

SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS



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MINETTE BATTERS:
"STANDARDS MUST
BE A PRIORITY"

P. 7



NEAL'S YARD DAIRY

JASON HINDS:
"THE POWERS
BEHIND U.S. CHEESE"

P. 16



AHDB

WILL JACKSON:
"FARMERS FEEL
UNDER ATTACK"

P. 43



- 4** John Shepherd,
MD of Partridges
- 7** Charles Campion,
food writer and critic
- 8** Sue Nelson,
The FoodTalk Show
- 16** Jason Hinds,
Neal's Yard Dairy
- 16** Sue Conley and Peggy Smith,
Cowgirl Creamery
- 46** Adrian Martin,
Chef and restaurateur

- REGULARS**
- 12** Product News
- 20** Cheese Uncut
- 24** Centre Spread: Picnic
- 30** Trend Watch:
The Joy of Japanese
- 42** Spotlight on Spain:
Unsung Heroes
- 43** Viewpoint:
Will Jackson, AHDB

- FEATURES**
- 10** IFE 2021
- 14** Meet the Producer:
Seasoned Pioneers
- 17** Counterpoint:
Mastering Cheese Tools
- 18** Meet the Distributor:
Rowcliffe
- 19** Italy's Finest
- 22** The Craftsman's Touch
- 26** Cashing in on Food to Go
- 28** Alcohol Alternatives
- 31** Meet the Producer:
Re:Nourish
- 34** The Midas Touch
- 38** Ice Cream
- 45** Need to Know
Display Tips

INDEPENDENT SPECIAL

- 32** Around the World
in 10 Delis
- 36** Destination Profit
- 40** The Diversifiers
- 44** Indie & Proud

EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the April issue of *Speciality Food*. The current situation with Covid-19 is unprecedented, and therefore it is impossible to gauge its future impact on our industry, although at the time of going to press some trade shows have been postponed until later in the year.

In this time of uncertainty, I'm calling for us to do what we do best and support each other as much as we are able to. It's important to stay informed, and so I direct you to our website and social media channels, where we will share into the subject.

Meanwhile, we have a packed issue for you. We hear from some masters of indie retail – including the pioneers behind the poster town of independent retail, Malton in North Yorkshire – dive into the world of quality soft drinks, and find out what role celebrities play in food and drink. We also share plenty of cheese intel, including pioneering voices of the American craft scene, advice on tools and display, and the story behind your favourite Alpine classics.

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The inclusion of labelling claims on packaging is a core purchasing factor for consumers when considering whether to purchase or abandon a food or beverage product. In today's retail environment, shoppers expect to easily gain access to the nutritional or health benefits of speciality food products.

Specialist retailers know that for producers launching or reformulating food and beverage products, they have to appeal to these changing consumer dynamics. To do so, manufacturers need to plough their innovation energy and investment efforts into more than just considerations on formulation or ingredient options alone.

"Selecting the right path on the product labelling, including claims, can lead to market success," reveals David Pineda Ereño, advisor on strategy, policy and regulation at DPE International Consulting.

In 2020, there are a number of core consumer demands impacting labelling claims in Europe. Looking after our health is a key driver in making changes to our diets and our product preferences.

"Immunity products that speak to consumers' primary desire to maintain their optimum health" are popular, Pineda Ereño adds. However, it is a "very competitive field".

To appeal to consumers in the specialist retail sector, manufacturers must develop the appropriate claim

How can the fine food sector boost consumer trust?

With natural, organic, clean and free-from just some of the terms brands are using to describe their products, accurate labelling is vital to increase consumer confidence

to appeal to different consumer demographics. Digestive health, the connection between the gut and the brain is increasingly growing in demand and influencing packaging claims. And subsequently, our decision to buy – or not.

Consumer lifestyles heavily influence the labelling claims manufacturers display on their new product launches. Both the number and type of formulations have grown in tandem to reflect consumer calls for food and beverage products that suit their daily routines, activities and needs.

There are a number of key terms that consumers are specifically looking for – such as natural, organic, clean and free-from – that highlight

the beneficial impact the product has on consumers' health, lifestyle and sustainability.

Healthy and ethical ingredients dominate the consumer decision-making process throughout Europe, market intelligence provider, Mintel, found in its Ethical Food Consumer UK April 2019 report.

In the UK, 35% of consumers would buy meals with no additives or preservatives claims, compared to 33% who would buy them without. Of those asked, a quarter of consumers in the UK also stated that they buy ethical food and drink to avoid consuming unwanted ingredients or substances.

The European Regulation on the use of nutrition and health

claims has been harmonised in the European Union since 2006. Positive lists with permitted nutrition and health claims have been produced.

However, the "development of the list of permitted health claims is still ongoing", Pineda Ereño notes. As a result, many health claims have been evaluated. Some of these labelling claims have been approved and others have not. Despite the lack of complete approval across labelling claims in the nutrition and health space, those health claims that have not been evaluated yet are allowed to be used in the meantime.

Another main aspect of the 2006 Regulation, pending implementation, is the creation of foods and beverage profiles that specify their critical

nutrients. The current European Commission administration is expected to release a proposal for nutrient profiles this year.

Commenting on the impact this would have on the use of labelling claims, Pineda Ereño informs: "If adopted, this would mean that food and beverages with amounts above the fixed nutrient profiles of key nutrients such as sugar, sodium or fat would be unable to use any nutrition and health claims." The landscape would become stricter in order to build trust, transparency and credibility with consumers.

Creating, confirming and setting nutrient profiles is a global trend. Many countries around the world have established their own nutrient profiles or are discussing it, particularly in the context of labelling and/or advertising applications.

The Codex Alimentarius, an intergovernmental organisation that adopts international standards for foods and beverages, is also exploring the development of general principles to guide national authorities for setting nutrient profiles for labelling applications.

The widespread focus on supporting and clarifying labelling claims in nutrition strives to provide specialist retailers throughout Europe with an unambiguous understanding of what food and beverage product formulations contain and their beneficial consumption attributes.

“ There are a number of key terms that consumers are specifically looking for – such as natural, organic, clean and free-from – that highlights the beneficial impact the product has on consumers' health, positive lifestyle and sustainability ”



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"The great battle for optimism and morale in modern retail"



**JOHN SHEPHERD
PARTRIDGES**

After a turbulent Christmas season how has the start of 2020 been? Looking at the eight week period up to 26th February, not too bad as a matter of fact. I am pleasantly surprised to say we have been quick off the blocks.

Sales in January have risen 7.5% over last year and customer count 4.3%. Although, this is mainly down to two specific reasons over which we have very little control. The weather for January this year has been mild if not actually benign. The temperature was on average nearly a degree above last year and it only rained on six days in London. This is one of the reasons why I keep droning on about the weather.

Partridges is set back from the road about 35 metres and when it rains, especially in the evening, that 35 metres becomes like the border crossing into North Korea – rather off-putting to visitors. Sales in February have been a more turbulent matter, however. Two unwelcome storms, Ciara and Dennis, managed to blow away 16% of our sales compared to last year and 10% of our customers.

By the middle of the month rainfall had already overtaken the of that whole month in 2019.

So by the time of writing in late February our 7.5% increase over last year has slipped to 6.3%. Yet there is light at the end of the February tunnel – and it is not an ambulance coming to take me away, yet.

It is a Leap Year! Hallelujah! We have one, glorious, delightful extra day free of all the vulgarities of costs. It is also known as St Oswald's Day. In a saintly manner it has so far evaded every attempt to be liable for rent, rates and service charge demands – at least in our experience. I hope no landlord is reading this. It comes at a propitious time of the year as well, falling halfway through the difficult first quarter for speciality foods. Therefore thanks very much to Julius Caesar for coming up with the idea of Leap Years in the first place.

One day I would like to introduce him to Tutankhamun as a fellow benefactor to Partridges in terms of raising revenue (this is not a long list). One extra day a year may not seem much, a small character role in a Shakespearean drama perhaps, but falling on a Saturday this time will amount to approximately 2% of our total first quarter sales (weather permitting).

There are still only 52 Saturdays in 2020, just like most years. The last time there were 53 Saturdays was 2016. The next time will be 2022. Immediate payback will occur in four-Saturday March 2020 when last year there were five Saturdays in that particular month.

But who cares? In the great battle for optimism and morale in modern retail every small step forward is of great importance.

Great British Food Awards join forces with Booths for 2020

Aceville's Great British Food Awards has announced a 12-month partnership with Booths to celebrate and elevate Britain's finest artisan food and drink.

Natasha Lovell-Smith, editor of *Great British Food* magazine and chair of the judging panel said, "I'm absolutely delighted to have Booths on board this year. The Great British Food Awards are all about celebrating the UK's finest artisanal produce, as well as the hard-working people behind the scenes. Booths are renowned nationwide for using really special local suppliers with a dedication to quality and provenance, so it's a perfect partnership."

Helen Clarke, marketing manager at Booths said of the tie-up, "Partnering with Great British Food Awards seems a natural step for Booths as there's a clear synergy between the two brands. We're best defined by our producers who supply us with a diverse and unique range of products you simply won't find elsewhere. Over the years, we have worked together to develop strong relationships and consider our suppliers an extension of the Booths family. In the same way we do, the Awards look for products that demonstrate quality and provenance and celebrate the country's finest artisanal produce, honouring the people behind the scenes. We're absolutely delighted to be working with Great British Food Awards and can't wait to find some of the country's very best food and drink."

The awards are judged by many of the nation's best-loved chefs, cooks and critics, with The Hairy Bikers, Michel Roux Jr, William Sitwell, Raymond Blanc and Monica Galetti, along with many other famous names and faces, lined up to judge categories from this year's shortlist after entries close on 22nd June 2020. Booths' buyers will decide on the British Product of the Year from the winners of over 40 categories, and will also be judging the brand new start-up category.

Entries are now open and winners will be announced in the Christmas edition of *Great British Food* magazine, on sale 29th October 2020. For more information about the awards and to see the full line up of judges, go to greatbritishfoodawards.com.

UK Welcomes Tunisian Olive Oil

Olive and olive oil are an integral part of the history and culture of Tunisia, which is home to 85 million olive trees. As a flagship product for Tunisian Agrifood export – the quality of which is recognised by all the global olive oil competitions – Tunisian olive oil has reinforced its presence on the international market to an impressive extent.

The 2019-20 season has produced an exceptional harvest of around 350,000 tonnes, including a surplus of 80,000 tonnes, which offers an unparalleled opportunity to nearly 60 importing countries – including the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

As the second largest oil producer in the world, and the primary organic olive oil maker, the time has come for Tunisia to introduce its olive oil products to British shelves to a greater extent. In order to support this aim, Tunisia and the UK have signed a Post-Brexit Continuity Agreement containing specific provisions on olive oil, and Tunisia will be represented at the upcoming Speciality & Fine Food Fair, taking place in London, September 2020.

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UK to launch PFN system in 9 months

● New British system of Protected Food Names to run from 1st January 2021

● New UK labelling system depends on marketing drive and minimal red tape

● Study by the Enterprise Research Centre shows primary benefits of GI scheme are protection of heritage foods from imitation and safeguarding of rural jobs

The UK Government has announced that as of 1st January 2021 all products with existing EU designated Protected Food Names will automatically receive a new British accreditation.

According to Defra, the UK's 86 food and drink products with geographical indication (GI) status account for 25% of all of Britain's food and drink exports by value, generating over £5 billion.

However, research by the Enterprise Research Centre found that benefits to producers went beyond financial; holding GI status led to increased heritage food tourism, safeguarding local employment and protection from imitation.

Consumer education is paramount in order to maintain the value of

these products, the research found, as is minimising the burden of red tape.

Professor Stephen Roper, director of the Enterprise Research Centre, said: "Current research suggests around one in six consumers recognise the European GI labels and only around one in 10 take them into account in their shopping choices. That's after them being in place for a generation. The UK is starting from scratch with this new Protected Food Names (PFN) system and so one of the key challenges for the government is going to be building awareness among consumers of this new system.

"Developing the new system presents two opportunities. One is for the UK to develop a system of PFNs that is more agile and accessible to specialist producers than the EU

system of geographical indications. The other one is to extend the current range of products which are protected. What we know from our research is there may be 12 to 15 additional heritage cheeses which might be in position to have a PFN and those numbers are replicated across meat products, confectionery and bakery products as well. It's clear that could bring potential advantages for producers and local food tourism in different parts of the country.

"One of the main challenges for smaller producers at the moment is around the costs of inspection relative to the benefits of the GIs. There is a possibility that if the UK Government wanted to support this very actively, they could subsidise the costs of inspection for smaller producers as part of initiatives to support local food tourism and economic development in more rural areas.

"A good point of comparison would be the Red Tractor farm assurance label. About 70% of the adult population in the UK say they recognise it, but it's been around a long time and has been heavily promoted. To achieve something similar with the new PFN labels, the government is probably going to have to think about a sustained advertising and marketing campaign that could take in on-the-ground promotion in schools, supermarkets and on social media."

The campaign group Sustain has joined forces with community food charity Growing Communities to create Better Food Traders; an accreditation scheme which celebrates retailers who support British farmers.



"At Better Food Traders, we're bringing together independent retailers who really want to do their best for people and planet. Our small food businesses who care about ethics, and don't have the big marketing or greenwashing budgets of the multiples, are working together, so collectively we can have an impact. Better Food Traders accreditation shows that your business has the highest standards across the board - we're helping people to align their values with where they buy their food."

NATASHA SOARES, PROJECT LEADER AT BETTER FOOD TRADERS

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HERITAGE
CHEESES WHICH
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"Landmark" Agriculture Bill set to shake up British farming

● "One of the most significant pieces of legislation for farmers in England for over 70 years"

● "One of the most important environmental reforms for many years"

● "The UK's 8,000 food and drink manufacturers must continue to have access to adequate supplies of raw materials that are safe, of high quality and competitively priced"

The new Agriculture Bill pledges to "transform British farming" by boosting productivity and rewarding environmental improvements. The Bill, introduced on 16th

January, contains revisions including a requirement for the government to regularly report on food security to parliament. The current subsidy system will be replaced with a scheme to pay farmers "public money for public goods" such as higher animal welfare standards and measures to reduce flooding.

Former Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said, "Our landmark Agriculture Bill will transform British farming, enabling a balance between food production and the environment which will safeguard our countryside and farming communities for the future. This is one of the most important environmental reforms for many years, rewarding farmers for the work they do to safeguard our environment and helping us meet crucial goals on climate change and protecting nature and biodiversity."

NFU president Minette Batters described the Bill as, "One of the most

significant pieces of legislation for farmers in England for over 70 years. Farmers across the country will still want to see legislation underpinning the government's assurances that they will not allow the imports of food produced to standards that would be illegal here through future trade deals. We will continue to press the government to introduce a standards commission as a matter of priority to oversee and advise on future food trade policy and negotiations."

Ian Wright, FDF chief executive said that food and drink standards must not be compromised when post-Brexit negotiations take place. "As the Government embarks upon trade negotiations with the EU and partners around the world, it is vital that we prioritise the quality and choice of UK food and drink, and safeguard the confidence of our consumers and shoppers in our world-class industry. The UK's 8,000 food and drink manufacturers must continue to have access to adequate supplies of raw materials that are safe, of high quality and competitively priced."

BRC: "2019 was the worst year on record"

● First year to show an overall decline in retail sales

● "Broken" business rates system sees retail pay 25% of all business rates

● The industry continues to transform in response to changing technologies and shopping habits



Tom Holder, spokesman for BRC (British Retail Consortium)

"2019 was a challenging year for many retailers, driven by weak consumer demand and Brexit uncertainty."

"Many retailers will be hoping

for the Government to show clear progress in their negotiations with the EU and other countries.

"Furthermore, as sustainability took up more of the news agenda, many customers switched to more environmentally friendly products or simply chose to buy less."

"It remains to be seen if this trend will continue through 2020."



Helen Dickinson OBE, chief executive, BRC

"2019 was the worst year on record and the first year to show an

overall decline in retail sales.

This was also reflected in the CVAs, shop closures and job losses that the industry suffered in 2019. Twice the UK faced the prospect of a no-deal Brexit, as well as political instability that concluded in a December General Election. The industry continues to transform in response to changing technologies and shopping habits.

"Looking forward, the public's confidence in Britain's trade negotiations will have a big impact on spending over the coming year. There are many challenges for retailers: to drive up productivity, continue to raise wages, improve recyclability of products and cut waste."

"The flavour race is well and truly on its way"

Not so very long ago ice cream was a seasonal treat. When the sun shone so did sales, and the larger manufacturers would turn to their in-house meteorology departments to help predict demand. Somehow things have changed and Mr Whippy has felt the squeeze from one-litre boxes packed with exotic flavours.

The flavour race is well and truly on its way, despite recent research suggesting that for Brits the favourite ice cream flavour is vanilla. Which must be irritating for the companies whose R&D departments have developed some suitably strange offerings including Blue Banana, Creme Egg, Chicken Sorbet or even Unicorn ice cream (presumably this one is hard to find).

We are defined by our taste in sweets and the decades have seen the rise and rise of Continental giant Haribo. Earlier this spring they went to the courts alleging unfair competition. What had got them so miffed was the entry to the Spanish market of a range of boozy gummy bears by Osito & Co. In Spain, bear lovers could purchase alcohol-infused bears with 15% alcohol and flavours like Gin & Strawberry, Tequila & Lemon or Rum & Pineapple. Slurp as few as seven of these infused bruins and you'll have taken on the equivalent of a 150ml glass of wine. Police will doubtless have their breathalysers at the ready.

As the rolling wave of new diet plans is about to overwhelm us, sifting through the healthy options becomes a chore until you come across the Great Gran Diet which



CHARLES CAMPION

suggests that we should eat the same meals as Great Granny. This is close to that oft-quoted premise that Britons were never healthier than during the Second World War, when shortages re-wrote menus and cut down portion sizes everywhere. But now we have a doctor suggesting that we start every day with a full English. He also recommends shopping in real shops: butchers, fishmongers and greengrocers. The snag is (and Great Granny wouldn't care for this bit) you have to cut out all carbs – no more toast with that full English; banish any crusty loaves; begone pasta. Tuck in.

There's a certain excitement when you stumble across a new word, and it's better still if you don't know its meaning. This spring I have noticed 'woke'. As far as I can judge, the word 'woke' is a stablemate of 'political correctness'. Woke grew up in North America and refers to the situation that follows "awake" and is usually linked to combating racism. A restaurant in Liverpool faced criticism when they launched an 8oz 'ladies fillet' to avoid over-facing delicate lady diners. A debate raged as to whether the term is patronising until a Liverpudlian lady diner said that her solution was to order two of the small steaks.

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“The notion of ‘novel food’ is not new”



SUE NELSON

The Food Standards Agency recently announced that CBD (the non-addictive active ingredient derived from cannabis) does not fall under the scope of the Novel Foods Schedule. That is to say, CBD was not consumed “significantly” prior to May 1997 and so it will be considered a novel food. Further to this, they have given the CBD industry a deadline of 31st March 2021 to submit valid novel food authorisation applications.

But what does all this mean and why should independent retailers take note? First, the FSA has declared that CBD products will be taken off the shelves if information about their contents is not given by the deadline. To be clear, there do not appear to be any safety concerns to those consuming CBD within the set guidelines, rather the FSA wants to ensure that the contents are what they claim to be. Those producers who are manufacturing genuine high-quality CBD ranges are, quite rightly, pleased about this development. It will prevent the more unscrupulous manufacturers from peddling dubious products with no medicinal benefits.

Secondly, it highlights the issue of ‘novel foods’. This is the classification of an ingredient or a food that is 1) new – usually because it has recently been discovered somewhere across the globe, or 2) innovative – generally because it has been modified or manufactured using a process that has not been used before. If either of these apply, then the novel food has to be registered and then authorised

before it can be sold in the UK and the EU.

New kinds of food are developed all the time. Increasing globalisation, growing ethnic diversity and the search for healthier alternatives and new sources of nutrients are the key drivers. The notion of ‘novel food’ is not new, however. Throughout history new types of food or ingredients have found their way into our shops from distant shores. Bananas, tomatoes, pasta, tropical fruit, maize, rice, a wide range of spices and herbs, all originally came to Europe as novel foods. Among the recent arrivals are chia seeds, the fruit of the noni tree, algae-based foods, baobab fruit and physalis (Cape gooseberries).

New processes and new technologies for producing food include vertical farming, hydroponics, extracting omega-3 fatty acids from krill and protein from insects, plant sterols as a new substance and new micro-organism cultures such as the development of certain probiotic bacteria.

On 1st February, responsibility for approving novel foods passed from the EU to the Food Standards Agency but the processes will be aligned for the time being. The UK will essentially be conforming to the long-standing EU novel food regulation. Obviously, consumers must be protected from products that pose a health risk, but it is important that the regulation of innovation in food production and ingredient sourcing is not overly onerous or too slow. Many people claim this is the current situation. Perhaps, then, this gives us an opportunity in the UK to make the system more streamlined as so many of these developments are important to solving our most pressing health and wellbeing issues.

Sue Nelson presents the FoodTalk Show with Holly Shackleton
foodtalk.co.uk

TRENDING NOW

Paula Bayarte lists Spain's top food trends

EAT IN MARKETS

Ninot Market in Barcelona and the Central Market of Valencia are perfect examples of places engulfing tourists and locals alike to enjoy cheap, fresh lunch. Markets not only fill fridges, but they are proving to be a great meeting point for friends and family. There are many restaurants serving fresh, local cuisines, such as paella and grilled meat for a fraction of the cost of bigger food chains.

