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CHRISTMAS

DEBORAH
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ITALIAN

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CHEESE

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CREDIT: GARAFALO

EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the November/December issue of *Speciality Food* – our final publication of 2019 – and what a year it's been.

The 'B' word has maintained its pole position across headlines and minds within the UK and beyond, and the food and drink industry has seen a major culture shift towards sustainability and health as consumers look to boost the wellbeing of both themselves and the planet.

Speaking of organic, have you read our *Organic Report 2019* yet? It's full of exclusive insight from movers and shakers across the world of organic, and totally free to download on our website.

We're ending 2019 on a high note, introducing the newly-crowned winner of the Future Food Awards 2019 on p. 14, previewing the brilliant Food Matters Live (p. 16) and European Pizza & Pasta Show 2019 (p. 24), before indulging in the very best of Italian cuisine on p.25 – as well as sharing all the trends, expertise and insight you need, as always.

Merry Christmas to all.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR
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There is a growing need for food and drink products to cater to people with intolerances and allergies. Brands have responded to the rise of vegans, vegetarians and those going gluten-free with a plethora of launches, but it's time for the same dedication to apply to allergens, and change is indeed happening.

The industry is becoming more aware of how important it is that consumers can trust the food and drink items that they consume. At a time when news headlines have been dominated by reports of severe allergic reactions and even deaths, consumer confidence is at a low. Demands have been made for businesses to provide transparent information about ingredients used and cross-contamination, as well as to increase staff training in hospitality to provide allergen information on menus.

The tragic death of teenager Natasha Ednan-Laperouse after an allergic reaction to a Pret A Manger baguette made headlines in 2016, leading to calls for businesses to have to provide clear information on labelling.

News outlets also reported on the case of teenager Owen Carey, who suffered a fatal allergic reaction in 2017 after consuming buttermilk at a Byron restaurant.

This year the government announced 'Natasha's Law' – a new law that will be coming into force by

Industry responds to allergy issues

Recent food safety scandals have put the food and drink industry under scrutiny. So what changes are being made across the board?

summer 2021 that will require food businesses to include full ingredients labelling on pre-packaged foods.

A Food Standards Agency spokesperson explains how small independent businesses like cafés and farm shops could be impacted by the new law coming into force, "The changes to the regulations which come into effect on 1st October 2021 could affect these kinds of businesses depending on how they produce and sell products. If products are sold loose or are packed at the request of the customer then there is no change. However, foods packed before a customer orders them may come within the scope of the new legislation and would require the name of the food and the full ingredients listed with the allergens emphasised on label to ensure that consumers know what is in the food.

"To help businesses prepare for this change, the FSA will be publishing technical guidance in December covering what products will require the new labelling and what they have to display. During the implementation period we will also be refreshing online allergen training tools and E-Learning modules on food allergens, and updating the Safer Food Better Business information pack to help small businesses. We will also be working with businesses and representative bodies to understand any challenges and encourage sharing of good practice."

Henry Mackley at Harp Lane Deli says, "At the moment anything that we produce in house – quiches, pates, salads etc – are all sold loose. We obviously take allergy issues very seriously anyway, regardless

of future legislation. We are able to provide a full list of allergens for anything we make ourselves, but as we only have a small kitchen we advise anyone with serious allergies to avoid anything homemade."

Meenesh Mistry, founder of Wholey Moly, which creates handmade cookies with natural ingredients comments, "Better legislation is needed to ensure consumers with allergies are safe and able to enjoy their food. [the new legislation] doesn't affect Wholey Moly as we already disclose all ingredients, but I think it could result in extra costs for small businesses, such as small delis and cafés, so there needs to be support in rolling this out. I also think more stringent rules could lead to less options for allergy sufferers as you run the risk of businesses wanting to be careful

and so covering their backs with blanket statements such "made in a factory with peanuts".

It's clear that aside from labelling adjustments coming into force, big changes are being made already. As reported in *The Grocer*, a new audit service has been launched by food safety consultancy NT Assure and independent compliance audit company Serve Legal. The Customer Experience Allergen Audit will help retailers and operators in the hospitality and food-to-go sectors to independently monitor the customer experience of allergy sufferers eating in their establishments. The audit will use mystery diners as food-to-go customers who will ask questions regarding ingredients, food preparation, cross-contamination and more, reporting back on the customer experience.

Uber Eats also announced this year that it would be introducing "allergy-friendly" filters to make it easier for those with food intolerances or allergies to place orders through the app. The company said that the new feature will allow customers to filter restaurants, communicate allergy requests and allow the restaurants to contact customers and provide the opportunity to order another item that suits.

Big-scale changes are being made with the largest players within the food and drink industry and it's important for independents to follow suit.

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JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



“Is the Christmas boom sustainable?”

This is our 47th Christmas at Partridges. And although the scent of mulled wine and mince pies and the sound of carols and jingling bells may have diminished in appeal over the past nearly five decades, one thing has not changed. The months of November and December combined account for over 20% of our annual sales. If you add in October it becomes 30%. The next best quarter is quarter two, April to June, which accounts for about 24%.

It is therefore an unavoidable fact that Christmas remains the vital trading period of the year and that without it our shop, and perhaps much of the speciality food industry, would not exist in its present form. So how sustainable is the Christmas period as a lifeline for our businesses? This year the omens for a good year do not appear to be positive.

Retail is in a sorry state. Costs are rising, staff are difficult to recruit, online is challenging, and we have frankly no idea how much Brexit, deal or no deal, will affect us. As a business we have made no contingency plans at all.

However, we have been here before. It's always been something of a bunfight in the past, take last year for example. It was a similar situation but still proved to be our best Christmas ever (albeit by a fraction) with the same background music of Brexit and high street woes.

In fact, sales for December 2019 were 54.6% up on December 1995 – which is as far as my personal records go back. This roughly equates to the retail price index in food over the same period, if my understanding is correct.

We have had disappointing Christmases in the past – in fact a consecutive period of four years, from 2000 to 2003, when we were down year on year by 7.7%, 7.2%, 4.3%, and 6.4%. The main reason was the arrival of Waitrose a few hundred yards away.

We then took the opportunity to move ourselves a few hundred yards in the opposite direction and basically normal service was resumed as soon as possible, with a 13.5% rise in sales.

Our next blip was in 2007, with sales down 7.3%, and I cannot remember any particular reason. The following year was up by 5.6%. Then blip time again in 2013, which was down by 3.7%, but the following year was up by 17.5%.

So, if past sales are anything to go by, the good news is that Christmas still seems to have a sustainable future – despite the political background, despite the challenge of online retailers, despite the weather and despite it all.

Long live Christmas. Long live carols and jingling bells. Bring on the mulled wine and mince pies! And good luck to every speciality food shopkeeper and producer in the country!

Nourished crowned Supreme Champion at the Future Food Awards

Nourished, winner of the Wildcard category, has been crowned overall Supreme Champion of the 2019 Future Food Awards.

The nine category winners took to the stage at Bread & Jam to deliver a three-minute pitch to the panel of expert judges for a chance at the title, invaluable coverage in *Speciality Food* magazine, a slot on The FoodTalk Show, run by awards co-founder Sue Nelson and the opportunity to build relationships to help take their business to the next level.

After much deliberation the judges – *Speciality Food* editor Holly Shackleton; Renée Elliot, founder of Planet Organic and Beluga Bean; Ollie Lloyd, founder of Great British Chefs; John Stapleton co-founder, Little Dish and The New Covent Garden Soup Co.; Monika Linton founder and owner of Brindisa; William Chase founder of Tyrrell's Crisps, Chase Distillery & Willy's ACV and Ed Mehmed director of ?What If! – were most impressed by Nourished, an innovation marrying 3D printing technology to combine active ingredients into personalised nutritional snacks.

