social sustainability.

Second, it called on the government to ensure responsible business by creating new legislation that ensures businesses address human rights and environmental violations in supply chains, including deforestation, while taking full account of the needs of farmers and workers.

And third, the foundation said the UK must strengthen aid by responding to the needs and priorities of the farmers and workers making "crucial contributions" to the global food system.

"The UK imports almost half its food, with 16 percent coming from countries exposed to climate change and lacking the capacity to adapt and respond," Alexander said.

While British farmers are rightly urging the government to support the farmers and growers on our own shores to bolster food security, there are undeniably numerous products that, even when we boost homegrown food production, will need to be imported from abroad – and fine food retailers and producers will be well aware of the impact everything from geopolitical events to climate catastrophes can have on these products' prices and availability.

"In recent years, we've seen how global events can have a massive impact on UK food supplies, with the cost of some of our favourite food products soaring and increasingly difficult conditions for farmers overseas – including ingredients like cocoa, sugar, olive oil and many others that are essential to the fine food industry," Alexander said.

He called on the next government to commit to publishing a trade strategy that addresses key links between trade, development and environmental sustainability, setting up objectives across all three.

"It [the government] should also address UK competition law to provide support for innovations in the area of pre-competitive collaboration between businesses," he said, which can be done through initiatives such as Fairtrade's Shared Impact, to support environmental and development objectives.

"We urgently need to invest for the future, building fair and strong trading partnerships, with businesses working for people and planet, that will ensure the ongoing availability of our food in the face of a changing climate."



Knowledge is everything when it comes to growing the world's finest walnuts. Multi-generations of knowledge passed down over the years, blending the perfect weather and soils with the know-how and experience producing beautiful, creamy textured walnuts.

A happy accident? Far from it, only in California do all of these distinct components combine, bearing testament to the families and growers whose expertise, commitment and dedication shows in every walnut they grow.

CALIFORNIA KNOWLEDGE, CALIFORNIA WALNUTS.

CONTACT: trade@californiawalnuts.co.uk www.californiawalnuts.co.uk

The tide is turning



JAMES GRANT
NO2 POUND STREET

Recently I travelled to the USA to attend the Cheese Mongers Invitational (CMI) and Fancy Food Show – one of the largest artisan food and drink expos in the world.

The CMI is a fantastic competition set out to find the best cheesemonger in the United States. It is run over several days with tests and interviews given by some of the greatest cheese authorities in the world. The event culminates at a brilliant venue called Brooklyn Steel in the heart of New York cool. This is where cheesemakers, cheesemongers and the public all gather for the most exceptional party of bottomless cheese and excitement as the competition moves into its final moments. The end scene features the cheesemongers presenting their favourite cheese, demonstrating the perfect wrap and hoping to slice the exact weight as prescribed by the ever energetic and charismatic founder Adam Moscowitz.

What an absolute hoot of show that aims to shout out the professionalism of American cheesemongers and the sheer brilliance of their incredible artisan cheesemakers. It engages the public and captures the attention of both local and international media.

In the UK we have recently seen brilliant initiatives to help encourage more to the world of cheese both on a professional and commercial basis. The Academy of Cheese (AOC) and Guild of Fine Food (GFF) are without doubt spearheading exceptional promotional drives to keep momentum as they strive for excellence in the artisan, farmhouse cheese world.

The AOC was the brainchild of Mary Quicke – in my opinion the godmother of cheese. Founded in 2013 it has quickly taken root as the educational platform for cheese brilliance, with modular levels now being taught all over the world. The AOC are always welcoming and happy to collaborate. Three years ago, when a then employee of Quicke's, Patrick Spinazza suggested to put on an affinage competition, the idea was grabbed. Affinage means to refine a cheese in a controlled environment (biome) and change the organoleptic properties of a cheese over time. Three years later the competition has evolved into an incredible school of learning and helped open a different world of opportunity for mongers. I even in built my very own cheese cave, which was switched on the day the very first competition cheese was delivered!

Real artisan cheese is without doubt becoming more popular. There are so many passionate and talented people doing brilliant work shouting about its provenance and benefits over cheaply prepared industrial styles.

Whilst at The Fancy Food Show in New York I was pleased to see producers of small batch cheeses. They stood out over the larger corporations as their passion shone through. The cheese tasted was delicious. One example was Von Trapp Cheese. This cheese simply blew my mind. The Vermont based creamery has its own herd and practises regenerative farming, they want to make sure that the land is properly nourished. Their knowledge and connection with the agroecology is clear.

It is obvious from large shows such as the FFS that there is a change of tack with the big corps widening their eyes to what the small producers are doing. The thing is, for the most part, these small producers haven't changed anything. However, these great people will gladly embrace technology providing it helps them build without detriment to the land or beast.

In large companies there are far too many pen pushers that have little or no connection with the physical product. Most industrial cheese being produced is made by pressing buttons. It is only so cheap because of the way it is produced with little human intervention. Sadly, there is a large price to pay, being the impact on the animals and the land in which the products are being made.

With organisations such as the AOC and the GFF plus new initiatives such as the educational subscription through The Real Cheese Project things can get better. The Real Cheese Project is an initiative to help promote real cheese and great cheesemongers with a consumer-facing publication, monthly webinar and of course cheese.

Fun and informative events like the CMI in New York help spread the word on proper production. They showcase people unified in bringing the greatest produce to your doorsteps. The Academy's Young Cheesemonger of the Year is helping our youth see the wealth of opportunities in the good dairy industry. The World Cheese Awards have put cheese on a level that shines brilliance on this food that goes back thousands of years.

If you are a business that uses cheese, consider your choices carefully ask your supplier about how it is made. Our decisions can and will affect our world as we need to preserve and nourish the flora and fauna.

Future of food a "political hot potato" says OF&G

Health, ecology, fairness and care are all under the spotlight as Organic Farmers & Growers (OF&G) publishes its latest manifesto – a framework of radical policy targeted at government.

The organisation's chief executive, Roger Kerr, said the future of food and farming is becoming a 'political hot potato', and must urgently be addressed to ensure ongoing security.

"The nation's seen huge upheaval in the last eight years. A flawed food system has left the country at the tipping point of catastrophic environmental and human health crises," Roger said. "Decisive action cannot come soon enough. We need policies that create jobs and improve rural livelihoods while delivering sustainable and economically viable food and farming systems."

He continued, "Restoring this balance and equity requires ambition and vision from government. The long-term effects of recent policies are still unfolding, but the need for action is urgent. One thing is clear; we must aspire to accomplish more."

By considering organic's four founding principles, OF&G's manifesto identifies solutions that address the huge disparity that exists in current food and farming systems.

"Implementing OF&G's recommendations would have a massive, beneficial impact. Organic is a defined farming system and operates to the highest level of compliance to deliver on all four of the principles outlined," adds Roger.

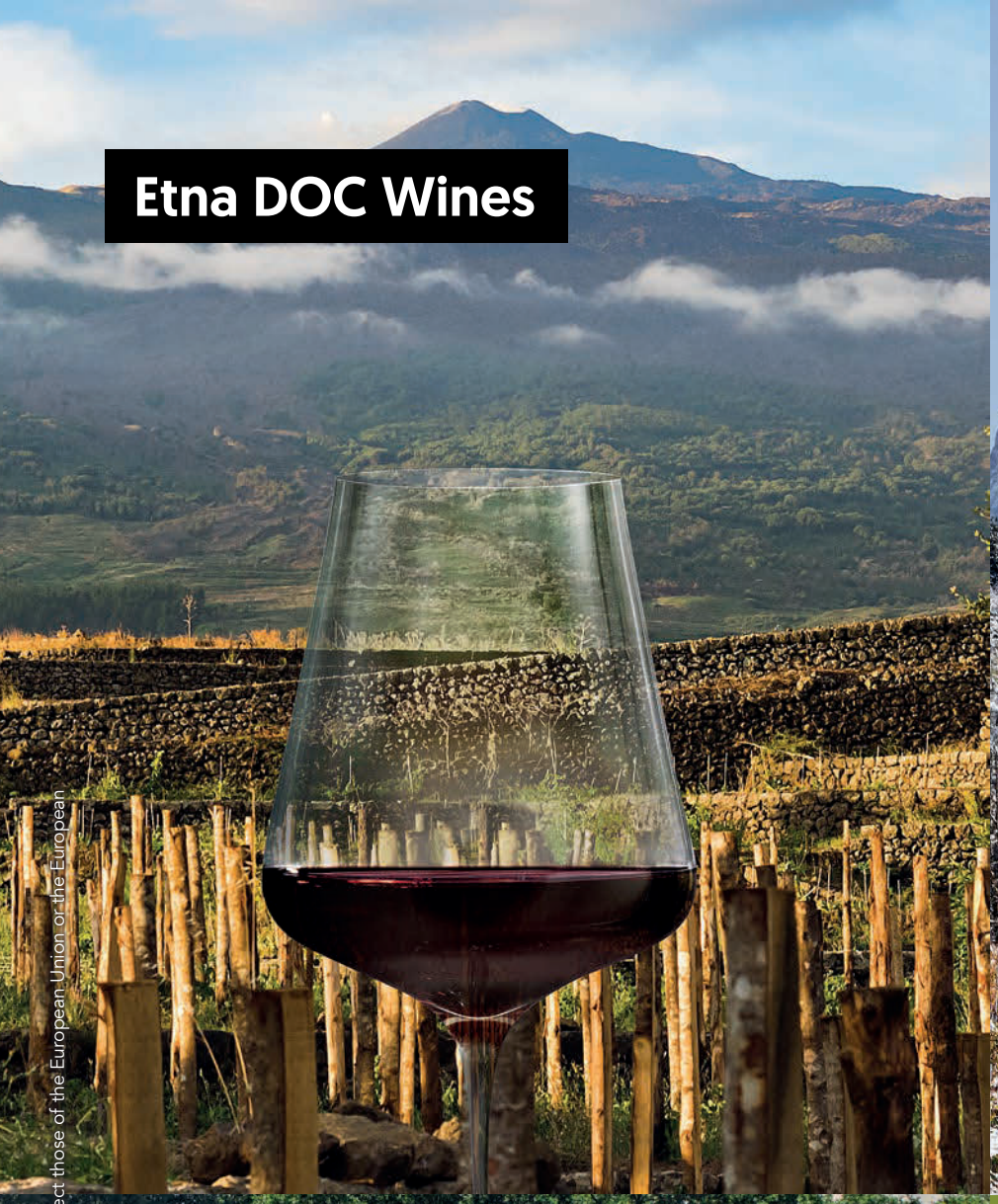
"The recent formal adoption of regulation on nature restoration by the EU shows that, with political will, change is possible. By advocating for policy changes that support health, ecology, fairness, and care, we can create a sustainable, equitable, vibrant and healthy food system. Organic is part of the solution to the challenges confronting us but is not just about changing farming practices, it is about championing a profound, positive impact on our society and the planet."

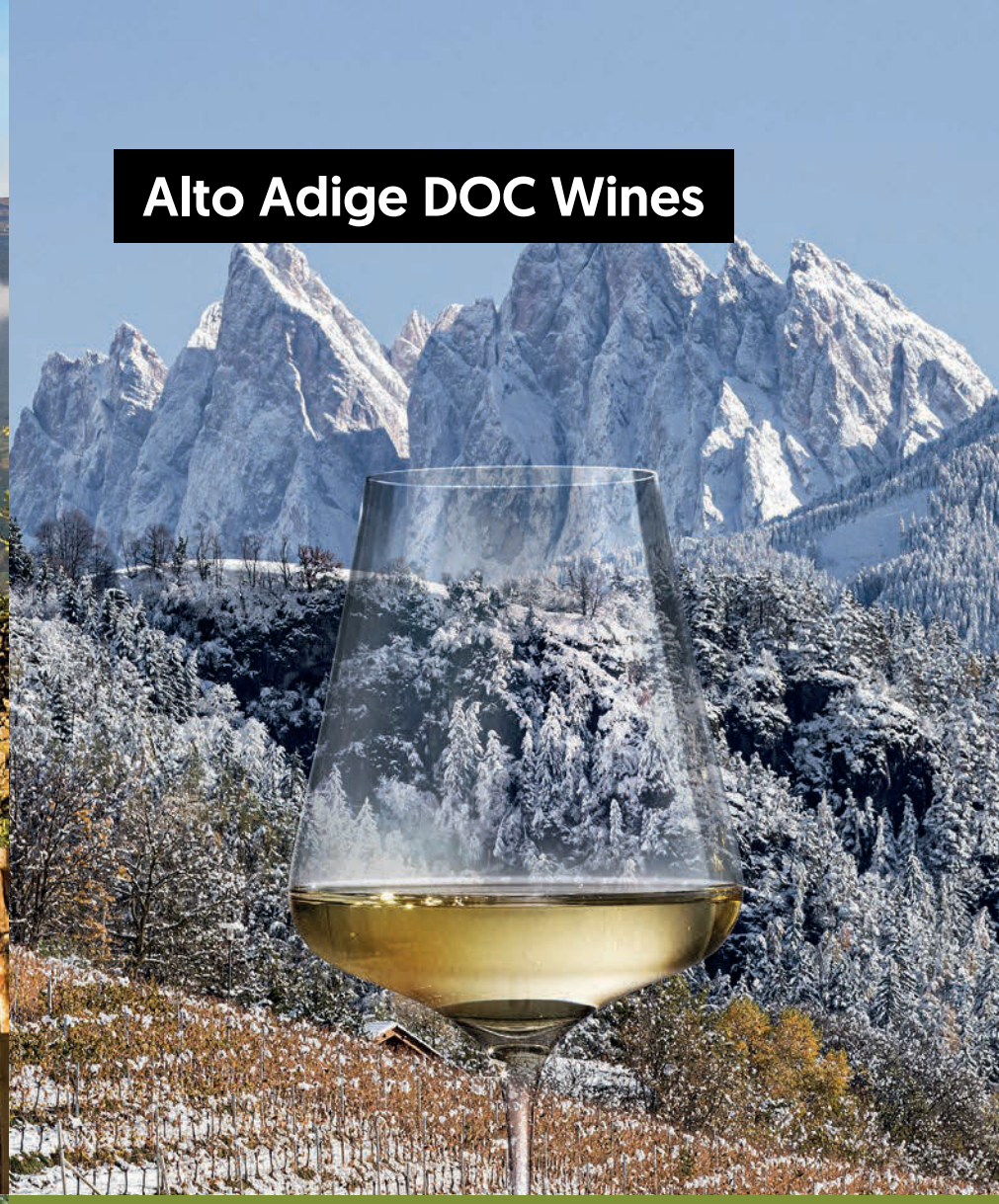


IN THE **UK** WE'RE ALREADY **FAILING** TO MEET **17** OF OUR **20** BIODIVERSITY **TARGETS**, WHILE RECORD **RAINFALL** IS DRASTICALLY **REDUCING** YIELDS

SOURCE: OF&G 2024 MANIFESTO









Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

EUROPE FOR THE SENSES

Selezione eccellente

from unique landscapes

europeforthesenses.eu

ENJOY IT'S FROM EUROPE

Südtirol Wein
Vini Alto Adige

CONSORZIO PER LA TUTELA DEL FORMAGGIO PECORINO ROMANO

CONSORZIO TUTELA VINI ETNA DOC

Co-funded by the European Union

THE EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS CAMPAIGNS THAT PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

Indies hit by ingredient price hikes

The rising costs of raw ingredients, caused by climate-change-induced shortages, are heaping pressure on small businesses' margins. The price of a chocolate biscuit with a cup of coffee could soon be set to rise – especially if producers refuse to compromise on quality.

COST OF CHOCOLATE UP 150%

In recent months, cocoa prices have soared to historic highs, driven by a global cocoa shortage, after poor harvests were caused by droughts in West Africa, which produces around 80% of the world's cocoa output. In fact, the global cocoa supply was expected to fall by nearly 11% over the 2023/2024 season, according to the International Cocoa Organisation.

Katie Cross, founder of Cake or Death, an Exeter-based bakery, said the sharp rise of chocolate's price is having a "huge impact" on her profit margins. The bakery found the price of chocolate rose by an alarming 150% since May 2023. Chocolate makes up a third of Cake or Death's ingredient costs, with its brownies, which contain a high percentage of chocolate for quality flavour and texture, being a core product.

This autumn when supplies run low again, Katie said she will have to fork out an extra £9,000 per tonne, and this may not even be the final price hike of the year.

While the increases in chocolate prices as well as cost pressures across the business are making it "increasingly difficult" for the business to make a profit, Katie, who founded Cake or Death in 2019, said she will not change the recipe to compromise the quality of the product. However, the bakery is being forced to make savings in other areas.

COFFEE PRICE SPIKES TO 15-YEAR HIGH

Meanwhile, the price of wholesale coffee has reached record highs. According to Gareth Redmond-King, head of international programme at the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU), the UK imported a billion pounds worth of coffee in 2023 – and the cost of a morning caffeine boost is set to rise because of extreme weather in countries like Vietnam and Brazil.

"97% of all coffee globally is grown in countries vulnerable to climate impacts. More than half the coffee beans we imported last year came from Brazil and Vietnam," Gareth said. "And coffee, like many UK food imports, cannot simply be grown here instead. If we don't speed the path to net-zero emissions by mid-century, and support farmers and food producers at home and abroad to adapt to a warming world, then prices will only continue to rise, as supplies are squeezed further."

In fact, Italian coffee company Lavazza warned that coffee prices are set to continue rising until mid-2025. Vice chairman Guiseppe Lavazza said prices hit a record 15-year high because of supply chain disruption, geopolitical issues and poor harvests. In early July, the price of coffee reached more than £3,300 a tonne. The price rises have caused 1kg bags of beans to soar by 15% in a year, but Guiseppe said the rises could reach 20% to 25% over the year as prices continue their upward trend.