MEAT BASED IN PLANTS

Currently, one of the most popular trends around the globe are vegan dishes. In a country where meat is dominant in many of the recipes, vegan chicken or fake beef are starting to become more usual in Spanish fridges. Heura is an aspiring brand from Barcelona, whose “mission is to face the problems of the current food system, offering proteins with a positive impact on the world through sustainable, nutritious and delicious foods”. Not only that, but “100% of people who try Heura believe they eat meat.”

FERMENTED PRODUCTS

Fermented products are not as common in Spain as countries such as England and Australia, but popularity amongst products such as kombucha and kefir yoghurt is increasing. Recent news and studies suggest that the beneficial probiotics within these ingredients are stimulating healthier immune systems. One of the major Spanish brands fermenting drinks is Kom Vida, with a variety of different flavours, such as ginger and lemon, carrot with turmeric and apple with cinnamon.

DISCOVER MURCIA

Fitur Madrid has just declared this small city in the south of Spain as the gastronomic city of 2020. Murcia has huge tradition of products from the orchard and the sea with delicious specialities as ‘Caldero’, rice with seafood or vegetables like beans or tomatoes. Nice food, nice beaches and Murcia is one of the cheapest regions in Spain, so it is time to discover it.

Talking point: CBD

While the CBD market in the UK is reported to be worth £300m and expected to hit £1 billion by 2025 (Centre for Medicinal Cannabis), a recent statement released by the FSA reiterating its status as a novel food product has set headlines ablaze. *Speciality Food* spoke to three brands utilising CBD in their products to get their take.

Melanie Goldsmith, CEO at Pollen: “We only see this move from the FSA as a positive one. At the moment there

is a lot of uncertainty, not just for the industry but for consumers too. We expect and hope that this announcement will help to bring greater clarity to a growing market, allowing consumers and retailers to choose brands with confidence in their integrity and enforce higher standards across the board – an approach that Pollen has always advocated and upheld.”

Jenny Simms, brand director at The Marshmallowist: “As artisan confectioners I want more transparency on

ingredients and I’m also supportive of increased regulation – this tends to work well for us because we use the best quality ingredients you can buy. But I, personally, feel that the novel foods regulation doesn’t do that. It’s odd territory to move into – to class CBD products as a novel food because they failed to show a significant history of consumption prior to 1997? Well what an arbitrary and irrelevant benchmark. How we ate in 1997 is not how we eat now. In a progressive food market that shows us moving more towards plant based products from oat milk to pea protein, showing that it was relevant to a 1997 consumer has little bearing on the demand for it in a 2020 market nor its efficacy as a product. I want to see more transparency on supply chains, I want to see products rigorously tested for the quality of their ingredients. I don’t want a ‘novel foods’ classification that does not improve consumer understanding or bring about an uplift in standards.”



David Burden, director at The London Botanist: “In regards to the Novel food enforcement in the

UK it seems on the surface that the FSA have given the market a route to compliance stating that only those with a novel food licence will be allowed to trade come 2021. However it is not quite that straightforward. These licences are a barrier for most companies with the costs running into the hundreds of thousands and so far there are only a handful of applications that have made it past the first stage. These applications are for single molecule products (either synthetic or isolate) and none are for whole plant extracts. It is argued that unlike isolates, whole plant extracts use the synergy of all the compounds in the hemp plant to help the body achieve homeostasis. Taken at face value it seems whole plant extracts could be off the market in the UK come 2021.

“However it seems there have been some immediate developments in Germany in relation to CBD’s novel food status which could be wide reaching. The federal government and federal ministry of food and agriculture (BMEL) has decided that it is sticking to earlier findings of the EU commission that whilst CBD isolates and CBD-hemp rich extracts are considered novel, whole plant extracts including leaves and flowers are not covered by Art. 2 of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 on novel foods and novel food ingredients. The EIHA are now awaiting on the response of the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) to concur with the BMEL and amend its stance on CBD products. Fingers crossed the BVL will take heed of the BMEL’s decision and return to a more sensible approach to CBD. Furthermore hopefully this can be the precursor to other bodies such as the FSA acknowledging that whole plant extracts have been in use pre 1997 and do not need to be placed on the novel food register.”



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IFE 2021 IS LINKING THE FULL SUPPLY CHAIN

"We cannot wait to deliver the largest collection of international food, drink and hospitality solutions to the UK annually from March 2021"



Launching 22nd-24th March 2021 at ExCeL London, The International Food & Drink Event (IFE), Hotel, Restaurant & Catering (HRC), London Produce Show, Festival of Enterprise and IFE Manufacturing Solutions will unite and establish the UK's largest event for food, drink and hospitality professionals. Showcasing a wealth of products and services from more than 2,500 suppliers and welcoming more than 45,000 visitors, this is your one-stop-shop to enhance your business.

Conquer all your business needs

Taking place across three mind-blowing days, you will be able to conquer all your business needs, meet the entire market supply chain under one roof and sample trend-topping content and thought

leadership by taking part in an annual celebration of all things food, drink and hospitality.

Head of marketing Sam Chance commented that, "The UK is known throughout the world as being a driving force behind innovation in the food, drink and hospitality industries. I'm thrilled that we will bring together 45,000 professionals from a multitude of sectors to source, learn and network and be delivered in a format that will be experience led, informative and fun!"

Not only is the event a sourcing opportunity for visitors from buyers, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and import/export – but also opens a range of commercial opportunities for suppliers, manufacturers and producers across all the different disciplines within food, drink and hospitality such as packaging solutions, fresh

produce, food and drink products and technology solutions – just to name a few... this will be the most important place for the industry.

Head of sales Daniel Gray stated that "The increased marketing and business development opportunities at the 2021 event are going to be phenomenal! The entire industry is going to come together – all categories and sectors throughout the supply chain, creating the largest gathering of food, drink and hospitality decision makers in the UK. Undoubtedly a must-attend event."

An attractive proposition for buyers and suppliers alike

Our partners at London Produce Show and Festival of Enterprise are delighted to be working collaboratively on this pending



union that will link the entire supply chain together in one attractive proposition for buyers and suppliers alike.

Jim Prevor, London Produce Show said, "The London Produce Show and Conference is the UK's largest event dedicated to the

exciting world of fresh fruits and vegetables. Producers from across the UK and around the globe come to showcase the best in fresh! We are proud to provide the fresh produce component to the new combined event serving retailers and foodservice operators with

Linking the entire supply chain



From concept to start-up to the best known brands, 2021 will deliver solutions from the entire food, drink & hospitality supply chain



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festivalofenterprise.co.uk



The UK's dedicated showcase of end-to-end manufacturing and product development
ifemanufacturingsolutions.co.uk



The go-to destination for UK & international food & drink discovery
ife.co.uk



The UK's leading global produce event connecting suppliers with major buyers
londonproduceshow.co.uk



The UK's largest and most prestigious event for hospitality and foodservice
hrc.co.uk

Daniel Gray
Head of Sales
+44(0)20 7886 3056
Daniel.Gray@montgomerygroup.com

See you next year!

22-24 March 2021 | ExCeL London

a world of fresh fruit and vegetable options!"

Paul Dunn, Festival of Enterprise commented that, "The Festival of Enterprise is delighted to be part of the 2021 group of events. With the whole food, drink and hospitality industry coming together we are looking forward to giving entrepreneurs and small business leaders in this vibrant industry access to expertise on funding, revenue growth and scaling up their businesses."

Our flagship event IFE has always been an industry staple event, with over 45 years of evolution under its belt. 2021 is an ideal time to implement this new proposition, developing and growing alongside the communities that we serve, not only by running the events simultaneously but also by running on an annual basis.

Nicola Woods the new event manager for The International Food & Drink Event (IFE) said, "IFE is the largest food and drink

event in the UK, it is the place for food and drink buyers to source new products and discover true innovation. Collaborating with IFE Manufacturing Solutions, Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, London Produce Show and Festival of Enterprise, and running the show annually, creates the most amazing opportunity for the entire industry to come together! The food and drink industry is constantly evolving and by running annually we ensure that we are delivering content which is on trend, innovative and ahead of the curve. We are extremely excited about the opportunities this new offering will create for the food, drink and hospitality sector – it is going to be huge!"

In addition, IFE Manufacturing Solutions (once Pro2Pac) has now become the cherry on top.

Introducing... IFE Manufacturing Solutions (IMS)

Launching 22nd-24th March 2021,

IFE Manufacturing Solutions (IMS) is set to be the UK's only dedicated product development and manufacturing showcase that services the entire food and drink supply chain.

Jamie Connolly, the new event manager for IFE Manufacturing Solutions says, "The world of processing, packaging and manufacturing has transformed into a much larger and more complex practice within the food and drink industry. From front to end of line processing solutions, packaging machinery and technology, contract manufacturing, branding, ingredients, transit solutions, ancillary services, sustainable materials, food wastage, the plastic debate, the list is endless. Having the right solutions in place has proven to make all the difference between having a successful brand with product longevity and being a non-starter." With this in mind, we have taken the well-respected processing and packaging event



"Pro2Pac" and turned it on its head to create an all new event – IFE Manufacturing Solutions!

Stay tuned as we reveal more information on this exciting project and confirm our new partners, content, products and updates for our 2021 debut event that stands to dominate the UK event scene for food, drink and manufacturing professionals.

GET IN TOUCH

Get in touch today if you have questions about our plans for 2021 and be sure to follow our suite of shows on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Don't forget the #tag #LinkingTheSupplyChain You can also subscribe to our monthly newsletter to stay in the know by visiting ife.co.uk/subscribe.

“We’re incredibly excited about this development to the event format in 2021. Ultimately, the five events combined will create the UK’s biggest and most diverse celebration of all things food, drink and hospitality. In today’s ever-changing and quick paced market, food, drink and hospitality professionals need to be able to stay ahead of the trends and adapt their business’ continually – bringing the events together allows them the efficiency of being able to fulfil all of their sourcing needs in one place whilst also having networking opportunities second to none”

SORAYA GADELRAH, PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR



The home of the UK's artisan food & drink community returns to London this September.

"We thoroughly enjoy attending the Speciality & Fine Food Fair as it offers a broad and carefully curated range of suppliers from organic to artisan and innovative start-up's."

Sophie Davies, Fresh Foods Buyer, Planet Organic

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specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk
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Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

Island Bakery extends all-butter biscuit range

Two new biscuit products have been added to the Island Bakey line-up. Sitting alongside the bestselling Lemon Melts are new Orange Melts, which are based on the same all-butter recipe but feature pure organic orange oil and are dipped in organic Belgian milk chocolate. Also joining the range are Blonde Chocaccinos, a combination of coffee and cinnamon in a light all-butter biscuit half dipped in organic Belgian white chocolate.

Owner Dawn Reade said, "We have been promising some new products for some time, and so it is really exciting to introduce these two new biscuits to the range. The Orange Melts, in particular, are proving to be a hit with our staff who are very keen to ensure good quality control by tasting them at any opportunity

– we think it is the Belgian milk chocolate that makes them so hard to resist. The Blonde Chocaccinos are a more sophisticated blend of coffee, cinnamon and Belgian white chocolate, which will perk up anyone's morning coffee."

islandbakery.scot



Trio of nut butters take to the shelves

Start-up Nutcessity has revamped the recipes and packaging of its range and launched their "most delicious" nut butters to date. They come in three flavours: Gingerbread Almond; Date & Walnut and Caramel Cashew, each of which are sweetened with natural fruits and are free from added sugar or oil. Each jar also now features a paper-based label and has been certified plastic-free by non-profit organisation A Plastic Planet.

Founder Mike Duckworth explains, "I wanted to alter the recipes slightly and make the label a bit brighter and plastic-free. They are a little bit different to peanut butter – the texture is a bit firmer and less cloying, whilst the flavour is wholesome but with a slight sweetness and salt-edge."

nutcessity.co.uk



Start-up unveils free-from sauces

New brand Janda has added a Vegan Smoky Garlic Mayonnaise, Nut Free Satay Sauce and Nut Free Romesco Sauce to its line-up. The range already includes a Vegan Lemon Spread, No Added Sugar Strawberry Extra Jam, Dairy-Free Salt Caramel Sauce, Burger Sauce, Buffalo Sauce and Egg Free Mayonnaise.

Managing director Andre Dang said, "We've developed Janda (derived from our names, Jon and Andre) to

offer a range of sweet and savoury condiments that can appeal to vegans, flexitarians and those on more restricted diets, but without compromising on the punchy flavours and quality that we're known for under our Manfood brand. It's my hope that the different recipes and product size will open up a new customer base for us, as we will supply both retail and food service."

welovemanfood.com

Italian fine pastries arrive from Vincenzi

Matilde Vincenzi is a family-owned business which produces an array of fine Italian pastries. The brand produces a range of snacks that can be enjoyed at any time of the day, including the Bocconcini range which is available in two flavours: Chocolate and Milk Cream, packed in a 65g box containing eight pieces. By using only the finest butter, Vincenzi produces a delicate, crispy and fragrant puff pastry composed of 192 layers enveloping a soft and delicious



cream filling. The Magnifico Wafers encompass all that is good in Italian confectionery; the light wafer is available in three delicious flavours: Hazelnut, Vanilla and Chocolate, and newly added to the range is chocolate covered with vanilla cream filling.

Vincenzi group president Giuseppe Vincenzi says, "These are not simply biscuits, they are fine pastries."

skoulikasbedford.com

Discover Franklin & Sons fresh take on the all-natural soft drink range

Three delicious new flavours have been refreshed within the core soft drink range including Cherry & Plum.

Franklin & Sons Cherry & Plum is Packed full of refreshingly rich cherries, with just a subtle hint of almond, perfectly balanced by juicy, yet tart plum. It combines the most delicious natural and nostalgic flavours to create a low sugar refreshment, with just 63 calories per bottle. All the newest additions to the range uses exquisitely crafted ingredients and less than 5g of sugar.

For more info and to request a sample visit: tastedirect2020.co.uk



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DTM PRINT



DTM Print, an international OEM and solution provider based in Germany and established in 1986, is a pioneer in speciality printing and has experience in developing individual printing services for over three decades. It represented the US company Primera Technology, Inc. under the name Primera Europe GmbH in EMEA for many years.

Besides its own products, DTM Print works closely with well-known manufacturers to provide the best possible printing solution.

LX610e from Primera is a brand-new full-colour desktop label printer/plotter that delivers photo-quality labels in any size and shape. It combines colour inkjet label printing with a built-in digital die-cutting mechanism.

0049 611 92770 sales@dtm-print.eu dtm-print.eu

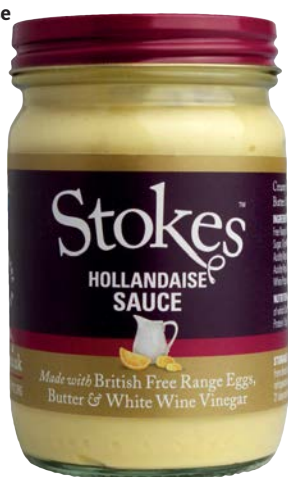
New sauce launches from Suffolk-based company

Stokes Sauces has added a creamy Hollandaise Sauce to its range of products. Described as "classic rich butter, egg and white wine vinegar emulsion" with a hint of lemon, the condiment is made using only British free-range eggs. Accompanying the launch is a recipe card with recommendations on how to enjoy Hollandaise Sauce, including recipes featuring seasonal asparagus.

Stokes Sauces founder, Rick Sheepshanks, commented, "Hollandaise is a versatile and well-recognised condiment, and, like everything we make, quality and taste is the Stokes difference in our version."

"Our luxury take on a classic staple is ideal for independents looking to cement their point of difference from major retailers. As asparagus comes into season, sitting the jars next to fresh asparagus to bring the classic pairing to life can really help drive sales."

stokessauces.co.uk



Fine food specialist revamps offering

Cooks & Co has spiced up its 100-strong range of products with a colourful new look. Updated packs of the brand's antipasti, oils and vinegars, mushrooms, canned goods and meal solutions are now being rolled out. Cooks & Co has also debuted new products: jars of Roasted Red and Yellow Peppers plus Roasted Red Pepper Strips, as well as a can of Young Green Jackfruit and a catering jar of Vegan Green Pesto.

Anne-Marie Cannon, senior brand manager for Cooks & Co at brand owner and distributor RH Amar, said, "Our new look and #AppetiteForAdventure campaign will drive awareness around authenticity and quality by tapping into natural cooking moments that appeal and inspire our target audience. Our exciting programme of recipe innovation will inspire our customers and consumers to be bold, daring and creative with Cooks & Co."

cooksandco.co.uk



Cake brand set to take indies by storm

New brand Cakehead is set to provide the independent retail sector with its indulgent cake offerings. The brand is launching with a whole host of products, which includes a selection of round, loaf cakes and tray bake cakes, as well as gluten-free and vegan options. Traditional flavours such as Raspberry & Almond cake will appear alongside more contemporary treats like Espresso Brownie. Co-founder Chris Finnegan says, "We want to work alongside farm shops and delicatessens, providing a high-quality product that we are confident will appeal to

their customers. Regardless of any major eating trends, we know that consumers will always be attracted to a comforting, home-baked indulgent treat so it is imperative that independent businesses capitalise on this important revenue stream opportunity. Cakehead is 100% committed to becoming the leading cake supplier to independent retailers and we believe that our unmatched quality, outstanding taste and extensive portfolio, blended with unbeatable customer service, will help us to achieve this goal."

cakehead.co.uk



Sweet brand releases VE Day commemorative tins

Premium sweet brand Uncle Joe's Mint Balls, made by Wigan-based William Santus and Co Ltd, has launched a commemorative tin to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day and raise money for war veterans. The tins come in two special designs for customers to collect, with 20p from each sale going to armed forces charities across the UK. The Mint Balls are still manufactured using the same traditional methods as when Mrs Santus originally made the sweets in her kitchen and contain no artificial additives or colours.

They are GM-free and gluten-free, and suitable for vegetarians and vegans.

Joint managing directors John Winnard MBE and Antony Winnard commented, "The Tommy Tin special edition is named after Uncle Joe's worker Tommy Bennett, who helped ensure front line forces had a regular supply of Mint Balls before joining the war effort himself with the RAF. It also honours the British troops who fought in the war and who were nicknamed Tommies."

uncle-joes.com



Changes afoot for biscuit business

Farmhouse Biscuits has re-launched its well-known Black & White range, which has been going for nearly 60 years, to include pops of colour. The packaging redesign for the range includes the removal of the PE-coated tray, which has been replaced with a recyclable version. The company has also expanded the range with the introduction of the Dark Coated Coconut finger.

Louisa Mayor, sales and new product development manager, said, "The biscuit is extremely moreish and one is never enough, with melt-in-the-mouth crumbly coconut half-coated in luxurious dark chocolate."

farmhouse-biscuits.co.uk



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MEET THE PRODUCER

A driving force in the spice mix market for the last 20 years, Seasoned Pioneers has now taken on its next venture with sister brand, The Spice Pioneer. MD Matt Webster tells us the story

How do you stand out in the spice market? Ask Seasoned Pioneers, who have been doing just that for the last two decades. Since the brand launched in 1999 there has been a steady release of its premium spices, chillies, herbs and seasonings. After honing knowledge and experience of manufacturing its spice mixes, the team branched out into its next venture in the form of sister brand The Spice Pioneer in 2017, filling a demand in the market for quality spice mixes using natural ingredients. Authenticity is key, and the spices are dry roasted and blended in-house in small batches at the Wirral-based premises using traditional production methods.

Managing director Matt Webster started working for the company in its early days, assisting the growth from a small start-up to a fully established brand. He took full ownership of the business in 2011 and has been the force behind The Spice Pioneer products. With the company adage being 'helping adventurous souls achieve culinary inspiration', it's clear that providing people with the tools to produce authentic-tasting dishes is the key. He explains, "The Spice Pioneer aims to make cooking accessible for people of all abilities. We want to remove spice intimidation so people can enjoy and feel proud of their tasty, healthy, home cooked meals.

content to make our spice mixes. This is unusual and costs more but delivers a much better end product."

The launch of Power Pods

The Spice Pioneer has had a strong start to 2020, with the launch of its Power Pods, which made the finals of the World Food Innovation

authenticity. The Power Pods are designed to be suitable for those with certain dietary requirements and are all free from gluten, preservatives, additives, oil and refined sugar. "Power Pods are a unique concept, perfect for those that lack the confidence or time to cook from scratch," says Matt. "They are conveniently portioned to minimise waste. Simply peel off the lid and tip in, it could not be easier. A straightforward shopping list and easy cooking method are also included to produce fast results."

It would be easy to assume that the running of two brands and plenty of product launches would take an army, but the success of both Seasoned Pioneers and The Spice Pioneer has been achieved with just a team of six. A passion for the products is the driving force behind this impressive feat, with

an all hands on deck approach when it comes to customer relationships. "We are a small, dynamic team that bond over our passion and knowledge for great tasting food," says Matt. "Managing both Seasoned Pioneers and The Spice Pioneer can be challenging but very rewarding. We have a customer-orientated, hands-on approach within a flexible work environment, that gives us the ability to help wherever needed and ensure a fast turnaround. Our reactive attitude means we provide a personalised service, working collaboratively with customers to ensure we meet their individual priorities and needs."