Caitlin Stanley, head of brand at Nourished said of the win, “It feels amazing, it feels awesome. The other brands that were pitching today were phenomenal, there was so much innovation and really cool ideas. The awards are amazing how they recognise all this new talent and all the innovative concepts that are coming out on the market



CREDIT: TOBY ESSEX, CLIQ STUDIOS

now, as well as recognising start-ups which is so important as start-up culture is so difficult. For these awards to see all the hard work that goes into it is really valuable.”

Renée Elliott, said of Nourished, “It's a blow-your-head off idea that wraps up good nutrition, future forward thinking around food and absorbability, best practice and tech all in one beautiful, tasty nugget.”

Ollie Lloyd, founder of Great British Chefs, added, “The amazing thing about Nourished is that they have combined cutting-edge technology, and the very clear consumer need and interest area, in a product that is genuinely sexy. And I think that is the marker of a

business that will succeed in the future. What is exciting about these awards is that they are focused on businesses that are showing other businesses where the future lies. A lot of the people who are shortlisted for these awards, young businesses and new businesses that are pushing boundaries, are ultimately hopefully beacons to other people that want to do similar things. The objective of these awards is to shine the light on the real innovators in the food space and hold them up as examples for others to show what is possible.”

Congratulations to the Supreme Champion, Nourished and to all the amazing category winners and finalists!

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CHARLES CAMPION

"What's in a name?"

It has become fashionable for marketers to revise their view of brand identity. Not so long ago the brand name was sacred and safe-guarding it was a full-time job. In the 1990s I toiled in the creative department of a large West End advertising agency, and amongst the clients I made television commercials for was the formidable Mars group. We had been tasked with making a commercial for a perky little chocolate, caramel and peanut bar called Marathon. Our commercial was very much of its time and featured four bright young things playing ping pong on an all white limbo set and backed with a sound track of irritating pop music. Frivolous and fluffy, clear branding, just the job. When we were happy with the commercial we presented it to the Mars marketing team. They solemnly shook their heads and revealed that the Marathon bar was to be brought into line with a global plan to rename this particular UK bar Snickers. Which is why my commercial never got shown to the public. At the time there were plenty of readers' letters protesting the loss of the Marathon name in favour of that American interloper Snickers, but even the staunchest chocolate fan cannot hinder progress. This autumn, guess what – the Mars folk have decided to bring back the Marathon name for a limited run in celebration of Mars' 85 years making chocolate confectionery in Britain.

There is nothing more entertaining than to catch up on squabbling French chefs, and it is

even better when the chefs take a pop at the Michelin Guide. This autumn's gastro shock horror will be played out in the courts. Chef Marc Veyrat runs a number of highly-rated restaurants including La Maison des Bois near Grenoble. Here he showcases 'botanical cooking' – ingredient-led and based on the wild herbs of Haute Savoie. After only a year at three stars his restaurant was docked a star and demoted from three to two, Veyrat took umbrage and announced that he would sue Michelin. He went on to assert that the inspector from the Red Book who visited his restaurant was mistaken in the matter of the cheese soufflé. Cheesegate suggests that the Michelin inspector thought the dish was made with Cheddar rather than local cheeses like Reblochon, Tomme or Beaufort and that such heresy was punishable by demotion. Veyrat on the other hand suggests that the yellow colour of the dish is due to his use of saffron in the recipe, and he is prepared to let the courts decide. The chef is broadening the fight and his lawyer asks that Michelin clarifies "the exact reasons" that they took the star away. This show could run and run, and probably will as long as both the chef and the guide book can milk it for all that valuable publicity. Michelin are keen to keep the principle of secrecy: "Our first duty is to tell consumers why we have changed our recommendation. We will carefully study his demands and respond calmly." Meanwhile, decent Cheddar is not necessarily yellow and makes a very fine cheese soufflé.



Low 2 No Bev Show to debut in 2020

A new trade show dedicated to the low and non-alcoholic drinks sector is set to make its debut next year.

The Low 2 No Bev Show aims to showcase a plethora of low and no-alcohol drinks brands from beers, ciders, wines and spirits, to craft sodas, adult soft drinks, cordials and mixers. The event, which is due to be held at The Old Truman Brewery in London from 17th-18th June 2020, will host exhibitor stands and a live content programme of insight and

trend analysis by HIM, MCA and other leading experts.

Andrew Reed, managing director of exhibitions at organisers William Reed commented, "Declining alcohol consumption coupled with strong innovation in low and no-alcohol drinks indicates to us that the sector is set for strong growth and the community needs an opportunity to come together to better understand and realise the full potential that is out there."

Figures reveal lowest retail sales in 10 years

Figures from the BRC-KPMG Retail Sales Monitor revealed that in September, UK retail sales decreased by 1.7% on a like-for-like basis from September 2018, when they decreased 0.2% from the preceding year. This is said to be the lowest 12-month average in 10 years, since August 2009. In the three months to September, food sales increased 0.3% on a like-for-like basis and 1.2% on a total basis. This is below the 12-month total

average growth of 1.7%, which is the lowest since March 2017.

In a separate report, the BRC-Springboard Footfall and Vacancies Monitor covering the five weeks from 25th August to 28th September 2019 showed that footfall declined by 1.7% in September, compared to the same point last year when it declined by 1.7%. High street footfall declined by 1.8%, following from the 2.2% decrease in September 2018.

National Living Wage to rise within five years

In September Chancellor Sajid Javid announced at the Conservative Party Conference his plan to raise the National Living Wage to £10.50 within the next five years. During his speech the Chancellor also said that he intended to reduce the age threshold to apply to those aged 23 and over from 2021 and to over 21-year-olds within the five-year time frame.

Commenting on the news, Mark Kacary, managing director at the Norfolk Deli, told *Speciality Food*, "Changing the rate by 50p might not cause us as much of a financial shock as it might others, but that doesn't mean that it will be easy for businesses. It's unfortunate that the government likes to create a policy which doesn't consider a wide variety of factors. To pay an employee £10.50 an hour will be much easier within certain industries where existing profit margins mean the only effect such a decision will make will be to show a slight dent on annual profits. For a small independent retailer like ours where even the owner/directors don't pay themselves a minimum wage to ensure that they can employ others will have an effect. Margins in food retail are not as high as some may believe them to be, and for some retailers a significant increase could be the difference between staying in business and selling up."

"We'd probably look at how to best increase some prices which would give us the additional revenue we would need without impacting sales. It would probably mean as individuals we'd need to work harder, we'd need to be more creative and more innovative. Find new revenue streams whilst finding ways to save money. It could be that we end up creating greater efficiencies and improving individual's productivity. It will be a burden for some."



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U.S. tariffs “very bad news” for Scottish whisky industry

New import tariffs have been imposed by the U.S. that affect a range of EU goods, including single malt Scotch whisky. According to media reports, the tariffs, which were approved by the World Trade Organization, have been put into place as a response to EU subsidies given to the aircraft maker Airbus. U.S. imports of single malt Scotch whisky and liquors will now have a 25% tariff imposed.

Chief executive of the Scotch

Whisky Association, Karen Betts, commented, “This is very bad news for our industry. It means that Scotch Whisky is now paying for over 60% of the UK’s tariff bill for the subsidies it provided to Airbus, eight times more than the next most valuable UK product on the tariff list. That Single Malts are being targeted is particularly damaging for smaller producers, who stand to be the hardest hit.