6 tips for growing your business

Are you looking at taking the leap with a new cafe, an expansion or a change in direction for your business? Or simply keen to build on the work you already do by growing your audience? Discover advice and ideas from

FIND YOUR USP

Hawarden Estate Farm Shop

"The first farm shop at Hawarden opened over 18 years ago, and it has changed a little since then!" says Tara Richards-Gladstone, director of the estate. What's driven the success? Tara says it was uncovering the shop's USP. "Without doubt, it is the on-site bakery. We think we make some of the best breads and pastries going, and they have a very loyal local following. We're even starting to use flour from our own wheat too – for a true field to fork experience."

WORK WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Fodder Farm Shop

"We want to inspire [consumers] to eat well, so we've made local food accessible and affordable to our customers while helping the local farming community to grow and prosper," says Vanessa Pitt, general manager. "Not only do we support farmers directly by buying from them, every penny we make goes to support the work of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society. Championing Yorkshire food and drink, our team of staff are dedicated to ensuring customers enjoy their food experience with us. Our café showcases our wide range of locally sourced food and we are passionate about eating food in season – when it is at its best and nutritious."

DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHANGE UP YOUR BUSINESS MODEL

Padstow Farm Shop

"We were established in 2006. After farming this area since the 50s, we are now on the fourth generation," says manager Sarah Hodgson. The decision to open the farm shop came only after years of supplying fresh veg to all the local restaurants in the area. Sarah continues, "We decided it would be great to have a shop that sold our veg, and that grew into the idea of selling our own free-range, home-reared beef, pork and lamb that roams free over the headland."

ATTRACT NEW GUESTS BY MAKING A DESTINATION

Drewton's Farm Shop

After being established in 2010, Drewton's now boasts a butchery, deli, grocer, pantry, cellar and gifting area, along with a popular restaurant offering brunch, lunch and afternoon teas. But the team has gone above and beyond to make their shop a true destination. "A purpose-built wedding and events venue was added in 2019. The Manor Rooms can cater for up to 220 guests and is beautifully designed with stunning views across the rolling Yorkshire Wolds," says Katie Taylor, proprietor of Drewton's. "Holiday accommodation can cater for up to 16 across three wonderful properties. Workshops and ticketed events prove popular throughout the seasons, and pumpkin foraging is always a great family affair!"

BUILD ON TRADITION

Trevaskis Farm Shop

"In the early 1980s Paul Eustice decided to fulfil his passion for growing fruit. As the strawberries ripened, he invited the public to come to the farm to 'pick your own'. The Farm Shop had begun, then just a converted corrugated iron shed," says Serena Eustice. "In over 40 years of trading as a family, we have maintained the same traditional ethos, always sourcing homegrown and home-reared produce or from trusted local producers wherever possible."

CATER TO FAMILIES

Trevathan Farm

As a family-run business established with a garden shed in a field of pick your own strawberries, Trevathan Farm knows a thing or two about appealing to British families. From a small farm shop and cafe, the site has grown considerably, but what really makes it stand out in a sea of retailers is its family-friendly angle. "We do pick you own strawberries, gooseberries, pumpkins and sunflowers when in season, and this proves very popular," says owner Grace Symons. "We have a pets corner with alpacas, emus, sheep, goats, Guinea pigs and rabbits, and also a large outdoor area with kids' play equipment and outdoor seating."





Sponsored by

Tracklements



HOT HONEY

With hot honey getting everyone from Instagram food stars to chain restaurants hot under the collar, now's the perfect time to cash in on this US-inspired trend

Everyone who's anyone is cashing in on the 'swicy' trend this season, and hot honey is the perfect example of sweet and spicy worlds colliding to create something super tasty and versatile. It's something that oh-so-trendy Korean cuisine has mastered, and is all over the UK snacking scene in 2024, so is becoming an increasingly familiar taste profile to British palates.

WHAT IS HOT HONEY?

Hot honey is simple blend of honey with heat from chillies. There are quite a few on the market these days, so be sure to pick one with the quality and provenance that your customers seek out.

WHERE'S IT COME FROM?

"In terms of history, while it appears across the world, from Medieval Egypt and ancient China to Medieval Europe, I think the most relevant historical link to using it on pizza come from the centuries' old tradition of infusing honey with pepperoncini peppers in Italy," says Tris Revill, founding food tour guide at Eat Like The French.

Tracklements, renowned for its pioneering attitude to fine food, was first on the scene in the UK. "Like all good things in this world hot honey is having a renaissance and I'd like to say that Tracklements spotted the trend first because, true to our nature as pioneers of the condiment scene, it was back in 1986 that we first launched our Spiced Honey Mustard," explains Becky Vale marketing director. "It quickly established its popularity and its best-seller status hasn't wavered since. Sweet and heat have always made happy bedfellows."

As with a lot of trends in the food and drink sphere, the current popularity for hot honey is thought to originate from the US. "The trend for hot honey stems from the US back in the 2010s – probably before UK consumers were ready to put sweet toppings on their food," explains Jade Buller, founder of JD's - a brand of hot honeys which was launched after a lot of experimentation with pizza toppings during Covid lockdowns.

HOW CAN IT BE USED?

The general consensus is that hot honey originated from experimentations with pizza toppings, so that's a great place to start. It's a particularly delicious partner for pepperoni, but equally as tasty with goats cheese for a veggie option. If you're feeling daring, try serving it in place of truffle honey on a cheeseboard, and it's also tasty with barbecued foods, fried chicken and in marinades and cocktails. "We genuinely haven't found anything it doesn't work with yet!" says Laurence from Black Mountain Honey. "Once you've tried it, eating a pizza without it feels like going to work without your trousers on. Incomplete and a bit chilly."

EXACTLY HOW HOT IS IT?

Our advice: don't be fooled by its sweetness; hot honey can have a real sting in its tail. Some hot honeys can pack a real punch with just a drop or two while others can be liberally drizzled for the optimum chilli kick. That's why JD's has three heat levels in its range: "we recognise that spice tolerance varies widely among individuals, and we wanted to ensure that everyone – from those who enjoy a mild kick to the heat aficionados – can find a product they love," says Jade.

WILL IT SELL?

According to Mintel, 53% of consumers are willing to pay more for products with new and innovative flavours, and if you consider the timings of the hot honey movement - 'swicy' is huge and growing by the day, DIY pizza is booming – it's sure to make waves. "It's by far the most popular item on our website," says Laurence,

WHO'S CASHING IN ALREADY?

The mainstream food industry has well and truly invested in hot honey. Starbucks in America has releases a Hot Honey Espresso Martini in some of its stores, while back on UK shores Nandos has released a hot honey with Dr Sting's. "Not everyone is familiar with honey just yet, but there isn't a supermarket out there without some presence of hot honey in its ranges, so by the end of the year I predict it will be part of our vocabulary here in the UK," explains James Kerslake, founder of Tom Savano and co-creator of the UK's first canned hot honey margherita in collaboration with JD's.

IS IT AVAILABLE WITH A FINE FOOD CREDENTIALS?

If you're looking for hot honey with provenance, there's a few options for you to choose from. Our pick is Black Mountain Honey's Hot Fire Honey, a two-star Great Taste Award-winning multifloral Welsh honey blended with Welsh raw apple cider vinegar and slow-grown Welsh Scotch Bonnet chillies. Be sure to check out WilderBee's Sriracha Hot Honey too, an ethically-produced honey from WilderKitchen – the brainchild of chef and food truck owner Dan Shearman.

53% OF CONSUMERS ARE WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR PRODUCTS WITH NEW AND INNOVATIVE FLAVOURS

SOURCE: MINTEL

> "By the end of the year I predict hot honey will be part of our vocabulary here in the UK"
>
> **JAMES KERSLAKE, TOM SAVANO**



The Life & Soul of the Pantry

Certified B Corporation

ORDER AT TRADE.TRACKLEMENTS.CO.UK OR CALL:01666 827044

PRODUCT NEWS

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

New Ice Kitchen pastes make scratch cooking easy



Having proved that fresh frozen flavours are a timesaving hit with their customers, Ice Kitchen is launching five exciting new cooking pastes this month. Building on the enormously popular Thai Red, Green and Massaman curries, the brand is expanding its range into Mexican, Indian, and Caribbean cuisine.

Founder Cesar Roden is the grandson of renowned food writer Claudia Roden and thus has great food in his DNA. Cesar says, "Our pastes offer the perfect fusion of authentic global flavours and cooking convenience". The new Thai Panang, Indian Jalfrezi, Mexican Fajita, Mexican Smoky BBQ Fajita and Jamaican Jerk pastes come in handy, fully recyclable pots to be cooked directly from frozen, ensuring reliable, effortless meals every time.

Each paste is vegan, gluten-free, preservative-free, and hugely versatile, appealing to customers who crave mealtime adventure but lack the time to prepare restaurant quality meals from scratch. Ice Kitchen has an established loyal customer base and glowing endorsements from their fans, including Nigella Lawson who calls the Thai Red curry paste "a brilliant innovation" and says that "If you're not pounding a paste together yourself, this is the very next best thing. Maybe even better!"

icekitchen.com

Mr Filbert's creates Iberico Pork Crackling



Snacking experts Mr Filbert's have released a brand new pork crackling snack into the speciality market.

Iberico Pork Crackling is a traditional Spanish cortezas made using prime cut pork loin rind from responsibly-sourced Iberian-bred pork, which has been air dried and triple slow cooked for a flavour-packed snack.

The new snack is soya, dairy and gluten-free, plus low in carbohydrate and high in protein, containing 33g of natural protein per 100g.

Available in 150g pouches, this new launch is delicious enjoyed with a glass of red wine or craft beer.

Mark Taylor, managing director, said, "This Pork Crackling is as good as a chef cooking it themselves in the kitchen, if not better!"

mrfilberts.com







School Yard Kitchen releases pretzels with purpose

Scottish producer School Yard Kitchen has added to its range of mission-driven products with Dark Chocolate Chilli Pretzels.

The new release combines crunchy sourdough pretzel, 54.5% dark chocolate and sun-dried Ghanaian chilli peppers for a delicious combination of sweet, salty, crunchy and spicy. The pretzels are available in 30g and 130g packs.



School Yard Kitchen is sustainably-minded and is committed to using socially responsible practices. Every purchase of a School Yard Kitchen product contributes to two causes: keeping children in Ghana in school and out of extreme child labour, and promoting social inclusion in Scottish communities.

Sarah Christie, founder of School Yard Kitchen, said "We're passionate about creating snacks that are delicious, fun and ethically sourced. Our new Dark Chocolate Chilli Pretzels are the perfect example. They offer a unique flavour profile that will tantalize taste buds and leave you wanting more."

schoolyardkitchen.com

Cottage Delight launches Christmas 2024 range

Artisan food manufacturers Cottage Delight have released details for their festive range for this year – the earliest the business has launched a Christmas range.

The collection brings together an exciting range of gifting and seasonal options, offering wide variety in terms of price and flavour profiles.

New launches include a limited edition Christmas Pudding Flavoured Curd, comedy beers, warming ciders and ready-to-gift packs of traditional ales under their Bottle Shop brand. Three new luxury gift bags have also been released.

Cottage Delight has also launched Fosters Christmas Brochure – offering a selection of premium brands, festive staples and confectionery – following its purchase of the business in February.

In addition to the Cottage Delight Christmas, the brand has also launched Fosters Christmas Brochure earlier this year. The range includes a plethora of premium brands which give Cottage Delight consumers a wider variety of Christmas confectionary and staples.

Sarah Williams, marketing director at Cottage Delight, said, "We've recognised that trade customers are planning their Christmas ranges earlier each year. With this in mind we took the decision to launch Cottage Delight Christmas a month earlier to give our customers more time to make their Christmas selections. We're already seeing huge benefits of this and had great feedback when the range has been presented.

This year we've given our well-loved Christmas gift packs a whole new look so they are more appealing to the consumer when on shelf and fit within our five commercial gifting stories even better.

Anticipating the consumer will continue to be savvy with their Christmas shopping in 2024, we've also retained a range of fantastic promotions giving everyone a little saving this year."

cottagedelight.co.uk



Lost Sheep Coffee releases RTD coffee

Lost Sheep Coffee have released two Aussie-style iced coffee drinks to their range, in order to offer barista-quality coffee in a can.

The new canned drinks, available in Iced Latte and Iced Mocha variants, are fully traceable from farm to can and contain under 85 calories per serving.

Made using the brand's award-winning Get To The Hopper speciality grade coffee – a blend of beans from Paranaiba in Brazil and Huila in Columbia – these drinks are made using coffee beans which have been hand-roasted at the brand's roastery in Whitstable, creating a smooth blend with notes of chocolate and caramel.

Stuart Wilson, Founder of Lost Sheep Coffee, said, "With Gen Z consumers more likely to drink ready to drink coffee than hot coffee, the category is buzzing, yet right now in the UK there isn't another brand using 'farm to can' traceable, speciality grade beans in a ready to drink milk-based coffee format. Many other ready to drink coffee products on the market use instant coffee as an ingredient, but ours uses speciality grade coffee beans, which are the highest grade you can get in the world. This level of traceability is unique in the ready to drink market, meaning we are perfectly positioned to turn the category on its head with a speciality grade product that is completely new, as well as being cost-competitive."

lostsheepcoffee.com





New Cornichons from Mrs Elswood

Empire Bespoke Foods, leading speciality food importer and distributor and owner of the Mrs Elswood brand, has launched a new range of Mrs Elswood Cornichons.

There are two flavours of the whole, mini pickled cucumbers available: Original and Cornichons & Onion. Both are harvested while young for maximum crunch before being pickled with Mrs Elswood's unique seasoning for the perfect balance of sweet, salty and piquant.

Mrs Elswood Cornichons (baby gherkin cucumbers) are harvested while still young for maximum crunch. They are then pickled with Mrs Elswood's unique blend of seasonings to create the perfect balance of salty, sweet and piquant flavours.

Jonathan Hehir, senior innovation manager at Mrs Elswood, said, "The Mrs Elswood brand has long been associated with a wide range of uniquely flavoured whole and sliced gherkins. As the latest addition to the Mrs Elswood family, the Cornichons continue the heritage of the brand's distinctive flavours but also offer consumers a new and modern taste sensation."

"Whilst typically associated with charcuterie plates and cheeseboards, Cornichons are a popular stand-alone snack and also add a welcome tang to many types of sandwiches, wraps, grilled foods, burgers and salads. Sharper in flavour than traditional gherkins, they add a whole new dimension to taste and texture while their unmistakeable versatility makes them a store cupboard must-have!"

empirebespokefoods.com



Just Jelly reveals rebrand

After a pause in production, Just Jelly is back on the market and has a brand new look.

The range currently consists of Mint Infused Jelly, Beetroot Infused Jelly, Rosemary Infused Jelly and Port Jelly. More flavours will be launched later this year. The products are delicious served with cheese, meat or fish, and are also a versatile flavour enhancer to use in sauces and gravies.

As well as displaying a fresh rebrand, Just Jelly jars are now larger following customer feedback.

Ryan Tindall, founder of Just Jelly, said, "Just Jelly is a range of savoury infused jellies based on family recipes given to me by my grandmother. Born in Whitby, North Yorkshire, the jellies have made their way around the country as a staple on cheese boards, Sunday roasts and as a delicious accompaniment to an array of other dishes!

"When I set up Just Jelly, I wanted the brand to reflect the company at the time, so it had a young, new kid to the block feel to it. When I came to re-brand Just Jelly, I wanted it to have grown up a bit, so it reflected the company (and me too!). I decided to go for a cleaner, more sophisticated feel to the brand to be more in line with the fine food retailers we aim at."

just-jelly.co.uk

Munchy Seeds extends snacking range

Suffolk-based Munchy Seeds has added a trio of 25g snack packs – named Mini-Munchy Seed – to its portfolio.

Available in three varieties: Plain (unsalted), Tamari (soy) and Lightly Salted, the blend of sunflower and pumpkin seeds are designed to meet the growing consumer demand for snacks which contain high levels of protein and support gut health.



The new mixes are gluten and wheat-free, as well as being high in vitamins and minerals and containing 130 calories per pack.

Sara Pearson, co-owner of Munchy Seeds says: "We are constantly looking at new flavours and packaging formats to excite our audience and meet the growing consumer demand for healthy and moreish snacking. At Munchy Seeds, we pride ourselves on offering nutritional snacks in a variety of flavours to meet every taste palate. This new format is the latest in on the go snacking formats and we are excited to be able to expand on this in the future."

munchyseeds.co.uk





COMMENTATORS



EVE REID
WBC



MATT WHELAN
FIELDFARE



JAMES TOD
THE GREAT BRITISH HAMPER COMPANY



NICHOLAS JINKS
RANDOM HARVEST



TUDOR EVANS
HOLLEYS FINE FOOD



SHIRLEY AUBREY
HARVEY NICHOLS







'TIS THE **SEASON**

Now's the time to get ahead to make Christmas 2024 your best yet. Here's some expert intel to help you do just that

As we all know, Christmas prep starts long before the first frosts arrive, so by the time consumers start to dust off their decs retailers are well and truly in full swing with their festive celebrations. Key to a successful season is planning ahead, prepping as much as possible, and making sure that you maintain a carefully curated balance of trend and tradition throughout your selection.

For WBC, personalisation is the name of the game. "Personalisation can take on many forms. From the way in which your products are packaged and presented, to the experiences you can evoke in-store," begins Eve Reid, managing director. Playing the personalisation card doesn't just help indies stand out from the crowd; it has tangible value, too. "For fine food retailers, this identification is everything. You want to reinforce the high quality of your products and increase the perception of these items to have more inherent value, so that consumers are inclined to pay more with the confidence that this is a purchase they can trust.