Eco-friendly ethos

Sustainability is also a key consideration for the business, which has a clear awareness of

“We roast and mix carefully selected, high-quality ingredients by hand in small batches to ensure unrivalled attention to detail and pronounced flavour”

its carbon footprint. To coincide with the launch of the Power Pods products, the company has opened a grove with tree-planting initiative Trees for Life to help make a positive environmental impact. Matt explains, "Although small, we are mindful of our carbon footprint. We strive to achieve significant change, which is why we support Trees for Life, who monitor and manage the trees they plant in the UK, meaning most trees planted survive and contribute towards carbon offsetting. It is important for us to make a tangible difference and we pledge to plant trees on a monthly basis. We hope this will motivate customers to purchase and support our initiative."

Looking forward to the future, the business is keen to expand its reach and see its products feature in even more kitchens. Matt says, "In 2020 The Spice Pioneer hopes to have like-minded retailers on board that share our ethos and passion for premium products. We look forward to producing spice mixes that inspire people of any cooking ability to share spectacular meals at home with family and friends."

“We are a small, dynamic team of six that bond over our passion and knowledge for great tasting food”

We roast and mix carefully selected, high-quality ingredients by hand in small batches to ensure unrivalled attention to detail and pronounced flavour, and only use premium ingredients with high volatile oil

Awards. The range includes five different spice mixes – Chicken Lollipops, Chilli con Carne, Fajita, Katsu Curry and Peri-Peri Chicken – which are made up of globally sourced ingredients for



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Cheese Talk

Artisan cheese from America:
 “If you give people space to create,
 they can do amazing things”



JASON HINDS
NEAL'S YARD DAIRY

When I started visiting the States in the early Nineties, artisan cheese barely existed – there were very few people making farmhouse or raw milk cheeses, and there was certainly no ‘tradition’ to speak of. It was a new beginning, a blank canvas to paint on. Cheesemakers were able to express themselves, take risks, be brave, find opportunities. They were unencumbered by tradition unlike those in countries with a cheesemaking heritage; they didn’t have a chef with a toque, or a fellow cheesemonger, tapping them on the shoulder and telling them to work in a certain way. Tradition is a great thing but it does halt people who are inspired to create. Had Heston Blumenthal been French or Italian-born he would have been shooed out the door.

America’s best cheesemakers are inspired by what’s come before but are applying their own brave twists because they’re not restricted by geography, politics and so on. They can be as creative as they want to be; they’re very dynamic, and very inspiring.

One of the advantages of creating something new, for which there’s great demand and small supply, is that you can command the right price for it. 20-25 years ago, artisan cheese was absolutely viewed as a novelty but the quality of the cheese has become inordinately better since then.

When we started selling cheese to the US, we were working with specialist shops which had no knowledge of artisan cheese. It’s very

hard to champion speciality cheese if you don’t have champions, so over the course of the Nineties we had some involvement in helping to create a generation of them. Once they existed there was a cohort of people to introduce artisan American cheese to the public as it started to come onto the market. I believe part of the reason makers started to produce quality cheese is because they had people to get behind what they were doing and champion it. These people helped create some positive momentum for cheeses which had quite a lot going against them, as they were not from the established cheesemaking

*Tradition is a great thing
 but it does halt people
 who are inspired to create*

nations and were very expensive. You can look to the American Cheese Society to see how fast this sector has grown; its numbers have increased stupendously between the turn of the century and today.

As it stands, 99% of American artisan cheese is sold in the US because a) there’s a market for locally-made produce, and b) it’s more expensive than even imported European cheeses. Its price is even higher in the UK because it is imported in such small quantities that it needs to be flown over, which is costlier than shipping. As a result, at this point the natural home for American artisan cheese is in specialist independent businesses. It’s worth noting that many American cheeses will be twice as expensive as even the otherwise most expensive cheese in the shop; over the course of a year you’re going to have very few return customers for a £100/kg Rogue River Blue, so at Neal’s Yard Dairy we stock it in November and December, when people are shopping for Thanksgiving and Christmas and therefore looking for a treat.

For over two decades, Cowgirl Creamery has been making handcrafted, organic cheeses in Northern California. Guided by the ideals that great cheese starts with happy soil, Cowgirl Creamery partners with dairy farms that champion organic, regenerative agriculture. Indeed, this commitment to the land creates a true taste of place in our award-winning fresh and aged cheeses. As pioneers in artisan cheesemaking in the US, Cowgirl is inspired by European traditions and their surrounding environs to create American originals.

Since the founding of the American Cheese Society in the 1970s, unique European-style cheeses for commercial markets in the United States have been flourishing. It was during this time that fresh handmade goat cheese made it onto the menu at Chez Panisse in Berkeley and the sector grew from there. Sheep milk cheeses are still rare, but find a prominent place on the artisan cheese counter. But there are few certified organic artisan cheesemakers in the States, and we are one of them.

Cowgirl Creamery plays an important role in making a handful of fantastic artisan cheeses that are distributed across the

*There are few certified
 organic cheesemakers
 in the States*

country, primarily through Whole Foods Markets. We also run two full service cheese shops in San Francisco and Point Reyes that sell a limited selection of the artisan cheese from our region as well as from California, the United States, a few favorites from Neal’s Yard Dairy, classics from Italy, Spain and France. Of course, Cowgirl Creamery cheeses are displayed prominently and represent a large percentage of our sales.



SUE CONLEY
COWGIRL CREAMERY

We also have a distribution arm called Tomales Bay Foods that delivers all of the cheeses on our shop counters to over 700 retail and restaurant accounts in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition, we ship through FED EX to areas in the US that do not have access to great cheese.

At our shops we sell primarily to visitors from our region and all over the world. Lots of grocers and specialty shops are now selling artisan cheese, so education is happening all over town. This helps spread the word about the benefits of sustainable farming and small production to the flavors of cheeses to the health of the animals and our planet.

Neal’s Yard Dairy has had a tremendous influence on artisan cheesemaking in the US. They have been helping Americans understand dairying and cheesemaking since the 1970s when Randolph Hodgson appeared on the scene to teach us how to taste and appreciate the wonders of British farmstead cheese. When he talked about the dairies and milk quality as the key to great cheese, many budding cheesemakers, including the Cowgirls, perked up and paid attention. The amazing mongers and cheesemakers at Neal’s Yard Dairy continue to inspire their American counterparts.

Our company was modeled on the Neal’s Yard philosophies and was created with the same commitment and attention to all parts of the industry from making, to selling, to delivering cheese in good condition.



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PETER'S YARD



MASTERING CHEESE TOOLS

A definitive guide to the cheese tools to have to hand, and when to use them

Cutting cheeses correctly is a big part of cheesemongery, as it's important that cheese looks just as appealing cut as it does whole. There is no one-size-fits all method to cutting cheese, and different types require different tools in order to get the best possible result. While a classic standard knife – which features a curved blade and double point at the end to pick up the cheese – will most likely be the most reached-for item in your toolkit, there are plenty of occasions where a specialist knife is called for.

Noemie Richard of Savencia Fromage & Dairy explains that, "We need to understand and define the cheese type to make the right choice of tool to use, as the main cheese families (fresh, soft, blue and hard) have very different textures." Plus, According to the Academy of Cheese (Level One Associate Learning Road. Feb 2020), "Different countries have their own preferences on which tools to use," continuing, "this typically derives from the preponderance of styles of cheese in that country." As such, it makes sense to have a

selection of tools available in order to cut and present every cheese at its best.

CHEESE WIRE AND BOARD

"This is the most effective tool for cutting most styles of cheese. The wire which is pulled through the cheese is not sharp but has no drag so moves through the paste and rind easily leaving smooth cheese surfaces," reports the Academy of Cheese. "The wire in this set up is likely to be on a spring so the tension makes it possible to cut through even the hardest rind with precision. Most cheese shops in the UK will use a board and wire. They are likely to have at least two boards, one for blue cheeses and one for other cheeses to prevent contamination. If a cheese is too large to fit on a board (e.g. a Gruyère), then a long cheese wire with handles will be used.

SOFT CHEESES

"For fresh and creamy pastes, we can use a wire to make precise cuts, but it is always easier to spread it on a top of bread or cracker using a butter knife," says Noemie. "Soft ripened cheeses (Camembert, Brie) are defined by a creamy and sticky texture with different level of firmness depending

on their life stage. These cheeses should be cut with a perforated blade to avoid the paste to stick to the knife."

BLUE CHEESE

According to Naomi, "Blue cheese such as Roquefort will generally require a wire as the amount of moisture together with the chalky texture make the cutting very delicate." The Academy of Cheese advises to use, "Hollowed out/ reduced blade knives for softer cheese (including blues) where the reduced drag of the blade makes it easier to cut and avoids smearing down the face of the cheese."

HARD CHEESE

"The hard cheese family is more diverse," explains Naomi. "For the 'non cooked curd' cheeses like Edam or Gouda, the wire machine will work perfectly and make the job easier for big wheels, whereas for the 'cooked curd', the firmness of the paste requires that a double handled knife is used."

CHEESE PLANE

"A very useful tool for creating shavings of hard cheese," states the Academy of Cheese. "Cheese shops

TOOL CARE

Advice from Noemie Richard, Savencia Fromage & Dairy:

"Cheese tools require a thorough clean after each use, and it is fundamental that they are fully dry before storing in order to avoid corrosion of the blade. Also, the sharpness of knives and tools can be affected by the acidity of some cheeses, therefore it is important to sharpen them regularly."

may use them for slicing tasting pieces and also for cleaning the face of the cheese." However, "In the home they are more frequently used for cutting cheese for recipes rather than on a cheeseboard."

CHEESE-SPECIFIC TOOLS

Due to some cheeses being designed to have certain characteristics when cut, specialist tools have been created to satisfy this demand. For example: "the unique texture of Tete de Moine requires a girole to create its unique curled 'flower petal' cuttings," explains Noemie. According to the Academy of Cheese, "Grana cheeses – Parmigiano Reggiano and Grana Padano – are too big, too hard and too large to easily cut. The tradition is to use a toothed knife to cut through the hard exterior by 1-1.5cm, then use sharp wedges to break the cheeses open. This gives grana pieces their signature rough cut look." The Academy advises that, "Grana knives are the tools used to achieve this. Once the cheese is in small pieces a cheesemonger may use knives or cheese wires to cut smaller pieces." Scoops and spoons are available for cheeses which are served from the centre of the cheese rather than in slices, such as a whole Stilton or Mont D'Or; and Dutch or rocker knives – a large curved knife, often with a blade over 45cm long, with the handle at one end at right angles to the blade to allow for greater control – are popular in Holland for cutting Gouda, says the Academy of Cheese.



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“ A chopping board is fundamental to put the cheese on and prepare all the cuts properly, and wipes are required to regularly clean the surface. Size calculation comes with experience but a scale is a must-have to assure precision ”

NOEMIE RICHARD, SAVENCIA FROMAGE & DAIRY

MEET THE DISTRIBUTOR

Fine food distributor Rowcliffe has spent over 40 years building a name within the industry. New MD Sunit Mehta explains how recent developments will propel the business to the next level



Passion for high-end products and quality customer service is at the heart of fine food distributor Rowcliffe. The business was founded by Anthony Rowcliffe in 1967, who introduced speciality cheeses from Europe into the UK market. The dedication to championing small producers is still core today, although now the business works with over 200 suppliers, some of which have been working with Rowcliffe for over 40 years. The business prides itself on being the only one in this sector supplying to all three channels – retail, food service and independents. While known best for its selection of artisan cheeses, Rowcliffe also offers a whole host of seafood, charcuterie, olives, vinegars and much more. Negroni, for example, supplies traditional cured meats from Cremona, Italy. The distributor is also the exclusive partner for Delicious OnTap Oils & Vinegars in the UK.

New direction

Change has been afoot within the last year at Rowcliffe; the company was acquired by premium speciality Italian cheese producer Ambrosi Group in January 2019, marking the start of a new partnership and chapter.

Sunit Mehta is the newly-appointed MD of Rowcliffe and brings to the role 22 years of knowledge within the food industry and experience generating sustainable growth across businesses in the UK and internationally. He has hit the ground running, and explains that the acquisition has provided the opportunity to shake things up: "Year one has been all about learning the business, doing a gap analysis and making a plan for the short, medium and long term," Sunit says. "A key strategic change has been investing in infrastructure, equipment, IT systems and performance efficiencies to support our customers

across industry sectors. This would give us not only additional capacity but it would also give us the ability to service a slightly wider number of products." The business has also seen changes in senior staff and the implementation of new structures, including a dedicated purchasing and supply chain team.

Commitment to quality

The independent retailers still remain at the heart of the business and integral to the future. This year the business has invested in the re-launch of their exclusive private label Clemency Hall – solely dedicated to the independent sector. Sunit explains, "Clemency Hall has been a Rowcliffe brand for a number of years, but we have decided to put more emphasis and focus on it. The brand is predominately for our independent channel, to give them that point of difference. We have hand-chosen a range of products from artisan cheesemakers and producers with true provenance. The brand is about championing these products, producers and the food stories we must keep alive in specialist stores."

Consisting of an exclusive selection of cheeses, olives and antipasti, Clemency Hall has a

cheeseboard concept feel, with independents having a wide variety of products sourced from UK and Europe to choose from. "We are revealing a debut range during spring 2020, but we will extend

it in the near future. We are not just launching the products with the branding but also the product support, media support, point of sale and our product experts sales team," Sunit says.

While flying the flag for quality, artisan produce is one half of the secret to the long-term success of Rowcliffe, the other is providing expertise and support



“ We work with over 200 suppliers and all of them have a place in our business. We want to carry on working with these brands and supply partners and develop our relationship further with them ”

for its customers. This care and commitment takes the form of a 'hands-on' approach, with advice on offering ranging from merchandising and ways to boost promotions and product launches. According to Sunit, "A lot of our area sales managers have been in this industry between 10 and 23 years. They are not just out there selling cheese, these guys have in-depth product knowledge learnt over the years and they offer 360 degrees support with in-store vision, range planning and store staff training."

The family-owned spirit is still at the centre of this business, with Ambrosi Group fully embraced as part of the future. Sunit confirms that with this exciting change has come a chance to move the business forward, with plenty of goals for the long-term including, "To further develop Clemency Hall, new and existing supply relationships and our business across all channels. We work with over 200 suppliers and all of them have a place in our business. We want to carry on working with these brands and supply partners and develop our relationship further with them. We have a strategy and a plan in place now and we now have the team in place. It's very exciting. There are a lot of positive changes. The business has a real direction, a focus, a strategy."



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ITALY'S FINEST

Introducing EEQF: a European campaign set to get deli tills ringing

Launched in the UK in November 2019, EEQF – Enjoy European Quality Food – is a continent-spanning campaign focused on improving awareness and understanding of cheeses, olive oils and wines which have Designation of Origin, Geographical Indication and Guaranteed Traditional Speciality accreditation.

Co-financed by the EU, the EEQF campaign is hosting events across Europe, in Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland and the UK, with the overall project set to last for three years.

As well as celebrating the work of Provolone Valpadana PDO, Mozzarella TSG, Seggiano EVO Oil PDO and Terre di Siena EVO Oil PDO, the EEQF campaign aims to raise awareness of three wines: Asti DOCG, Prosecco Valdobbiadene DOCG and Vino Nobile Montepulciano DOCG.

Vittorio Emanuele Pisani, general director of Consorzio Tutela Provolone Valpadana – the lead partner of the EEQF project – explains that they “rely on this project to raise knowledge on the Italian protected food names in the United Kingdom, whilst promoting the territories involved. Supermarkets have been giving increasingly more space to these products, using their own brand for the packaging. Our educational activities, organised in the supermarkets targeting the consumers, will reinforce the position of these products and will endorse the exports activities to the UK”.

Highlights of the EEQF campaign include:

Mozzarella TSG from Latteria Soligo

One of the world's most-loved Italian cheeses, Mozzarella is a fresh stretched curd cheese revered for its



fresh taste, delicate fragrance and soft texture. Although originating from Southern Italy, Mozzarella STG has become an integral part of the dairy tradition across Italy.

The produce of Latteria Soligo has been appreciated by Venice's pizza makers since the 1960s. The business's Mozzarella STG has a number of recognisable characteristics: a spherical shape, smooth milky surface and soft and slightly elastic texture which is perfect for cooking.

It can be sold only if pre-packaged at origin in packs with the Mipaaf (Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food, and Forestry) logo.

Provolone Valpadana PDO

Since the end of the 9th century, Provolone Valpadana has become an integral part of Italy's portfolio of stretched curd cheeses.

Originating in the Po Valley, and now produced in Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Trento, it is made using a technique of kneading

the fresh curd in hot water, leading to a 'plastification' which allows for a wide variety of shapes and weights to be produced. The typical forms are: salami, melon, truncated cone and pear and these can be produced in a number of weights up to over 100kg.

Two varieties are available: mild,



produced with calf rennet and aged for two to three months; and strong, produced with kid and/or lamb rennet and aged from three months up to a year.

All Provolone Valpadana PDO products must display the PDO symbol, its logo and the authorisation number from the Consorzio Tutela.

Olio Extravergine d'Oliva PDO

Terre di Siena Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

PDO is made using the grapes of at least one of the following varieties: Frantoio, Correggiolo, Leccino and Moraiolo. Olives must be harvested between October and December, with the milling process taking place within 72 hours of harvest and 24 hours of being placed in the olive-press. The oil, green or yellow in colour with a fruity aroma and bitter, spicy notes, is exclusively packaged within the Siena province.

Seggiano Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

PDO is made from Cultivar Olivastra Seggianese olives, a local variety of the Monte Amiata territory of Arcidosso, Castel del Piano, Castell'Azzara, Cinigiano, Seggiano, Roccalbegna, Santa Fiora and Semproniano. The oil has a golden green colour, a fresh fruity aroma with notes of artichoke, and a herbaceous taste with bitter and spicy tones.



VITTORIO EMANUELE PISANI, CONSORZIO TUTELA PROVOLONE VALPADANA

AT A GLANCE: PROTECTED NAME ACCREDITATIONS



PDO (DOP) – Protected Designation of Origin

A European label of origin applied to food and drink

products whose characteristics totally depend on the territory within which they are produced. The accreditation requires that natural factors such as climate and environmental characteristics, and human factors such as craftsmanship and expertise, are maintained during the full production process which has to occur within a defined geographic area.



PGI (IGP) – Protected Geographical Indication

A label attributed to products whose

characteristics are strictly dependent on the production or processing skills within a specific geographical area. At least one phase of the production process must take place within this area.



TSG (STG)– Traditional Speciality Guaranteed

The TSG label is applied to products obtained from

raw materials and traditional production methods in use for at least 30 years, without bringing into account their geographical provenance.

For further information visit eeqf.eu/en



“ [We] rely on this project to raise knowledge on the Italian protected food names in the United Kingdom, whilst promoting the territories involved ”

VITTORIO EMANUELE PISANI, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF CONSORZIO TUTELA PROVOLONE VALPADANA

New retail perspectives from industry experts

Bayley & Sage launches own-label blue cheese

After seeing success with its own-label wines, olive oil and cheese biscuits, strong cheese sales has promoted Bayley & Sage to develop its own blue cheese. The retailer is working exclusively with artisan cheesemakers at Hartington Creamery in Derbyshire Dales, which is well-versed in making small-batch cheese, in the making of Bayley Blue. Created by hand using local, pasteurised cow's milk, maturation takes five weeks for the 2kg wheels and three for the baby Bayley Blues. The end result is soft blue cheese, said to be rich and creamy with a hint of sweetness.

Bayley & Sage founder Jennie Allen says, "We are incredibly proud to support British artisan Cheesemakers Hartingtons by having them make our first own-label cheese, Bayley Blue, which we believe to be the first British blue cheese of 2020. Every part of the process is done by hand, creating the



curds, ladling into the moulds and the wrapping of the final product. It encompasses our philosophy of fresh, local lovingly made food."

The Cheese & Dairy Show returns to Lancashire

The Cheese & Dairy Show, which was part of the annual Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show, is coming back in 2020. Spearheaded by Singleton & Co, alongside the NFU and local cheesemakers, the event is set to take place on 2nd July 2020. Supporting the competition is Ann Forshaw's from Booths, Jan K. Overweel at Morrisons, the NFU, Rowcliffe, Singleton & Co. and Tesco.

A new industry-recognised scoring system, based on points, will be used during the judging. A winner will be

chosen from each class of cheese, from which the Reserve Champion and Supreme Champions will be selected. Entries close on 12th June at 5pm.

Chief steward Ross Capes commented, "Lancashire is a strong centre for the production of cheese, ice-cream and award-winning yoghurts, but entries will come from all over the country. We are thrilled by the support that we have received and look forward to welcoming cheese and dairy producers' entries for the first of many shows to come."

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Organic cheesemaker brings award-winning cheeses to the UK

Italian cheesemaker Carioni is set to make its DOP cheeses available in the UK.

Carioni's dairy farm in Lombardy shifted its focus onto organic and sustainable farming practices five years ago, and is said to now be the largest organic dairy farm in Italy. Everything is done on-site, from growing pesticide-free feed for the cows to the production of the cheeses.