“We estimate that 25% tariff on

Single Malt Scotch Whisky will see exports to the U.S. drop by as much as 20% in the next 12 months, as Scotch Whisky will become less competitive in the U.S. market. In time, consumer choice will diminish and Scotch Whisky companies will start to lose market share. In Scotland and throughout our UK supply chain, we expect to see a dropping-off in investment and productivity. Ultimately, jobs could be at risk.”

Farm Retail Association Awards 2020 now open

The search for the UK’s best farm retailers has begun, with entries now open for the Farm Retail Association’s Farm Retail awards 2020. Members of the FRA can now enter their farm shops, farmer’s markets and trade suppliers for free for a chance to win in the Large Farm Shop of the Year (turnover over £1.5m); Small Farm Shop of the Year (turnover under £1.5m); Farmers’

Market of the Year; Farm Café/ Restaurant of the Year and Trade Supplier Member of the Year categories.

New to the 2020 edition of the awards is the Rising Star Award, which will celebrate farm shops or markets that have been in business for 36 months or less. The Lifetime Achievement Award is also open for nominations for the first time.

Chairman Rob Copley commented, “These are the only awards that are judged by fellow farm retailers and to win is a huge accolade. We would encourage everyone to get involved, this is your chance to recognise your team and promote your achievements to your customers. We wish you luck!”

Submissions for the awards will close on 1st December 2019.

Organic food and drink market continues to grow

Research from Mintel has shown that Europe is leading the way when it comes to organic food and drink innovation, with 17% of all food and drink products launched in the continent carrying an organic claim. The total share of new global food and drink product launches with organic claims has also risen from 6% to 10% in the 10 years between August 2009 and July 2019. The research highlighted that Millennials and Gen Zs in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland are the most likely to purchase organic food and drink.

Speaking at Anuga, Katya Witham, global food & drink analyst at Mintel, says, “Organic produce has seen growing support among European consumers at a time of increasing

concerns for wellbeing, health and the environment. Our research shows that the European market is spearheading organic food and drink innovation, with France, Germany and Spain leading the way. Although organic products have fully entered mainstream channels and continue to gain traction with shoppers, the organic segment still offers innovation opportunities across numerous food and drink categories. This is especially true in categories where organic claims have previously played a minor role, such as wine.”

For a detailed look at the organic food and drink industry, refer to the *Speciality Food Organic Report 2019*, in partnership with BIOFACH.

“Retailers are facing a sustained drop in footfall, with numbers of visitors down over 10% in the last seven years alone. With Brexit looming, many consumers are holding off from all but essential purchases, and it is no surprise that the 1.7% drop in footfall has also contributed to a similar fall in sales”

HELEN DICKINSON OBE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM



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SUE NELSON



"To CBD or not CBD?"

A lot has been written about Cannabidiol (CBD) recently in the media. You may have seen it as an add-in booster to smoothies or coffee, or as creams, oils, tinctures or sweets. But what exactly is CBD and why is it suddenly so popular?

CBD is the second most prevalent of the active ingredients of cannabis (marijuana). While it is an essential component of medical marijuana, it is derived directly from the hemp plant and not the marijuana plant. Contrary to some articles you may have read it does not cause a 'high'. According to the World Health Organization "In humans, CBD exhibits no effects indicative of any abuse or dependence potential.... To date, there is no evidence of public health related problems associated with the use of pure CBD."

The reason for the hype is its use to address anxiety and reduce insomnia and sleeping disorders. WHO also found that CBD could provide relief for a variety of debilitating conditions including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, cancer and diabetic complications, as well as general pain. There isn't enough evidence to say that CBD definitely can help such medical conditions, but so far doctors are very optimistic about their research.

This is why CBD is so popular, with informed consumers actively searching for products that contain CBD, even though manufacturers cannot yet make claims about their alleged medical benefits. While the vast majority of cannabinoids are listed as controlled substances

under the Misuse of Drugs Act, CBD is an exception and is completely legal in the UK.

An independent retailer can sell CBD products without fear of damaging their customers health or breaking the law. So, if you want to stock CBD products ensure your suppliers talk you through the manufacture process and its provenance and that they have derived the CBD element from an EU-approved industrial hemp strain. Check that they are not making wild medical claims on the packaging and that dosages are clear.

What is the future for CBD oil and other CBD products? It's looking as though it will quickly develop into other markets and not just remain in the medicinal world. It's already expanded into other products including burgers, breath sprays, gummy sweets, artisan chocolate bars and even tooth picks in America, and is on its way to being added to water, pet products, and skincare to allegedly help with acne.

Market research by the Centre for Medicinal Cannabis estimates that the CBD market in the UK could be worth almost £1bn a year in just five years. Supermarkets and the big national chains view them as somewhat controversial and are currently avoiding stocking them, despite their popularity with the public. There is a real opportunity for independent retailers to stock CBD oils, creams and general food and drink products with added CBD before the nationals start to gain realise the potential of the category. **Sue Nelson presents The FoodTalk Show with Holly Shackleton**
foodtalk.co.uk

Fortnum & Mason unveils revamped confectionery department



Fortnum & Mason has revamped the confectionery department at its flagship Piccadilly store. The retailer offers more than 500 different varieties of chocolate, and visitors will be able to purchase artisanal treats from around the world alongside the classic Fortnum flavours, which includes Kent Honey. The new department aims to provide an immersive experience for customers, with a mixture of aroma jars, daily tastings, a live chocolatier station and hot chocolate on tap. The loose chocolate counter is also filled with a 300-strong assortment which features 150 new chocolates.

Fortnum & Mason has celebrated the launch by donating a chocolate hamper worth £1,500 to Great Ormond Street Hospital, which will be auctioned at the charity's 20th Anniversary Christmas Carol Concert on 10th December.

FOOD SERVICE POP-UP AIMS TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH

A new food service pop-up, Fink Street Food, plans to combine food with opening up the conversation around mental health. Co-founders James Reid and Lewis Greenwood have created a vegetarian menu which will be available through different channels including street food markets, pop ups and music festivals. Fink will also be encouraging customers to share mental health messages and experiences through the Fink Frame and message board on the stall, as well as social media, blog and workshops.

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WHAT'S TO COME IN 2020?

The biggest changes we'll all see next year and beyond

Today's food and drink landscape is always changing, continually being shaped by both short-lived micro-trends and larger movements which have long-term impact. It's important to keep abreast of these evolutions to ensure a satisfied – and inspired – customer base, so here we've listed a few of the biggest changes that are set to develop in the coming year...

Health and wellbeing

As a society we are becoming increasingly aware of the quality of our food and drink. Consumer demand to know and understand what is in the food and drink that is being consumed helps to drive forward innovation across the board. A plethora of products in the sector being launched in today's market are catering to the customer who is conscious of food

and drink that is deemed 'healthier', containing less sugars and additives and leaning towards more natural ingredients. The snacking sector, for example, is now a category that is filled with healthier alternatives and on-the-go choices. According to Mintel's *Consumer Snacking UK May 2019* report, "Public Health England has challenged nine food and drink categories, including snacks such as biscuits, yogurt and chocolate, to cut sugar by 20% by 2020."

Understanding functionality

Building on the trend for health and wellbeing are functional foods. In its *Global Consumer Trends 2019* report, Mintel identified total wellbeing as being one of six key consumer trends impacting industries and markets on a global scale. Gut health foods such as kefir have been at the forefront of this movement.