"There are numerous studies that suggest that by leveraging personalisation you can drive sales, forge connections through customer satisfaction, and create long lasting brand impressions."

Of equal importance is carefully chosen packaging, and it is especially vital for retailers to hone

WHOLESALER VIEWPOINT



Tudor Evans, head of commercial at Holleys Fine Foods, highlights the business's must-stock products for Christmas 2024

"A large part of our offer each year is our Christmas range, which contains over 1,000 products," begins Tudor. From tins of biscuits to confectionery, all festive requirements are catered for, but it's important for retailers to stock up on the basics too. "Pantry products, the kind of thing that is stocked year-round such as preserves, pates and chutneys, tend to see a boost in sales around Christmas so it's important that *Speciality Food* readers plan ahead for that rush," he continues.

New to the Holleys range is ambient charcuterie, sure to be a strong seller this season, alongside Christmas favourites such as panettone from Italy and stollen from Germany, plus traditional mince pies and festive cakes from brands like Bakewell & Browne. On the savoury front, the popular West Country Legends range of cheese snacks is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser, as is the rest of Holleys' sizeable snacking range.

Holleys customers can be sure that whatever they order, the wholesaler will deliver. "One of the cornerstones of our offer has been certainty of supply," says Tudor. "Whatever the customer orders is what we will deliver, and we make sure to work with suppliers who can live up to that expectation too."

Tudor's key tip for successful selling during Christmas 2024? "Look for products that help with displays and merchandising," he says. Continental products and items with attractive packaging that will catch the customer's eye are valuable "Farm shops and garden centres tend to cater to a lot of impulse shoppers during the festive season, so stock a range of recognisable classics as well as more unusual items that could be suitable for gifting."

> "Look for products that help with display and merchandising"





in on the perfect packaging for their items ahead of the festive season. "Christmas is renowned for its gift-giving traditions. Customers are either spending on presents for others, or indulging in impulse buys for themselves. So, when it comes to fine foods, it's imperative to get items from point A to B in the same pristine, presentable condition in which they were purchased," Eve continues. "Whether you're delivering on eCommerce demands or looking for off-the-shelf solutions, providing your products with unparalleled protection means that your fine foods can be safely presented with the same consideration and care that has gone into their creation."

Of course, the freezer is an invaluable tool when it comes to planning ahead for the festive season – both for consumers and retailers. Thankfully, Fieldfare is on hand to support both in their mission for a delicious, smooth-running Christmas. "Premium frozen has grown in popularity over the past couple of years and in a recent shopper survey we conducted with YouGov, over a third (35%) of shoppers stated that they had bought premium frozen products from independent or speciality stores recently. This represents a big opportunity for retailers as Christmas is a time when people want to treat themselves and premium frozen can offer them something special, as well as the convenience they have come to expect from frozen."

As well as avoiding waste and the danger of overstocking, Fieldfare's frozen range is ideal for occasions throughout the festive season. "Retailers can tailor-make a unique selection for the season, scaling up or down on products as needed," says Matt. "A large number of our products are complementary to the farm shop Christmas offer but equally as relevant into January and beyond, so because the products are frozen, retailers can stock up for Christmas without the concern that products will be wasted after the festive period. The range is adaptable and flexible."

A particularly smart stocking option is Fieldfare's range of frozen pastries, including their best-selling croissants alongside other indulgent pastries, for hosts to bake fresh for guests throughout the Christmas period. Indeed, Christmas Day is the busiest day for Fieldfare's website, with customers flocking to the site for instructions on how to cook their pastries. Desserts are also sure to prove popular, with "indulgence starting to return to dining tables nationwide," begins Matt, and convenience being an attractive proposition for busy home cooks. "Individually portioned desserts such as our award-winning Melting Chocolate Fondant, Salted

> "We work on Christmas throughout the year, focusing on our Harvey Nichols own label range, as well as hand-picking traditional, up-and-coming, and new brands to elevate our edit"

BEHIND THE COUNTER



Shirley Aubrey, food buyer at Harvey Nichols, talks us through the iconic retailer's approach to the all-important festive season

We believe the joy of Christmas is in the giving, so we take the hard work out of shopping for customers and curate beautiful edits of high-quality gifts, both Harvey Nichols own label and branded. We think about our customers, who they buy for, and what they will be doing, whether that's attending parties, buying stocking fillers or being the best gift giver with the ultimate showstopper present.

We work on Christmas throughout the year, focusing on our Harvey Nichols own label range, as well as hand-picking traditional, up-and-coming, and new brands to elevate our edit. We also build iconic hampers filled with the finest Harvey Nichols range of food and beverages. As soon as Christmas is over, we start thinking about the next. We look back and take inspiration from the previous trends and sales to begin curating and preparing for our next festive launch. We experiment with products and innovative flavours, and analysis our customer buying habits, but favourites such as stocking fillers will always be on our radar. Mini mince pies are a Christmas staple, paired with our wonderful Harvey Nichols Cognac Butter. We experiment with flavours and ingredients of our Harvey Nichols own label range to curate innovate products, such as our Strawberry & Champagne Jam using our Harvey Nichols Champagne and Christmas Pudding Gin using our Christmas Pudding.

Harvey Nichols Hampers are an extremely exciting part of our offer. With something for everyone, each hamper is filled with the most enticing range of food and beverage. Every year we ensure we have something new to offer. This year we will be launching a Harvey Nichols Amaretto to perfectly pair with our wonderful food range. Our in-store displays offer customers an inspiring edit of exciting gifts, with tastings to allow customers to sample our wonderful products.



2024 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

STOCK CHECK



RANDOM HARVEST ASSORTED FUDGE

Delicious handmade fudge made using traditional methods for a truly smooth and creamy finish.

cotswold-fayre.co.uk



JANDA FOOD BOXING DAY CHUTNEY SET

Three pickles and chutneys that are perfect for those festive cold cuts. Contains Boxing Day Chutney, Smoky Onion Relish and Piccalilli.

jandafood.com



TIPTREE MERRY CHRISTMAS

The essence of the season. Pieces of Tiptree handcrafted Christmas puddings are infused in small batch English craft rum for a moreish flavour.

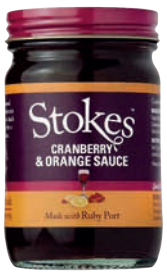
tiptree.com



ASPEN SPICES CARAMEL APPLE SPICE BLEND

The taste of caramel infused into Aspen's irresistible spice blend, and with a hint of tart apples. Easy to use, and absolutely delicious.

buckleyandbeale.com



STOKES CRANBERRY & ORANGE SAUCE

Cranberry sauce is a Christmas must. And this one's a little bit special, being finished with tangy orange zest and a splash of Port.

stokessauces.co.uk



BELVOIR FARM FESTIVE FRUIT PUNCH

A non-alcoholic punch made by blending cranberry, blackcurrant and orange juices with extracts of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg.

belvoirfarm.co.uk



SEGGIANO CLASSIC VIN SANTO PANETTONE

Handmade for Seggiano by a family-run bakery in Tuscany, with the best ingredients, and leavened with mother yeast. Enriched with 12% DOC Vin Santo del Chianti.

seggiano.com



BOOJA-BOOJA THE WINTER COLLECTION

16 luxurious vegan, organic chocolate truffles. Includes new flavours Yuletide Spice, Cherry Bakewell and Salted Caramel Mocha.

boojabooja.com



POSITIVE BAKES CHRISTMAS PUDDING BROWNIES

A pack of six vegan and gluten-free brownie bites with the familiar taste of a luxurious Christmas pudding. Wrapped in plastic-free packaging.

positivebakes.com



THE DORMEN FOOD COMPANY THE DORMEN CHRISTMAS MIX

This distinctive blend brings together cranberries, peanuts, cashews and almonds. A wonderful treat for the family to share.

thedoormenfoodcompany.com

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT



Nicholas Jinks, general manager at Random Harvest, introduces the gifting-ready range with impressive (and delicious) credentials

When it comes to great gifting options, Random Harvest is certainly a producer to watch. While its impressive list of clients – Harrods was the very first UK stockist of the brand's products, and it is now available to independent retailers via Cotswold Fayre – might suggest otherwise, the business's selection of premium quality, 100% Australian-made produce hail from a small-scale, entirely family-run enterprise as well as being prime gifts for food lovers across the UK.

"Our range of rock candy, homemade fudge and nut brittles are ideal for gifting," begins Nicholas Jinks, general manager, "not least because it's 99% natural and gluten-free so suitable for the vast majority of customers." At present Cotswold Fayre is the main supplier of Random Harvest for UK fine food retailers. "They will stock six to eight variants of our rock candy, as well as our caramel and assorted fudge, peanut fudge and popcorn fudge," says Nick.

Beyond confectionery, Random Harvest's selection of Australian truffle products is also not to be missed. "In the range we have a 100% natural truffle oil which combines extra virgin olive oil with real Australian truffles, a truffle balsamic vinegar and a truffle hot sauce – an addictive blend of peri peri and Australian truffles. Plus a truffle mustard, truffle aioli and truffle salt which infuses salt from the 5,000,000 year old Lake Deborah with real Australian truffles." Ideal for get togethers as well as smaller scale indulgent nights in, the truffle range perfectly suits the British shopper's appetite for high quality, affordable luxury at home.

The Australian provenance of Random Harvest's range is sure to be a selling point for fine food consumers. "While to begin with some people seem put off by the fact our products are made in Australia, the reality is that they are a lot lower in Carbon Miles than a lot of products because everything – from the food itself to the packaging, even the glass bottles of our condiments and oils range – is produced locally to us in Australia. We're not sourcing ingredients from one country, packaging from another, putting them together in Australia then shipping them across the world, they're 100% produced in Australia then shipped directly to the UK."

Delicious, affordable luxury with proven provenance – Random Harvest are ticking a lot of gifting boxes this Christmas.

> "Random Harvest's selection of premium quality, 100% Australian-made produce is a prime gifting range for food lovers across the UK"

Caramel Fondant, White Chocolate Fondant and Vanilla Panna Cotta, offer an indulgent treat and fun take on the classics, whilst irresistible, creamy potato gratins make for a great alternative to the traditional roast potatoes or mash side."

Lest we forget, the festive season extends beyond the big day itself to incorporate the weeks before and after, so smart retailers will "help shoppers to plan for the days in between Christmas and New Year," suggests Matt. "Our award-winning range offers a wide variety of choices that are complementary to the Christmas lunch and beyond, so it should be included in the retailer's Christmas catalogue. For example, vegetarian options for Boxing Day and a range of fantastic products for brunching in between Christmas and New Year."

Hampers are strong sellers every Christmas – and with good reason. As well as being easily personalised (have you considered offering a build-your-own hamper service?), flexible to your stock levels and themes (local, sweet tooth, cheese lover...) they look great in-store and can help make you a destination for shoppers who visit seasonally as well as perennial customers.

Their downside, of course, is that they can take time and resources to implement – which is where carefully pre-made hampers from the likes of The British Hamper Company come in. Rest assured, the team share your passion for championing British artisans so you can be confident that they will provide goods worthy of your shelves.

"We're passionate about sharing the best of artisan Britain with the rest of the world," begins their spokesperson. "Rich flavours, bold designs and personable service carefully hand-packed into beautiful gift boxes and hampers; we deliver artisan British experiences across the world."

"The Artisan Collection is a triumph of British classics, but with a modern twist. The treats, created by Britain's best makers, bakers and growers, are a representation of artisan excellency. We've searched from John o' Groats to Lands End to find the most skilled, dedicated artisans creating the best flavours. Feel their passion through the rich, contemporary flavours of Britain's most loved treats. Enjoy the buttery punch of each shortbread round, the meticulously blended Lincolnshire tea and the pang of Cornish sea salt amongst the wave of caramel in the fudge. From the Cornish fudge kitchen to the Suffolk bakery, The Artisan Collection takes consumers on a gastronomic journey through artisan Britain."



ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS

Keeping your shelves and counters looking fresh is key in fine food retail. Especially so in the lead-up to Christmas when consumers are seeking inspiration for the dining table, festive parties and delicious edible gifts. We've rounded up some brilliant additions for your stocklist this autumn and winter – from the traditional, to innovative, exciting new must-haves



SUMMERDOWN

Made from the signature Black Mitcham peppermint grown on their regenerative family farm in Hampshire, Summerdown's Great Taste Award-winning collection includes their classic range of dark chocolate peppermint creams, peppermint thins, crisps and soft-centred dominoes. The individually-wrapped Heritage fondants and crisps offer a more grown-up taste, whilst the indulgent truffles and ultimate mint chocolate collection make perfect Christmas presents. The three bars complete the collection. Their multi-award-winning range of three herbal teas: Peppermint, Camomile and Peppermint & Camomile, made entirely from herbs grown on their Hampshire farm, are the perfect way to end a meal and can also aid digestion and sleep.

01256 675 105 sales@summerdown.com summerdown.com



A L'OLIVIER

A l'Olivier (a creator of perfect pairings since 1822) selects, prepares and bottles its extensive aromatic olive oil range at its plant in the Nice countryside, a stone's throw from the olive trees. The team's unique expertise brings together sun-soaked olives harvested from partner farms and delicious aromatic herbs, citrus fruits, vegetables and spices. All these ingredients allow A l'Olivier to create artisanal oils and vinegars, bursting with flavour that will add a new culinary dimension to your dishes.

07845014242 rhianhooper@daregalgourmet.co.uk oilmerchant.co.uk



APEAL WÖRLD

Influencers and alternative health gurus are endorsing one of our most prescient revelations, The Glucose Hack. With a regulated diet, we can all benefit from monitoring our glucose levels. Put simply, taking acetic acid (ACV) before carb heavy meals can help reduce sugar spikes - those mid-afternoon fogs that send you into the spirit world, barely able to return to earth before the day is over. Apeal Wörld ACV has hit the market and nailed a great tasting and affordable way to take your daily dose on the go, with added ingredients to boost wellness. The reported benefits of this ancient health hack range not only include lowering blood sugar levels, but reducing inflammation and fighting infection too.

acvdrink.com



WELSH LADY PRESERVES

Sôs Coch – Welsh Lady Preserves' version of a much-loved traditional favourite - is an essential ingredient to transform food into a meal to remember. Packed with chopped ripe tomatoes, the ketchup is free from artificial colours and flavours, and as it's crafted with spirit vinegar, it's also sulphite-free. Welsh Lady Sôs Coch is one of many award-winning products, handmade by the Jones family in North Wales since 1966. Each batch is lovingly prepared from the finest ingredients and cooked slowly in open pans, just like you would at home.

01766 810 496 sales@welshladypreserves.com welshladypreserves.com



JANDA FOOD

New for the second half of 2024, Janda Food has launched a chunky piccalilli. Their new recipe has been formulated to not include either garlic or onion, making it more FODMAP friendly. The chunky pickle is the perfect accompaniment to the festive cheeseboard as well as pairing with charcuterie. It is also 100% plant-based. Available from Diverse Fine Food, Gorgeous Food Company and direct.

01480 708 066 info@jandafood.com jandafood.com



SUMA

Suma's delicious sparkling organic kombuchas are craft-brewed and traditionally fermented from kombucha cultures and natural ingredients. There's the traditional best-seller, Ginger; three fruity options: Strawberry & Raspberry, Lychee & Lemongrass and Elderflower & Lemon; and an adventurous Peach & Turmeric. New to market is Cola Kombucha, an exciting fusion of traditional cola with the fizzy, tangy essence of kombucha, resulting in a refreshing and invigorating drink. These healthier alternatives to soft drinks are natural, lower in calories, and free from artificial sweeteners and alcohol. At £1.75 RRP they're very competitive in comparison to other kombuchas and chilled soft drinks.

01422 313 848 sales@suma.coop suma.coop



WALKERS NONSUCH

Independent family company, Walker's Nonsuch are celebrating 130 years of toffee making. Using the finest ingredients, the taste and chew are second to none. New for 2024 are 350g gifting boxes in Assorted Toffees and Chocolate Eclairs, Salted Caramel and Liquorice. Designs include the strong colours along with the gold foiling, and printed inside giving the quality feel that reflects the toffee within. Boxes are 100% recyclable. All Walker's Nonsuch toffee is free from artificial colours, preservatives, gluten and vegetarian friendly too.