The farm works hard to ensure the wellbeing of its 1,600-strong herd, working to the ethos: "happy cows yield the best milk" by using less antibiotics and milking procedures that reduce stress.

Next door to the milking sheds is a state-of-the-art cheese production

facility. The fresh milk is taken from the milking sheds on a daily basis and turned into the award-winning, certified organic DOP cheeses.

Francesco Carioni is the fourth generation of the family and head of Carioni's UK expansion. Of the company's range he explains, "We produce well-known DOP favourites such as Gorgonzola, Parmigiano and Taleggio, as well amazing cheeses such as Salva Cremasco and Quattrolo Lombardo, lesser known in the UK. We also specialise in organic fresh dairy products, for example Ricotta, Mozzarella, Stracchino, and Whole Yogurts that are popular all over Italy due to the creamy flavour and textures."

The Cheese Barge comes to London this spring

The team behind conveyor belt restaurant Pick & Cheese and The Cheese Bar has announced its latest venture – The Cheese Barge. Set to arrive into Paddington Central this spring, the Metro reported that the restaurant will be on a two-floor custom-built boat, where a refined menu of seasonal dishes will be served. British cheeses will be a highlight, and it's said that cheeses to be sampled will include the likes of Baron Bigod by Fen Farm Dairy, Quicke's clothbound Cheddar cheese and Cropwell Bishop Stilton. At the time of going to print a launch date had not been confirmed but the Barge is due to open in April, so watch this space.



"BREXIT WILL LEAD TO US SELLING MORE BRITISH CHEESES"

Svetlana Kukharchuk of The Cheese Lady on the potential impacts of Brexit on business

“At the moment it's hard to tell if Brexit itself has had any impact on our business. It's still very early days. However, build-up to it did cause a lot of business-related anxiety and uncertainty. I optimistically hope that there won't be any negative effects on our business, provided that there is an arrangement at the customs that allows perishable goods to be imported from Europe smoothly and without delays. If that is not the case, however, I think it will just lead to us selling more British cheeses and other produce, which of course will be great for British producers”

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CHEESE FACT FILE...

ASIAGO

- **Country of origin:** Italy
- **Milk:** Cow's
- **Type:** Hard
- **Region:** Veneto
- **History:** Produced in the Asiago Plateau in the Veneto foothills of Italy, this cheese is part of a tradition that is said to go back over a thousand years. It's made using unpasteurised cow's milk but the traditional version used sheep's milk until around the 1500s.

TASTING NOTES:

Asiago D'Alleva

Crumbly in texture, there are different types depending on the maturing process. There's Mezzano, Vecchio and Stravecchio. The more mature version has a sharper taste.

Asiago Pressato

This a semi-soft cheese and has a milder flavour compared to the D'Alleva.

EVERY YEAR,
APPROXIMATELY
**10 MILLION
TONNES** OF
CHEESE ARE
CONSUMED IN
THE **EU**

SOURCE: STATISTA

Entries open for The British Cheese Awards

Farmhouse/artisan cheesemakers through to large-scale producers are invited to enter this year's British Cheese Awards. Held at The Royal Bath & West Show in Somerset on 28th May 2020, the awards celebrate the quality and diversity of British cheeses. The 70 expert judges, which include master cheese grader Diane Cox from Wyke Farms, will be scoring 126 classes of cheeses in a range of different categories, considering presentation, texture, aroma, flavour and balance. Awards will be given for the likes of Best Territorial, Best Blue, Best Cheddar and Best Blue Cheese as well as recognising the top cheeses in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The top accolade of the day is Supreme Champion, which will be named from the winners of each of the nine category awards. In 2019 the prize went to White Lake Cheese for its English Pecorino.

The Cheese Awards Hall will be nearly twice as large as previous years, reflecting its growing popularity. Over the last 26 years the awards have gone from strength to strength with nearly 900 entries from over 120 cheesemakers in 2019. Entries are open until 10th April 2020.

Alan Lyons, head of shows, said, "We're looking forward to the British Cheese Awards at the Royal Bath & West Show. It's been a pleasure to watch the awards develop over the years and become a prestigious date in the cheese calendar. We're giving the awards an even higher profile this year with two halls dedicated to the British Cheese Awards."



JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



"Whinging Poms"

We Brits have a reputation for being unwilling to complain. When asked by a waiter, "How's your meal?", a table that had been vigorously criticising their plates will meekly answer, "Fine. Lovely". Paradoxically, we now seem to love venting our spleen later on blogs, Trip Advisor, and any other social media channel that'll offer an audience.

I had very few returns in my shop – hopefully the quality of the cheeses avoided much disappointment. A faulty cheese would be replaced or refunded. Occasionally a customer would bring back a purchase that they just hadn't liked. If somebody has made the effort to revisit and present the item, they clearly have strong feelings. My adopted best practice, after a few mistakes, was to honour and validate their disappointment: "I'm sorry your dinner party didn't go so well", "It is quite a strong blue". This tactic (even if I thought they were quite wrong) tended to calm the situation. Offering a different item or a refund didn't dent margin much, yet served to retain some good customers. I learned that their emotional investment was as important as the money that my customers had spent on their purchases – the expectation that this cheese would impress their friends, or provide the perfect end to a dinner for two. It was the gap twixt hope and outcome that needed addressing.

How do you deal with any cheeses that disappoint you? I was judging last week with a retailer who said that the cheese submitted for assessment was markedly better

than the ones she received from her wholesaler. Had she raised the matter of her disappointment with the seller, or the cheesemaker? No. And too few of us do, to the detriment of all those concerned. If I felt that a cheese didn't live up to my expectations, at first I'd either cease ordering and selling it, or consign it to the brief list of cheeses that we still stocked (due to demand) but didn't rate or promote. It was better to raise it with the wholesaler's rep (though too often that results in a refund rather than an explanation), and/or directly with the maker. Few cheesemakers spend time in the retail environment and they may not understand the difficulties of portioning a cracked cheese, or have seen how an encroaching and browning under rind a day after the first cut can deter customers.

Some 'faults' may be easy to remedy (over-salting, perhaps), others may be explained by seasonality or a change in the milk or weather conditions. At the very least, both parties will learn something about the difficulties the other faces. I've learned most about the cheeses I've sold directly from the people who made it, and not the info sheets from my suppliers. I started to understand that artisan cheesemaking is as much an art as a science – alchemy if you will. I was then able to address shoppers' concerns about unsightly aspects of a cheese and explain them as a benefit.

A final thought – if you're in contact with a maker, ensure that your shop is added to the list of stockists on their website!

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THE CRAFTMAN'S TOUCH

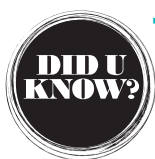
A unique natural geography and human expertise combine to create Kaltbach's cheese masterpieces

There's a limited number of products which truly offer an authentic taste of the place they originate from, but Kaltbach has got provenance in droves. Within caves carved in the Swiss mountains over the past 22 million years, Kaltbach's instantly recognisable cheeses are aged and finished to perfection – with unique characteristics which means that there can be no imitations.

The idea of cave-aged cheese is becoming increasingly familiar to the British fine cheese customer, but nobody approaches it in the same way as Kaltbach, which has been refining the very best cheeses from Switzerland in its unique caves for 67 years. It's a combination of geographical individuality and an unaltered natural environment which leads to the unparalleled characteristics of a Kaltbach cheese: a complex aroma and tangy flavour partnered with a distinctly dark rind.

A unique landscape

The mountains of Switzerland are breathtaking from afar, but look a little closer and you'll see clues to what makes the cheeses of the region so spectacular. Cows roam the picturesque hillsides, consuming a unique combination of colourful mountain herbs and flowers which imbue the cheeses with a one-of-a-kind depth of flavour. The volume of cheeses managed by Kaltbach may suggest production on an industrial scale, but in fact the opposite is true. Each cheesemaker sources his milk from within the local Wauwilser Moos area – some farms are within walking distance – and milk is



There is a small tranquil river that runs through the cave, which is formed by the water that is continuously coming down through the sandstone from above. This river inspired the cave's name: 'Kaltbach' means 'cold brook' in German

delivered in surprisingly small quantities fresh every early morning and afternoon, each day of the year without fail.

Cave-aged to perfection

Although discovered by the region's cheesemakers in 1953 and utilised for their unique characteristics which make them perfect for refining cheese in a way never seen before, the history of the caves extends back to the last ice age which took place 22 million years ago. Formed originally by water and ice, before the early 20th century the caves were used for storage – it is only since 1953 that they have been recognised as a geographical treasure appreciated by cheese lovers around the world.

Kaltbach's caves have been extended six times, from 10m to 2.3km, since the natural sandstone's



suitability for storing and ripening cheese was discovered. The caves store up to 120,000 wheels of Kaltbach cheeses, including 11,000 wheels of Emmentaler AOP and 20,000 Gruyere AOP wheels.

Located in Kaltbach close to the town of Lucerne – home of Emmi – the caves offer cheesemakers the perfect climate for ageing and refining cheese, as well as a

MEET THE MAÎTRES KALTbach

Kaltbach's cave masters possess knowledge that has been passed down through generations; it has never been written down, only shared by a small number of people who can boast not just tangible cheesemaking skills but also an innate instinct which cannot be taught. As the cheese in Kaltbach's caves a natural product, the cave masters' expertise is paramount in ensuring that each wheel is refined in accordance with its specific needs. Each stage of the production process benefits from their craftsmanship.



“ It is said that the cave's climate is responsible for 70%-80% of the cheesemaking process. The final 20%-30% is the responsibility of the cave master ”



natural geography of the cave can be witnessed throughout; its power over the cheesemaking process ever-present. While the tunnels which run throughout the caves – named after regions of Switzerland to avoid staff becoming lost in the warren-like space – were created by machine, nature continues unaffected. While the nature of the stone forming the caves is consistent (layers of sandstone and quartz, which controls the flow of water down the walls), the personality of each tunnel differs throughout. One side of a tunnel can be dry to the touch while the facing side has water dripping down towards the floor; stalactites can

cover just one section of a wall.

While the Kaltbach caves and staff continue their work creating the finest cheese behind the scenes, the site has become a popular attraction for consumers who appreciate this unique cheese and the story behind it. A modern Visitor Centre allows cheese lovers to learn about the history of the business, take a tour of the caves and enjoy high quality products in the on-site shop.

At the Kaltbach cave

During their time in the cave a mixture of salt and bacteria cultures are rubbed into the cheese wheels and they are turned, which in time

“ If you manage to get this kind of product to the standard you like, then that makes you kind of proud and you leave the cave and set off home in the evening with a great feeling of satisfaction ”

MICHAEL IFF – MICHU – CAVEMASTER AT KALTBACK CAVES

makes the cheeses firmer, tangier and stronger in flavour.

Gas builds up in cheeses such as Emmentaler to create its famous holes, and is prevented from escaping by the rind.

The cheese can be refined in the caves for months or years. The

longer the time spent in the caves, the more tangy and flavourful the cheese becomes.

Before the cheese can display the Kaltbach label it must pass 10 quality controls to ensure that it is of the highest level of quality and flavour.



As the composition of the raw milk being delivered to the dairy changes constantly, the expertise of the cheesemaker is constantly required to adjust production steps in order to create the ideal final product.

CAVEMASTER INSIGHT

Michu, one of the cavemasters at Kaltbach who looks after, cares for, and refines the cheeses within the caves, explains his process:

- We need a top quality product to begin with; then the whole cave climate plays its part, and we do our bit in caring so devotedly for the cheese.
- We brush the cheeses with our special cave wash so that these nuances of flavour penetrate the cheese and enhance it in both taste and aroma.
- Before these cheeses come to us in Kaltbach, the Emmi buyers assess

them in the cheese dairies, and then there's a maximum score of 20 points that these cheeses can reach. They must have a minimum of 19 points to be stored here. Most are 19.5 or even 20 points, and that's a prerequisite, so that with our care and time in the cave we can ultimately turn these premium products into perfectly aged Emmi Kaltbach cheeses.



WHAT'S IN THE EMMI KALTBACK RANGE?

Kaltbach offers a range of unique cheeses to the discerning British cheesemonger, all of which are selected by its master cheesemakers prior to ageing to ensure that only the best quality products bear the Kaltbach name

KALTBACK EMMENTALER AOP

Renowned for their size, each 90kg wheel of Emmentaler AOP is made using 1,300 litres of raw milk from the local area before being cured in salt water and aged. Kaltbach takes the finest wheels of Emmentaler to another level by ageing them in its damp sandstone caves for 12 months, lending the wheels a superb nutty flavour and tangy aroma as well as the cheese's iconic evenly-spaced holes and a natural brown-black rind.

KALTBACK LE GRUYERE AOP

Considered by many to be Switzerland's most popular cheese, Le Gruyere AOP is a strong selling product in the Kaltbach range. Wheels are selected from the 16 best Le Gruyere AOP dairies and are refined in the Kaltbach caves for 12 months to produce a uniquely fruity and tangy flavour. Once the year-long ageing process is complete, the cheese boasts a pale brown rind and crunchy salt crystals.

KALTBACK CREAMY

An exclusive recipe boasting an extra portion of cream, Kaltbach Creamy is popular with cheese lovers across the world. Delicious served in a number of ways thanks to its melt-in-the-mouth texture, it is expertly refined in the Kaltbach caves for four months which imbues a dark brown rind as well as versatile savoury notes.

KALTBACK GOUDA – NEW FOR 2020

Popular around the world at its three month-aged stage, Gouda comes alive after another three months spent ageing in the Kaltbach caves. A rustic brown rind and nutty caramel flavour delights consumers after this time spent with Kaltbach's renowned cavemaster.



Ensure customers have everything they need for eating al fresco with these picnic essentials

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Our range is packed with variety, from lager to cider, stout to sour and much more. Each is a genuine craft beverage, created by real independent brewers at the highest level of quality, and each beer is an established award winner.
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2 RUSSIAN PIES PIEWICH®

Our traditional hand-crafted, baked Russian Pie has an exceptionally deep savoury filling wrapped inside a lightly sweet, soft buttery brioche outer. We named it 'Piewich' given its versatility to be served hot as an amazing pie, or cold as an artisan sandwich. Winners of over 40 national food awards, to try for yourself email reesample@russianpies.com

3 THE REAL OLIVE COMPANY OLIVES

We source all our olives from artisan and organic farmers across the Mediterranean, we then marinade and pack them using cold pressed oils and special herb and spice blends at our accredited site in Bristol, ready for the deli fridge or loose deli counter. Live, love, eat olives.
therealolivecompany.co.uk



4 DRAGON CHEESE

Dragon is owned by 130 farmers, many of which have been supplying milk for its award-winning products for generations. The cheeses are made using 100% Welsh milk from cows that graze on the Welsh countryside, with the range including Mature Welsh Cheddar, Vintage Cheddar & Leek and Welsh Caerphilly. dragonwales.co.uk

5 SAN NICASIO POTATO CHIPS

Three quality ingredients are used to make the hand cooked Extra Virgin Potato Chips – Spanish potatoes, Himalayan Pink Salt and Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Using the sour type of non-transgenic potatoes from Spain ensures a crunchy texture and top quality for customers. sannicasio.es/en

6 BALLANCOURT FINE FOODS FRENCH FOODS

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

7 MELBA THINS SESAME AND ORIGINAL THINS

The Frisian family-run company has been baking thins for four generations. The process starts with carefully baked bread, which is then cut into slices, covered with cheese and cress and then baked until light, crispy and golden. melbathins.co.uk

CASHING IN ON FOOD-TO-GO

How to stay ahead of the curve and reap the benefits in the booming convenience food sector

The food-to-go sector is booming, and according to research from MCA's recent *UK Food To Go Market Report 2020* the UK FTG market is set to grow £1.8bn by 2023.

With consumers living busy lives, grabbing food on-the-go is essential for many, with Kantar Worldpanel's report (*Eat Drink & Be Healthy: How At-Home Consumption is Changing*) stating that on a global scale people are eating or drinking at home 36 million times less than in 2014. A few years ago the words 'food to go' or 'convenience foods' would have conjured up images of sugary and fat-filled items such as chocolate bars or mayonnaise-filled sandwiches that were chosen out of necessity. However, shoppers are now making more conscious decisions about the food and drink products they pick up. These days health and wellness are key factors for many when choosing items to eat on-the-go, with many looking for 'healthier' options that are less calorific and feature a reduced amount of sugar, salt and fat.

Formats are also changing and innovation in this arena is clear to see. When it comes to snacking, Deliciously Ella, for example, has a range of plant-based options, from Baked Veggie Crackers to Energy Balls, all of which are in snack-friendly packaging. Chocolate brand Doisy & Dam, known for its ethical chocolate, has also recently unveiled packaging options designed for on-the-go snacking in the form of share pouches and impulse bags.

For more substantial meals Re:Nourish is an example of a forward-thinking soup brand with its revolutionary heatable bottle. This packaging gives consumers the ability to have a hot soup during a busy working day with minimal fuss and planning. The bottles are also fully recyclable, ticking the box for sustainability as well.

Global influences

Attitudes towards animal products in the UK are also going in new directions, with an increase in the number of people adopting flexitarian, vegetarian or vegan diets. Statistics from The Vegan Society show that numbers of vegans in Great Britain have quadrupled since 2014, with numbers reaching 600,000 in 2019. In order to attract this growing demand for 'healthier' options, brands are needing to innovate in order to stay ahead. Jake & Nayns' has drawn inspiration from street food and global flavours in order to provide exciting options for consumers. The range includes a selection of filled naans: Beef Madras, Chicken Tikka and Balti Chicken plus a vegan Chickpea Curry filled with chickpeas and cauliflower in a tikka sauce, pilau rice and mango chutney. All four products can be eaten cold or heated up in 90 seconds.

Founder Jake Karia explains that incorporating street food style and flavours from around the world gives the brand its USP; "Innovation is key, and something that will help grow the food-to-go

category exponentially if done well. The majority of current offerings take inspiration from typically British food. At Jake & Nayns', we concentrate on bringing the range of world flavours currently available on the high street, such as Indian and Mexican, to the food-to-go category, offering a point of difference. We are constantly out and about trying new street food and getting new inspiration for flavours and NPDP. From getting an understanding of what works on the street and how people consume it, we can replicate the formats and flavours, and bring them into a chilled environment. We have lots of new ideas constantly coming out of this and are hoping to



“ One trend to watch for food-to-go offerings is 'out-of-the-box, into-the-fridge' snacking ”

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CRESPO SHAKES UP OLIVE SNACKING WITH NEW-LOOK POUCH LINE-UP

Harnessing its reputation as the Mediterranean's most trusted olive producer for nearly a century, Crespo is the pioneer of brine-free on-the-go pouched olives, which have now been given an eye-catching makeover.

Sourcing only the finest succulent olives with exceptional quality and flavour, Crespo's new-look snacking line-up features four tasty 70g pouch options – Pitted Green Olives with Herbs & Garlic or Chilli Peppers, alongside Pitted Mixed Cocktail Olives and Pitted Dry Black Olives.

All offering shoppers a healthy alternative to other bagged snacks, a 30g 'reduced salt' version of Herbs & Garlic option completes Crespo's on-the-go line-up.

Carrying a fresher version of Spanish producer Crespo's iconic diamond logo, packs also feature strong Mediterranean cues including sunshine-kissed olive groves to reassure shoppers of the quality within.



All are available widely through speciality wholesale, or direct from UK distributor RH Amar.

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bring more of these to market later this year."

How Whole Foods Market became a food-to-go destination

Whole Foods Market, a business which has seven stores around London with a huge range of natural and organic foods, also highlights global flavours within its offering. Timothy Howard, prepared foods coordinator at Whole Foods Market, explains, "One of our key USPs at our stores is our Hot Bar where we serve a variety of dishes from five cuisines from across the globe. This offer currently has an Italian, Chinese, Indian, vegan and UK/US set pulling together many of our highest quality

naturally sourced ingredients from across the store."

For the retailer the food-to-section and shop sections of the business very much work together in harmony. "We have different types of customers who require different things but at some point in the day they will all interact with food-to-go," says Timothy. "This could be an early morning coffee, a lunch or an evening hot meal. At Whole Foods Market this drives our footfall and also demonstrates the standards and values we have, in turn driving them back into one of our seven stores in London for other items at other points of the day. In terms of how this works for us behind the scenes we create win-win relationships

collaborating with other aspects of the business, whether it is a free range/organic chicken farmer or a vegetable supplier sourcing best in-season produce."

It's important to stay ahead of the curve, and Timothy explains that the company keeps an eye on what's happening within the restaurant industry. He says, "We are constantly keeping a close eye on our local markets and competitors, which includes the restaurant industry as this can trend ahead of retail. We stay on top of these trends through global food shows and industry discussions which help shape our understanding of different products, packaging and sustainable ingredients. Dietary requirements are key for Whole Foods Market and in food-to-go we pride ourselves on leading the way in as we follow a spike in certain foods if seen in grocery, produce or meat and seafood."

According to research by Whole Foods Market, there are a few key trends set to be popular in the next year: "This year, regenerative agriculture, West African foods and new varieties of flour are among the food influences and movements expected to take off in the next year," says Timothy. "One trend to watch for food-to-go offerings is 'out-of-the-box, into-the-fridge' snacking which finds more wholesome, fresh snacks typically prepared and portioned in advance at home: hard-boiled eggs; pickled vegetables, drinkable soups and mini dips and dippers of all kinds, all perfectly portioned and in convenient packaging. These snacking innovations mean ingredients lists are shrinking and there's a lot less guesswork in picking up a quick snack you can feel better about."