Consumers are seeking out food and drink products that serve a deeper purpose and more health

benefits. No-one could fail to notice, for example, the array of CBD products on the market today in a variety of forms, with brands highlighting its potential to aid sleep, relaxation and even help with inflammation.

A growing trend to keep an eye out for next year is adaptogens. Jeremy Jaffe from The Food Agency says, "It's all about how you enhance what you're offering your consumer. The big buzzword in the last 18 months on food has been protein, and boosting what you're consuming by combining other products such as inulin. Fibre is also a big conversation the moment, and it's one that will definitely continue."

Ed Mehmed, director at ?What If! predicts that new wave energy drinks will be gaining more traction as 2020 goes on: "We can see a growing space for new wave energy drinks, which challenge the notion of energy being spikey, short lived and sometimes unnatural or artificial. Smoke signals are natural energy challengers Tenzing, RedBull – who are stretching into more natural recipes with their Organics range – and blurred lines between juices and smoothies leading with functional health benefits. Plus, the explosion of RTD and cold brew coffee pushes the category and consumer towards plant-based stimulants unchanged from nature. In 2020 energy will be multifaceted where fast and slow are equally desirable by the consumer, just as training days and recovery days are important to health."

Personalisation

Cutting edge-technology and a deeper understanding of how certain nutrients can provide benefits to our bodies allows for the opportunity for personalisation. According to Mintel's *Global Consumer Trends 2019* report, "Consumers are looking externally to their surroundings and internally towards their physical and mental

wellbeing, expecting holistic approaches to wellness. Across the globe consumers are increasingly seeking personalisation and in the UK, as many as 42% of British consumers are interested in a personalised diet based on their genes/DNA."

There are companies out there taking function and nutrition to the next level and personalising to each individual. Supreme Champion of the Future Food Awards, Nourished, for example, offers the ability to create customisable supplements using essential vitamins and nutrients. The business is also ticking the boxes for consumer demand with it's vegan, sugar-free, plastic-free and made-in-the -UK credentials.

Sustainability

The conversation around sustainability is an integral one to today's industry. Brands across food and drink are making changes to packaging to create more eco-friendly products and reducing the amount of hard-to-recycle plastics used.

Jeremy says, "I think the biggest driver of food in the next 12 months is going to be a continuation of the plastic conversation. Even at the beginning of this year to now there is a plethora of good plastic alternative packaging coming to market."

The conversation around organic is also gathering more momentum and is sure to pick up pace in 2020. Figures from the *Soil Association Organic Market Report 2019* show that organic sales stood at £2.2bn in 2018, a growth of 5.3%. The Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD) also reveals that in the last 10 years – between August 2009 and July 2019 – the total share of new global food and drink product launches with organic claims has risen from 6% to 10%. It's clear that environmental concerns are pushing companies to innovate like never before.

“ I think the biggest driver of food in the next 12 months is going to be a continuation of the plastic conversation ”



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Take stock with our new food and drink round-up



Start-up releases "UK's first" Fairtrade black seed oil

Morris of London has launched what it says is the UK's first Fairtrade black seed oil. The single-origin oil is created using 100% organic and certified Fairtrade black seeds from the Nigella Sativa plant grown in Egypt which are then cold-pressed to create the oil. It makes for the ideal addition to salads and smoothies or on its own. Black seed oil is said to be rich in antioxidants and thymoquinone, which has both anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Founder Zarina Morris comments, "Morris of London is a dream realised. I wanted to bring to market a conscious brand that treads lightly, sourcing only the highest quality products that offer benefits to our busy modern lives. My culinary oil is the first product to launch, and I hope to follow this with other black seed products in the future. Its popularity in America is growing, and I wanted to make it more accessible in the UK."

morrisoflondon.co.uk

Festive nut butter hits the shelves

Pip & Nut is celebrating festive flavours with the launch of its Limited Edition Pumpkin Spice Almond Butter. Aiming to invigorate the nut butter market with its exciting flavour combinations, the Pumpkin Spice Almond Butter features Californian almonds blended with pumpkin seeds, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg for a warm, spicy taste that is reminiscent of Christmas. It's made from only natural ingredients and is palm oil-free.

Pip & Nut founder, Pippa Murray, says, "Our Limited Editions are fast becoming some of the best-selling lines in our product portfolio and we know our consumers eagerly await the latest launches and seek them out in-store. They are a great example of how we focus on flavour over functionality, and launching the UK's first-ever festive nut butter is an exciting opportunity for us and our retail partners to capitalise on the Christmas trading period."

pipandnut.com



Alcohol-free brand delivers 0% cocktails

New from The Original Free Drinks Company is Highball Cocktails, an alcohol-free range of what is said to be the UK's first range of 0% ready-to-drink cocktails. Six cocktails are available – Classic G&T, Pink G&T, Cosmopolitan, Mojito, Italian Spritz and Ginger Dram – with each drink being made with natural ingredients, including fresh juices, bitters, extracts and agave nectar.

Co-founder Kate Johnson said, "We are passionate about providing great-tasting and healthy alcohol-free alternatives that do not require a compromise, allowing consumers to have confidence in their positive alcohol-free choice. Our Highball Cocktails set a new standard in 0% flavour experience and we will continue to add more classics to the range, as well as introducing original cocktails of our own."

highballcocktails.com



Beer and whisky companys partner up to create new beverage

St Peter's Brewery and The English Whisky Co. have joined forces to launch a whisky beer. The golden beer – which has smokey overtones and aromas of peated malt – is combined with a measure of award-winning whisky to create a 4.7% ABV beverage set to delight both beer and whisky lovers.

John Hadingham, MD at St Peter's Brewery, said, "This is an exciting new launch and we're delighted to have worked so closely with The English Whisky Co. to create a delicious beer that combines great beer and fantastic whisky."

Katy Nelstop at The English Whisky Co. added, "Whisky fans are real connoisseurs and they love to experiment with other whisky-based products. We know this new whisky beer will be incredibly popular with our customers and we also have plans to create a gift pack combining the beer and our single malt, which we expect will be a great seller through our shop."

englishwhisky.co.uk and stpetersbrewery.co.uk

Vegan brand launches latest cookie and dip snack

Maple Peanut Drizzle is the latest addition to Livia's range of cookie and nut butter dip DUNX products. Featuring three oat cookies with a Maple Peanut Drizzle dipping sauce, the product now sits alongside the Caramel Almond Swirl and Choco Hazel Twist varieties. All three are vegan and gluten-free and feature new packaging with 20% less plastic. Founder Olivia Wollenberg says, "We pride ourselves on bringing the most innovative products to market and are always working hard to ensure all our ranges are the very best they can be. With the new DUNX range we've really taken our consumer feedback on board and are thrilled with the results. It's a truly exciting time at Livia's. We're the leading brand challenging the traditional image of free-from, making it fun instead of functional. We're now entering the next phase of growth and look forward to appealing to an even broader audience with our flavour first approach."

livias.co.uk



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Egg & Chips-flavoured crisps launches from SLABS

Crisp producer Great Food Affairs (GFA) has launched a new vegan and gluten-free flavour for its SLABS brand. The innovative Egg & Chips joins the existing flavours of Sea Salt, Salt & Malt Vinegar, Mature Cheddar & Onion, Mellow Sweet Chilli and Beef Roast. The Cheshire-based businesses' chunky crisps are hand-cooked and made with olive oil and natural seasonings.