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



SHEPHERDS PURSE

A favourite of Rick Stein and Raymond Blanc, Mrs Bell's Blue is considered to be one of the best ewes' milk blue cheeses in Europe. The meadowy sweetness coming from the sheep milk contrasts beautifully with the umami notes of salty blue cheese to deliver a rich, complex flavour. Milder than a Roquefort but punchy enough for any blue cheese fan, Mrs Bell's Blue is distinct in appearance with a bright white body, contrasting beautifully with the blue/green veins. Mrs Bell's Blue is Shepherds Purse's most-awarded cheese on the international stage, having won more than 80 top accolades.
01845 587 220 info@shepherdspurse.co.uk
shepherdspurse.co.uk



HAWKSHEAD RELISH

From traditional preserves to innovative flavours, Hawkshead Relish's award-winning range has something for everyone. Since the launch in 2017, The Original Black Garlic Ketchup has been a best-seller due to its unique flavour profile. Black Garlic is blended with tomatoes, vinegar, herbs and spices to create this rich, umami ketchup, which is available in both retail and catering sizes. Upgrade your burger, dollop into casseroles or marinade your meat/fish before cooking for a black garlic infusion! Hawkshead Relish's handmade range is gluten-free, nut-free and suitable for vegetarians, with most products also being suitable for vegans.
01539 436 614 info@hawksheadrelish.com
hawksheadrelish.com



DRIVERS PICKLES

Drivers Pickles delight in the art of personalised gifting with their latest offering – the Customisable 4 Jar Gift Box. Drivers invite you to handpick from their exquisite selection of 350g jars, each brimming with flavour and age-old family recipes. Whether it's the zesty tang of classic pickles, the rich depth of savoury relishes, or the sweet allure of artisanal chutneys, you can create a bespoke gift containing any four of your Drivers best-sellers. Presented in an elegantly designed, shelf friendly stackable box, it's the perfect foodie gift for any time of year but especially during the festive season.
07489061906 press@pickle-lovers.co.uk
pickle-lovers.co.uk



UNION HAND-ROASTED COFFEE

Revelation is Union's most popular espresso coffee, a bold one – with hints of chocolate and treacle. Dark-roasted for a rich caramel finish, without bitterness. A complex blend of coffees from family farmers in Guatemala, Rwanda, Burundi, Costa Rica and El Salvador. Union Coffee was founded to raise – and set – the standards for sourcing specialty coffee. That means sourcing coffee directly, visiting coffee farms regularly, paying farmers a thriving wage – not simply a 'fair' one - and helping them plan long-term. Union has been working with many of their producer partners since day one, in 2001.
020 7474 8990
independentsales@unionroasted.com
unionroasted.com



MOTHERNUTTER

Born out a passion for all things natural, Mothernutter is the striking new peanut butter brand from Lake District-based preserve, sauce and chutney manufacturer Wild & Fruitful. Designed to appeal to a younger generation of health-conscious adults, Mothernutter is all-natural, vegan, high in protein, and crafted using a deeper roast for a beautifully rich and indulgent flavour. Mothernutter's small batch peanut butters are palm oil-free and contain only the best Argentinian hi oleic nuts and a dash of sea salt. As well as popular Crunchy and Smooth types, the brand makes several bold flavours that stand out from the crowd, and they're proving a big hit with independent retailers across the country.
01900 813 335 hello@mothernutter.co.uk
mothernutter.co.uk



WEPACK

WePack is a family-owned contract packing service provider with over 30 years of history in the East Midlands. Their commitment to delivering top-quality services across the UK has built a strong reputation. WePack's services range from filling pouches, sachets, bottles, vertical bagging, hand assembly, rework, rectification, contract filling of powder/liquid. They are backed by prestigious accreditations, including BRCGS certification, Soil Association, ISO, and FDA recognitions, reflecting their commitment to providing sustainable and ethical products. WePack offer packaging design as well as advice on style and artwork to ensure that your products are visually appealing and eye-catching, nicely display on the shelf.
01158 529 000 enquiries@we-pack.co.uk
we-pack.co.uk



LE GRUYÈRE AOP

Made in western Switzerland, Gruyère AOP has been produced in the same way since 1115AD, using raw milk from cows fed on grass in summer and hay in winter. It is the only cheese that has won the title of Best Cheese in the World at the World Cheese Awards four times, demonstrating how much work and skill is needed to create its unique and delicious flavour. Gruyère AOP can be found with different maturities: the Classic is matured for six months and has a delicate, nutty, creamy flavour. The Reserve is matured for 10 months and has a drier, more grainy mouthfeel. Then you can find an older Gruyère AOP, 14 months or more, giving it a much stronger flavour.
gruyere.com



JELLY BELLY

Festive gift giving has never been easier for those with a sweet tooth. These irresistibly delicious Jelly Belly gift boxes are perfectly suited for the job! Apart from the ultimate classic design 50 assorted flavour compartmentalised box, Jelly Belly also have the 10 and 20 flavour versions sporting a decidedly festive vibe, so pretty they won't even need wrapping! You can always rely on Jelly Belly for providing the seasonal cheer at Christmas – Absolute Essentials!
01727 829 010 uksales@bestimports.co.uk
bestimports.co.uk



JELLY BELLY

Meet the latest Christmas Advent Calendar offerings from Jelly Belly, famously the tastiest way to celebrate the annual event. Featuring brand new festive designs for both the Jelly Belly Factory Jumbo advent and of course, the magical Harry Potter Marauder's Map advent. Now both even more impressive with pull open flaps sporting 24 windows of fun and deliciousness. What better way to Countdown to Christmas? Absolute Christmas Essentials!

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



WILD RICE

Love Thai food? With Wild Rice, you can cook authentic, restaurant-quality Thai meals in just 10 minutes. No more need for lengthy cooking sessions, expensive restaurant visits, or lukewarm takeaways. Our sauces are made in Thailand using the freshest local ingredients from small farms, preservative-free, and 100% natural. Super easy to cook, Wild Rice lets you save time, save money, and rediscover the joy of cooking. Enjoy the true taste of Thailand at home with Wild Rice.

07727179455 hello@wildricelondon.com
wildricelondon.com



COOKS & CO

Cooks&Co's award-winning store cupboard range has been extended with the addition of five new authentic Italian antipasti lines. The new antipasti includes delicious Borettane Onions – grilled or in Balsamic Vinegar, Grilled Zucchini stuffed with Pecorino cheese, spicy vegetable mix – Diavulillo, and Saporiso – a delicious mix of olives, onions, artichokes, mushrooms, peppers and capers. All are sourced from Italy and can be added to grazing boards, antipasti platters or served as dish accompaniments to bring true Italian flavour to the table. Saporiso is perfect for festive sharing boards or stirred through creamy pasta or rice. The Borretane Onions add interest to autumnal cheese boards and the Grilled Zucchini parcels are delicious appetisers.

01494 530200 rhamar.com



BERRY'S LUXURY ICE CREAM

New owners of Berry's Luxury Ice Cream, John & Charlotte, have bought an old favourite flavour back and made it even better. The ice cream now has Cold Brew Coffee Liqueur from the brilliant Ludlow Distillery to enhance the taste AND 50p from every 500Ml tub sold goes to local dog charity Forest Dog Rescue.

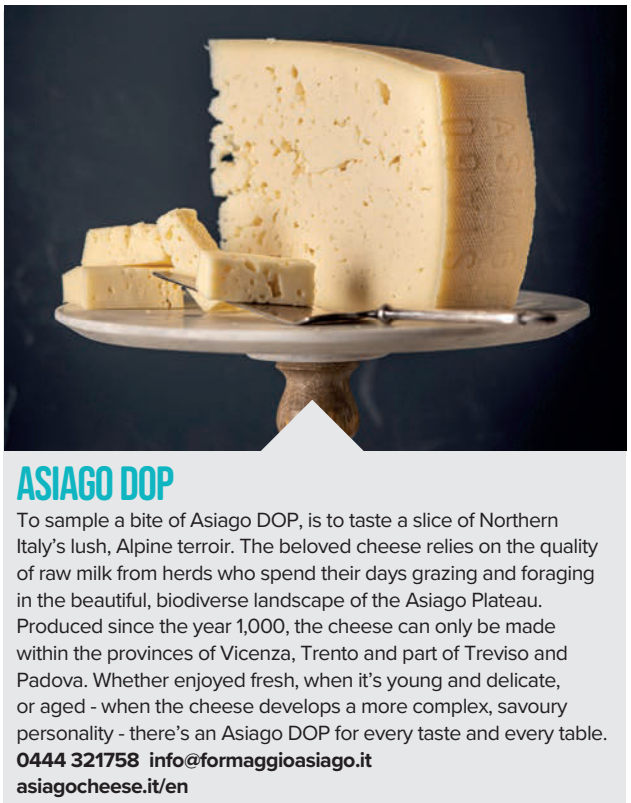
01531 650639 info@berrysicecream.co.uk
berrysicecream.co.uk



FAIRFIELDS CRISPS

Rapidly growing independent producer Fairfields Farm grow potatoes and make thick-cut, handcooked crisps. They're available in a range of nine flavours including all the classics like Salt & Cheese & Onion and have just debuted their brand new Prawn Cocktail, which has been flying off shelves. Made using gluten-free and vegan ingredients, they are a fab choice for those occasions where you need to please everyone – but especially for the ones where you need to please yourself! The brand prioritises sustainability, and in 2023 became carbon neutral.

01206 241 613 hello@fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk
fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk



ASIAGO DOP

To sample a bite of Asiago DOP, is to taste a slice of Northern Italy's lush, Alpine terroir. The beloved cheese relies on the quality of raw milk from herds who spend their days grazing and foraging in the beautiful, biodiverse landscape of the Asiago Plateau. Produced since the year 1,000, the cheese can only be made within the provinces of Vicenza, Trento and part of Treviso and Padova. Whether enjoyed fresh, when it's young and delicate, or aged - when the cheese develops a more complex, savoury personality - there's an Asiago DOP for every taste and every table.

0444 321758 info@formaggioasiago.it
asiagocheese.it/en



STAG BAKERIES

Made using a blend of three seaweeds, Stag's Seaweed Shortbread is a moreish treat that blurs the lines between sweet and savoury. Taking a traditional shortbread recipe as its base, the satisfying and familiar sweetness is then offset with sea salt and seaweed for a truly unique but strangely irresistible flavour profile. Inspired by the landscapes of Stag's location in Stornoway, what could be more evocative of the Outer Hebrides than a classic sweet biscuit with a hint of the sea? The Seaweed Shortbread was awarded two stars in the 2022 Great Taste Awards and is a biscuit with a difference.

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



THE REAL OLIVE COMPANY

The Real Olive Company are introducing two delicious, fresh organic vegan pestos to their range. The Organic Fresh Basil Pesto is a vibrant vegan pesto with rich and savoury notes achieved by the use of pumpkin seeds along with a blend of natural ingredients. The new vegan Organic Tomato and Olive Pesto is perfect for a quick and easy mid-week meal that's good for you whilst bringing luscious, warm, deep flavours to the table! The sweet red peppers and savoury sun dried tomatoes are lifted by the addition of fruity Kalamata olives to really harness the flavours of the Mediterranean.

01179 501 058 hello@therealolivecompany.co.uk
hello@therealolivecompany.co.uk

CENTRE



Delight your customers with our pick of this season's cheeseboard must-stocks

1 SNOWDONIA
BLACK BOMBER



Black Bomber is Snowdonia's flagship Cheddar, boasting a moreish rich flavour and addictive creaminess on the palate. This exceptional cheese has won multiple awards, including two stars at the Great Taste Awards, making it a modern-day classic ideal for all cheese counters.
snowdoniacheese.co.uk

2 MRS BRIDGES
CHILLI JAM



A bright coloured jam with chilli suspended throughout. The chilli flavour is upfront which delivers a fruity full-on flavour. This chutney has a rounded flavour of garlic which compliments the chilli. It provides a good balance of heat and sweetness.
mrsbridges.co.uk

3 BELTON FARM
SILVER FOX



Silver Fox is a new modern British Superior Vintage Cheddar cheese, handcrafted at Belton Farm and matured for around 18 months. Enjoy the rich, savoury flavour and hints of caramel as the salt crystals crunch, ending with a moreish creaminess.
beltonfarm.co.uk

4 1912
ARTISAN STILTON



Multi-award-winning and Supreme Champion, the best Blue Stilton at this year's ICDA! 1912 is a Stilton like no other. It will take you on a journey from pure creaminess to intense tanginess, with layers of flavour in every crumbling bite. From the heartland of Stilton country, backed by a PDO status, comes 1912 Stilton, a British cheese to be enjoyed all year around.
1912.co.uk



5 SHEPHERDS PURSE BLUEMIN WHITE



Made from quality Yorkshire cows' milk, and matured in carefully managed ripening stores, Bluemin White is a 3 star Great Taste award-winner. A blue coated cheese with a creamy rich interior, it's incredibly versatile for pairing with wine.

shepherdspurse.co.uk

6 THE RIBBLEDSALE CHEESE COMPANY SOFT GOATS CHEESE LOGS



Since Carron Lodge acquired The Ribblesdale Cheese Company, they have been thinking of ways to expand the range and soft goats' logs fit perfectly. Their health benefits and quality plus food consciousness and the influence of social media have propelled lactic cheeses to the forefront of the cheese industry.

carronlodge.com

7 TRUER KAAS DUTCH GOAT CHEESE WITH HONEY & THYME



A young, creamy cheese made from goat's milk with an addition of honey and thyme. The black rind and the blue flowers on top of the cheese give this goat cheese a special and striking appearance. This ensures that it is a beautiful cheese to present in your store. It is also a real eye-catcher on the cheeseboard.

treurkaas.nl

8 LE GRUYÈRE AOP



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

gruyere.com/en



Long Clawson's Stilton wins Supreme Champion at ICDA 2024

The 'Oscars of the cheese industry' named the Leicestershire-based producer's Blue Stilton as its top pick in this year's awards.

British Stilton is making its comeback on the cheese scene as Long Clawson's Blue Stilton took the crown at this year's International Cheese & Dairy Awards (ICDAs), one of the world's biggest platform for world-class cheese.

Long Clawson Dairy's Blue Stilton stole the show at the event, held at Bingley Hall in Staffordshire County Showground on 27th-28th June. It marks the cheesemaker's second win in just three years, after its Shropshire Blue won the title in 2022.

"We are absolutely ecstatic to win Supreme Champion for our delicious Blue Stilton," said Bill Mathieson, managing director at Long Clawson Dairy. "This victory is like winning an Oscar in the cheese industry.

"Stilton is a national treasure, and we really hope this win will help people reacquaint their love with it because it's such a fantastic cheese," he continued.

The ICDA, which has its roots in Nantwich from 1897, has grown to be the leading cheese and dairy event bringing together buyers and sellers from the dairy industry worldwide, and its stamp of approval for Blue Stilton will be a boon for the cheese, Bill said. "Stilton generally has had quite a tough time in the last few years with lots of imported cheese coming in and it only really being considered as a part of the Christmas cheeseboard, but this win really is support of our campaign to 'Save our Stilton'."

Long Clawson's team of master cheesemakers have more than 200 years of collective experience, and Bill hailed the moment as a proud one for the whole team. "It's such a feat for a farming cooperative like ours to be recognised for the fantastic skill that goes into our artisanal cheesemaking process," he said. Each year, more than 5,500 entries are made for cheese and dairy products in the ICDAs, and this year the team behind the event built on the success of last year's show with even more entries across the categories.

While Long Clawson won the Supreme Champion Cheese category, Dewlay was named as the reserve for its Tasty Lancashire cheese, which is made to the traditional Lancashire two-day curd recipe.

THE ICDA 2024 WINNERS

SUPREME CHAMPION CHEESE

Winner
LONG CLAWSON – Blue Stilton

Reserve
DEWLAY – Tasty Lancashire

SUPREME CHAMPION DAIRY PRODUCT

MANOR FARM DAIRY – Orange & Passion Fruit Yogurt

The Champion UK
MORRISONS – Mature Double Gloucester

The Reserve Champion UK
CROPWELL BISHOP – Stilton

The Champion Overseas
BRADBURYS – Marcel Petit Morbier

The Reserve Champion Overseas
LUSTENBURGER & DURST SA – 1862 Creamy & Extra Tangy

SUPREME SPECIALIST/ ARTISAN CHEESEMAKER

LUSTENBURGER & DURST SA – 1862 Creamy & Extra Tangy

CHEESE BOARD AWARDS

OLIVE ARCHITECTS – Black Garlic & Ginger

Organic cheese claims top spot at Virtual Cheese Awards

Nettlebed Creamery is celebrating being named Supreme Champion at the Virtual Cheese Awards. Witheridge – a semi-hard cheese aged in hay – is the third organic cheese in the awards' five-year history to take the prize.

Penny Nagle of the Organic Cheesemaker's Network says, "This is an endorsement of just how good organic milk and cheese tastes. For organic cheese to beat all other handmade artisan cheeses in the UK and Ireland is an achievement in itself, but to do this three years out of five indicates that organic cheese is recognised by professional cheese tasters as tasting a whole lot better than non-organic options."

"The quality of British cheese entered into our awards just keeps on getting better," says Sarah de Wit of the Virtual Cheese Awards. "We're proud that an organic cheese has been crowned Supreme Champion. Witheridge in Hay is a truly spectacular cheese that wowed judges."





Maker releases five new goats' cheeses

Family-run Somerset dairy, White Lake Cheese, has expanded its range considerably by bringing to market a quintet of new goats' cheeses.

Equinox is an aromatic, semi-soft cheese washed in Equinox ale from the Glastonbury Brewing Company. It has a creamy, melt-in-the-mouth interior and punchy rind, and makes a great baking cheese, says the producer.

King of the Castle is White Lake's take on a Caerphilly, being salty and sweet with a slight squeak, light freshness and citrussy tang.

Glaston Tile is a firm, fresh, creamy cheese that could be used in place of Feta, while Glaston Brick is a large version, suited to deli counters or foodservice.

Finally, Smo'King is a smoked version of King of the Castle.

Roger Longman of White Lake Cheese, says, "Ever since I introduced our herd of Alpine goats to Bagborough Farm, my aim has been to show something that the French already knew, that goats' cheeses can be as diverse and interesting as cow's cheeses, if not more so. That is why we continue to bring new goats' cheeses to the market of all different types and textures, with each one having its own unique quality."

Roger says he is especially proud of King of the Castle as it's based on a cow's Caerphilly recipe his parents used. "We even had one of their old employees, Rose, come and help us to make sure it was just right."

A new cheesemaker for Suffolk

Hot on the tails of Baron Bigod – Fen Farm's stellar cheese, which is now recognised globally – a new dairy has launched in Suffolk, releasing its first ever product, Pyghtle.

Maker and Broughton Hall Dairy co-founder, Emily Tydeman (who runs the business with husband Sam) cut her teeth at nearby Suffolk Farmhouse Cheeses, and was head cheesemaker until recently, ensuring the quality of production of Suffolk Gold, Suffolk Blue and Suffolk Brie.