PRODIGY PEANUT & CARAMEL CAHOOTS

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prodigysnacks.com



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seriouspig.london



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weartheurators.com



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SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON ALCOHOL ALTERNATIVES

We explore how the wellness trend sparked innovation and a boom in alcohol alternatives

The drinks market has seen a wave of change in the last few years. The emphasis on health and wellness has seen Brits drinking less alcohol and opened up the market to a wealth of new and innovative low and non-alcoholic products. According to IWSR's *Global Opportunities in Low- and*

No-Alcohol report, 65% of those in the group of heaviest alcohol consumers (25-34 year olds) are trying or have tried to reduce their alcohol intake. The younger generation are also consuming less alcohol, with recent Mintel research showing that three in 10 Gen Z spirit drinkers over the age of 22 have taken an extended

break from alcohol in the past six months.

Dry January has also made a big impact. The campaign was launched by Alcohol Change UK in 2013 with 4,000 people taking part. After January 2020 it was reported that 100,000 people signed up and four million took part. Mintel social

media analysis has also found that mentions of Dry January across social media channels increased 89% from 2018 to 2019 and 1,083% between 2015 and 2019.

Quality is key

Previously those choosing to abstain from drinking alcohol had limited choice away from sugary soft drinks, but now the market is overflowing with options. Consumers are looking for something sophisticated and tasty to drink that feels like a real choice rather than having to settle for a lower quality option than their alcohol-drinking peers. Today's manufacturers of soft drinks are bringing flavourful options to the market which contain less sugar and preservatives as well as catering to the latest consumer trends. For example, Green Stem is a brand offering CBD-infused tonic waters, which can be enjoyed alone or mixed with alcohol. There are three flavours on offer – Rose & Rhubarb, Elderflower and Citrus – which are all sugar-free and feature natural ingredients.

Simon Horth, managing director of Green Stem CBD, believes that this combination ticks all the boxes when it comes to the consumer demands of today: "It's perhaps no coincidence that interest in CBD has surged at the same time as a number of other trends concerned with better health and wellbeing; notably, the 'sober curious' movement among them. It represents a renewed curiosity among a growing share of consumers about alcohol-free living and delicious alternatives to alcoholic drinks.

"The market has partially met that new demand with zero-alcohol versions of common beers, wines and

“ The products that sell are always a treat rather than a poor substitute. We sold a huge amount of good quality non-alcoholic sparkling over Christmas ”

wine and beer. Seedlip was the first brand to catch the public's attention with its non-alcoholic spirits, but since then start-ups and established brands alike have been releasing their own offerings. Many of these make clear that their products are tapping into the health and wellness arena, with low sugar, low calories, gluten-free and vegan credentials often highlighted.

Binary Botanical, for example, offers a 0.5% abv beer, described as being light and refreshing with a tangy finish. Meanwhile mead, one of the world's oldest alcoholic drinks, has been making a comeback thanks to Gosnells, Afon Mèl Meadery and Lyme Bay Winery. Gosnells has tapped into the trend for low abv drinks and also caters to the RTD market with its canned offerings. It's a market that is also starting to attract famous faces to it. Former *Made in Chelsea* star Spencer Matthews has launched low alcohol brand The Clean Liquor Company, which offers CleanGin at 1.2% abv.

Display tips

The key to getting on board the low and no-alcohol train is ensuring that customers are not missing out in terms of quality. Whether people are teetotal or are looking to reduce their alcohol intake at the weekend, it's important to have options on offer to cater to different tastes and preferences. Anthony Johns explains that good quality tonics and cordials sell well at Johns of Instow and Appledore over peak seasonal times; "The products that sell are always a treat rather than a poor substitute. Mr Fitzpatrick features very highly seasonally with their range – cucumber in the summer, spiced pear in the winter. We sold a huge amount of good quality non-alcoholic sparkling over Christmas. Bell and Co. flavoured tonics are also seen as a treat. The non-alcoholic gin market is a little trickier; we find as it is quite expensive it's an investment for a whole bottle, and consumers, I believe, ask why they should pay the same [as they do for alcoholic drinks]. I think this market works better for the on-trade."

For Johns the positioning of low and non-alcoholic drinks has changed in-store as the category has grown. Anthony says, "When they first came out, the non-alcoholic wines, for example, were always 'lost' within the alcohol section. The category has grown and they now demand their own stage and section in-store, and it's now a wine or a soft drink becoming a mini department all on its own."

“ It's perhaps no coincidence that interest in CBD has surged at the same time as a number of other trends concerned with better health and wellbeing; notably, the 'sober curious' movement ”

spirits, as well as previously obscure beverages like kombucha, but Green Stem were among the first to recognise the potential for delicious tonic waters infused with our award-winning CBD. Tonics are among the most versatile mixers after all; delicious on their own or with spirits, so they appeal to both drinkers and non-drinkers. But, we also wanted our Green Stem tonic waters to reflect the spirit of innovation that is a driving force behind the wellness market by making some innovations of our own."

According to the IWSR survey, low and non-alcohol products are on the rise – beer, for instance, was expected to grow by 4.9%. There has been a boom in alternatives for all types of alcohol across spirits,

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Now that sushi is as familiar as cheese 'n' pickle, we're branching out. We've eaten at Wagamama, Itsu and Yo!, and we want to have a go ourselves.

Japanese cookbooks are launching as quickly as Yo! Sushi is replenishing sashimi on the belt: January saw *The Japanese Table* by Sofia Hellsten; February, *Japanese in 7* by Kimiko Barber; and in March, *Vegan Japan Easy* appeared, by former Masterchef winner, Tim Anderson.

A Mintel report in February 2019 showed more than one in five UK adults who had eaten ethnic in a restaurant or ordered ethnic takeaway in the previous three months "would be very interested in trying out Japanese ramen (wheat noodles with toppings)".

WHAT'S BEHIND THE JAPANESE TREND?

Eating out plus a growing awareness of Japanese culture, whether it's last year's Rugby World Cup, the sweater-rolling, tidying-up guru Marie Kondo or the Tokyo Olympics. "Cooking as a hobby is also a factor," says Helen Best-Shaw, owner of the fussfreeflavours.com cookery blog. "People may not bother to cook on a weeknight – preferring ready meals – but they will cook a themed feast at the weekend."

JAPANESE FOOD IS SEEN AS HEALTHY, TOO, ISN'T IT?

Absolutely. The long lives of the Japanese have been linked to their traditional diet of green tea, soy, seaweed, fish, matcha and fermented foods like miso.

SO WE'RE AIMING BEYOND SUSHI?

Yes, we aspire to make katsu, teriyaki, yaki udon and ramen. The company Clearspring has seen a 24% rise in sales of Japanese noodles (year-on-year to September 2019, Nielsen).

ISN'T JAPANESE COOKING FIDDLY WITH LOTS OF SPECIAL INGREDIENTS?

Sourcing is easier now thanks to online retailers such as souschef.



THE JOY OF JAPANESE

Never mind sushi, give us katsu, ramen and yakitori. When it comes to Japanese cooking, customers are growing in confidence finds Sally-Jayne Wright

co.uk, and there are videos on YouTube and social media to show us what to do. Even so, many of us need lots of hand-holding. This explains the rise of meal kits and cook-in sauces. Itsu, Yo!, Blue Dragon, Sharwoods and S&B have all launched them. Even Marks & Spencer has a two-minute Ramen Noodle Pot – simply add water for a savoury Japanese-style soup with egg noodles and veg. Founded in 2014, Miso Tasty Ltd – makers of miso cooking pastes, noodle and soup kits – launched a new katsu curry kit in November.

WHAT IS KATSU?

A cross between chip shop curry sauce and tikka masala. It's so popular that last year Aldi was selling a Chicken Katsu Kiev.

WHICH JAPANESE INGREDIENTS SELL BEST AND WHEN?

"Organic White Miso Paste," says Ellie Minch, sales manager at Miso Tasty, "After it was used by Jamie on TV, sales increased overnight – they haven't slowed since." Miso soups, ramen, teas and yaki udon (noodle stir fry) kits sell best in winter and in cities.

“For confident cooks, there's a world to explore and that's before you even get started on fusion”

Planet Organic's best-sellers "by some distance" are the Clearspring seaweed snacks Toasted Nori Strips and Organic Seaveg Crispies. Clearspring's top performer is Organic Japanese Silken & Soft Tofu; as you'd expect, there's a spike during Veganuary.

HOW CAN WE COMPETE WITH SUPERMARKET 'WORLD FOOD' RANGES?

Surprise customers by selling something grown in Britain. The Wasabi Company offers award-winning own-label wasabi mustard, mayos and even a wasabi vodka, along with an impressive range of authentic Japanese ingredients.

Be adventurous. Try Clearspring's new Organic Yuzu Ponzu, a savoury condiment based on a citrus fruit

with a complex flavour. There are also three new miso soup paste flavours – Ginger & Turmeric, Creamy Sesame and Hot & Spicy.

Be knowledgeable and helpful. Show cooks how to use up Japanese ingredients to give British recipes a twist: rice vinegar, miso, sesame seeds and mirin in dressings; tamari and nori sprinkles on avo toast; miso paste in chocolate desserts. Remind them soba (buckwheat) noodles and tamari are gluten-free.

WHAT SHOULD CUSTOMERS DRINK WITH THEIR JAPANESE MEALS?

Sake – fermented rice wine. At 14-16% ABV, it is far less alcoholic than most people think. Serve chilled, room temperature or warm. The Wasabi Company has a range of Japanese teas including sencha, matcha and UK-grown green and purple shiso.

SORRY, WE'RE MUCH TOO BUSY TO EXPLAIN EVERY INGREDIENT...

So "look for products that are labelled well so their use is apparent," advises Charlie Turnbull of delishops.co.uk. You don't want to be left with slow or unsold stock.

I'VE THOUGHT OF PROMOTING MY JAPANESE RANGE DURING THE OLYMPICS IN JULY

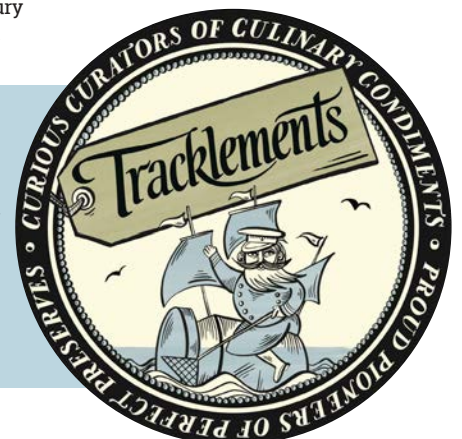
Good thinking. There's also the cherry blossom festival of Sakura in early April, Father's Day and Christmas. Cooking kits and Japanese knives make great gifts. Create in-store theatre with Japanese incense, flowers, colourful tableware and cookbooks; Clearspring can help with in-store tastings, display units and recipe leaflets.

WILL THE JAPANESE TREND LAST?

Undoubtedly, because wellness, fermented food, hobby cooking and more adventurous eating are macro trends. Meat eating was against the law in Japan for over 250 years so their dishes are well suited to flexitarian eating. For confident cooks, there's a world to explore and that's before you even get started on fusion. How'd you fancy a Japanese-Italian pizza?

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MEET THE PRODUCER

Innovative brand Re:Nourish is taking the soup sector by storm with its “world-first” format. Founder Nicci Clark talks to *Speciality Food* about her passion project



When talking to Nicci Clark, the founder of Re:Nourish, it's clear that she is extremely passionate about what she does, which is creating delicious and healthy soups while “breaking all the rules and reinventing them.” The brand offers five products: Digest, Immunity, Energy, Fuel and Calm. Each combines vegetables and plant-based ingredients to create a soup packed with vitamins and minerals. Ingredients across the four soups include tumeric, passion flower, roasted carrot and basil. Two new flavours will also be joining the range at the end of March.

According to Nicci, the soup market desperately needed innovation when it came to taste and quality. She explains, “The UK fresh soup market had not had any innovation since 1988. We use the freshest ingredients and the hands-on process ensures the soup tastes as though you've made it yourself; it's fresh, vegan, with no nasties added and full of the health benefits you would expect soup to have. The soup is healthy – I'm not going to be part of something that I wouldn't feed my kids or myself. That's what Re:Nourish is all about; it's black and white, there's no grey area because we've got nothing to hide.”

Working originally as a critical care nurse, Nicci's interest in nutrition grew and she started Nourished, a diet company specialising in nutritionally balanced fresh meals delivered directly to the door. It was during a trip to the US that a lightbulb idea came to her.

She was determined to introduce a soup packaged in a heatable bottle but was told it couldn't be done. Her tenacity paid off; after nine months in design, the “world's first heatable grab-and-go soup bottle” was ready to launch.

In March 2019 the brand showcased the soups at the

International Food Exhibition and by April was stocked in all seven Planet Organic stores. The brand is also listed at Ocado, Selfridges, Co-op, Waitrose and independents around the county. Nicci says, “We are one of the fastest growing FMCG brands, having grown 8,900% in 10 months. It's really exciting and a bit scary! We've gone from selling about 1,000 bottles to a quarter of a million bottles to date.”

Re:Nourish's path to success may have been swift, but it hasn't always been easy. “It's all very well getting a product on the shelf but you've got to then get it off the shelf; you can't have wastage. Retail is incredibly tough and fresh retail is just not for the faint hearted,” she says.

Transparency is core to the Re:Nourish ethos. The heatable bottle

is completely clear, to show that these products have nothing to hide. The packaging is not only practical but conveys the message that this is a new and exciting product and the future of soup. “It might just look like a rectangular bottle but what it does and how it performs is incredible, people love it. For the first time, soup is Instagrammable!”

Not only does this brand tap into consumer desire for soups that can be eaten on-the-go, but it's setting standards with its eco credentials too. “The average working person only takes 15 minutes as a lunch break so you want to give them something that is nutrient dense, quick on-the-go and that fills you up,” Nicci says.

“With Re:Nourish you can eat half and have the rest later as the bottle stays warm. We're the only fully recyclable

“ We were first to market, a world first, so it's a very exciting time for Re:Nourish because we are leading this category ”

grab and go soup brand, and that in itself is a great accolade. The bottle, cap and label can be recycled. Plus, as they are all made in the UK we also have a very low carbon footprint. We are ticking a lot of boxes and I feel

very passionately about that.”

After a stellar year of impressive growth for the business, what's in store for the brand moving forward? Nicci explains, “We are launching two further flavours at the end of March into Waitrose and are in talks with two other major retailers. We are also launching in Scandinavia in September. We're taking more market share and growing very rapidly. We were first to market, a world first, so it's a very exciting time for Re:Nourish because we are leading this category.”

Nicci's ability to innovate in the food and drink sector is by no means limited to soup. “There are also plans, not just in soup, but in another category that we think needs a bit of innovation,” she hints. Watch this space...

RE:NOURISH



renourish.co.uk

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GRAB & GO

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FULLY RECYCLABLE

LOW FAT

NO ADDED SUGAR

NO NASTIES

VITAMIN PACKED

HIGH FIBRE

AROUND THE WORLD IN 10 DELIS

Our planet's finest food retailers have plenty of retail inspiration to share, discovers Anna Blewett

Been abroad lately? Even if you were determined to switch off from the pressures of work, chances are you found yourself checking out the fridges in a bijou cheese shop, or pondering the challenges of maintaining a glorious fruit and veg display in high traffic location. Food markets, grocers and specialist ingredients stores are often magnets for hungry tourists, but they aren't just fabulous places to get under the skin of an international food culture. Thriving stores around the globe are also a shortcut into the retail culture and emerging tech of any nation, and plenty of lessons that can apply to your operations back home. Okay, so Seattle's new Amazon Go Grocery store, opened at the end of last month, may tell us little about the culinary underbelly of this dynamic city, but it does express something of the community's priorities and expectations.

There's plenty to be learned by studying the best retail outlets around the world; as we look for new ways to meet consumer's desire to shop more ethically we have the deposit schemes of Northern Europe to learn from. The best French retailers, meanwhile, are those successfully navigating a trend to reduce consumption and shop more consciously. Canada is the place to see how innovative food and drink producers run with the decriminalisation of cannabis ("Legalized recreational cannabis has certainly had one of the greatest impacts on the Canadian market in the last decade," says Mintel analyst Scott Stewart). Across continental Africa open-air markets have been

losing ground to supermarkets across the last decade, openings of air-conned aisles marching north from South Africa. In China the increasing urbanisation of the population is causing convenience stores to boom. Want a whistle-stop tour of the world's most interesting fine food businesses? Step right up...

1 BILL'S FARM, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
Heston Blumenthal isn't the only gourmet to recognise this south-coast city as a wellspring of innovation and excellence. Bill's, a stall that's stood in the Queen Victoria Market for more than three decades, is widely acclaimed as one of the country's best delis. European-style specialist cheeses made in the state are a highlight (including Australian Bries, triple creams and chèvres) and nestle alongside a series of single cheeses imported from Europe and sold as limited editions.
billsfarm.com.au

2 WHOLE FOODS MARKET LAMAR, AUSTIN, TEXAS, USA
Whole Foods may have 499 stores worldwide but its first outlet, the chain's flagship store in Austin Texas, is cited by many as its best. It's twice as big as other stores, and kombucha on tap, grind-your-own nut butters, bulk spices and certified beer and cheese experts on-hand all contribute to the sense of an outlet that's ahead of the curve. With upcoming in-store events including a 'beauty brunch' and a 'beauty and wellness class', this iconic retailer is pushing consumers' buttons hard.
wholefoodsmarket.com



BILL'S FARM, MELBOURNE



BILL'S FARM, MELBOURNE

3 SIGNATURE BY SPINNEY'S, BEIRUT, LEBANON

It's nearly a year since one of Lebanon's main multiple retailers opened a premium store in the commercial district of Beirut Souks. In a country spoilt for glorious open-air markets selling the region's fabulous ingredients loose, Signature offers a very different retail experience. Gleaming counters graced with imported foods give (rich) locals the chance to immerse themselves in a finely-curated "ultimate gourmet experience".
spinneys.com

4 HABITAT BY HONESTBEE, SINGAPORE

This "multi-sensory, tech-meets-food" grocery has all the innovation you'd expect from one of the world's most progressive retail cultures. Shoppers must first download an app before swiping a QR code for entry to the one-acre site which offers retail areas and café concessions. The store has no manned tills, instead baskets of 10 items or less are charged to the app's digital wallet. Trolleys are packed and priced by



MARKTHAL, ROTTERDAM

5 MARKTHAL, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Responding to tightened EU regulations regarding the open-air sale of meat, fish and cheese, this cavernous enclosed market opened in October 2015. Its brightly-coloured ceiling spans stalls piled high with South Holland's iconic yellow-rinded Goudas, cured meats, poffertjes (Dutch pancakes) and other European delights. Great though the food and drink on sale is, it's the richly detailed wraparound ceiling mural that sets the stage for visitors to flock in, and has made this new market into location that can challenge sites with hundreds of years' trading heritage.
markthal.nl

6 GASTRONOMIA FRANCHI BENEDETTO, ROME, ITALY

Another institution with its roots at the start of the 20th century, Franchi's regularly fills up with Romans and tourists jostling for Italy's iconic luxury foods. Fresh-fried 'suppli', Rome's answer to arachini, line up alongside deep-fried artichoke hearts and fritto misto for

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WHOLE FOODS MARKET

hungry shoppers while vac-packed cured meats, regional formaggio and funghi tempt cooks looking for the finest ingredients. 'Savour the difference' is the instruction etched above the threshold, and thousands of visitors every year do just that. franchi.it

7 LES HALLES DE LYON – PAUL BOCUSE, LYON, FRANCE

Named for the world-renowned chef who hailed from this third city of France, Les Halles packs in everything you'd expect from the country's gastronomic heartland. Brightly-lit counters (think Borough Market given a Harrods makeover) carry the prettiest aspic-glazed pâtés, foie gras, escargot, frog's legs and 'quenelles des brochet' made

from pike and wheat flour. halles-de-lyon-paulbocuse.com

8 WEGMAN'S, VARIOUS STATES, USA

With more than a hundred stores across seven states, this is no boutique deli, but Wegman's has plenty of inspiration for fine food retailers. While UK mults are pulling back from manned counters (witness closures at Tesco stores) this family-run chain invests in trained staff, and regularly ranks highly on 'best companies to work for' lists. With its offer aimed at 'upscale clientele' it is beloved for its focus on excellent customer service, organic groceries and hot food, earning admissions of #wegmania from loyal customers. wegmans.com



WEGMAN'S, USA

9 LA BOQUERIA, BARCELONA, SPAIN

Picking just one stall from this iconic market (also known as Mercat de Sant Josep) would be an impossible task, and it's the confluence of stunning seafood, jamon iberico, diverse local produce and impressive tapas that makes it such a treat for the senses. Tourist trap? Undoubtedly. But La Boqueria has worked to limit large groups and maintain its quality as a working market. Since November last year the market has offered online shopping to Barcelona and local cities, with shoppers getting 30% discount on items ordered via website or app. boqueria.barcelona

10 FORTNUM & MASON, PICCADILLY, UK

What list could exclude the incredible new experiential retail spaces at Fortnums? The confectionery department brings a make-up counter level of lighting to the brand's iconic colour scheme, with bright marble and gleaming brass fittings making a utopian fantasy retail space. In fact every individual space in the iconic food hall ups the ante, not only making the Piccadilly site a destination for tourists but also food lovers seeking out the most innovative and decadent new ideas in luxury food and drink. fortnumandmason.com



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THE GOLDEN TOUCH

Jackie Mitchell explores how retailers can cash in on celebrity-influenced 'foodie' culture

Celebrities have always influenced consumers' food choices. Back in the day, the phrase "the Delia effect" was coined whenever the cook Delia Smith featured a certain ingredient or utensil on TV, causing a spike in sales. Times haven't changed – if a celebrity mentions a particular food on a TV show, website or social media post, there is a surge in demand. Currently celebrities are increasing interest among consumers in quality food, healthy eating and veganism. As Scott Winston from Scott Winston Fine Food says, "Celebrity culture and, by extension, our desire to emulate our heroes, has been part of our culture for generations. Speed of communication via social media simply means that ideas and trends can be disseminated much quicker than before."