Beegie Bourne-Robinson, founder of GFA and creator of SLABS says, "Shoppers tell us they love SLABS but want more vegan-friendly varieties to pick from. We have always tried to make SLABS stand out from the crowd and so when launching a new flavour, we wanted to go beyond the usual flavours typically found on crisp shelves – you might say we needed to go with something more 'Eggs'treme.'" greatfoodaffairs.com



Street food-inspired meal kits hit the market

New street food-inspired meal kits have been added to the Thai Taste range. The six products include: Easy Thai BBQ Scewers Kit – Moo Ping; Easy Thai Chicken & Cashew Nut Noodle Kit – Gai Pad Med Mamuang Him Ma Paan; Easy Thai Tom Yum Soup Kit – Tom Yum; Easy Thai Chilli & Holy Basil Stir Fry Kit – Pad Kaprao; Easy Thai Coconut Sticky Rice with Mango Kit – Khao Niao Mamuang and Thai Chilli Jam – Nam Prik Pao.

The new kits will join the brands' Pad Thai and Thai Green, Thai Red and Thai Yellow curry kits.

Thai Taste has rolled out the new products, as well as the existing range, in new packaging that has resulted in a reduction of single-use plastics by more than 50%.

Sales and marketing director Nick Thomas says, "When it comes to world cuisine products, consumers are looking for easy and quick to prepare options combined with an authentic and traditional dining experience (Mintel/Lightspeed). Our range of Thai meal kits meet all these needs." empirebespokefoods.co.uk



Signature Smoked range unveiled from BigFish

BigFish has drawn on its family heritage and experience with smoking to produce a three-strong range of products – Signature Smoked Salmon, Organic Smoked Salmon and Smoked Sea Trout, made at their own Grimsby smokehouse.

Andrew Coulbeck, founder and MD of JCS Fish, manufacturer of the new BigFish Signature Smoked range, says, "Investing in our new on-site smokehouse has given us the opportunity to develop the very finest smoked fish, exactly the way we wish them to be. I have spent my entire working life in salmon and I am so proud of our Signature range, I think it really is something special." bigfishbrand.co.uk



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PIECE OF THE PIE

Is your savoury pastry selection looking a little stale? Here's how to capitalise on developments in this category

When it comes to comfort food, pies, pasties and other savoury pastries really hit the spot. While they are often grabbed on-the-go throughout the year, when the colder weather starts drawing in they are options that consumers start reaching for even more. Although savoury options are perennially popular, sweet pies come into their own in the autumn months, reflecting the time of year that fruit such as apples and blackberries are harvested. Karen Deans, MD of field fare, explains, "Savoury pies are more

popular because there are more filling options that cross seasons, but, on the whole, sweet pies are hot, comfort food puds, which is the stuff of dreams on a cold day, but too heavy in the summer, particularly after a meal. Alongside the more traditional steak and ale pies and suet puddings that we offer, our chicken or cheese-based, vegetarian and vegan savoury pies work equally well in the warmer months with salads and steamed veg, which broadens their reach."

When deciding what pies and other savoury pastries to stock in

your shop it's essential to consider your customer base. These days there are so many different needs to cater to, but that doesn't mean that those more classic flavours should be forgotten about as these will likely still remain best-sellers.

Anthony Tilbury, manager at Moody Sow Farm Shop, explains that they have a range of traditional flavours available, as well as vegan options: "We make all our own pies and pasties at present which includes Steak, Steak & Stilton, Steak & Ale, Steak & Kidney, Chicken, Leek & Bacon and Chicken & Chorizo. All are made with fresh ingredients, and the reason for this selection is that these are the best-sellers in the shop. We also make some vegan pies made with carrots, onion, mushroom, leek, vegan mince, peas and gravy. Pasties are Corned Beef and Cheese & Mushroom."

Make room for more veggie options

With the desire for vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free pies and pasties stronger than ever, it's important to ensure that there is enough variety to be able to cater to all dietary requirements. Karen at field fare says, "Traditionally, pies have been seen as comfort food and seasonal, and this is still true of our more classic recipes – our Chicken, Leek & Mushroom and Sweet Cherry pies, for example. But increasingly our vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free pies are proving very popular as handy, individual, self-contained standbys for visitors or family members with isolated dietary restrictions. And with this growth of plant-based product demand and in the quality of it, innovation in this sector is soaring. We have just introduced a new vegan pasty, for example, using an indistinguishable

soya-based meat-free alternative from the Meatless Farm Company.

"Innovation in the category doesn't stop at specialist diets and the environment, however. Consumers want 'newness' more than ever and there is some interesting tinkering with traditional formats going on out there, illustrated by our range of filled puff pastry purses and parcels. The humble pie is being gourmandised in format, functionality and in fillings – our gluten-free Roasted Vegetable & Goats' Cheese pies, for example, exceeded sales expectations from launch. Having said that, two of our biggest sellers are still Steak & Ale pie and Bramley Apple pie, so there is still much to be said for tradition."

Brands across the sector of pastry-bound foods have been seeing success with the introduction of free-from options. Take Greggs, for example, who saw huge media coverage and a surge of sales when they launched their vegan sausage roll. The popularity of this product proves how in-demand a meat-alternative to the traditional sausage roll is in today's market.

Pasties and pies are often thought of as a more 'unhealthy' choice, especially when consumed on-the-go, but with the rise in demand for vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free products encouraging brands to explore new flavours and lighter fillings, the category has had new life breathed into it.

“By creating delicious free-from recipes, we hope it means that even more people – regardless of different dietary restrictions – can tuck into pies together this Christmas”

Embracing seasonality

As the winter months are the ideal time to stock up on a range of delicious savoury pastry products, it's worth giving them an extra push in the run-up to the festive period. Christmas and New Year provide the ideal opportunity to introduce some exciting flavour combinations for both meat and vegetable options.

Pieminster is a brand that has a range of pies and patties available, from classic options like the Kate & Sidney – the British beef steak and kidney pie – to the Gluten Free Heidi, a goat's cheese, sweet potato and spinach pie. The company has also just launched a new vegan Christmas pie Good Elf – a vegan 'turkey', cranberry, port and thyme pie in pastry. Also new is the company's first gluten-free festive pie. The Gluten Free Mistle is made with British Beef, free-range British bacon and port.

Tristan Hogg, Pieminster co-founder and MD, says, "For us, the festive season starts when the first batch of Christingles, Deer Santas, Mistle Moos and Crackers emerge from the ovens in November, filling the kitchens with the scent of Christmas spices. This Christmas is extra special because we have not one, but two new pies to look forward to; the Good Elf and the Gluten Free Mistle. By creating delicious free-from recipes, we hope it means that even more people – regardless of different dietary restrictions – can tuck into pies together this Christmas."

“With the rise in demand for vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free products including brands to explore new flavours and lighter fillings, the category has had new life breathed into it”

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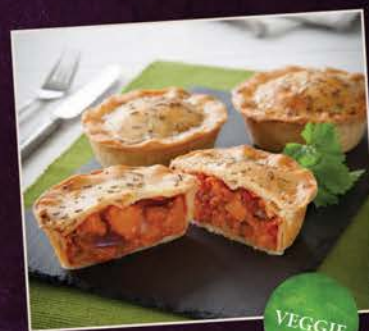
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DRINKS

No one's appreciation of Spanish drinks should stop at Sangria, says Helen Graves

With more acreage under vine than any other country on the planet, Spain produces excellent wine, sherry and vermouth. It's also a peninsula, which means the weather varies greatly between regions resulting in a plethora of styles from fresh, salty aperitivos to sweetly sticky digestivos.