Pyghtle is a soft, lactic, melting cheese, made with raw milk from sheep raised on nearby fields, with the name alluding to an old Suffolk word, translated to refer to a small patch of grass enclosed on a farm.

Emily describes it as "sweet" and "gentle" with a rich creaminess from a slow making process which creates a cheese "that is so luxurious".

It's slightly tangy, getting fudgier and denser with age, before hitting earthy, meaty notes.


GILLIAN ALLARD

CLAWSON®

CHEESEMAKERS SINCE 1912

WORLD CHAMPION CHEESEMAKERS

DISCOVER OUR ARTISANAL RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CHAMPION CHEESE

LIST OUR **AWARD WINNING** CHEESE



INTERNATIONAL CHEESE & DAIRY AWARDS 2024 — SUPREME CHAMPION

INTERNATIONAL CHEESE & DAIRY AWARDS 2022 — SUPREME CHAMPION

BATH & WEST BRITISH CHEESE AWARDS — 2024 CHAMPION

SUPREME CHAMPION 2024 Blue Stilton®, SUPREME CHAMPION 2022 Shropshire Blue & GOLD CHAMPION 2024 Rutland Red®

To find out more about our delicious selection of cheese, please contact a member of our sales team
enquiries@clawson.co.uk +44 (0)1664 822332 - Follow us on social media

www.clawson.co.uk

SPONSORED BY

PETER'S YARD



SELLING LOCAL

Selling local cheeses could have shoppers flocking to your store. Here's how to do it well

As an independent fine food retailer, no doubt supporting local food and drink producers will be one of the major aims of your establishment. Making sure they have a good outing, that customers are aware of the brilliant produce being created on their doorstep, and giving yourself a unique selling point are just some of the benefits to doing so. If you're lucky enough to have great cheesemakers in your local area it makes sense to offer them a solid stepping stone – but how to ensure success when it comes to selling local cheese? Jen Grimstone-Jones of Pangbourne Cheese Shop/Cheese Etc and Mark Kacary of The Norfolk Deli share how it should be done.

With so many excellent cheeses available for indies to stock, from across the world let alone the UK, why should *Speciality Food* readers give special treatment to those produced close by? "Selling local cheese (and local produce in general) really helps independent retailers to stand out," explains Jen. "There is a lot of competition when it comes to retail and so anything that an independent shop can do that makes it unique will help it survive. But I think the most important reasons to stock local are that it keeps money in the local area and supports co-operation between local businesses and minimises the impact on the environment."

It's worth remembering that fine food retailers are often stopping-off points for people visiting the area, as much as they are regular haunts for some locals, so it makes sense to host local cheeses in order to offer a taste of the locale. "One of the joys of visiting a new area is exploring the local shops and discovering new products," agrees Jen. "We have quite a few tourists that visit Pangbourne and they are always keen to try cheeses that they may not have come across before, in the same why that whenever we travel we like to pop into the cheesemonger to see what they offer from the local area."

How to promote

"One of the most common questions we get asked in the shop is 'where are your most local cheeses?", explains Jen. "We're really lucky in that we have some fantastic award-winning cheesemakers just on our doorstep." The strongest sellers include Village Maid Cheese, makers of Barkham Blue, Spenwood and Wigmore; Norton & Yarrow, who make Sinodun Hill and Brightwell Ash; and Nettlebed Creamery, creators of Witheridge. "Those three dairies are our closest and we have really good relationships with all of them."

At The Pangbourne Cheese Shop/Cheese Etc, local cheeses are displayed in the centre of the cheese counter for ultimate promotion. "It helps that they are all fantastic cheeses and so promoting them is easy!" Offering pairing suggestions goes down well, too, she says. "We sell some really good local wines and we will often pair local cheeses and wines at our tasting events." Insider intel helps: "One of our members of staff used to work for Village Maid Cheese and as such provides wonderful insights into life at the dairy which our customers love to hear".

Be the expert

Being a font of information when it comes to the cheeses you sell, and ideally having a connection with the maker, is one way to get your customers engaged with local cheeses says Mark. "Know your cheeses, and know them well," he begins. "Ideally know the maker and how they make their cheese, including where their milk comes from. Importantly, know their story – because stories sell!"

Getting to know the ins and outs of the local cheeses that you sell allows you to offer one up as an alternative to a further flung option requested by a customer. "Suggest a local cheese that will offer them something to compare with their internal template," suggests Mark. "For example, if a customer said they liked Cheddar I would ask if they preferred a harder, more farmhouse style or a softer, creamier Cheddar – based on their answer I would offer a sample of Norfolk Dapple if the preference is for a harder/farmhouse style or Walsingham if the preference is for softer and creamier." Ultimately, it's important that you allow customers to try the cheese, "otherwise they will stick to what they know and not try something new," says Mark.

As much as sharing the knowledge you have about the local cheeses you stock will reap valuable rewards, allowing your customers to come face-to-face with the creators of the cheeses in person is a great move. Mark recommends holding local cheese tasting events, inviting the cheesemakers to come and share their stories and expertise.

Things to avoid

In terms of what not to do, Mark has some solid advice. "Don't ignore local cheeses." While British stalwarts and Continental classics are strong sellers, that's not to say that a delicious locally-made cheese can't capture the imagination of cheese-loving locals and tourists – making you into a destination into the bargain. Having cheese shrink wrapped and unavailable to sample is also a no-no – as we all know, trying often leads to buying! – and be sure not to drown them in technical detail, as tempting as it is to share all of your knowledge. It's a question of knowing your audience, suggests Mark. "Remember you are often trying to sell to somebody who knows they like Cheddar, Stilton and a Brie and use these cheeses as their grounding point. Talking about velvety textures, or the flavours of grass etc, will probably not mean anything to them and may even put them off."

> "Stocking local produce keeps money in the local area and supports co-operation between local businesses"

PETER'S YARD

NEW OREGANO & OLIVE OIL SOURDOUGH CRACKERS

EXCLUSIVE TO SPECIALITY & FOODSERVICE



EXCLUSIVE TREAT FOR YOUR TASTE BUDS.

GRUYERE.COM

LE GRUYÈRE®
SWITZERLAND
AOP

THE TASTE OF SWITZERLAND SINCE 1115.

SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SWITZERLAND

Switzerland. Naturally.

AOP

Cheeses from Switzerland.
www.cheesesfromswitzerland.com

THE CHEESE REPORT 2024

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF SPECIALITY CHEESE?

It's been an interesting year for the British cheese industry. One impacted by new import and export rules, rising production costs, and more. But, say insiders, there is much to celebrate too



COMMENTATORS



ANNE-LAURE FARRAR
THE KNOWLEDGE BANK



NIKKI MATTHEWS
CLAWSON



TIM COLLINGS
ROWCLIFFE



LEONA MCDONALD
GOLDEN HOOVES



PENNY NAGLE
FELTHAM'S FARM



SARAH NORRIS
GODMINSTER



JESSICA KIMBER HOLLOWAY
GODMINSTER



JULIE CHENEY
ST JUDE CHEESE

Trends may come and go in the artisan food and drink arena, but new data gathered by The Knowledge Bank is reassuring for the speciality cheese sector, highlighting a 'renaissance' in the British retail market which shows no signs of slowing down. The nation's love of cheese, say analysts, isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

The boost in sales and interest in the UK can be attributed to multiple factors, be it costly new legislation burdening imports from mainland Europe, greater consumer interest in the provenance and healthfulness of their food, or even the wave of new, younger Gen-Z shoppers, seeking out more exciting formats.

Sales are strong

Anne-Laure Farrar, The Knowledge Bank's UK market insight manager, says, "Cheese has maintained a strong position in the UK retail market despite the ongoing financial challenges posed by inflation. Consumers are still opting for traditional favourites, however there is clear evidence that tastes are diversifying."

Arguably the most notable statistic in the report is the resurgence of speciality brands (up 12% across all channels) representing a massive opportunity for artisan producers. Data shows the increasing desire to cook at home has proved a fruitful environment for this growth as consumers seek to recreate the restaurant experience.

This changing preference has also been noted by Paul Grant, chairman of the Scottish Dairy Growth Board (SDGB), as British cheese brands benefit from harsher and costlier conditions on importing cheese, forged by Brexit and the current financial climate.

"The importation of European products is not as simple as it used to be," Paul says. "There is opportunity for UK artisan cheesemakers to replace some of these European products that have traditionally established themselves in the market.

"It's critically important that the quality and standard of the cheeses meets consumers' aspirations, and we seem to be doing that, which is very encouraging. There is a momentum, if you like, and I don't think that interest is going to dwindle as long as the service and quality delivers."

The report states that increasing costs due to inflation haven't hampered the local market, with consumers showing they are happy to spend more for a product they deem to be of higher quality, for instance organic speciality cheese, which is growing ahead of standard specialty in grocery retail, crucially both in value and volume (though from a small base).

Anne-Laure says, "The nation's love for cheese has not been dampened by the current financial climate and it's great to see the retail market remain stable during this time.

"But what is most promising is how brands are adapting to this changing landscape to seek out new opportunities and audiences for their products."

A new audience

In a unique twist, certain cheese products have experienced a rise in popularity thanks to the power of social media.

Anne-Laure explains, "The importance of viral trends cannot not be denied, and seeing some varieties blow up in popularity thanks to TikTok and Instagram is wonderful, as long-established products gain a new audience."

One beneficiary is cottage cheese which has buoyed in popularity with younger, health-conscious consumers who are transforming it into almost anything, from cookies to ice cream.

Sales across the UK reflect this, with cottage cheese outperforming other soft cheese varieties in growth – representing 11.6% in sales and 10.7% and volume respectively.

Stirlingshire-based Graham's Family Dairy has recently noted a 40% rise in cottage cheese sales – to levels not seen since the 1980s – and attributed them to rise in demand for high-protein products, retro trends and social media.

As those younger, 'social media savvy' shoppers look to speciality stores to satisfy their desire for 'newness', blue cheese is gaining popularity too, with more accessible 'entry point' products being brought

SALES OF PREMIUM **STILTON** SLICES ARE UP **33%**

CLAWSON







to market by brands such as Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses and Clawson. Both producers have tapped into the burgeoning 'at home occasion dining' trend, popular amongst Millennials and Gen-Z – demographics feeling the pinch of the cost-of-living crisis, and instead choosing to host dinner parties, backyard cookouts, and cheese nights with family and friends.

Clawson reports sales of its premium Stilton slices have increased by 33% this year to date and appear to be on a continual upward trajectory. This is, the cheesemaker says, a profitable space, and an easy, relatable point of entry for newcomers dipping their toes into the world of speciality and artisan cheeses.



Talking about this 'new' consumer, Clawson's Nikki Matthews says they're searching for "something special, or to recreate a meal within their own kitchen". Gourmet burgers are one of the treats they're making, and premium burger melts fit in with their aspirations to bring the 'steakhouse' experience home.

"If you're at the cheese counter, why would you buy a block of cheese to put on top of a burger? It can be a bit intimidating," says Nikki, "which is why we think we're seeing success with our product. It's the ideal solution. And if consumers discover our melts at the counter and they enjoy them, it could well encourage them to come back and try a bigger piece, or experience another cheese."

Retailers shouldn't be afraid, Nikki adds, to introduce premium slices alongside their cutting cheeses. "They have to cater to a lot of different consumers and tastes... to anyone who might visit their counter. There will be those who are not that interested, and purely want a cut from the whole cheese but, also, we're seeing there is a large number of people looking for convenience, who want us to make life easy for

SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT



The skill and expertise of cheesemakers, particularly those who have been in the industry for a long time, is something that has long been taken for granted. What happens when those people retire or die? Where do their hand-written or well-remembered notes and treasured recipes go?

The answer is, they're often lost. Too many heritage cheeses have fallen to the wayside through lack of succession planning, and it's one of the greatest tragedies of the British food and drink scene, says cheesemonger Andy Swinscoe of The Courtyard Dairy.

Andy is incredibly active and vocal in the world of cheese, helping makers revive and restore traditional practices, and products that would otherwise be long forgotten. This year he set up the Northern Dairy Cheese School as a way to formalise his thoughts, while bringing together others like himself, who are frustrated by the lack of technical support in the UK. A kind of 'neighbourhood phone tree' for the cheese industry.

The raison d'etre for the school is to share ideas, discuss techniques, try out different methods, and generally upskill the current and incoming generation of cheesemakers.

"That spread of knowledge is key," Andy explains. "There is no technical support here really, but many of the problems cheesemakers have are easy to solve. Like the way your wash system works. A lot of people are open to helping others, and you can learn so much from those who've got experience."

In years gone by, he says, there would have been old fashioned dairy schools in the regions, or neighbours making similar cheeses across a hedgerow. "If you had a problem, you could chat to the people next door to see how they might solve it. We just don't work like that anymore."

It's Andy's hope that by bringing together makers, across a series of events, those vital details and nuggets of advice that make the difference between a good cheese and an exceptional one, might be shared. "We're such a small industry," he adds. "It's important that we help each other. We're all trying to raise the profile of artisan cheese, and how to make it safely."

Issues to discuss could be anything from how to wipe a cow's udder, to the paint you use in the parlour, or even the feed your give your animals.

"The thing about most small cheesemakers is they are doing everything, from milking to fixing the hole in the wall, and that ability to have another small business on the end of the phone is everything really. When we talk to each other it means we're not having to reinvent the wheel. There isn't a book telling you how to make farmhouse cheeses. It's so important to learn from each other."

COMMITMENT TO **SUSTAINABILITY** AND ANIMAL **WELFARE** HAVE THE **POTENTIAL** TO BE A BIG FACTOR IN **PURCHASING** DECISIONS, ILLUSTRATED BY **77.5%** OF SURVEY **RESPONDENTS**

GOLDEN HOOVES



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF TRUCKLES




It doesn't pay to be snobbish about waxed truckle cheeses, say insiders, particularly with demand for premium versions on the up.

Cheese expert Charlie Turnbull says specialist cheesemongers should have "a ladder all the way from just above the supermarkets, up to the greatest artisan cheeses".

It is essential, he adds, to cater to a diverse customer base. Essentially – don't cut off your nose to spite your face.

"There will be someone different on each rung of the cheese ladder, and you want to reach people on every rung. Truckles are part of that conversation. They're a really good spontaneous purchase, they're great for longevity, and they're also really good as gifts. I can't think of anyone who doesn't like them. It's a totally safe pair of hands and an easy win for the customer."

Charlie notes too the attractive price point of truckles, at around £6 to £12 "which is bang in the gifting range".

If customers enjoy that impulse truckle they've popped in their basket quickly, avoiding eye contact because they're too shy to talk cheese, there is a high likelihood they'll return, Charlie adds - either for a repeat purchase, or to venture into something new.

The key is to buy the best because "quality really does matter".

Godminster was one of the first cheesemakers to craft artisanal waxed cheeses and Sarah Norris says this is an area of growth in the cheese world, as consumers spend more time thinking about the provenance of their food, with premiumisation key to this part of the market.

"There was a period of time 20 to 25 years ago when cheese that wouldn't make the grade was put into wax as a means of finding a home for it. At that point some products had additives, but those were there to cover up the imperfections of those cheeses," she says. "I'm confident we were the first premium brand to take a good quality cheese and put it in wax, and it has been organic from the start. We've never wavered from that ethos. We always use 12 to 14-month Cheddar across our range from one source."

Cheaper, 'novelty' truckles, Sarah says have the effect of "slightly degrading" the market.

Godminster's Jessica Kimber Holloway, adds, "Some will go for interesting cheese rather than quality cheese and make that their MO. It's a shame, because it's pushing, when we're pulling."

Sarah agrees with Charlie that some retailers don't feel truckles deserve a place in the artisan sector, however "the public need to be the ones who judge this, rather than the cheese industry. The cheese industry can be a bit elitist which is kind of unfair, because there are some amazing cheeses from a lot of different makers, in lots of different formats. We have to be able to give consumers choice."

"If your cheese is a good cheese, customers will come back," Jessica says. "When it comes to waxed cheese, it's a crowd pleaser. It's something that's going to appeal to a five-year-old as much as a 95-year-old. A lot of cheeses have complicated flavours which take a while to appreciate. There needs to be a bit of educating that you can still sell the crowd pleaser and it's not undermining or selling out, or downgrading your cheese counter. You're showing you have a portfolio of cheeses, and a range of different styles."

Jessica also says, with Christmas buying in full swing, it's worth remembering the value of waxed truckles for hampers. "They have a longer shelf life, and they have the wax for protection. It makes them a good option when curating a gift set or box."

Clawson, best known for the production of cheeses such as Stilton and Rutland Red, has invested heavily in waxed truckles this year, viewing its new premium range as a futureproofing tool the business, tapping into an area of serious upward growth, especially with younger shoppers.

"We noticed that the volumes of cheese in the market aren't going up, but that truckles break that rule and buck the trend," says Clawson's Heather Lewis.

"Through our own market research we saw a gap for very premium truckles offering flavours with a twist, but not so odd that people wouldn't recognise them."

The team spent a long time perfecting the recipes, and designing characterful branding that links to the 'personality' of each product – each having its own story, feeding into consumer desire to really 'connect' with what they're eating.

Heather hopes this level of care, attention and quality resonates with speciality retailers who she, alongside Charlie, Jess and Sarah, thinks can be too quick to make assumptions about waxed cheeses can offer.

"What's inside matters. If retailers don't have a premium truckle range, they are missing out. They are an excellent touchpoint cheese that's accessible to everyone."



them, and we're here to give them inspiration."