Which celebrities are influencing consumers' choices?

Although Gwyneth Paltrow, Hollywood star and founder of wellness site Goop, has been criticised in the past for her eating style, her recipe books have been well received. On her website, the recipes are described as "relatively virtuous and absent of common allergens." Examples include Kale Cabbage Slaw with Almonds & Dill and Vegan Salad Dressing, as well as a guide to plant-based grilling.

TV presenter Davina McCall cut sugar in five weeks as demonstrated in her book *Davina's 5 Weeks To Sugar Free*, in which she uses natural sugars such as honey and maple syrup. In her latest book *Davina's Kitchen Favourites* the recipes are refined sugar-free, use loads of vegetables and fruit, as well as brown rice pasta, wholemeal or spelt flour

“Celebrity involvement certainly raises a product's profile”

instead of white flour, rice and pasta. Examples include Apple Soda Bread, Freekeh & Goat's Cheese Salad, Pea & Ricotta Dip, Simple Dal and Vegan Baked Beans.

Product endorsement

Another area is products endorsed by celebrities. For example, Kombucha No 1 was launched by Johnny Wilkinson, the English former rugby union player, and Just Water is the eco-friendly water brand from Will Smith, Hollywood movie star and his son Jaden. Karen Green, The Food Mentor, says, "There was a huge amount of publicity around the launch of Just Water, but the whole point is finding niche products that aren't in the retailers. See what celebrities are doing in the grocery market and adapt it to suit your business."

The growth of veganism

A 2019 survey revealed the number of vegans in the UK had risen to 3.5 million, influenced by celebrities such as Ariana Grande, Miley Cyrus and Ellen DeGeneres. Lewis Hamilton, Formula One World Champion, also a vegan, is launching Neat Burger, a plant-based burger chain.

Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver has followed this trend with his new book *Veg*, a vegetarian book which is around 40% vegan. It's accompanied



“When the TV programme is on, take part in the discussion. Show your customers you're part of it. Post on social media that you're offering sampling in your shop and invite them to come in”

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CASH IN?

FORWARD PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL

Scott Winston says, "When I worked for a major retailer, key dates were noted and annualised. So when *The Great British Bake Off* is running, make sure you have a compelling range of home baking products – maybe cross merchandising with any relevant books. This approach allowed us to participate, but not fall foul of any specific licensing rules, for example we would not use the show name."

DOES THE CELEBRITY ETHOS FIT YOUR SHOP'S PROFILE?

Vhari Russell says, "Make sure the celebrity influence is aligned with your shop's ethos and brand ethics."

If you are a butcher, you wouldn't talk about veganism."

LOOKING AHEAD TO CHRISTMAS

Keep posted on which Christmas TV shows are coming up so you can prepare displays and join in on social media. For example, Nigella Lawson usually has a festive show and, as Vhari points out, this will have a knock-on effect "not only on ingredients, but also on non-food products, the utensils she uses in the kitchen. It's a great idea to sell items in your shop which are being highlighted by someone with great influence. Make every inch of your shop work for you. Non-food items have a higher margin and there are no shelf-life issues."

MAKING CELEBRITY COOKBOOKS WORK FOR YOU

Capitalise on celebrity recipe books and use them to focus on the USP of your shop. As Scott Winston says, "For example, if you are in the West Country, on the coast or feature fish and seafood heavily, you could feature books by chefs such as Mitch Tonks or Rich Stein. This helps reinforce your own niche on the high street. Nigel Slater's *The Kitchen Diaries* is great and I always have a copy close by. It's brilliant for reminding you what's around the corner from a seasonal perspective and then offering suggestions on how to use the ingredients. Cookbooks can often add a subtle upsell to your range. Find a good distributor working across multiple publishers, keep stock levels light and rotate the range seasonally."

SOCIAL MEDIA – JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION

As Vhari Russell says, it's important to engage on social media. "Twitter is powerful from *The Great British Bake Off* point of view," she says. "Post images of baking ingredients, cakes and so on. When the TV programme is on, take part in the discussion. Show your customers you're part of it. Post on social media that you're offering sampling in your shop and invite them to come in."

Another idea is to follow celebrities' social media accounts so you can see what they are promoting and capitalise on it. Also follow food TV series and well-known food Instagrammers to see what's on trend.

FINDING NICHE PRODUCTS

Karen Green, The Food Mentor suggests researching what

celebrities are doing in the mainstream grocery market (such as Kombucha No 1 and Just Water) "and then find more of a niche product from a smaller up and coming brand relative to your customer base. Find a point of difference, something innovative and new," she says. She cites the example of Pip & Nut, producers of nut butters such as Crunchy Maple Peanut Butter and Coconut Almond Butter, with a range of recipes on the website such as Chocolate & Almond Bread. Or there's Candy Kittens, the gourmet sweet company, which produces vegan, veggie-friendly, gluten and dairy-free sweets with no gelatine. Variants include Wild Strawberry, Blueberry Bliss, Peach Fizz and Sour Watermelon.



ELLA WOODWARD

by a Channel 4 show *Meat Free Meals*. Recipes from the book include Crispy Cauliflower Katsu, Indian-style Chip Butty and Veg Tagine.

Even Greggs has cashed in on the vegan trend with its best-selling vegan sausage rolls, while KFC has introduced a vegan burger.

Meanwhile, Heidi Klum, model and TV personality, favours a vegetable and fruit packed smoothie every morning.

As Vhari Russell, founder of The Food Marketing Experts says, "Veganism isn't going away." Her company has been working with The Brook, producers of vegan ready meals and its new brand ambassador Jasmine Harman, TV presenter of *A Place in the Sun*. "We made the announcement about Jasmine at Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2019," she says. "Celebrity involvement certainly raises a product's profile."

Engaging in social media is key according to Vhari. "It's all about joining the conversation on social and being part of it. In the build up to TV food shows, have a display of ingredients and utensils and while the TV programme is airing, take part in the discussion on social media."

Meghan Markle, former Duchess of Sussex, is also a major influence. A self-proclaimed 'foodie', according to *Hello* magazine, she follows a gluten-free and vegan diet during the week although she likes roast

“ Make sure the celebrity influence is aligned with your shop's ethos and brand ethics. If you are a butcher, you wouldn't talk about veganism ”

chicken. During a Royal tour of Australia, she presented her hosts with a homemade banana bread. She lent a hand to a group of women who suffered after the Grenfell Tower tragedy, suggesting they come up with a cookbook of their recipes. It was published as *Together: Our Community Cookbook* with a foreword by Markle. Recipes include Green Chilli & Avocado Dip, Coconut Chicken Curry, Aubergine Masala, Persian Chicken with Barberry Rice and Caramelised Plum Upside-Down Cake.

TV shows affect consumers' tastes in food, too. *The Great British Bake Off* has brought forward a big resurgence for baking. It's not just the

presenters such as Paul Hollywood who set trends, but also past winners. Nadiya Hussain, for example, has moved beyond baking with several cookbooks and TV series.

There's no doubt that celebrity cookbooks influence consumer choice, although *A Pinch of Nom* by Kate Allison and Kay Featherstone is the fastest-selling non-fiction title ever.

Instagram 'influencers' also have a role to play in increasing consumer interest in quality food, such as Ella Woodward, also known as Deliciously Ella, with 1.7 million followers. Ella is a top foodie influencer who posts delicious-looking, healthy food. She's written several cookbooks, has a YouTube channel, a podcast and an app. Sample recipes include Whole Roasted Cauliflower with Creamy Harissa Dip and Spiced Peanut Sweet Potatoes.

Karen Green also mentions The Happy Pear (David and Steven Flynn), YouTubers with 394,000 subscribers and authors of three recipe books. Their YouTube channel demonstrates recipes such as Easy Vegan Chilli. Topics on their Instagram feed (398,000 followers) include Vegan Choc Bounty Bar and Vegan Omelette.

“ Capitalise on celebrity recipe books and use them to focus on the USP of your shop ”



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DESTINATION PROFIT

Atmosphere, ambience, regional specialities... what else makes for a destination deli, asks Jackie Mitchell

What makes a great destination deli? Is it the atmosphere, the ambience, regional specialities, foodie gifts, added attractions, or a combination of all these elements? And most importantly, how does a deli become a great destination? It needs to stand out and create an adventure for customers, and provide products and experiences they won't find anywhere else. At the same time, it needs to reflect the local area by supporting local producers and the community.

For some delis, creating an 'add on' works. This can be anything from a cookery school, café, bookshop, holding events and tastings to selling housewares. As Edward Berry, consultant from The Flying Fork, says "It's all about education, discovery and experience. Supermarket shopping is a function. People want to be surprised when they visit a deli."

"People, product and place" are all essential, according to Scott Winston from Scott Winston Fine Food. "The environment should be welcoming

and inspiring so it increases your customers' dwelling time, which can help push up your average spend as they explore more of your offer."

Creating a point of difference is crucial to becoming a destination deli. As Alice Evans from Broad Bean Deli, Ludlow, says, "You've got to distinguish yourselves, create something different and offer products customers can't find elsewhere."

Regional specialities

Reflect the local area by offering a range of regional specialities. This will appeal not only to tourists and visitors, but also your regular customer base. Working with local producers is crucial to sourcing and identifying new and unusual products. Alice Evans from Broad Bean Deli says she's always receptive to local products, although finds it time-consuming to buy from lots of different ones, so works with Fine Food Angels, a smaller wholesaler which helps the buying process.

Regular tasting events are a good idea so that customers can try the product first-hand and meet the person behind it. At Broad Bean Deli, tastings are held in six to eight week blocks with a different producer every week. The producer comes in one day for a few hours to talk to customers, explain how to use the product and give out literature.

Then the deli promotes that product for the rest of the week. For example, a milk producer talked about the family dairy, the welfare of the herd and the milk, while a husband and wife cheese producer came in with cheese samples, explained how the cheese was made and how to serve it. "We find this works well," says Alice. "It's vital for

customers to meet the producers."

For Westmorland Family, which runs motorway services in Cumbria, Gloucester and Scotland including farm shops, delis and restaurants, stocking and using local produce is essential. Even as a 'rest stop' for drivers, the company believes in reflecting the tastes of the region and sharing local specialities with customers. Tebay Services works with over 70 local producers in Cumbria, while Gloucester Services is involved with 130 local producers. Julie Mills, commercial director, says, "This ensures our visitors get a genuine taste of the region. We have a team of experts sourcing produce

from our surrounding communities. We believe in nurturing new suppliers so hold regular Meet the Buyer events where producers can meet our buyers and get some advice. These have been a huge success."

Foodie gifts/souvenirs

As a destination deli, it's essential to have a selection of foodie gifts and souvenirs on sale year round. Vhari Russell from The Food Marketing Experts suggests looking at non-food items as they may have a bigger margin and there's no best before date. "This way you can offer a point of difference. It is also key to think green – can you work with someone



“You've got to convey passion at the front line and staff must know about 'upselling' – for example, this chutney would go well with this cheese. People like being sold to – it makes them feel special**”**

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PAPADELI

go well with this cheese. People like being sold to – it makes them feel special.” Sangita at Delilah Fine Foods says, “Customers expect expert knowledge from staff. Each staff member is knowledgeable about one particular area – for example, it’s cheese for me and someone else for coffee. People ask us how to use products and for recipes so we have to be able to supply that information.”

Location, location, location

The location of your deli can have a huge impact on creating the ‘destination’. If the deli is in a popular tourism area, business can be seasonal so you need to consider how to attract people, for example, on a cold Tuesday in February, “so maybe try loyalty cards, e-newsletters and social media,” says Edward Berry from The Flying Fork. “Post on Facebook ‘come and see us on Tuesday, we’ll be tasting tea/cheese/wine’. To get people to browse longer, consider putting in a coffee machine, serving lunch and include a few stools in the window for people to sit on.”

Location is key for Farmers Fayre Farmers Shop & Kitchen as it is on Stoneleigh Park, a business park in Warwickshire. “On site there are 100 shows a year,” says Nicole Reece, managing director. “It’s very diverse – everything from dressage events, car boot sales to fishing shows. We adapt our products to suit the market and make sure products are seasonal. I’m always looking for new products and the more local they are, the better. If you have a good rapport with a local supplier, they will network on your behalf. We use 40 local suppliers. You don’t need space to give a customer an experience; it just needs to be innovative.”



CAIRN LODGE

Mainstreet Trading Company is in St Boswells on the Scottish Borders and combines a bookshop, café, deli and homewares shop. Owner Bill de la Hey says, “As we’re in a rural setting, people rely on us. You have to be a destination to get people through the door. We like to think of Mainstreet Trading Co as a destination in itself.” Bill’s wife Rosamund was in publishing and it was her idea to open a bookshop with a café. Bill says, “It’s difficult to operate a big bookshop in a rural location, you need other draws so we added the deli and housewares shop to create a real destination and to keep people longer. I buy something because I like it – I do research by going into other people’s shops and attend trade shows.” A family can spend at least half a day at Mainstreet Trading Company, he says, as there are four departments to visit. “We do a lot of PR ourselves, we write articles, and social media helps to bring people here.”

Papadeli in Bristol opened a cookery school six years ago. Catrin McDonnell, director, says, “Having a cookery school helps bring in customers as they get to see behind the scenes, try out ingredients and learn how to use them in dishes. People who’ve attended courses at the school buy ingredients in the deli and it all helps to create a sense of belonging and family.”

Events

Holding regular events at your deli is a great way to create a ‘destination’ and attract people into the shop. It could be tastings with small producers, talks by experts or you could form a partnership with a third party. As Scott Winston from Scott Winston Fine Foods says, “Events and masterclasses can be a great way to engage a customer base and set you apart. A healthy calendar of events done well, can give you much needed additional revenue and help build your local profile.”

Delilah Fine Foods has teamed up with nutritionist Dr Sally Bell for several events such as a women’s health evening where the deli will provide a menu fine-tuned to the topics being discussed. Sangita Tryner says that “Events really bring in people to the shop.” Food and wine pairing events are a regular feature at Delilah’s Fine Foods such as the recent sold out Italian food and wine evening. At this event, eight wines varieties were matched with Italian food.

For Mainstreet Trading Company, it’s a massive part of the offering. Many events feature bestselling authors, chefs and celebrities, or

there are panel discussions with a variety of experts. “It helps to pull in people from Edinburgh, an hour’s drive away,” says Bill.

Form an events plan for the year, so you can promote it well in advance. Vhari Russell from The Food Marketing Experts says, “Create events and samplings that will pull in customers. Eventbrite, the ticketing web site (eventbrite.co.uk) is a great platform on which to share events and promote them to a larger audience than your own.”

Local community

Building up awareness among the local community in important because even if your deli is in the heart of a tourist area, business will be seasonal so you need to keep the regulars coming in. Nicola Reece from Farmers Fayre says, “You have to communicate with your customers.”

The deli uses Facebook to ask people to nominate a charity which Farmers Fayre adopts for a year and holds six events to raise as much money as possible. “Get a charity on board,” says Reece. “Think about what’s going to be popular which will also get local media coverage and social media engagement.”

As part of Sports Relief, Farmers Fayre brought in skiing machines and asked people to do a 30 minutes “ski” on the machine with a £10 entry. “Our target was 175 miles to raise money and all proceeds go to Lam Action charity.”

Joining the local chamber of commerce is a good idea as you can meet other small business and keep abreast of what’s happening in the area. Broad Bean Deli is part of Ludlow Chamber of Commerce. “The more we can do to encourage people to visit Ludlow the better,” says Alice Evans. “As a destination deli, we want people to make a day of it.”

At Papadeli in Bristol, every year a giant 5kg Easter Egg is raffled for a local charity. “We’ve been doing this for years and customers love it,” says Catrin MacDonnell. “We regularly attend charity events and donate vouchers or cookery class. It’s all part of being a local business. Winning awards also helps – we’ve been runner up in the Observer Food Monthly awards for several years – it’s amazing how many people come and visit as a result.”

To be a successful destination deli, you need to know your customers’ preferences and create a ‘journey’ for them by offering unusual local products, holding interesting talks and tastings, providing knowledge and advice and above all, giving them a reason to dwell longer.



GLOUCESTER SERVICES

like Terracycle to offer a green recycling point to increase the reason for customers to visit?” At Broad Bean, there is no parking outside, “so we make sure goods that are local to Ludlow are clearly labelled as potential gifts because customers are looking for something easy to carry as they’re on foot,” says Alice.

Great customer service

As part of creating a ‘destination’ it’s crucial to hire the right staff who can talk passionately about the products. As Edward Berry, consultant from The Flying Fork, says, “You’ve got to convey passion at the front line and staff must know about ‘upselling’ – for example, this chutney would

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HOW INNOVATION CAN STRENGTHEN SUMMER SALES

Combine premium ingredients, exciting flavours and individual charm for an ice cream and dessert selection that will get tills ringing

While British summers can often be unpredictable in terms of weather, it seems that the public's love for ice cream is far from waning. According to figures provided by Kantar Worldpanel for the British Frozen Food Federation, despite soggy weather at the start of last summer, the ice cream category saw an increase in both value and volume, with a rise of 8.8% and 5% respectively (in the 52 weeks up to 16th June 2019).

Ice cream and desserts are traditionally seen as indulgent 'treat' foods, however the movement towards health and wellness has had an impact on these categories. It has motivated brands to produce lower calorie options, as well as products that contain less sugar and artificial ingredients, so that consumers can still experience a treat without the potential guilt factor. For example, Halo Top has been at the forefront of this sector with its high protein ice creams in flavours such as Strawberry Cheesecake and Cinnamon Roll containing between 320-374 calories.

Make way for innovation

The veganism movement has been hugely influential for both ice cream and dessert markets. With more consumers than ever wanting quality free-from options, brands have been capitalising on this trend.

Ice cream is a popular part of the Cobbs Farm Shops summer



offerings, and marketing manager Katie Westwood explains that vegan versions are becoming more integral: "In our farm shops we sell the fantastic Jude's ice-cream. Their range is always incredibly popular but this year they've added three more vegan flavours to their range. There is a high demand for dairy-free and vegan products now so we predict that these will sell really quickly for us. Especially with our July offer that we will be putting on Jude's across our farm shops."

Alice Evans, co-owner of Broad Bean Deli in Ludlow adds, "We think vegan desserts will continue to grow as a concept and are constantly scouring the market for good quality vegan and free-from products that combine taste with proper ingredients. Mixed flavours like passion fruit and coconut, or dark chocolate and orange.

People are not content with something vegan and boring, they want to be able to serve delicious vegan food to everyone at the table rather than single people out because of their diet choices."

Incorporate new flavours

Grown-up flavour combinations are a trend that's worth getting on the bandwagon for. According to a London city food guide published in July 2019 from Mintel's senior foodservice analyst Trish Caddy and global food and drink analyst Ayisha Koyenikan, influences from Asia are shaking up the ice cream scene. A host of Japanese flavours such as yuzu, matcha, mochi and adzuki are making their way into ice creams and sundaes, which should be of interest for the reported 19% of ice cream eaters in the UK who are looking for new flavours to try. There's also a place for more savoury flavours. London-based La Gelateria, for example, offers a Basil & Chilli flavour. Ruby Violet is known for its unusual and seasonal flavours, and offers customers the chance to sign up to a weekly newsletter to order in advance. Make choosing ice cream and desserts an exciting experience for customers by sprinkling in some innovative flavour options.

Create a USP

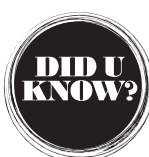
Play to your strengths and find ways to create a USP for shoppers. Cobbs, for instance, focuses on the use of its homegrown soft fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries and currants, across desserts and specials in the café. Minskip Farm Shop in York is set to open The Farm Kitchen, "the world's first egg restaurant on a free-range egg farm,"

where cakes and desserts will be made using eggs from the farm, such as a Baked Alaska made with Italian meringue and rhubarb compote.

Broad Bean Deli promotes add-ons and summer recipe suggestions using local produce. Alice says, "During the summer months we focus on ice cream with add-ons such as the amazing Lang du Chat biscuits we sell. We have also done some summer recipe suggestions such as making cheesecake using locally produced Billingtons Gingerbread biscuits as the base. We usually have homemade meringues in small quantities available on the counter and often local strawberries."