WINE

Spain is the third largest wine-producing nation in the world (after Italy and France) but production happily tends to steer towards artisanal methods. Adrian Castro, bar manager at Spanish importer

Brindisa explains, "Smaller productions are run by grower-winemakers rather than massive operations where grapes are bought from surrounding plots." Wines are 'terroir driven', meaning they're made with less oak, allowing the characteristics of the grapes and soil to shine through. "The direction in Spain is pretty much towards organic and bio dynamic principles too," says Castro, with "intervention in the vineyard and cellar kept to a minimum."

Thanks to regional climate variation, white wines range from light and fresh through to weighty and aromatic. In the bars of San

Sebastian, for example, Txakoli dominates. An easy-drinking, low-alcohol wine with a slight spritz, it pairs perfectly with light bar snacks, known as pintxos. Albariño is another salty coastal wine (this time from the North West) which matches well with seafood; a crisp glass or three with a plate of mussels steamed with garlic and parsley is pure heaven. Weightier whites include white Rioja, which generally strike a balance between fresh and full bodied – richer examples are best paired with jamon and whole roast fish. Verdejo – another major player – tends to be aromatic with notes of oily citrus and herbs, making an interesting alternative to Sauvignon Blanc.

When it comes to reds, Tempranillo dominates (it's the most planted grape in Spain). Grown in the regions of Rioja and Ribera del Duero it may be a blend aged in French or American oak (Rioja) or a 100% Tempranillo tasting of baked

earth and sun ripened fruit (Ribera del Duero). For more muscular wines, look to Priorat. Juicy blends of Garnacha and Cariñena with Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah make for wines which are excellent but pricey. For more affordable options, try those from Montsant, which have similar weight and intensity but a lower price tag. All work well with red meats and rich, tomato-based sauces.

CAVA

Long gone are the days when Champagne was considered the only sparkling worth the money. Produced mainly in Catalonia in the North East of Spain, Cava is predominantly made from a blend of three grapes – Macabeo, Parellada, and Xarello, undergoing secondary fermentation in the bottle. It must then be aged for at least nine months, with Reserve Cava aged for 15 and Gran Reserve at least 30. Flavours tend to be those of Mediterranean fruit and citrus, with toasty notes coming through with age. Cava really comes into its own as an aperitif paired with salty snacks such as crisps, nuts, olives and charcuterie but is also great with seafood thanks to its zesty citrus characteristics.

While the majority of Cava comes from three companies: Freixenet, Codorníu, and García Carrión, a new splinter group of high-end producers called Corpinnat caused a stir when they parted from the Cava DO to form their own EU-recognised body. Their first wines were released in spring this year to very positive reviews.

SHERRY

Sherry comes from Spain's oldest wine producing region – Andalusia – and has the advantage of coming in a wide range of styles at reasonable prices. It's a lightly fortified white wine, with styles ranging from light and dry to sticky and sweet. At the lighter end of the scale you'll find Fino and Manzanilla, both aged under a layer of living yeast called Flor and perfect for drinking early in the evening with salty nibbles, or at lunch time – preferably with the sun on your

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back. The heavier, sweeter styles are exposed to oxidative ageing, for example Amontillado and Palo Cortado, both richer, nuttier styles which work with meatier tapas dishes. Oloroso, full of tobacco and leather, works with pigeon, duck or mature cheeses, and for desserts, it has to be Pedro Ximenez – perfect poured over vanilla ice cream for an elegant and no-effort finish.

Those looking for something cool and of the moment should seek out Equipo Navahos, says Donald Edwards, head sommelier at London's La Trompette restaurant: "They started out as a private buying club for a group of friends and expanded to become the company that has redefined what sherry can be, with each different bottling a unique expression of one style."

VERMOUTH

We tend to associate vermouth with Italy (where it originated) but the Spanish have been making it for more than a century and "are some of its most enthusiastic drinkers" according to drinks expert and author of *Aperitif: A Spirited Guide to the Drinks, History and Culture of the Aperitif*, Kate Hawkings. Vermuterias – all-day cafés and vermouth bars – are now the rage all over Spain, with many of them making their own house vermouths. 'La hora del vermut' or 'the vermouth hour' now applies pretty much 24/7 in Barcelona according to Hawkings: "It is now quite common for bars in Barcelona and beyond to make their own vermouths and serve them on tap, with the usual Spanish generosity when it comes to pouring. Usually served neat over ice in a tumbler with a slice of orange and/or an olive... Look out for El Bandarra, Vermut de Lana or anything by Casa Mariol."

“ Spain offers a plethora of styles – from fresh, salty aperitivos to sweetly sticky digestivos ”

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Meet the Supreme Champion of the Future Food Awards 2019!

Introducing Melissa Snover, CEO and founder of Nourished – innovator and creator of the future of nutrition



On 3rd October 2019, at Bread & Jam Festival held at the Institute of Directors on London's Pall Mall, nine truly innovative food and drink brands went head-to-head to impress a panel of illustrious judges from across the world of food, drink and technology. The panel – including such industry icons as Monika Linton, founder of Brindisa; John Stapleton, co-founder of Little Dish and Covent Garden Soup Co.; and Ed Mehmed, director at ?What If! – was there to uncover the future of food and drink, and they found it in Nourished. The business has all the hallmarks of a future food: personalisation, nutrition, sustainability, attractiveness and great taste.

Speciality Food caught up with Melissa Snover, CEO and founder of Nourished, to find out more about her truly innovative business.

**THE BEST IDEAS OFTEN
STEM FROM PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE. WHAT LED YOU**



TO CREATE NOURISHED?

"I have been an avid consumer of vitamins for years and used to carry a large container of all my different tablets and pills with me wherever I travelled. On one particular business trip I was going through customs at an airport in Germany and accidentally dropped my Tupperware – spilling pills and tablets all over the floor. I had to crawl round in my suit and heels picking them all up, and the idea for Nourished came to me. My team

and I spent the next 18 months developing a patented 3D printing technology and vegan encapsulation formula which allows us to combine seven different active ingredients into one convenient and delicious nutrition stack."

WHAT MAKES NOURISHED'S PRODUCT A FUTURE FOOD?

"We are passionate about providing truly personalised nutrition and making it easier and more affordable for people to take the vitamins and supplements to suit their lifestyle

MEET THE CATEGORY WINNERS!

Out of hundreds of entries to the Future Food Awards, these were the businesses which most impressed the panel of judges with their unique blends of passion, innovation and industry-changing missions



YOUNG PRODUCER Oli's Nectarous

The Future Food Award judges were blown away by the deliciousness of Oli's Nectarous' Chocolate & Maca Lava Cake, as well as how much the founder had achieved at such a young age. The lava cake had an incredibly indulgent texture and taste whilst being vegan and refined sugar-free – in fact, those following conventional diets have been astounded to find out that the dessert had those credentials. Not only that, but it was gluten-free too! A delicious indulgence which is more virtuous than you'd think – what more could anyone ask for? A treat for all, and an impressive feat for the Oli's Nectarous team.
olisnectarous.co.uk



FARM TO FORK Dorset Snails

The team at Dorset Snails offer a taste of what – we hope – will be the future of food. Not only is their product genuinely delicious (even newcomers to snail-eating were impressed), but their approach to production is an innovation in itself. Rather than being imported and tinned like most snail products you find in the UK, Dorset Snails are farmed on-site and kept in a state of hibernation until ordered, meaning that their taste and texture is second to none. With the sustainability credentials of conventionally farmed meat a hot topic right now, the judges were inspired by Dorset Snails' offer of a rich source of protein with minimal environmental impact.
dorsetsnails.co.uk



DRINK INNOVATION Luhv Drinks

While most brands start the NPD process thinking about flavours, Luhv Drinks was determined to do things differently – by starting with science. The team worked in partnership with King's College London to create a range of drinks which each focused on a part of the body the health of which consumers might like to boost. The range currently consists of Heart, Skin and Mind cold pressed juices, and Awake, Focus and Calm shots. The judges were impressed by the combination of genuine health benefits and delicious taste, as well as the businesses' verifiable science-first approach and clear-cut consumer messaging.
luhvdrinks.com



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and goals. We believe that, of all the things we personalise, our health makes the most immediate difference to our lives and should take priority.