Tim Collings, area sales manager at Rowcliffe, says he's also noticed the impact of a younger generation of shoppers. "Customers are telling me they're constantly being asked 'what's new?', and they're really having to push on innovation and new products more than ever before. I think it's a sign of a really good deli that people want to come in and push the boundaries a bit more."

These shoppers are also asking about pairings, and "what is becoming apparent is people are looking for ideas for what they can do with a cheese," Tim adds. "Whether it's melting or grilling it, or the recipes they can make with it, rather than just having it on a cheeseboard."

The sustainable message

One of the most noticeable shifts in the specialist cheese sector, from a consumer perspective, is a leaning to, and preference for more sustainable, natural products. With ultra processed foods (UPF) the topic du jour amongst scientists, health gurus, doctors, and everyone in between, cheesemongers, cheesemakers and farmers say they are being asked more than ever before about their milk, animal welfare, and environmental impact.

This heightened interest is giving even further weight and credence to organic and regenerative cheeses, which are being considered more frequently by wholesalers, retailers and buyers.

Tim says to align with this shift in consumer buying and satisfy demand, Rowcliffe has added new lines such as Organic Herd, Golden Hooves and The Ethical Dairy.

"How our food is produced is under the spotlight more than ever, so as the regenerative movement continues to gain momentum, we know it's crucial to take consumers on this journey with us," says Leona Mcdonald of Golden Hooves.



Leona says the brand's recent consumer surveys confirm shoppers are more likely to purchase eco-friendly products, with 25.1% of those asked stating sustainable credentials are one of the most important factors in choosing a dairy product. But, most importantly, these claims need to be trusted."

Quality and taste remain at the top of shoppers' lists, Leona continues, noting commitment to sustainability and animal welfare have the potential to be a big factor in purchasing decisions, illustrated by 77.5% of survey respondents saying they would be more likely to buy dairy products made using regeneratively farmed ingredients.

"We'd like to move the conversation onto the next stage from 'where was it farmed?' to 'how was it farmed?'. Opening up these discussions and consumer awareness of the difference is vital when considering that the lot of the planet, animals and people should all be enhanced by improvements to agricultural food production," Leona says.

"The future of our farms and the nation's food security, including the stability of milk supply, are all reliant on what we do today. This means paying a fair price, while encouraging better and better farming practices."



Seaweed Oatcakes
Award-winning biscuits for cheese from the Outer Hebrides
www.stagbakeries.co.uk



Feltham Farm and Organic Cheesemakers' Network founder Penny Nagle agrees, but says more needs to done to promote the benefits of organic farming and cheese in particular. Although interest in organic cheese is rising, Penny says that is countered by the decision of some organic cheesemakers to stop certifying in order to save money, which is in turn devaluing this small corner of the cheese world.

"We think there needs to be a bit of research done, certainly by the Specialist Cheesemakers Association and the Soil Association," she explains. "There's a whole movement about regenerative farming and Net Zero and rewilding. And what we're saying is, we've got organic cheeses here, and we're thinking about all of those things too. There's an almost untold story about how good organic milk is."

Those who farm organically or buy organic milk from a single source herd, such as Feltham's Farm, have a third more costs because "everything has to be organic or the best quality, and often organic cheese is sold at the same price as other standard cheeses".

From Penny, the message is that consumers need more opportunities to engage with organic cheese, which suffers a lack of visibility, with cheesemongers not necessarily 'thinking organic' as they curate their stock lists.

"There's definitely a market for it,." she adds "There's a big movement from the Soil Association to say organic food is as accessible as any other handmade artisan food. That's certainly the message we want to send."

Jessica Kimber Holloway at Godminster agrees that consumer education around organic is poor.

She says she is saddened that organic seems to be increasingly left out of the speciality conversation which, she thinks, has an impact on all organic producers. "We used to lead with organic as our main USP," she says. "But we don't any longer because it can have negative connotations. There can be that expectation that it's too expensive, but actually it is often priced like-for-like alongside non-organic artisan cheeses. I think those who remain organic will be able to charge a good premium for their products because organic is in demand. We need to shout about the value of organic!"

Penny adds that consumers are increasingly looking at improving their diets, choosing local, organic and non-UPF, and that the main barrier is gaining access to these shoppers – something that retailers can certainly help with.

GRAHAM'S FAMILY DAIRY HAS RECENTLY NOTED A **40%** RISE IN COTTAGE CHEESE **SALES** – TO **LEVELS** NOT SEEN SINCE THE **1980S**

HELP NEEDED TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR SHEEP'S MILK CHEESES



Sheep's milk cheesemakers in the UK say they are struggling to keep up with increased requests for their products due to a nationwide shortage of milk.

Owen Davies, of Ty Caws in Cardiff (a cheesemonger which has recently started to produce sheep's milk cheese), says more needs to be done to support the industry, and adds that investment in sheep's milk could be lucrative for farmers due to heightened demand.

"The price for sheep's milk is 3.5 times more than cow's," he explains. "There is a premium there, and there is a huge demand for sheep's milk, sheep's milk cheese, and even sheep's milk yoghurt. Beyond this, we're seeing, in places like New Zealand, sheep's milk being bought up by China to be used in baby milk formula because they are intolerant to cow's milk. There is a market for it, but at the moment here, it's hard to get hold of."

Owen has been crafting cheese at Food Centre Wales, a funded development site where he's been able to research and create products with support. "I said to them I wanted to focus on sheep's milk cheese. Wales is a country of sheep, but we don't actually make many sheep's milk cheeses ourselves, and we have a number of customers who are switching from eating cow's milk cheeses to sheep's milk and goat because of intolerances. Apparently, sheep's milk is the closest to human milk, and it's easier for us to digest."

Owen says they were lucky enough to find a farmer last year in Pembrokeshire who was able to supply them with good quality sheep's milk. "But when we came to make cheese this year, that farmer had decided not to produce it anymore."

This will be a familiar dilemma for other makers. "It is very very difficult to find sheep's milk in Wales, but we did manage to find a small farmer in mid to North Wales, who has 36 dairy sheep. However, it is very small scale."

Owen says he is pleased the Welsh government is in the process of setting up a sheep's milk dairy in the country to support the industry but adds there is still work to be done to ensure the strengthening of what could be a valuable market in the future.

R

We have put together an inspiring selection for Christmas 2024.

Contact us to receive our list:
01892 838999 or
christmas@rowcliffe.co.uk

www.rowcliffe.co.uk





SUFFOLK FOOD HALL



MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

Done right, homewares can boost footfall and create a destination for discerning shoppers

While space is often a premium at fine food retail establishments, it's well worth considering adding a home and gifting range to your offering to not only delight your existing customer base but also to attract new ones in search of quality gifts for loved ones and themselves. Plus, by widening the selection you provide you might well widen your customer base, too, and make your shop a destination for shoppers from nearby and further afield.

One fine food retailer which has done just that is Suffolk Food Hall, based just outside of Ipswich. "Since the Food Hall has opened, we have worked hard to create an inspiring home department for our customers," begins Nick Punter, marketing manager at Suffolk Food Hall. "The original idea was to create a one stop shop for food and home interiors by linking together our food, home, and garden departments. We have achieved this through complementary products such as our Kadai range, which we link with our butchery through promotional offers for our customers."

Not long after opening, the team realised that the move into homewares reaped great rewards. "Within our retail sector, home contributes a considerable proportion of our turnover and generates footfall across the whole site. For our customers, it is the perfect addition to the Food Hall, allowing them to be inspired whilst visiting us." Offering a wide range of home and gifting ideas is key: "Our home department attracts all customers and caters to everyone's needs, including children's toys, gifting, garden, and soft furnishings," says Nick.

While you might think food and homewares aren't natural bedfellows, by choosing your suppliers wisely they can support each other – and your philosophy – well. "The core values of our business include using local suppliers, showcasing seasonal items, and sharing the story behind all of our products with our customers," says Nick "This runs across all the departments, and we are proud to stock many local and artisan producers. As an example, we have recently launched a new candle range by Elsie & Tom from Suffolk, which has now become one of our best sellers."

Suffolk Food Hall's buyers and retail team work closely together to ensure the right mix of products for their customers, and attend local and national shows as well as listening to customer feedback to help shape their ranges. "By attending, we are able to build on our relationships with existing suppliers and forge new collaborations. We are often the first retailer to stock small artisan suppliers' products, helping them to launch their business," says Nick.

Bringing some elements of its homeware selection into the food area has benefited Suffolk Food Hall, he continues. "We merchandise a selection of our home products in the Food Hall to demonstrate how they can be used at home, creating an inspirational shopping experience for our customers."

Another retailer renowned for its homewares selection is Daylesford Organic, where it is "an integral part of our overall offering," says a spokesperson. "Since starting over 40 years ago, we have evolved from an organic farm into Daylesford as we know it today. The inclusion of household goods and homewares, which began just a year after opening, has grown to encompass a wide range of items including table linens, crockery, glassware, kitchen items, candles, toys, and gifts as well as a dedicated garden space and plant nursery. These products are crafted in collaboration with skilled makers, emphasising natural materials and sustainable practices. Each piece is carefully selected to reflect our ethos and enhance the customer experience."







SUFFOLK FOOD HALL

Daylesford's evolution to include homewares has been pivotal in establishing it as a destination, they continue. "The farm's transformation into a destination is complemented by the extensive home and garden range, which attract visitors interested in sustainable and high-quality household items. It allows our customers to immerse themselves in the Daylesford ethos, extending beyond food to encompass a holistic approach to living well."

As at Suffolk Food Hall, Daylesford's homewares offering is produced in line with the business's overall mission and messaging, ensuring that it perfectly complements the food hall. "The philosophy behind our home and food offerings is deeply intertwined," explains the spokesperson. "Both product lines are curated with a focus on natural materials and craftsmanship, reflecting the farm's ethos of organic, responsible practices that don't just protect the world around us, but have a positive impact on it too. Our teams work collaboratively to ensure that every product, whether it's food or homeware, upholds our standards of quality and aligns with our mission to promote a balanced, eco-conscious lifestyle."

Our pick of homeware and gifts that will help your establishment stand out from the crowd

1 SOUS CHEF SAINT-GERMAIN
Green Gingham Picnic Basket

Perfect for alfresco eating, this picnic basket is a classic design that will stand the test of time year-on-year. It contains four porcelain plates, four sets of cutlery, four wine classes, four napkins, salt and pepper shakers, a corkscrew/bottle opener and a small bag for storing dirty crockery, making it the ultimate picnic tool for customers to take on the road.

souschef.co.uk





2 FALCON ENAMELWARE
3 Pint Jug

One of the best-sellers from Falcon Enamelware's range of high quality enamel products, this three pint jug comes in a wide range of colours to suit all households. It is incredibly versatile with a huge number of uses within the house so is suitable for display within a number of areas of a retailer. It's ideal for serving chilled drinks or for displaying flowers as a vase. Like the rest of the Falcon Enamelware range, this jug is of premium quality so is destined to last for years.

falconenamelware.com

3 ARCANA ART
Tapestry Blanket

Made using recycled cotton by highly skilled weavers on jacquard looms, this blanket is inspired by the natural world and comes with a printed Nature Connection Guide which shares information about the inspiration and origination of the work. Created with an heirloom mindset, the blanket is designed to be handed down through the generations.

wearearcana.com





4 CHERRY ORCHARD PUBLISHING
Grace and Grayson

Greeting card producer Cherry Orchard Publishing introduces its well loved and in demand range, Grace and Grayson. This card range offers stunning artistic designs featuring hobbies, nature and wildlife coupled with an eye catching gold envelope. As Eco-conscious Publishers, Cherry Orchard has an Affiliation with 9 trees, a non profit organisation whose vision is to tackle climate change by restoring woodland habitats. Grace and Grayson greeting cards are sure to bring a fresh focal point to your store, enticing customers to come and investigate all that is on offer.

cherryorchardpublishing.co.uk

5 STELLAR FORM
12" Pizza Paddle Board

An attractive and functional way for retailers to cash in on the make-your-own pizza trend, this paddle board is made using recycled and compacted paper fibres for a finish that won't fade, split or crack over time. It is naturally antibacterial, guaranteeing a hygienic surface for DIY pizza preparation. This board is also dishwasher safe and designed to withstand temperatures up to 180°C.

stellar.co.uk







THE **SPICE** OF **LIFE**

When it comes to that 'bit on the side' consumers are dialling up the heat, and looking for a twist on the classics in 2024

COMMENTATORS



KIER KEMP
CONDIMANIAC



BECKY VALE
TRACKLEMENTS



AMRIT MADHOO
SOUTH DEVON CHILLI FARM



TOM GATEHOUSE
EGG SOLDIERS



RICHARD BAINBRIDGE
BENEDICTS

A really good condiment can make or break a meal. That slick of sauce, or drizzle of dip on the side of the plate, has the opportunity to make every mouthful of food pop.

Now, clearly, any good retailer should have a decent ketchup, mustard, brown sauce and mayo on their shelves... but what are consumers reaching for beyond these familiar mealtime friends?

Globalisation, TikTok trends, and increased travel (particularly food tourism), have led to the average Brit having a much more adventurous palate, say insiders. And they're using condiments in ever-increasingly imaginative ways...looking beyond adding a dollop of the usual suspects to their burger.

Mintel data recognises that flavour innovation is crucial in driving the sector, with 53% of consumers happy to shell out a premium for products they consider innovative.

They're thinking more and more about how 'clean' their condiments are too, eschewing products that are ultra processed, or high in sugar or salt. According to Mintel, 42% of consumers worry about the healthiness of condiments, and say they'd be willing to pay more for better quality variants.

Sauce and seasoning aficionado Kier Kemp of Condimaniac, has reviewed hundreds of sauces, dips and relishes, and says they are the "underdog" of the speciality food world, adding that they should be taken seriously by retailers, because they really do underpin a good meal. "I don't think we afford the same prestige and attention to condiments as we do to things like wine," Kier says. "And there's no reason why. There's no difference in quality and variety. I just love them. Whenever I'm having a meal, that's the bit I'm getting excited about. What am I going to dip my food in? For most people, the sauce is a big part of how good their meal's going to be. Condiments really imbue food with flavour."

He thinks we're just beginning to catch up with our continental neighbours when it comes to enhancing our food. "If you go to Germany (my wife, and my business partner are both German) they have whole aisles dedicated to seasonings and toppings. In Britain we're now discovering the wonders of seasonings, and people are definitely looking to switch up what they're eating."

Hot sauce is the one to watch

If you add just one thing to your sauces and condiments aisle this year, let it be hot sauce, says Kier. "I've been saying for a long time hot sauce is the new craft beer, and it has been for a while," he explains, adding that he's seen enormous growth in the category both here, and globally.

"It really is like the craft beer scene was 10 years ago. And hot sauce is still in that exciting pre-commercialisation period where there's a big demand for it, being met by lots of small producers and artisan creators. They've got amazing artwork, and stories, and their own way of doing things."

Kier has noticed a tide change in our tastebuds, saying today's shoppers are much more attuned to heat, and prepared to 'take it up a notch' when it comes to spice. "Our tastes are definitely getting more exotic," he adds, saying that's why independent makers continue to exist. "Our modus operandi is to fill the gaps the supermarkets can't."

Becky Vale of Tracklements says the brand has also noticed a shift towards the spicier end of the spectrum. "Hot sauces, in particular, are just such a trend," she explains. "Our recent quantitive research showed that 44% of shoppers are using hot sauces to go with everyday meals at home, and Waitrose recently reported hot sauce category growth at 55%." This has led to Tracklements investing further in warmer sauces. Building on the success of its bestselling Fresh Chilli Jam, the brand recently launched a trio of hot sauces (Rocket Hot Sauce, Sriracha Chilli Sauce and Smokin' Chipotle Sauce) with flavour and heat levels to suit everyone, made with all-natural ingredients.

Amrit Madhoo, who bought South Devon Chilli Farm two years ago, says the market for chillies and hot sauces has exploded in the nearly 25 years since the business was founded. Its chilli jam, he says, "helped pave the way for the sauce market in the UK". In fact, the chilli jam, made to use up a large harvest, was so popular that within just one season the team on the farm had to begin growing chillies specifically to make the product.

Amrit agrees that hot sauces are the 'next big thing' in the UK, appealing not only to 'chilli heads' who want to display a bit of bravado, but more widely in the mainstream. "People are developing a tolerance for them," Amrit says. "And things like sriracha are becoming commercialised and popular in the big supermarkets. Everyone wants fermented chilli sauce, or a mild to medium sauce they can use on their sandwiches."



He believes our newfound love of hot sauce has been driven by social media, and that emerging brands are a result of lockdown, which Amrit says saw people buying chilli plants, discovering ways of using the fruits, and sharing their sauces and dips through content online.

The super super hot sauces are always big sellers at Christmas, Amrit says, adding that retailers should look beyond the gifting season to 'get in on' the trend, offering a breadth of heat to appeal to different customers. "In summer they [consumers] want something to go on their burgers, or a mild sauce to go on their salads," for example.

He also recommends seeking out fermented chilli sauces, which go hand-in-hand with consumer interest in gut health.

Keep it swicy

An interesting development in the condiments market has been the recent leaning towards 'swicy' (sweet and spicy) flavour profiles, which has seen an explosion in products such as hot honey. According to Scott Joynston, product development manager at The Flava People, 'swicy' is the 'one to watch'. Tom Gatehouse, of Egg Soldiers, says spiced honey is





making its mark in retail right now. "For example, WilderBee Gochujang Hot Honey made it into Harrods the summer of last year, and into the Co-op last October." Consumers, he believes, are seeking out products with an Asian vibe in this growing category – particularly gochujang. "The sweet/spicy Korean condiment staple is now turning up in all manner of dish types and product settings, be it as a crisp seasoning, creamy pasta sauce addition, fried chicken glaze, ice cream enhancer or Korean BBQ seasoning."