Johns of Instow and Appledore adds another string to its bow in the form of its North Devon-based location, The Instow Beach Hut. Offering a selection of tasty options to customers in the form of an ice cream cone, float or affogato, the emphasis is on locally made ice creams such as Vanilla Luxury Clotted Cream and Honeycomb Heaven. Inclusivity is key, ensuring that there is something for everyone to enjoy. Alongside a vegan option, which is also promoted as being low in sugar plus dairy and allergen-free, there's also scoops of ice cream suitable for dogs.

Feature quality ice creams and desserts, with some innovative flavours in the mix, to ensure that you are a one-stop-shop for customers this summer.



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1 THE ETHICAL DAIRY Lemon Curd Organic Ice Cream

This rich, indulgent organic ice cream is flavoured with swirls of zingy lemon curd to create a beautifully refreshing dessert for summer. The Ethical Dairy is a cow-with-calf dairy, where the calves get to stay with their mum to suckle naturally, and the milk used to make this delicious dessert is what remains after the calves have had their fair share, making it a truly guilt-free ice cream treat. This is a company fully committed to delivering low environmental impact which makes it a great choice for sustainability minded customers; even the tub is compostable.

MD Wilma Finlay commented, "We want our customers to feel really good about enjoying ice cream, so we combine our own cow-with-calf milk with delicious organic ingredients, and swirl them together with a minimum of air to create a really rich, luxurious ice cream. There's no gums, artificial flavourings or colourings, because, frankly, there's absolutely no need for them. This ice cream encapsulates everything that's good about summer desserts: it's rich, refreshing and delicious."

theethicaldairy.co.uk



2 FIELD FARE Chocolate Torte

The vegan hand-prepared Chocolate Torte from field fare is made using rich dark chocolate on a crunchy date, rice flour and nut base, including hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews and almonds and a hint of creamy coconut. It serves four and is free from dairy and gluten.

MD Karen Deans said, "Our vegan Chocolate Torte rolls all the key 2020 dessert trends into one Great Taste-award winning triumph. Dairy is replaced by coconut milk, Belgian on-trend dark chocolate reduces the sugar content, the crunch base is made with gluten-free rice flour and packed with the dessert ingredient du jour, nuts. Maple syrup and dates provide natural sweetness and relegate sugar right to the end of the ingredient list. Its popularity is a testament to the category's increasing embrace of healthy solutions and accompanying innovation."

field-fare.com



3 LUSCIOUS Salted Caramel Ice Cream & Mango and Raspberry Sorbets

Luscious, makers of award-winning organic ice creams, celebrate their continuing success this spring with the launch of Salted Caramel ice cream and two sorbets in Mango and Raspberry flavours. The new products bring together a range of 10 flavours in 500ml and 120ml sizes. Luscious will also be introducing new biodegradable packaging for the whole range.

Co-founder Kate Clark said, "The last year has been extraordinary – Wiltshire Life Independent Food Producer of the Year, three Taste of The West Awards and two Great Taste Awards, as well as the Soil Association 'Best of Frozen' in the BOOM Awards. Now, with our new dairy-free sorbets and eco-friendly packaging, we're strengthening our range and ethical story to answer customer demand."

lusciousorganics.co.uk



4 LITTLE MOONS Cookie Dough Ice Cream Bites

Little Moons has re-imagined cookie dough ice cream. The Cookie Dough Ice Cream Bites consist of creamy vanilla ice cream and chocolate chunks in a chewy chocolate chip cookie dough. Each Bite is also just 95 calories and contains no artificial flavourings, colours and preservatives.

Co-founder Howard Wong said, "Little Moons has re-invented how consumers can enjoy ice cream, and with our new Cookie Dough line we want to take on the competition by turning conventional thinking inside out. Why bury the star of the show inside ice cream when you can guarantee it with every bite?"

littlemoons.co.uk



5 BOOJA-BOOJA Honeycomb Caramel & Heavens on Earth vegan ice cream

Confectioner Booja-Booja has launched two vegan ice creams: Heavens on Earth, featuring refreshing mint and swirls of chocolate truffle sauce; and Honeycomb Caramel, which contains velvety caramel ice cream and crunchy honeycomb. These ice creams join the six existing flavours in the range: Hunky Punky Chocolate; Keep Smiling Vanilla M'Gorilla; Caramel Pecan Praline; Chocolate Salted Caramel; Hazelnut Chocolate Truffle and Raspberry Ripple.

Louise Collins, marketing co-ordinator at Booja-Booja, commented, "We are very excited about our new ice cream flavours and can't wait for everyone to try them. Booja-Booja is all about creating incredible taste sensations from simple, organic ingredients and that's exactly what these are. Heavens on Earth is – as the name implies – unbelievably delicious with its blissful combination of refreshing mint and rich dark chocolate truffle sauce. Honeycomb Caramel is a sublime combination of creamy caramel ice cream and crunchy honeycomb. They take vegan ice cream to a whole new level and we're confident they're going to be incredibly popular."

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“We needed to try something completely different or to shut up shop”

Diversifying a small business can be a daunting prospect. While it makes sense to consider alternative revenue streams, investing in the unknown is a risk. Helen Graves talks to three retailers who took the plunge and reaped the rewards

“Everyone thought we were a little bit mad”

Rhug Estate Farm in North Wales was already home to a thriving farm shop, bistro and takeaway when owner Lord Newborough came up with a radical idea for time-poor customers: a hot food drive thru. While we may all be aware of the fast food equivalent, Rhug's drive thru takeaway is a world apart, serving home-cooked curries and toasted sandwiches made using organic produce from the farm.

Managing director Graham Webster chuckles as he tells the story of their setup, “I think everybody thought Lord Newborough was a little bit mad when he started a drive thru – even some of the staff thought it was a little unusual. As ever though he has these good ideas and ends up proving that he was right in the first place! We believe it's the first drive thru on any organic farm – certainly in the UK – but we think Europe as well, so we've now got an opportunity for people with less time on their hands to stop and enjoy the Rhug products.”

As well as hot drinks and snacks the Rhug team sell hearty meals cooked in their own on-site kitchen; “We do organic chicken curry and organic beef mince from the estate,” explains Graham, “and we also make cakes, sandwiches and panini.”

The success of the drive thru has depended on a steady flow of traffic past the farm, “We are on a very busy tourist route into North Wales so anyone coming from the Midlands area will come past us to go to any holiday destinations,” Graham explains, “and a lot of the North West tend to use our route as well as it's so picturesque, an area of

outstanding natural beauty.”

They're still constantly adapting the concept to meet a variety of customer needs however, “We are still tweaking it because people want high quality, great tasting food but they also want to have it in something quick and easy to carry away and within a couple of minutes – all of those things combined really limit what you can give out while maintaining standards. You can't take more than a couple of minutes per car because otherwise the queue will be horrendous. We're hoping this year to introduce more of a breakfast offer, with some bacon and sausage baps. We can then use the organic pork that we get in.”

The key to making a success of a radical idea, Graham explains, is thorough research. “First of all you need to assess whether or not you've got enough passing trade, and we did quite a lot of studies on our road to see whether we'd have enough cars to make it worthwhile. You need at least 50-60 cars a day to be worth it in low season and at peak we're looking to get 100-150 cars a day. Sometimes we push to over 200.”

“My advice would be to speak to as many people as you can from the get-go; I was speaking to people long before we built the drive thru, like the company that make the headsets we use to communicate with the people driving up; they set up lots of different drive thrus all over the world so they were able to give me lots of advice about the building, how we should have the road going around it, the distance for stopping... We took that advice and put it into the Rhug model which



really is about the quality of the food that we give out.”

“People can stop further down the road to eat, or take it with them to work, but we also have picnic benches and an area where they can pull up straight away if they want to. We are working hard to give people everything they need before they go off on their way.”

“It's all completely self-service, nobody has to be there”

We've all used vending machines to grab a quick snack, but what about using one to buy ingredients for your dinner? At Inverurie's Thorneybank Farm Shop, the pioneering Stephens family have ensured people can do just that.

“When the shop was founded by my grandfather in 1979,” explains Murray Stephens, “it was just a shop in a wheelbarrow at the side of the road with neeps, tatties and all that in it. Then my dad turned it into a hole in the wall on the side of a shed, and it was in 2017 that my brother found the idea of the vending machine system.”

For the Stephens', switching to a fully automated system solved problems they were having with their existing shop; “The old farm shop was just an honesty box so there was no one there all the time

and we were losing the young demographic because they only carry cards on them,” says Murray. “We also found we were getting stolen from quite a lot, probably more than we were aware. We needed to try something completely different or we needed to shut up shop.”

Going fully automated was a radical move, but putting it into practice was easier than they'd hoped. “Once the existing shop had been prepared for the machines to be fitted, everything was fairly straightforward. We very rarely have problems with them and the problems we have had were at the very beginning. If the internet goes down then we're unable to take card payments so that's a pain but it doesn't happen all that often, and if there's a power cut, we obviously can't sell anything either.”

“We've now got an opportunity for people with less time on their hands to stop and enjoy Rhug products”



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Having started out with one machine, they've now expanded to three, two of them chilled. "The first machine was up and running in 2018, then the second one was a chilled machine – now we are able to sell meat, milk, cheese, butter and so on. Then in January we got another machine to sell pies, crisps, sandwiches and all that. We also got a coffee machine, so it's all completely self-service, nobody has to be there."

It sounds like a big investment,

but has made financial sense long term. "It was quite expensive, the cost of the machine and getting the existing shop ready, and it was done off our own backs because we applied for funding but we were rejected. Now, we're busier than ever."

The system hasn't been universally welcomed, however, "most customers love it but the older generation are not so tech savvy and we have lost some of them because they can't operate



it which is a shame. The thing is, you have to move with the times, do something different. We like the idea of being able to help yourself and you don't have to pay wages to someone to be there all the time. I always say you never know until you try."



"All that glitters isn't gold and it's a hard slog"

Algy Garrod – a third generation farmer – had originally intended to diversify his business by producing bird seed. When this didn't take off however, he began looking for another way to sustain his farm shop. Growing another crop seemed to make sense at first, "I came across a seller in Nottinghamshire who was using a different system growing maize under polythene," he explains, "so I started doing that but soon found out there wasn't much market for it around here. The drying costs were also too high so I thought 'what else can I do?'"

Popcorn seemed like attractive option economically speaking, and although Algy had to adapt through various teething problems, he soon found a way to make Algy's Norfolk Popcorn thrive; "After a time I realised we couldn't grow our own corn, we were trying imported varieties from America and just not being able to get the quality we required. We shelved the idea of 100% home grown and now we actually buy French popcorn."

Although the idea of not producing a completely home-grown product was frustrating, he's still able to produce other ingredients on the farm; "We use rapeseed oil made from the rapeseed that we grow – it goes to a company called Crush who send us the oil back and we then use that to cook our popcorn, so it's a nice circle of local producers. We also produce sugar which is used to sweeten the popcorn. It's as home grown as it can possibly be."

Working out how to promote popcorn was a large part of Algy's journey to success; "I started off by going to fairs and promoting it and I bought a giant wok from America to pop with – a real Mad Max monster popper!" He laughs, "it was great fun and theatre, but the consistency was not brilliant so then I ended up buying two electric machines."

He hit another stumbling block with packaging, trying to switch to 'grab bags' which turned out to have little to no effect on sales, "We



were supplier of the East of England Co-Op for three years but it became apparent that we were not getting the shelf life we needed. We then took the decision to come away and go back to tubs that can be reused. Yes they're plastic but they're also useful for storing other things."

Algy now makes all the popcorn himself to order and has been focusing on new ways to sell it. "We are trying a new model for outlets where we supply warming cabinets for popcorn and all the seeds too – the margins for them [the outlets] are massive – that works well but it's a different model. I guess there's more than one way to skin the cat when it comes to popcorn! Panto season always goes well for us too."

Does he have any regrets about diversifying? "People thought it was a little bit left field, but you know at the end of the day there's money out there and if the farm isn't producing the money it used to be then why not think of cashing in in some other form. Take advice, look at what other people are doing, don't expect it to be easy, all that glitters isn't gold and it's a hard slog. Don't be scared to try, because if your initial concept doesn't work then you can always find one that does."

"Don't be scared to try, because if your initial concept doesn't work then you can always find one that does"

"You have to move with the times, do something different. I always say you never know until you try"

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UNSUNG HEROES

From little-known artisan cheeses to fish and pulses; Spanish food goes far beyond what's available on supermarket shelves

Spain produces some of Europe's finest food, but many consumers struggle to think past paella. In 2018 alone, Spain exported food and drink products to the UK worth a total of £37 million, according to trade organisation Food and Wines from Spain. Consumers clearly have an appetite for Iberian flavours, but where to start if you're looking to introduce Spanish foods to your offering, or expand an existing range?

Most customers simply aren't aware of the breadth of Spanish products available, says Peter Kinsella of Spanish restaurant and deli group Lunya. "The biggest contribution to awareness actually comes from supermarkets but they only stock very 'safe' products such as Manchego cheese and chorizo. There's so much more." Oscar Blazquez of Spanish food importer Iberica agrees that while interest and awareness is on the rise, there's still a lot of confusion around ingredients, "especially chorizo, serrano ham or olive oil. Some people

think that any sausage with paprika is chorizo! That Serrano ham is the same as prosciutto! Or that all the olive oil comes from Italy!"

Blazquez argues that it's best to begin with a range of basics including, "paella rice, high quality extra virgin olive oil, sherry vinegar, gordal and manzanilla olives, charcuterie and a selection of cheeses." Spanish cheeses are numerous, ranging from cave-aged goats' milk Garrotxa made in the Pyrenees, to the pungent Cabrales, a PDO-protected sheep and goats' milk cheese from the craggy peaks of the Picos de Europas. "Spain has got this wonderful artisan cheese industry which escaped all the attention that the French and the Italians got in the 70s," says Kinsella. "They still have small cheesemakers who generally use their own animals, their own milk. There's a fabulous cheese called Torta del Casar, which is a very soft scooping cheese that would give anyone incredible distinctiveness to their cheese range. Then there's

a fantastic goats' milk cheese called Montenegro, which has twice won cheese of the year award. These ones you generally don't see unless you go to a specialist or well informed cheese shop."

"Tinned fish products are also seeing a huge amount of growth in the market," says James Robinson, product trainer at Spanish food giant Brindisa. "The small 'sardinillas' from artisan producer La Brujula are excellent. They're only fished during the high season in June to guarantee an exceptional catch and the delicate flavour of these meaty, extremely tasty little fish is locked in by gentle steaming. Preserved in light olive oil and salt, the fish actually improves in flavour over time. They're also boneless, making them ready to eat right away, and they make a healthy

lunch or picnic snack – simply pop open the tin and enjoy them on crusty bread with a drizzle of olive oil."

"People become hooked on Spanish tinned fish," agrees Kinsella, "and they won't go back to that sour vinegary anchovy they get from Tesco, or the cheap tinned tuna. The Spanish eat bonito tuna which is a whole fillet of fish in a tin. Spanish tuna always has the most fantastically decorated tins, too, and the last thing you want to do is mix it with mayonnaise and put it on a sandwich."

The quality of rice and pulses will also surprise people, argues Brindisa's Robinson. "Illa de Riu produce some of the finest Rice money can buy. The third-generation family company grows exceptionally high quality rice in the delta of the Ebro river and they have channelled their resources into improving the seed stocks of the rices they cultivate, and hence are responsible for growing some of the best rice in Spain. The incredibly absorbent Bomba rice can take on up to three times its weight in liquid, making it perfect for paella and other Spanish rice dishes."

Jarred pulses such as chickpeas are a winner for Kinsella. "You

immediately taste the difference against the standard African or Middle Eastern ones – they're bigger and nuttier." And using them doesn't mean you have to cook a Spanish dish – blend them up and you have 'the best hummus you'll ever make.'"

While artisanal ingredients can make fantastic store cupboard standbys for quick suppers, it's the snacking market that has really boomed in the last couple of years, particularly crisps, "there are some brilliant flavours coming over which really give a distinctiveness to your range," says Kinsella, "they're flavours which don't exist or even come into people's heads in the UK, such as fried egg – it's astonishingly uncanny, it tastes like the crispy edge of a fried egg – and black olive crisps which are made with dehydrated black olives. They tend to use very natural flavourings. It gives people something very distinctive."

Simply putting products on the shelves may not be enough to engage consumers, however. Are there other ways to educate which may boost sales? "For us it's making sure that we're really informed about the provenance because people are really interested in the story behind great products," Kinsella argues, "and small Spanish producers have got fantastic stories." Blazquez agrees. "The majority of our products come from small, independent companies which makes the final product unique and very attractive to the customer who always looks for great quality, sustainability and who wants to support local, family owned businesses." Iberica offers training on how to prepare samples of products that will catch the attention of customers and "Make them feel as if they're in Spain."

With awareness of Spanish products on the up, demand will increase, says Robinson, "Not so long ago the British public's general perception of Spanish cuisine was largely associated with the kind of food that would be included on cheap package holidays. Since the mid 90s however, an awareness of more typical Spanish dishes and products has grown and with the advent of social media, the market is booming."

“ We make sure that we're informed about provenance because people are really interested in the story behind great products; small Spanish producers have got fantastic stories ”

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VIEWPOINT: WILL JACKSON



Red meat is under attack from all sides, but the sector has plenty to offer today's consumer, says AHDB's strategy director for beef and lamb

Trading through Brexit

Life is going to be slightly different after Brexit, it's just a question of how we make the best of that. There's certainly been a lot of talk about it for the last however many years. When we look at the challenges and opportunities, we will potentially be weakening our relationship with one of our biggest consumers, especially from a sheep point of view. At the moment just over a third of the lamb produced in the UK is exported to Europe, and about 94% of that goes to France. We have a huge reliance on that market, so keeping it open and potentially tariff-free will be really, really important – there's a bit of a risk there. The other side of the challenge is that more countries will be able to import than have done previously. We've had protection as members of the EU, and we may see more variety – particularly on the beef side.

Provided trade deals happen we'll have the chance to grow exports which will help us balance our carcasses over here in a more effective way. We've been on the front foot on this over the last few years – and got access to China for beef as AHDB worked with Government last year, which allows us to access that market. That's going to be a really important for us but it won't be the whole answer; we need to keep exploring those export opportunities.

Countering anti-meat propaganda

I think the merit of some of our farming systems are getting lost in the arguments: a lot of the big headline figures are global, not reflective of UK systems. There are huge differences between the US and what's being done in the UK, for example. If you drill down into figures, in the UK ruminants account for between three and four per cent of greenhouse gas emissions (agriculture accounts for about nine per cent, and ruminants create half of that). That's actually really low, and I think that gets overlooked. One of the challenges we'll probably continue to face is that we're looking at quite sensational headlines. Beef tends to provide those headlines quite well because of the big feed lots used in other countries, but getting a nuanced picture of how beef actually works is a bit of a challenge. At AHDB we're positive that we need to keep having those arguments.

We're fortunate in this country that we have the climate and topography to grow grass very effectively. Around 60% of UK agricultural land is only suitable for growing grass, and the

best way to get a high-nutrient food source off that grass is to put it through sheep or cattle. So we're actually using what we have to the best effect. What goes undiscussed sometimes is that we have a huge amount of locked-up carbon within that grassland, and the sequestration where it pulls further carbon from the atmosphere. I think a lot of the time this issue is being looked at in a rather 2D way; there is real benefit to having those ruminants on the hillsides and keeping grasslands managed and able to soak up that carbon.

Farmers feel under attack from some quarters at the moment, and that they haven't had the chance to put their side of the story across. We shouldn't forget that, according to our research, 0.6% of the population are following a vegan diet. So although there's a lot of noise out there, it's noise from a fairly vocal minority. We still have 98% of households purchasing meat on an annual basis, and a lot of people still eating and enjoying red meat regularly as a really important part of a balanced diet. Red meat adds nutrients and minerals that are very, very difficult to get hold of if you're not eating it, so we need to keep everything in context. The noise doesn't necessarily represent the overall feeling.

'Peak meat'

Over the last 20 or 30 years there's been a gradual decline in the consumption of red meat, so this isn't a new thing. People often feel that this issue for red meat has been around for 12 or 14 months. Actually, if you look at Government policy and the reduction in the number of animals and their environmental impact, things are very positive. We've been working on this for a number of years. The trick is to make sure people have the data in front of them to help them make an objective decision. We need to help people make an informed choice, rather than plump for an easy fix – 'I'm going to drop red meat from my diet' – because [addressing climate change] is not as simple as that. There's huge talk about carbon because that's one of the easiest metrics we have when we're talking about climate. But if we look at production as a whole? What about water used? What about other impacts? These need taking into account as well.

'Woke' consumerism

At AHDB we encourage conversations that'll help drive improvement. So animal welfare,

environmental and the health of our soils are all really important to providing healthy nutritious food produced in the right way. As an industry we encourage people to understand more about their food and where it comes from. Take antibiotics: across agriculture there's been a real concerted effort to reduce the amounts of antibiotics that are used. We're seeing some really good results on that, tackling the problem of anti-microbial resistance that's coming down the track. It's about being ahead of things; to be a really successful farmer you're already working day in, day out on things that increasingly matter to consumers – animal welfare, sustainability, soil health. I'd encourage everyone to discuss these things as much as possible to help lift standards.