"Nourished utilises innovative 3D printing technology and allows the consumer to create a product completely customised to them. We have over one billion combinations available, and each Nourished stack is as individual as the person who made it. We 3D print each and every order on demand, and allow the consumer to make changes to their monthly subscriptions as their lifestyle also changes. Nourished eradicates consumers having to swallow multiple pills each morning, having to order from numerous suppliers and take nutrition products which have been sat on the shelves for months and lost much of their efficacy. Because Nourished is consumed as a food macro, the active ingredients are digested much more effectively into the body, meaning they have a much higher absorption rate than most vitamins in pill format."

THE JUDGING PANEL WAS IMPRESSED BY THE YOUR PASSION FOR SUSTAINABILITY. HOW ARE YOU PAVING THE WAY FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW?

"We really believe that food companies have a responsibility to reduce their carbon footprint and make products which are inclusive rather than exclusive. Every ingredient we use in Nourished is vegan and at least 95% of them are sourced in the UK. All of our



packaging is recyclable and plastic-free, and our individual Nourished flow wraps are made from wood pulp which is home compostable in just 32 weeks! At Nourished innovation is our blood and we think that to establish a sustainable and healthy food industry in the UK we need to incorporate new technologies and processes. 3D printing not only allows us to customise each order quickly and efficiently; it also means

we produce extremely little waste and can introduce new products to our range in just two weeks."

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT FUNCTIONALITY AND HEALTH ARE ADOPTED INTO THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY, RATHER THAN BEING SEEN AS A SEPARATE ENTITY/MARKET?

"With a growing trend for more nutritious and versatile food products, it is obvious that

consumers are increasingly seeking ways to boost their health through the food that they eat. In today's fast-paced society, time poor consumers are looking for healthier and more convenient food. We believe there is a huge advantage in providing functional micronutrients and active components from superfoods into personalised on-the-go snacks to make staying healthy more convenient, more affordable and more sustainable."

FINALLY, WHAT MAKES NOURISHED WORTHY OF THE SUPREME CHAMPION ACCOLADE?

"My team and I at Nourished have worked long and hard to bring this innovative product exclusively to the UK market, and we're really proud of everything we have achieved so far. We started as a young team of just four people in Birmingham, and in a matter of months have grown to over 20 employees. We are incredibly passionate about what we do, and are committed to making a difference in the food tech industry with our 3D printing technology. Our vision is to change the way people take vitamins and supplements – one Nourished stack at a time – and being Supreme Champion of the Future Food Awards 2019 will certainly help us along that journey!"

“Our vision is to change the way people take vitamins and supplements – one Nourished stack at a time – and being Supreme Champion of the Future Food Awards 2019 will certainly help us along that journey!”

WHAT THE JUDGES SAY...



"Nourished is a blow-your-head off idea that wraps up good nutrition, future forward thinking around food

and absorbability, best practice and tech all in one beautiful, tasty nugget."

RENÉE ELLIOTT, FOUNDER OF PLANET ORGANIC AND CO-FOUNDER OF BELUGA BEAN



"The amazing thing about Nourished is that they have combined cutting-edge technology and a very

clear consumer need and interest area, in a product that is genuinely sexy – I think that is the marker of a business that will succeed in the future."

OLLIE LLOYD, FOUNDER OF GREAT BRITISH CHEFS



"Nourished is at the forefront of the consumer need that is coming round the corner, which is

personalisation. It's all about providing good quality vitamins and supplementation compared to a lot of what is on the market right now. Personalisation is the future and Nourished is way ahead of the game in terms of being able to deliver."

JOHN STAPLETON, CO-FOUNDER OF LITTLE DISH AND THE NEW COVENT GARDEN SOUP CO.



FOOD TECH INNOVATION Vita Mojo

We all know that the foodservice industry is facing a number of struggles right now, not least the consumer demand for customisation and nutritional credentials. That's why Vita Mojo have created a food service system which provides transparency regarding a meal's ingredients and nutrients. Something which particularly impressed the judges was that when the Vita Mojo team experienced resistance when launching the product into restaurants, they opened their own in order to prove their model. These restaurants are still in action four years later, demonstrating that this is a proven sustainable approach to foodservice in the modern age.

vitamojo.com



FOOD PACKAGING Little Freddie

The team behind Little Freddie weren't content to sit back and wait for the technology and infrastructure around recycling to improve, so they took matters into their own hands and created a new system to do their bit in the fight against plastic waste. As well as researching the most sustainable pouch option to house their baby food products, they've worked in partnership with Enval, a specialist laminate recycling technology provider, to recycle their used pouches and make sure that none of them end up in landfill. This 'closed loop' approach to their manufacturing and post consumption processes particularly impressed the Future Food Awards judges.

littlefreddie.com



MISSION DRIVEN Seaweed & Co

Seaweed is a massive trend right now, not least because of its health credentials – but not all seaweed products are created equal. Seaweed & Co (headed up by the brilliantly named Doctor Seaweed) harvests wild Scottish seaweed using patent pending technology, protecting the environment yet allowing mass collection of the nutritionally dense natural food. The Future Food Awards' judging team were impressed by the taste of the retail range of seaweed-infused oils, as well as the health supplement capsules, and the way that the company is producing its range responsibly and with environmental health in mind.

seaweedandco.com



NEWCOMER Binary Botanical

Innovation is rife across the drinks sector, and yet the Future Food Awards judges hadn't seen anything quite like Binary Botanical before. It's a new take on beer, using a hop leaf infusion to give a Prosecco-like flavour to their 'table beer' – imbuing the drink with a tanginess rather than the bitterness sometimes associated with beer. The sophisticated flavour notes of the drink make it a viable option for pairing with food, and the judges hope that by creating Binary Botanical, its female founders have paved the way for restaurants to offer non-wine pairing options – a must in today's era of experimental foodies both in and out of home.

binarybotanical.com



FOOD INNOVATION Bee Approved (Veganista)

The number of vegans in the UK is growing, as is the quantity of vegan-friendly food and drink products on the market, but there are some items which those following a plant-based diet could be forgiven for missing. The industry has worked hard to create viable alternatives but some have proved elusive, including honey. Bee Approved have put it back on the menu for vegans thanks to their innovative product which looks and tastes just like honey but is made from rice. Not only that, but it's organically-produced and gluten-free, too. A game changing product for sure.

beapproved.co.uk

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FOOD MATTERS LIVE 2019

The event returns with an all-star line-up of the most innovative and promising brands of the future

From innovative ingredients and future brands through to new product development, Food Matters Live 2019 has something for every taste.

Showcasing new healthy, natural and clean label products, Food Matters Live 2019 hosts the largest ingredient exhibition in the UK, introduces a stellar line-up of new challenger brands, live theatre attractions, unique business opportunities and an inspiring seminar programme.

More than 15,000 people are expected at the two-day event on 19 and 20 November at ExCeL London, where visitors will discover the latest food, drink, nutraceutical and functional product development.

From chocolate to crickets

Running alongside the main exhibition is the Innovative Ingredients Live theatre, which has a line-up of industry insiders introducing new nutritional science ideas and emerging ingredients.