World flavours

As Mintel reports, consumers are becoming much more adventurous and globally astute. Becky thinks this is "possibly a hangover from Covid restrictions, or maybe just continuing the British love of exploration. Flavours from around the world are experiencing a boom in popularity".

Becky cites Mintel's UK World Cuisines report from 2023, which found 50% of Brits enjoy at least five different world cuisines at home. "This is just one of the reasons why Tracklements launched Chimichurri Chilli Relish as its latest special edition. It's a popular South American sauce. A veritable fiesta in a jar, with coriander, oregano, parsley, garlic, lemon juice, and a cheeky helping of hot Bird's Eye chillies to keep it lively."



While Amrit says he's working on a range of Caribbean products to tap into the global condiments trend, delving into the flavours of his heritage, he believes products containing Mexican chillies, or an authentic taste of Mexico should be on retailers' radars.

In fact, he adds, the farm is only just keeping up with demand for its homegrown Mexican chilli varieties. "We can't grow enough poblano," he says, explaining that there are huge opportunities in the UK for brands to explore and deliver Mexican sauces and relishes, made on home turf... perhaps even using chillies (like his), grown in the UK.

"People want to make authentic Mexican food. Moles, and they need the chillies their recipe calls for."

'New Mex' is the trend to watch from across the pond, Amrit continues, saying it's leading the way with new varieties and breeds that are causing genuine excitement in America particularly, which should filter into the UK market.

A twist on BBQ

A number of chefs pivoted during Covid times to create their own food brands as a way of keeping their businesses alive. In many cases, these products have remained, becoming a further, lucrative revenue stream. Amongst them is Richard Bainbridge, chef patron of Norwich restaurant Benedicts, and a regular on BBC1's *Saturday Kitchen*.

Richard adores condiments, and when he found himself cooking at home more with his family in lockdown, says he wasn't too impressed with the sauces and accompaniments he could get 'off the shelf' locally. "So we decided to come up with our own".

Under the RB Provisions banner, Richard developed chutneys, jams, barbecue salts, and a granola based on his wife Katja's own recipe. "We created products we wished existed on shelves. It's one of the most selfish things we've done," Richard says. "We loved them ourselves and we weren't thinking about customers!"

Today the products can be found in premium retailers, and it's barbecue sauces that Richard says consumers are getting most excited about. He sees this as a real area of growth for himself, and other condiment producers in the UK. "People are cooking at home a lot more, and they've got the confidence, after lockdown, with barbecuing. If we're blessed with a great summer, barbecuing is going to be bigger than ever this year, and having the right barbecue sauce can really take their food to the next level."

Richard says a good condiment should "make a dish come to life.



You can have really banging dishes, but a bit of beetroot ketchup with your chips, or elderflower barbecue sauce going into a burger, or coffee barbecue sauce in a bacon sandwich in the morning when you've got a bit of a hangover, makes life worth living. Food is great, but sometimes it needs a bit of love to get it over the line."

Kier also seeds barbecue sauce as a key line for speciality retailers going forward – if they select varieties that push the boundary flavourwise. "People have always loved it. You can very easily get a normal barbecue sauce, but people are after a twist of stuff they already know," he says. "So we do a maple jalapeno barbecue sauce. When we make candied jalepenos we have the syrup leftover, and we use that as a base. It's delicious. Anyone can go to a supermarket to get any type of brand, but really, people want to try something different."

SPOTLIGHT ON: OXFORD SAUCE

While it may not have hundreds of years of history behind it, relative newcomer Oxford Sauce is a spicy table sauce that's now being used as a staple by many top chefs in England.



Oxford Sauce was created by Baron Robert Pouget, also known for founding the Oxford Cheese Company in 1986, to mark the millennium. Not to be confused with the 18th century Cumberland Sauce derivative that's also referred to as 'Oxford Sauce', which the Baron believed to be "too sweet and insipid" for his tastes, this version used a more "exciting" blend of ingredients.

A spicy brown sauce with a complex flavour, it is described as "deceptively sweet" followed by a "surprising afterthought" of chilli heat, and it is made with ingredients like tamarind, anchovies, garlic and real Birds Eye chilli (not chilli powder).

It can be used in numerous ways, on meat and seafood, in Mexican-inspired dishes or even in the Baron's version of a Bloody Mary, in addition to Worcestershire Sauce.

STOCK CHECK

2024 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



TRACKLEMENTS RICH & CREAMY MAYONNAISE

This is the mayonnaise for mayonnaise lovers; authentic, rich, creamy and as good as the best homemade.

tracklements.co.uk



THE GARLIC FARM BLACK GARLIC KETCHUP

A vegan, gluten-free sauce, balancing sweet undertones with a distinctive black garlic edge.

thegarlicfarm.co.uk



STOKES SAUCES HABANERO CHILLI MAYONNAISE

The smooth, creamy free-range egg mayonnaise Stokes is known for, infused with fermented red habanero and coriander.

stokessauces.co.uk



SOUTH DEVON CHILLI FARM HOT HABENERO CHILLI KETCHUP

The farm's hottest ketchup with a smooth, fruity flavour. Goes with everything from chips to barbecue food.

southdevonchillifarm.co.uk



WILDERBEE SRIRACHA HOT HONEY

A sweet and spicy honey that gives a Thai kick to everything from pancakes with bacon to pizza and noodles. Infuses organic honey with scotch bonnet chillies and fermented sriracha.

wilderkitchenfood.com



CONDIMANIAC KYUBI HOT SAUCE

A medium hot sauce, inspired by the flavours of East Asia. Infuses fresh habanero chillies into a base of pineapple, carrot and five spice.

condimaniac.com





EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **GRAINS & PULSES**

Speciality Food explores common and quirky pulses and grain types and their health benefits

With so many flashy, new food products lighting up the fine food sector, like sweet-and-spicy condiments or snacks made from seaweed, it can be easy to overlook the basics. But the bags, jars and tins of grains and pulses on your shelves are full of potential. From quinoa and farro to beans and lentils spanning the colours of the rainbow, this category is the bedrock for countless of your customers' homecooked meals, and there are real benefits you can share about swapping from supermarket tins of beans to speciality varieties, or from packets of bog-standard rice to British-grown or more unusual varieties of grains.

Health benefits of pulses and grains

One distinction that is important to note in the health conversation is defining whole grains versus refined grains.

Whole grains are only minimally processed, so they contain more fibre, vitamins, proteins, minerals and antioxidants. Whole grains are said to have many health benefits, including helping to lower blood pressure and supporting gut health.

Refined grains, meanwhile, are the more processed options you'll see at large supermarkets, and they contain fewer nutrients, though they have a longer shelf life.

Whole grains and pulses, like beans, are a good source of fibre. "Having a higher intake of fibre has been associated with reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, such as bowel cancer," explains Reema Pillai, a sports nutritionist at Dietitian Fit. Adults should aim for at least 30g of fibre per day, she says, and one serving of pulses could make up a third of the recommended intake.

As a good source of plant-based protein, beans and pulses are digested very slowly through the gut, Reema adds, "meaning they can help keep us fuller for longer".

And the health benefits don't stop there. "The bacteria in our gut will thrive off the fibre content from the pulses, producing healthy and important by-products – again, these by-products, such as butyric acid, have been associated with reduced colon cancer risk," Reema continues. "A regular intake of higher-fibre foods can also support a reduction in cholesterol levels, which is otherwise a leading cause of heart disease."

Another mineral found "abundantly" in legumes and whole grains is magnesium, which Reema says "can aid in many functions in the body including heart health, blood sugar management and bone health."

The health of the planet

As with anything, variety is the spice of life. And just as our health (and happiness) benefits when we change up what we eat, the health of the planet is helped by reducing our reliance on a handful of crops and introduce more unusual varieties.

"It's absolutely crucial that we move away from our over-reliance on the monoculture agriculture which dominates our countryside today," says Will White, sustainable farming coordinator at Sustain.

"By using more diverse crops and keeping rare verities in use, we strengthen on-farm resilience to disease and extreme weather, which is absolutely crucial in a globalised world with a changing climate."

Hodmedod's is one producer championing indigenous British beans and grains. The brand's interest in searching for lesser-known foods led it to the fava bean, its star product, which has been grown in Britain since the Iron Age, as well as varieties like black badger peas and quinoa grown in Essex.



Trends in pulses and grains

Despite having histories often stretching back millennia, grains, beans and other pulses are a hotbed for emerging trends thanks to our increasingly globalised world and the growing interest in eating more diverse crops.

Quinoa, which emerged in the UK as a must-have superfood in the mid-noughties, is now ubiquitous in shops and on menus across the UK. After gaining mainstream popularity in the US and Europe, the price of the grain shot up, tripling between 2006 and 2013. Several grains have followed in quinoa's footsteps – although none have replicated the process as successfully – from amaranth to sorghum and freekeh to fonio.

And it's not only what we're eating, but how we're eating it, too. Jarred beans are becoming increasingly popular, with the likes of Biona, the Bold Bean Co and Belazu selling gleaming jars of plump beans that boast extra creaminess and flavour when compared to their tinned counterparts. Continental producers are also selling their wares in fashionable jars, like Spanish beans from Perello or Navarrico.

Beans, lentils and other pulses to know

Pulses, the dried seeds of legumes, are little bursts of nutrition – namely protein, fibre and iron – that can even count as one of your five a day. They're simple and effective to cook with and can be divided up into a few categories: lentils, beans and peas.

They're sold in several formats, including dried, tinned and jarred. Dried pulses offer more nutrients and are often less expensive, but they'll take longer to cook as they need to be soaked first.

LENTILS

Lentils are rich in iron, and they're also said to reduce blood sugar and help support heart health. A staple in the cooking of countries including Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, they are made up of more than 25% protein and contain a variety of other nutrients.

Common types of lentils include:

- **Black lentils**
- **Brown lentils**
- **Green lentils**
- **Red split lentils**
- **Puy lentils**

BEANS

Beans are a win-win-win: they're nutrient-packed, often inexpensive and easy to cook with. There are dozens of common varieties, and even more counting less-common ones, and each offers its own health benefits. Overall beans are known for being loaded with protein, fibre and a variety of vitamins and minerals while being low in fat and calories.

Common bean varieties include:

- **Kidney beans**
- **Black beans**
- **Broad beans (also known as fava beans)**
- **Butter beans**
- **Haircot beans (also known as navy beans)**
- **Borlotti beans**
- **Cannellini beans**
- **Chickpeas**
- **Pinto beans**

Soya beans are also included in this category but are worth a special mention. "Consuming soybeans regularly in the diet can also give additional protein compared to other beans, since it contains all essential amino acids," Reema says. As well as being used to make fermented foods like tofu and tempeh, the young green soya beans can also be eaten, known as edamame. "It provides a great source of calcium (specifically calcium-enriched tofu), important for bone health, and frequent consumption may also help manage menopausal symptoms."

12 GRAINS TO KNOW

• WHEAT

As one of the world's most common grains, you'll already know a fair bit about wheat. The most popular form is called, as you might expect, common wheat, and it is used to make bread thanks to its high gluten content. Another popular species is durum, which is used to make semolina for pasta and couscous. They have similar nutrients to offer despite their different uses – just make sure you opt for whole wheat grains.

• BARLEY

Our domestication of barley dates back millennia. This low-gluten, high-carb grain is used in flatbreads as well as soups and stews, and it has a nutty flavour. While it doesn't need to be milled before use, its outer layer is removed, or 'hulled'. Choose 'whole barley' or 'hulled barley' rather than pearled barley, which is more processed and not technically a whole grain.

• RICE

Brown rice is a whole grain that gets its name from the colour of the bran coating, which gives the rice a nutty flavour. To make white rice, this layer is removed after harvesting. Compared to white rice, brown rice has nutritional benefits, like protein, potassium, B-vitamins and iron.

There are also more unusual varieties, like black rice and red rice, which are high in antioxidants (see

Seggiano's Black Nerone Rice or Wild Red Rice). Wild rice, which originated in North America, is technically not related to the other rices in the list, but it is recognised as a whole grain, packed with nutrients and used in a similar fashion.

• OATS
Steel-cut oats contain the whole grain kernel, and they are known to help lower blood cholesterol levels. They're also a good source of protein, fibre and antioxidants. As well as being eaten on their own in porridge, they're also perfect for baking or homemade granola.

• QUINOA
Originating from South America, this ancient grain (it's technically a seed, but accepted like many on this list as a pseudograin) gained popularity over the past few decades in Europe thanks to its host of health benefits. Quinoa is a complete protein that is high in fibre, iron and magnesium, and it's also naturally free from gluten. It has a nutty flavour, and the most common varieties are red, black and white. It is often served in hearty salad bowls.

• RYE
Rye is most often used in breadmaking because of its high gluten content, as well as in the production of some spirits, like whisky. Whole rye contains protein, potassium, fibre and B vitamins. It has an earthy, slightly sour flavour, and it is closely related to barley. Doves Farm offers an Organic Rye Grain.

• FARRO
An Italian staple, farro is gaining more attention in the UK. It's loaded with protein and fibre and has a nutty flavour and a firm texture. While whole grain farro needs to be soaked overnight, you can get semi-pearled farro which cooks faster than whole grain farro but contains more nutrients than pearled farro.

• AMARANTH
Increasingly popular due to its use in gluten-free baking, amaranth, while not a 'true' grain, is a complete protein containing all nine essential amino acids. Similar to couscous, amaranth was a popular crop with the Aztecs. It has an earthy taste and is really versatile in the kitchen. Retailers can test the waters with Biona's Organic Amaranth.

• BUCKWHEAT
While again not technically a grain, and not, despite the name, related to wheat, buckwheat is prized for its fibre and high mineral and antioxidant content. Buckwheat seeds can be collected and ground into flour to make pasta and noodles. It has a nutty, bitter flavour in whole grain form.

• BULGUR WHEAT
Bulgur wheat is a whole grain that has its roots in the Middle East, Mediterranean region and West Asia. Traditionally, it is an ingredient used in tabbouleh salad and kibbeh meat patties, but it is a versatile and nutrient-dense grain, similar to quinoa or couscous. Rich in fibre, it is typically made from durum wheat, but other species can be used.

• FREEKEH
This Middle Eastern and North African speciality is also often compared to quinoa, but it has a richer, nuttier flavour. Freekeh is often used in salads, and it's a good source of protein, fibre and manganese. It's made from durum wheat that is harvested when immature and green, and then roasted for its distinct flavour. Retailers can explore the freekeh trend with Zaytoun's Smoky Freekeh

• FONIO
Grown in West Africa and enjoyed – and even used in various ceremonies – in countries like Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Mali and Nigeria for thousands of years, fonio is an ancient grain that is now making waves around the world. It's a good source of amino acids, can help moderate blood sugar levels, and is free from gluten. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says fonio is believed to have the highest calcium content of all grains. Retailers can try this super grain from producers like Aduna.

More unusual bean varieties include:
- **Aduki beans** (sweet and nutty, they're popular in East Asian cooking)
- **Lupin beans** (traditionally eaten as a pickled snack, they're now touted as a superfood as they are packed with fibre and all nine amino acids)
- **Hidatsa beans** (a rare bean originating from North America, they're a good substitute for cannellini beans)
- **Eye of the Goat beans** (used in Mexican cooking, they're thin-skinned with a fantastic creamy texture)
- **Ayocote Negro beans** (these Mexican-rooted beans are more commonly known as runner beans, but this variety is dried and turns an inky dark colour)
- **Soldier Beans** (grown in the US, they're firm in texture but mild in taste, and a good substitute for white beans)
- **Blackeye beans** (originating in Africa, they are now commonly used in southern American food)

PEAS
High in protein, fibre, antioxidants and micronutrients, peas help to support good gut health and maintain healthy blood sugar levels. They're also great for bone health. Today, pea protein is also even added to vegan products to enrich their nutritional content. You'll find a number of types, including
- **Black-eyed peas**
- **Marrowfat peas**
- **Split and whole green peas**
- **Split and whole yellow peas**
- **Gungo peas (also known as pigeon peas)**







THE 2024 VEGGIE AWARDS ARE NOW OPEN

THE Veggie AWARDS 2024

The Veggie Awards celebrate the best plant-based, sustainable and ethical products on offer.

Enter now to become a standout brand that consumers will trust.

CATEGORIES INCLUDE...















ENTER NOW!

Visit the website below to enter today or find out more details. Our dedicated awards team will also be more than happy to help with any specific questions you may have.

easyveggieideas.com/awards

JENNY O'NEILL Head of Awards - jenny.oneill@artichokehq.com

NICKY MAIA Brand Manager - nicky.maia@artichokehq.com









DARING TO DIVERSIFY
LUDLOW FARMSHOP

We take a trip to Shropshire to see how the team created a destination for the region's traditional food and artisan producers

"Passion for food drives everything for us," says Jon Edwards, managing director of Ludlow Farmshop, a Shropshire-based foodie haven located two miles from the gastronomic town of Ludlow.

Since opening its doors in 2007 on the Earl of Plymouth's Oakly Park Estate, the farm shop has become a unique site, blending farming, food production and retailing under one umbrella, which has created a special environment based around celebrating local produce and artisan food production.

The Oakly Park Estate encompasses approximately 8,000 acres of Shropshire countryside, of which the team at Ludlow farms 6,500 acres. "Farming is at the very heart of what we do," Jon explains. The farm shop, he adds, produces many of its own award-winning products from "the bountiful supply of wonderful produce both from the farm and surrounding area".

In fact, 80% of the food sold at Ludlow Farmshop comes from Shropshire and the surrounding counties – that includes everything from wine produced in rural Herefordshire to flour milled in the Cotswolds to award-winning marmalade made in small batches on-site.