Media bias

There is a danger of baffling people with science. If you look at examples in the press it's about trying to create doubt with complicated science that scares people off. It's probably much easier to do that from a negative perspective than a positive one. I get asked all the time whether in beef we use growth hormones that make animals grow really quickly but compromise their welfare. Over here in the UK we don't put any hormones into our beef herds at all, but it's very easy for someone to scare people off by suggesting we do. Bad news stories make headlines, but saying 'we do this really well', or 'our production is sustainable' doesn't grab the headlines, so we're at a slight disadvantage in how we're able to pitch our narrative.

Point-of-sale information

I would say everyone supporting this sector has a responsibility to tell the story of their food in the best way they can. That has to be a nuanced message that depends on your audience. Some readers will be talking to consumers who take a lot of interest in what they're buying, and may be willing to listen to and absorb some of the information they're given. There's a real opportunity to spread food messages through conversations, but as an industry that's where we have to be quite joined up. At AHDB we produce a lot of information on health, welfare and sustainability but we need consistent messaging coming

“Life is going to be slightly different after Brexit, it's just how we make the best of that”

“UK ruminants account for 3% to 4% of greenhouse gas emissions; that's actually really low”

from everyone – AHDB, the NFU, supermarkets and the independents. I see everyone as having a role in facing the challenges. As a sector we believe we're creating less impact than we're being blamed for, but we do still have an impact. We have to work together to be absolutely the best we can be, so when we do get a chance to share it we have a great story to tell.

Pitching to your market

In a previous role at Co-Op I was senior agriculture manager with a view on everything that happened across beef, lamb and poultry. There are different segments of consumers: some for whom price is absolutely vital, and others where provenance and traceability are major factors. There is room on the market to help grow the local products, and Co-Op and other retailers have done a lot to drive that through their higher tier lines. But we have to make sure we're nuanced in the consumers we're talking to; we have to realise there are some consumers out there who won't engage with the message of provenance. Let's not try to deliver that message to the people who won't react to it, but be clever and target talking to the people who will, and will potentially pay more and add value to the product based on where it's coming from.

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While today's customer is looking for story, quality and connection – the signature characteristics of an independent – a town which encompasses all of these things is a rare beast. This rarity goes some way to explaining the status of Malton as a Food Capital; a somewhat self-fulfilling prophecy, as its reputation attracts yet more quality food businesses to join the fold. The area's bountiful natural larder (Malton is nestled within the stunning North York moors) means that the town has boasted great quality, locally-produced food and drink for generations. Its traditional Yorkshire fare brings food lovers flocking, but some of the town's food icons have relocated from further afield. Take Florian Poirer, French-born master patissier and curator of some of the very best macarons, chocolate bonbons and desserts in the UK (let alone in Yorkshire) for example.

Now settled in Malton's renowned Talbot Yard, Florian counts a number of passionate independent producer-retailers as its neighbours. Groovy Moo Gelato is feet away, and an ever-popular stop on Visit Malton's Food Tours. Rare Bird Distillery is just a few paces away and offers delicious gins created on-site; gin lovers can even create their own in the co-located Gin School. Facing Rare Bird is Roost Coffee & Roastery; a haven for coffee lovers which roasts its own beans on-site, selling them in retail bags for fans to take away as well as brewing the coffee for the public in its comfortable café next door. The hallmarks of a great, independently-minded community – a butcher and a baker – are here too; the former, Food 2 Remember, makes everything on-site including a popular range of gluten-free scotch eggs, fishcakes, sausages and more. The latter shares the same ethos as so many of Malton's food enterprises, in that the shop is located right next door to where the produce is made. Baguettes, craft loaves and sweet and savoury treats fly off the shelves just feet from where they're created.

Elsewhere in the town, McMillans of Malton on Market Street is a wonderland of fine alcohols of all descriptions – a cornucopia curated by the exquisite tastes of father and son team James and Jim and home to familiar favourites as well as intriguing finds. The shop currently boasts around 50 whiskies



INDIE & PROUD

Yorkshire's foodie capital, Malton, has made the indie dream come true: it's fought off the multiples and cultivated a healthy – thoroughly independent – food scene

and 100 gins, including a handful of locally-produced examples such as Whitby Gin, York Gin and Hedgerow Gin. Brass Castle, a brewery and taphouse located on Yorkersgate, is award-winning and unusual for its focus on gluten-free beers. Nearby, a traditional Victorian sweet shop, Mennells, attracts customers old and new from across the generations. Its wooden displays and old fashioned counter top are the perfect host to its freshly made indulgences. A short walk away are Malton Cookery School, where food lovers inspired by the town's foodie spirit can hone their culinary skills, and Chapter One Bistro – a popular spot for locals and visitors after a deliciously meal sourced from local producers.

A charming mix of old and new

Tom Naylor-Leyland, director of Visit Malton explains, "Over the years

we developed Malton's reputation as a foodie destination and this was all based on the availability of outstanding local produce. Lobster and crab from the coast, grouse, partridge, pheasant, venison, rabbit and hare from the moors, rare breed cattle and pigs, lovely fruit and veg, great beer, bread – the list goes on! Now Malton makes many of its own products too and I think this concentration of artisans and shopkeepers striving for excellence who each have a real passion for good food really does stand out. That's not to say that the retail environment in general isn't tough, but now Malton has a growing reputation and people love to come and spend time here."

While there is a new wave of businesses such as the vegan and veggie deli – The Purple Carrot and the award-winning Brass Castle – there are also businesses that in

some cases have existed the town for over 100 years. "Derek Fox Butcher & Game Dealer is a great example, as is Dales Greengrocer, both high quality and old fashioned," says Tom. "The mix of the old and new, I think, is part of Malton's charm."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a strong sense of community has played a sizeable part in the growth of Malton's independent status. "One of the greatest pleasures of our work in Malton has been the community," says Tom. "While it's always been here, I believe it has been strengthened and recharged by a slightly new foodie direction. Whether its market traders, artisan producers making food in town, visitors or the residents, it all starts to create a very happy mix which is infectious. I also think that Malton is lucky in its unique setting between such abundant farmland and its pretty buildings."

Keeping it indie

Nurturing an independent spirit is one thing but fighting off the multiples is quite another, and one of Malton's proudest achievements. "We had a bit of a battle concerning a Tesco that was to be built on the edge of town," explains Tom. "I think it is no coincidence that the local food shops and producers have since blossomed as a reaction to that. In some ways Malton is lucky to have been able to learn from the mistakes made in other places around the UK, where a supermarket on the outskirts of the town sucks the life from the centre. I'm not intrinsically opposed to supermarkets and they definitely have their place, but town centres are a crucial part of the community and should be supported as much as they can be."

Creating a year-round destination

Maintaining a strong indie identity requires more than the passion and hard work of bricks-and-mortar businesses, however; Malton's status as a destination for food lovers is also down to a packed calendar of foodie events, including a monthly food market on the second Saturday of each month; Meadowfest, a new boutique summer festival; a 'wineathalon', during which attendees run, walk or stagger around a beautiful 10 kilometre course while drinking gin, beer and wine and eating grouse, lobster and Yorkshire puddings; and a two-day Christmas market in December.

The biggest and best-known, Malton Food Lovers Festival, started in 2009 and is now a three-day affair in May, welcoming over 40,000 visitors. "But as thrilling as that weekend is," says Tom, "the purpose is actually about developing Malton's offer as a year-round destination with markets, a cookery school, the food tours, the Talbot [a 26 room coaching inn, recently refurbished by the Lucky Onion Group] and most importantly of all the artisan producers actually making things in town."

"We said to them, 'Don't just come to town to sell, come to town and actually make your products right here in the centre' – these days people are looking for an experience, so being able to see bread baked, chocolate tempered, coffee roasted and so on is key."

“Malton is still a working town and increasingly a town of ‘makers’. Malton is a very charming place, the quintessential Yorkshire market town”



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NEED-TO-KNOW DISPLAY TIPS

How do you get cheeses flying out the door? Attractive displays are part of the secret to success

Having a great selection of cheese is step one for a successful cheesemonger; step two is ensuring that the display helps boost sales. Customers shop with their eyes, so an attractive display is essential. Depending on stock, cheeses are often grouped together at the counter by region or type in order to make it easier for customers to hone in on what they want. Stephen Fleming, owner of Leeds-based George & Joseph Cheesemongers, displays by type. He explains, "We have three full refrigerated display counters in our shop. One contains all our soft cheeses, the second has hard blues, hard goat and sheep cheese. The third counter has hard cow's milk cheeses." At Hartington Cheese & Wine Co. it's important that local produce is also highlighted in a dedicated section. Director Claire Millner says, "We tend to put all the blue cheeses together and all the

local cheeses and then the rest of our cheeses are randomly placed in the counter. Blues are by far our most popular sellers, as are the local cheeses, so we like to make these stand out."

It's important that customers are able to see the full picture, so consider having a big wheel of cheese on display, if space allows, to create a visual impact. It's also worth surveying the cheese range from the shopper's perspective – what appears to be working from behind the counter may not be as visually pleasing on the other side. Ensure that cheeses at the back and right at the front don't get tucked away or hidden from view, and it's good practice to keep the counter and cutting equipment clean and tidy at all times.

Communication is key

Communication is also fundamental when it comes to display. Whether

customers are waiting to be served or simply perusing the produce, it's important that clear signage is put in place. Many shoppers will be unfamiliar with all the different varieties on offer, so signs that easily communicate name and type, as well as background story when appropriate, are necessary to the shopping experience. Be sure to highlight unique facts about particular cheeses or producers that can spark a conversation, allowing the chance for knowledge to be passed onto customers. Stephen explains, "Signage is very important to us. We recently redesigned and updated all our cheese display signs. As well as the key information items (price per 100g, animal type, vegetarian/animal rennet, pasteurised/unpasteurised) we include in our signs a brief description of the cheese, which we try to keep fun as well as informative. Since making



the changes we've found customers spend a bit more time reading the signs and making choices based on them – they still ask my team for advice and suggestions but from a more informed point of view."

When you're happy with how signage looks in-store, don't forget to shout about it on social media and on your website. Instagram in particular is all about aesthetics and can encourage some creativity when it comes to planning displays, alongside the opportunity to highlight unique stories.

Considering where to keep accompaniments such as chutneys, crackers and even wine pairings also comes into play. At George & Joseph, natural cheese companions are kept close to the counter. Stephen says, "We display some of our accompaniments near the cheese display – although our shop is quite small so the main displays of chutneys, crackers, wines and the like is pretty close to the cheese in the first place. We have signage to suggest pairings for wines and cheeses, and often sample cheeses with matching crackers and chutneys."

Highlighting different pairings on a regular basis keeps the information fresh and regular customers can increase their knowledge each time they visit. If the layout of the shop allows, a dedicated stand next to the cheese counter with the top picks of the moment makes a great addition.

TASTING EVENTS

Cheese at Leadenhall director Sue Cloke gives her top notes for a cheese and wine tasting event:

- Start with goat's milk cheeses, such as Rachel's or Tomme de Chevre. There's lots of choice here and it's a good start to awake the palate. Works with a Sauvignon Blanc.
- Move on to a creamy style of cheese, which can be a Brie-style such as Bath Soft Cheese or Vacherousse d'Argental. Works with a rich Chardonnay or Albariño.
- Half-way through suggest a matured sheep's milk, such as Manchego or a Tomme de Savoie style, which might suit a lighter red like Pinot Noir.
- The next cheese should be well flavoured like a Winchester, Comté or matured Gruyère to match a full flavoured red such as a Bordeaux or Primitivo.
- The final cheese should be a blue, such as Bath Blue, Montagnolo or Isle of White Blue. This could match a Port.
- Present each cheese in bite-size portions. Be able to describe the cheese, including milk, where it is made plus the style and flavour to expect.

“Whether customers are waiting to be served or simply perusing the produce, it's important that clear signage is put in place”



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TALKING SHOP

Recently I've been thinking about how easy it is in this day and age to spread ourselves too thinly. We live in a world where we are connected to each other all the time through the internet and social media, and while it absolutely has its benefits, it can be tricky to switch off at times. Personal and professional tasks can also start blurring into each other – when looking at my own online calendar it's a mixture of work deadlines, social events and personal admin tasks. I even need reminders to call family members otherwise the days can slip by without any contact. Our days can be filled with so much activity and never-ending to-do lists, and with our phones constant companions it can be hard to unwind even once the day's jobs are done.

When you are passionate about your business and the industry you work in, it can feel that there is pressure to do it all. There can also be battles with marrying the old and the new, for example perhaps trying to find the delicate balance between promoting traditional heritage with technological advances. When it comes to the world of independent retail, there will be times when you will be expected to wear many hats, especially in a smaller business. However something that I have learned, and been reminded of recently, is to never be afraid to ask for help. It warmed my heart to hear about local businesses that have reached out to each other in parts of the country badly affected by flooding, which proves that there are always those willing to help. Why not look deeper into your local community? You never know, reaching out to support your peers could lead to a more positive working environment, enhance the local community or even open the door to a new partnership.

It's also worth taking a closer look at what's going on in-house to see what other skills your employees could bring to the table. Perhaps one of your weekend staff members is not only great at customer service but also a whizz at social media? Reaching out and asking what others can bring to the table could not only be a way to lighten the load for yourself but to empower someone else to take on more responsibilities. It's worth asking those questions and seeing whether jobs could be delegated so that your time and focus can be put to the best possible use.

We always want to hear the opinions of our readers – do you have a story to share, expertise to pass on or a comment to make? Please do get in touch with us at lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk.

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5 MINUTES WITH... SHADIA AL-HILI, FOUNDER OF CUZENA

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

A DJ – the oldest female David Guetta!

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

A Saturday job in a greengrocer/butchers when I was 14. I really enjoyed the direct interaction, which I think helps with confidence at a young age.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Anyone who goes against the grain of conformity; who challenges the mediocre which most of us may very well accept. I'm inspired by those that believe there is a better, or alternative, way for almost everything.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

A BUPA consultant, selling private health care. It was completely

scripted and soul-destroying. I lasted less than six months.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

Experiencing growth in a really challenging sector. The food category takes no prisoners, so any small win feels like a huge accomplishment.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

How pressured it is with all the hats you have to wear. Realising how vulnerable people in the food sector feel, even those with established brands, which in turn gives you another layer of pressure.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

The challenges are tough, so I do like that the industry has created a community of people supporting each other, especially big brands doing their bit to help the little guys.



TEA OR COFFEE?

Coffee, but good coffee is wasted on me as I just need a hit to keep me going for three hours at a time.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

No doubt the very meal I started our range with: Fiery Chilli Ful Madamous with my favourite Moroccan flat bread 'M'simin' and a cheeky brandy and lemonade.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

You have to be kind and give from your heart for no expected return. I'm a true believer that 'If you give, you get' in life.

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

Camel meatball stew. I was a kid on a trip to Morocco – just vile.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

Miracle Morning by Hal Elrod – habits that help your daily routine.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Sweet all day. A good old custard cream pushes me off the wagon every time.

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

The **Summer Special** issue will include:

- Top Tips on Summer Sales
- BBQ & Accompaniments
- Summer Drinks
- Oils, Vinegars & Dressings
- British Cheese Awards Preview
- Yoghurt, Butter & Cream
- Crisps & Bagged Snacks

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HUMBLE WARRIOR TURMERIC & MANGO

I'm always keen to try out different drinks, so I was looking forward to tasting the offerings from Humble Warrior. This sparkling non-alcoholic botanical drink ticks lots of boxes for me, including being low calorie and no added sugar, but it's definitely not low on taste. I really enjoyed the turmeric flavour that comes through and it's a beverage that I would want to reach for again.

the-humble-warrior.com

ONE EARTH ORGANICS JACKFRUIT CRISPS

Jackfruit has been popping up all over the food industry recently and I've tried it in a few different guises, so I was keen to give these crisps from One Earth a go. I wasn't sure what to expect but I liked that these tasted sweet enough to feel like a treat while also counting towards one of the recommended five a day. At only 71 calories a portion it's easy to keep dipping into these.

oneearthorganics.co.uk



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



CELEBRATING ITALIAN CUISINE

We explore what makes pasta such a staple in British households

Italian cuisine has become embedded in British eating habits. Firm favourites such as spaghetti bolognese, lasagne, gelato and pizza make regular appearances on the dinner tables of UK households.

There's not much that can beat a bowl of pasta and it seems that the British public agrees; according to Statista £164m was spent on fresh pasta at the end of 2018. So what's so great about it?

It's estimated that pasta became widely eaten throughout Italy in the 1700s and then started to become popular around other countries across the world. It is a versatile food that, no matter if bought fresh or dried, only takes minutes to prepare and so continues to be a popular choice for a speedy meal. There's a whole host of meal options that can be created with pasta as a base, so it's worth offering customers an interesting variety and stocking up on a few different options.

Aside from the well-known staples of spaghetti, penne and fusilli, there's also the likes of fettuccine, farfalle and schiaffoni to choose from. With more and more consumers looking for free-from options, the market for gluten-free pastas has expanded, too. Far from being a product to be tucked away in a dark corner, these pastas should be featured pride of place on your shelves.

For shoppers who are looking for a quick meal, having a delicious sauce to complement their pasta of choice is essential. The beauty of pasta is that it can work with so many different flavours, from the classic tomato sauce to spicy chilli to creamy mushroom. There are plenty of good quality sauces on the market these days, which feature less sugar and preservatives and use natural ingredients, so be sure to keep a good selection on the shelves. It's also important to keep stock of all the core ingredients needed to create a homemade sauce, such as plump tomatoes, onions, garlic and fresh herbs.

It's not just Italian food that continues to make waves in the UK. The Italian aperitif cocktail Aperol Spritz, which is made using prosecco, Aperol and soda water has been a top seller for the past few summers. We look forward to seeing the next trend influenced by Italy's vibrant food culture.

Are you passionate about Italian food and drink? Do you have a story, advice or comments on the topic? If so we would love to hear from you, so please get in touch via lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk.



THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Chef Adrian Martin has recently opened Camden restaurant Wildflower



I come from a very small village called Bawnboy in Cavan, Ireland. In our village we literally have only one shop, so we'd have to head to the nearest big town, Ballyconnell, to get our hands on the best local produce. I'd always go to Crowe's Butcher's for top-quality meat, and the greengrocers in Ballyconnell sell, in my opinion, some of the best fruit and vegetables in Ireland – and it's all sourced from the local landscape.

When I was a child, my parents were big champions of home-grown produce, so we used to cultivate a lot of our fruits and vegetables in our back garden. We also had an orchard where we'd grow all sorts of fruit like damsons, apples and pears. Over the years, my Mum and I would attempt to make different products out of the fruits we'd grown ourselves. Recently, we grew our own grapes which we now use to distil our own wine every year. Of course, our first batch of wine was terrible, but I like to think that we've perfected our recipe now.

At home, we'd get our chickens from Manor Farm as it's such a very close to us and all their chickens are free range. We also kept hens ourselves from time to time for fresh eggs, and we also tried our hand at keeping ducks, but quickly learnt that they're extremely messy.

In my restaurant, Wildflower in Camden, I'm continuing my family's

ethos of foraging for wild foods and ingredients in the local landscape.

A large proportion of the ingredients on the menu have been foraged, and we're also growing most of our own produce in the market's food garden – just like I used to with my parents in Ireland. I think our slogan, 'As Nature Intended' really sums up the philosophy behind Wildflower; cooking only with what is provided by nature throughout the seasons.

Nowadays, I live between Dublin and London and travel between both cities very regularly. In Dublin, I live right next to a big Asian market which I'm a huge fan of because they stock a lot of different spices and unusual vegetables that I cook with at home. I'm also really close to an artisan food store called Fresh Avenue, which I love because it always stocks the best organic fruit and vegetables. I think it's always worth paying the extra money for quality ingredients to cook with at home as you can see a definite impact in your health and energy. In London, Daily Fish Supplies are the best for sustainably caught, ultra-fresh fish and I like to buy my meat at Campbell Bros because it's all sustainably reared (and delicious!). Finally, Bello Wild Foods are one of my favourite suppliers as they forage most of the produce they sell – which is what I'm trying to do at Wildflower, too.

RESCHEDULED EVENTS

July

7th-8th
NATURAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTS EUROPE
ExCel, London
naturalproducts.co.uk

23rd-26th
LONDON COFFEE FESTIVAL
The Truman Brewery, London
londoncoffeefestival.com

September

1st-4th
CIBUS
Parma, Italy
cibus.it

7th-9th
FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW
NEC, Birmingham
farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

7th-9th
FOOD & DRINK EXPO
NEC, Birmingham
foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk

13th-15th
TAVOLA
Kortrijk Xpo, Belgium
tavola-xpo.be

14th-17th
ALIMENTARIA
Barcelona, Spain
alimentaria.com



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW

THE UK FOOD SHOWS
30TH MARCH – 1ST APRIL 2020 AT NEC
POSTPONED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 health situation, we have taken the difficult decision to postpone the NEC UK Food Shows.

This decision has not been taken lightly. We have been following Government and WHO advice to continue as planned however it is now more likely that under the Government's 'Delay' phase large scale events will be prohibited before the end of March.

We have been working closely with the NEC to secure new dates; **Food & Drink Expo, Farm Shop & Deli Show and National Convenience Show** will now take place at the NEC on the 7th – 9th September 2020.

farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

 @FarmShop_Deli #FSD2020