CHAMPIONING PRODUCERS

Farm shops up and down the UK are known for banging the drum for local producers, but Ludlow goes above and beyond by bringing skilled makers in-house. In fact, over half of the products sold are created in production units surrounding the shop floor. "Bakery, dairy, butchery, production kitchen, jams and pickles and coffee roasting – these units produce high-quality products from scratch," Jon says.

And producers aren't hidden away – they're put centre stage. "These are visible through windows so you can see artisan producers making your food by hand using the produce grown or reared on our own farms. Our original ethos included this concept, and it's still as strong today," he continues.

In addition to seasonal fruit and vegetables, which are grown less than half a mile away in the farm's walled garden and sold in the farm shop, the entire team strives to utilise all that is good from its farms alongside traditional production methods to produce great tasting food, Jon says. "We support local suppliers by providing them the opportunity to retail at a fair price. Supporting the local economy is key for us, particularly as we seek to attract visitors to the area."

Offering seasonal, fresh, local, and handmade produce is at the core of the business at the shop – and that has led the team to continuously diversify and innovate. "We believe in the pleasure of better tasting, real food, through continuous development and keeping skills and flavours alive; truly making the most of our region," Jon says. "Our values give a sense of our land and farms, people, and passion for sustainability."



A TRADITIONAL BUTCHERY

At the heart of the farm shop is the butchery department. All the meat products sold, including at the on-site hotel and café, use the meat prepared by head butcher John Brereton and his team.

John manages a full-carcass operation in the butchery. "To ensure the best results are achieved from each carcass, John uses many different ways to add value and manage his carcass in balance by doing his own curing, smoking, production of charcuterie and selling a range of unusual cuts," John explains.

And as well as working closely with the herdsmen across the farm to ensure only the best animals are sent to the farm shop, allowing for full quality control of the shop's meat, the butchery also boasts ultra-low food miles.

The farm's cattle and lambs are transported to Griffiths of Leintwardine, an abattoir that's a mere seven miles away, before the meat is prepared for customers on site, "which means less stressed animals and a lower carbon footprint," Jon says. The meat is then traditionally matured and prepared.

LOCAL SPECIALITIES IN THE BAKERY

The bakery team, meanwhile, craft fresh biscuits and cakes from scratch using local ingredients seven days a week. More than 20 varieties are made on site, with new recipes and ideas constantly in the works. "We bake many traditional products like Victoria Sponge and

> "You can see artisan producers making your food by hand using the produce grown or reared on our own farms. Our original ethos included this concept, and it's still as strong today"





shortbread, as well as championing local specialties, like Shrewsbury biscuits," Jon says. These melt-in-the-mouth biscuits are infused with mixed spice, lemon zest and currants for a buttery treat.

The shop takes deliveries of fresh bread (from classic white loaves and French sticks to the delicious focaccias and sourdoughs) six days a week from Bread2Bake, a nearby bakery. "We also offer a unique Bromfield Black, which is exclusive to Ludlow Farmshop," Jon says.

A COFFEE ROASTERY CRAFTS A UNIQUE BREW

Who doesn't love the smell of fresh coffee? At Ludlow's in-house coffee roasting room, the team work their magic on ethically produced and sourced green coffee beans, which are blended, roasted and ground in small batches – a process that is all overseen by specialist Hannah Bond. "This coffee is then packaged ready for the shop floor, prepared for use at The Clive Arms hotel," the boutique inn also on the Oakly Park Estate, "or sent over to be freshly ground by baristas at our café," Jon says.

By trading directly with small-scale farmers to hand-roasting each type of bean in small batches and finally producing a number of blends that are unique to the site, Ludlow Farmshop showcases a truly artisan product.

STORE CUPBOARD ESSENTIALS

In another corner of the farm shop, a jams and pickles department



is run by Teresa Holdsworth, and together with her team she produces approximately 100,000 jars of Ludlow's own-recipe jams, preserves, marmalades, chutneys, oils, sauces and pickles every year.

These products, like everything else in the shop, have a natural and local focus. They "use fruit and vegetables sourced as locally as possible and are always made in small batches," Jon says. "No artificial pectin is used as they are set when the ingredients are in season – if needed fresh lemon juice is used instead. We don't use thickeners and instead reduce the consistency which produces a more concentrated and intense flavour."

KITCHEN AND DELI

Deli products are a must-have in any farm shop as expansive as Ludlow, and the in-house kitchen does not disappoint. They create from scratch a huge range of products using cuts of meat from the butchery, cheese from the dairy and chutneys created by Teresa and her team, alongside other locally sourced products.

"From Scotch eggs to quiches to award-winning pies, the kitchen department is a hive of activity," Jon says. One of the kitchen's signature dishes is the Shropshire Fidget Pie, made with gammon, cooking apples, onions and potatoes.

A DAIRY WITH QUALITY AT ITS CORE

Ludlow's dairy is not to be missed on a tour of the site's production hubs. It produces the milk that's used across the farm shop, including in the making of artisanal cheeses (hard, semi-hard, soft, blue and smoked varieties), butter, yoghurt and more in small batches.

Just two miles away from the farm shop, there are more than 300 dairy cows located at Ludlow's robotic dairy. "Only 10% of dairy farms in the UK use this robotic system, which contributes to high animal welfare as a major benefit," Jon explains.

Technology has been incorporated to push their traditional methods to the cutting edge. "Not only do we milk through the full robots, we also graze through technology which is quite unique for robotic units. For the majority of robotic units, the cows stay in all the year round, but we prefer cows to be grazed on welfare grounds, so we summer graze our cows – you can actually see the cows grazing from here if you know where to look!" he says.

Indeed, welfare is a priority at Ludlow. What is most extraordinary about the dairy unit, Jon says, is how relaxed the cows are, "and the best bit has to be the satisfaction of seeing how happy they are," he continues. "They have nice, soft beds which are sprung, a robotic feeder, and they even have back scratchers! They are so laid back and do everything when they want to. They are not driven or herded anywhere, so there is no stress; it really is quite something."

Ludlow Farmshop's cheeses have claimed numerous awards, and in 2016, one was even recognised on an international scale, picking up bronze at the World Cheese Awards. It's "something we are hugely proud of against such tough competition," Jon says.

Jon praises the work of dairy manager Paul, who has been with the team for over 14 years. He "is instrumental in making such great-tasting, award-winning cheese. Our newest cheese, Ludlow Red, which is a raw milk cheese, was developed from Paul's ideas, skill and experience, and this went on to win at the Great Taste Awards shortly after it launched."

> "We are very excited about its future and keeping the Ludlow 'foodie' reputation going across the country"

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EXPANSION

Diversification has not been without its difficulties, however. With business booming at the farm shop, the team decided to open Ludlow Kitchen, an on-site café, to allow customers to sample some of the shop's fantastic products before buying them. But Covid hit the café hard.

"This, coupled with the huge raw ingredient cost price increases, have meant for some challenging times," Jon admits. Despite this, the team is firmly committed to providing customers with high-quality products using locally sourced ingredients. The café has "gone from strength to strength over the years" and is, Jon claims, "without doubt one of the busiest cafés in the local area."

Since 2023, the farm shop has sold its jams, marmalades, chutneys and pickles to businesses across the UK. "The response to this has been great. We launched the range at the Farm Shop & Deli Show last year, and the feedback we received about the brand, the quality, the product and the service we offer was outstanding," Jon says. "We are only at the start of this journey, but we are very excited about its future and keeping the Ludlow 'foodie' reputation going across the country."



FINAL CALL

Perhaps it's the election, or the endless possibilities that the longer summer days always seem to bring, but this season feels like a good time for a fresh start. A government changeover means there are plenty of new policies and manifesto pledges for shop owners to get their heads around, and we hope the long-awaited summer weather, though still fickle, is bringing bursts of optimism to your establishment. What could be better than watching the sunset on a warm summer evening with a glass of something special and a plate full of the finest fresh food?

Although the cost-of-living crisis is ongoing, fresh data from the Office for National Statistics revealed that May retail sales rose by 2.1% by value and 1.2% by volume as more shoppers were getting out and about and treating themselves. And while there are certainly still challenges, it's not all bad news – between January and March, the economy actually grew more than expected.

With a brighter outlook on the cards for retailers, we want to know how the summer is shaping up in your shop. The summer of sport has likely influenced your sales to some degree – polling by the British Retail Consortium found that more than one-in-eight people planned to spend more on drinks and snacks, with 13% of people having planned to spend more on groceries, beer, wine and spirits as well as takeaways to enjoy while watching the Euros. And next up is the Olympics – is your shop getting behind Team GB with any special displays, offers or events?

This time of year, first impressions can be everything. Whether you're a destination farm shop or a high-street deli, you may be welcoming in larger numbers of fresh faces this season in the form of British staycationers or travellers from abroad. But if we know anything it's that for fine food retailers, there is no greater pleasure than serving with a smile and creating the best possible shopping experience.

We love hearing from our readers. Do you have a story to share or expertise to pass on? Please get in touch with courtney.goldsmith@artichokehq.com

5 MINUTES WITH

MARTIN MURRAY, FOUNDER OF DUNNET BAY DISTILLERY



WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
I am a Chartered Chemical Engineer and I love process control and optimisation. Not very glamorous, but I love the technical challenge and I would have been doing that.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?
My first job was stacking the fruit and vegetable aisle in the local Co-op. It was nice to win their product of the year for Rock Rose Gin.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?
I am motivated by making improvements. I am excited by how I can make things work faster, better, safer or more easily.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?
Working on an effluent plant and a valve burst and sprayed our legs.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?
The Castletown Mill project is the hardest thing I've done. I am in charge of making the process design work. A lot of pressure, but I am thriving on it. It's amazing seeing the mill come back to life and makes me incredibly proud to think that we are doing that.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?
Forecasting. The last four years forecasting has been very difficult. Trying to prepare something sensible during disrupted times.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
The food industry is amazing. I love meeting people behind products that they love. It connects me with a brand for life and that's what we would love to do with our products.

TEA OR COFFEE?
Tea at home. Coffee overseas.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?
I probably wouldn't bother with food as it would be a waste of time.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?
Things are never as good or as bad as they seem. I guess that motto makes me a dour Highlander.

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?
Far too many things to mention. Fish cheeks were odd, but rather nice.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?
The Flying Circus of Physics by Jearl Walker. It's just brilliant for anyone interested in science. I love sharing it with the kids.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?
Sweet – I have a sweet tooth and I cannot change this.

BE CONNECTED



@SpecialityFood

linkedin.com/company/speciality-food

specialityfoodmagazine

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

CONTENT

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

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

News & Digital Editor
Courtney Goldsmith

Art Director
Lee Whiteford
lee.whiteford@artichokehq.com

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

Next issue available: September 2024

COMMERCIAL

Advertising Manager
Jessica Brett
jessica.brett@artichokehq.com

Deputy Advertising Manager
Sammy Kirby

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

Accounts
artichokemedialtd@integral2.com

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

artichoke

The next issue of Speciality Food includes:

- Speciality & Fine Food Fair Preview
- Christmas Puddings and Fruit Cakes
- Christmas Cheese
- Chutneys & Pickles
- Christmas Drinks
- lunch! Preview

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

CAFE BUYER MAGAZINE
with the next issue of Speciality Food



For more information contact:
louise.barnes@artichokehq.com 01206 508629

TRIED & TESTED

NIBS ETC ORIGINAL SEEDED CRACKERS



All too often healthy crackers feel very 'worthy' and devoid of any foodie indulgence, but not so with these seeded crackers from Nibs Etc. Their almost malty flavour and crunchy, satisfying texture means that they taste like a real treat, especially so for lovers of seeded snacks as they lent a great nubbly mouthfeel as well as delicious flavour. I'm happy to report that these are just as delicious with cheese as they are with sweet toppings – honey was an instant favourite – so they're a great balanced snacking option. Bonus points for being made with upcycled apple pulp.
nibsetc.com

JULIENNE BRUNO SUPERSTRACCIA

In all honesty, I can't say that I've been particularly struck by many vegan cheeses – they're often too nutty or fermented-tasting, which in and of itself isn't an issue, but don't sit well when compared to a dairy milk cheese – so it was with trepidation that I tried Julienne Bruno's Superstraccia, a plant-based take on straciatella (AKA one of my very favourite cheeses). My fears were unfounded, as this was perfectly creamy and salty, and paired beautifully with everything I served it with; indeed, it's just as delicious on toast with a drizzle of honey as it is with pasta.
juliennebruno.com



OHMG PEACH & ROSEMARY & ASHWAGANDHA

I'm a sucker for anything which offers up nutritional value while tempting my tastebuds, so I was delighted to discover this summery tipple – deliciously refreshing and at once fruity and herbacious, it's made even more special with its inclusion of ashwagandha, a herb which is purported to ease pain and inflammation, and to aid sleep. That together with the bioavailable magnesium also on the ingredients list meant that far from being a drink to avoid in the evening (sweet, fizzy drinks are often my kryptonite post-5pm), I could enjoy this at any time of day.
ohmgwater.com



THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

James Pilcher, head chef at The Ferry House



I am head chef at The Ferry House – a 2AA Rosette restaurant and event venue with boutique rooms, set beside the estuary in Harty, Kent.

The owners are third generation farmers and the restaurant itself is surrounded by their family farmland. This heritage is a foundation for a passion towards food provenance. We have a 1.5 acre Kitchen Garden, while locally grassed grazed beef comes from their family herd, along with their free range eggs. We also serve wild game such as pheasant and partridge from the family shoot on the Harty estate and forage the hedgerows and shoreline.

Our food is ultra-seasonal, with a heavy focus on sustainability, reducing food waste and using every edible part of the produce creatively. We have a penchant for anything out of the ordinary and grow all kinds of weird and wonderful produce in the kitchen garden - I take a great deal of pride in being able to offer food that many of our guests have never tried before.

What we can't grow or farm for ourselves we also source from a selection of carefully chosen Kentish suppliers, and these producer relationships are enormously important to me. We cultivate these partnerships carefully as having that close relationship allows me to make sure the producer is as passionate as we are about the product and works to same level as we do.

These relationships give you a new level of respect for the produce. You know the individuals, you understand the sheer work and effort they put in to producing high quality produce and you respect the owner's hard work that has gone into it. It affects your attitude towards not wasting any part of it, and ensuring as much as possible can be creatively used. It's a relationship that only benefits everyone involved and these kinds of relationships should always be fostered.

To reduce produce wastage we carefully preserve seasonal produce, while also utilising what would normally be considered off cuts. We also have our own onsite butchery, so we can order whole animals from our suppliers and practice a 'nose to nail' ethos.

Knowing our producers well and carefully selecting those relationships is also beneficial to the health of our guests and to the environment. I think everyone understands that eating healthily is important for the good our body. However, eating healthily is more than just eating more fruit and veg, it can also go hand in hand with making better food choices. Choosing higher welfare meats and knowing our food provenance often has environmental benefits which go hand in hand with health benefits. Knowing our producers well allows us serve produce cultivated in this way.

Guests are much more aware of and interested in the food provenance of the establishments they choose to eat at. At The Ferry House we spend considerable time educating the team on our dishes and suppliers, including organising tours and tastings. By doing so the team can make recommendations and suggestions if desired, but moreover they can enrich the customer dining experience by bringing food provenance to the fore.

PARTNER CONTENT

Garofalo

HOW TO CASH IN ON THE HOMEMADE PIZZA TREND

Everyone loves pizza, and with the DIY pizza movement showing no signs of abating it's time to make sure you're giving your customers what they need to do it well



The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it many things, most challenging but some positive – one of which was the advent of the homemade pizza trend. That's not to say that making pizza at home wasn't a popular pastime pre-2020, but with everyone spending more time than ever at home and restaurants and even takeaways being shut for long periods of time, many consumers started to take the habit a bit more seriously.

Whereas pre-pandemic a standard white bread flour was ideal for creating a pizza base, with a teaspoon of instant yeast and sugar added for a quick rise, in 2020 and beyond shoppers have realised the beauty of slow dough – using a sourdough starter instead of yeast, perhaps, and leaving the dough to prove in its own time. Indeed, not just prove but ferment for added flavour. Of course, quality makes all the difference, so a finely ground Italian 00 won out over conventional bread flour in some households.

Tomatoes also had their turn in the spotlight. No longer just a cheap commodity, shoppers were experimenting with authentic tinned tomatoes with provenance – recognising that quality options, for example from Mutti's range, offered a richer and naturally sweeter sauce. The same thing happened with cheese, with some consumers realising that smaller-scale, better quality cheeses – while often not as dry as mass-produced options – made all the difference in terms of flavour and creamy texture. Plus, why not experiment with cheese as a topping, from rich and piquant Gorgonzola to smoked Scamorza or indulgent Burrata?

Speaking of toppings, consumers' minds are still overflowing with creative ideas – often inspired by masters of the art who showcase their skills on social media. New styles are filtering into the UK market, from the Detroit-style pizza (think a melted cheese-loaded focaccia with a crispy cheese crown) which can host any number of wacky flavours, to the New York-style: a super thin and crispy base.

This is the joy of Italian food – often simple and always made with love, but by levelling up the ingredients you stock you can make foodie fans for life.



NEW

Mochi Rice Bites

(Chilli Rice Crackers just got interesting!)

Unbelievably Crunchy and Crispy - welcome to our new range of puffed, sticky rice bites. Now in three memorable spicy Asian flavours!



150g sharing bags

Our original Chilli Rice Crackers in a new bag

✓ Plant-based ✓ Palm Oil Free ✓ MSG Free

✓ Your customers will love them!





01458 833744

sales@filbertsfinefoods.co.uk

www.mrfilberts.com