Among the speakers is Francesco Majno, the co-founder of Crické, which makes sustainable protein snacks from crickets, and Neil Robson, co-founder of Rebel Chocolate Limited and creator of a new functional range of high-quality chocolate bars that contain half the sugar of regular bars.

With ever-changing consumer demands for plant-based, healthy and sustainable foods, the new Future of Retail Trends live theatre will take a fresh look at the challenges for retailers and manufacturers to identify and respond to new opportunities.

And reflecting these consumer-

driven market trends is the new Plant-Based Pavilion, International Brands and Country Pavilions, where buyers and NPD professionals will discover a world of different flavours, products and ingredients.

Meet the buyers

Maximise your time at Food Matters Live and connect with multiple buyers by using the unique Match Meet the Buyer service.

If you're an ingredients innovator, you can meet NPD and innovation teams from key manufacturers including Allied Bakeries, Britvic, Danone, Genius Gluten Free, Hovis, Innocent Drinks, Kraft Heinz, PepsiCo, Premier Foods and Quorn.

And creative food and drink producers will have access to buyers from retail, foodservice and distribution networks including AB Hotels, CAMRA, Costco Wholesale, Harrods, Marks & Spencer, Marstons Pubs and Bars, Pizza Hut, Starbucks Coffee Company, Tesco and more.

This dedicated networking opportunity can only be pre-booked at foodmatterslive.com/match.

The future's bright

With innovation at the heart of Food Matters Live 2019, a new competition to find the UK's most promising food and drink start-ups was launched earlier this year.

From hundreds of entries, a team of influential buyers combed through the applications searching for challenger companies with the potential to take on the big brands.

Sitting alongside the Food Matters Live main exhibition, these challenger companies will be introduced in a prestigious new UK Future Brands Pavilion, supported by

Mintel, The Grocery Accelerator and Young Foodies.

The judging panel included Paul Hargreaves (chief executive of Cotswold Fayre), Olivier Sevenou (R&D lead – future-facing / health & wellbeing, pladis Global), and Wan Mak (head of nutrition & dietetics, Sodexo UK & Ireland).

Mr Hargreaves said competition for start-up companies is fierce: "With the pure number of new brands coming into the market, it can be overwhelming and increasingly difficult to make the right decisions. Just having a great product with great packaging that tastes fantastic isn't enough any more. Now you must really have investment and a large marketing budget to make a brand fly, even if you are only supplying independent retailers."

As one of his judging criteria, he identified companies which, "through manufacturing or other means, are looking to alleviate poverty or help disadvantaged communities".

Lovegrass Ethiopia is just one of the innovative companies selected for the UK Future Brands, which is genuinely giving back to the communities it buys from.

Founder Yonas Alemu was brought up in a small farming village in Ethiopian Rift Valley but he gave up a banking career to bring the ancient grain Teff to a global market. For thousands of years the Ethiopian people have used Teff as the main ingredient of their staple food 'Injera' – sourdough bread with a spongy texture, but Teff flour is also a fantastic and incredibly nutritious gluten-free replacement for conventional flour.

Central to Lovegrass Ethiopia's philosophy is a belief that Ethiopian



farmers should be able to trade Teff fairly to a global market. The company invests in farms to ensure a consistent and excellent quality supply of Teff and aims for sustainable and fair trade, not aid.

Closer to home Black Bee Honey is named after the British honey bee, which after nearly dying out is slowly making a comeback. Each variety is single-source and British, supporting both bees and their keepers.

The company was set up by friends inspired by a beekeeping course, and they currently work with local beekeepers based in London, the Cotswolds and Exmoor to create three products, all jarred in batches straight from the hive. Crucially, the honey is left unprocessed to ensure that each jar retains its optimum flavour and nutritional benefits – just as the bees intended.

Another truly innovative product is the botanical drink made with hemp-derived CBD created by Cannasa. Founded by Matthew Pygott and Gregor Pecnik, they wanted to create a great-tasting and amazing looking hemp drink that people can use on social occasions and instead of oils or vapes.

Made with all-natural ingredients and botanicals, it has no artificial sweeteners or preservatives. The company aims to have a positive social impact by educating people about the benefits of hemp and by

supporting mental health charities.

Combining ethical values with a growing consumer-driven market for vegan protein alternatives is the team behind Better Nature Foods, an innovative vegan start-up company based in London.

They have introduced the Indonesian staple Tempeh, which involves fermenting soybeans (or any other legume, nut, grain or seed) to produce a versatile, nutrient-rich and sustainable source of protein and fibre.

From original flavour to mince and bacon substitutes, the company has taken a traditional staple and turned it into an innovative and delicious plant-based, protein alternative.

The company donates 10% of all its profits to the Indonesian Tempe Movement, a not-for-profit co-founded by one of its co-founders Driando Ahnan.

Vibrant start-ups

Judge Olivier Sevenou (R&D lead – future-facing / health & wellbeing, pladis Global) said the quality of entries showed "how vibrant the UK start-up platform still is".

"The best entries showcased great innovative thinking looking for first-mover advantage in emerging consumer trends as well as creating clear USP at the core of their propositions."

Embracing this is the team from Fodilicious who are passionate about

“The countless numbers of new products entering the market can be overwhelming. Some days, I wonder if we are almost at saturation point, but it never ceases to amaze me when I spot the little gems from time to time”

FOOD MATTERS SUMMIT

Running in parallel with Food Matters Live this year, in ExCeL's prestigious Platinum Suite, the new Food Matters Summit will bring together more than 100 top-level international speakers to lead a debate on the key issues for the global food and drink sector.

From a session celebrating the top 30 disruptors rethinking the way we source, produce, package and distribute food to the race to develop alternative proteins as more people reduce their meat intake, the Food Matters Summit offers delegates unique learning and networking opportunities.

Confirmed speakers include Dr Sandhya Sriram, co-founder and CEO of ShioK Meats, who will be explaining how her company is growing sustainable seafood and meat using stem cells. Heather Mills, the founder of VBites, will be discussing if vegans are the ultimate disruptors of the future and what future there might be for plant-based food businesses, and Darren O'Sullivan, director of Plant Protein, Kerry Europe & Russia will examine the power of alternative proteins.

helping people with food allergies and intolerances. Their range of 'Free From' convenience food caters to a wide range of diets: gluten-free, dairy-free, nut-free, vegan options and low calorie, and is the UK's first low FODMAP certified meals and snacks.

The UK Future Brands may showcase a huge range of innovative new products, but they all have one thing in common – spotting a new market-driven trend early enough. For Olivier Sevenou, this was crucial: "I was, first of all, looking for propositions built around a clear consumer insight but also products experiencing with emerging consumer trends. A key criteria in judging was whether the products had a strong USP achieved through design and/or through leveraging unique core technology."

Embodying all these qualities is Ötzibrew, which was founded just two years ago by entrepreneur Tricia McNeilly. The company had a clear ambition to revolutionise the hot drinks market and find a healthy alternative to coffee.

It launched its first medicinal mushroom beverage in November 2017. Made out of pure Siberian birch tree, Chaga is renowned for its high

concentration of antioxidants and melanin. The company is preparing to launch new products, including Lion's Mane, Cordyceps, and Reishi.

Another UK Future Brands winner is Snooze, which promises to support natural sleep cycles with a natural herbal drink – made with valerian, passionflower, lemon balm, and lime blossom with extracts from hops and peppermint.



Treat yourself

The UK Future Brands judges were also looking for companies who were genuinely innovative with their products.

Wan Mak, head of nutrition and dietetics at Sodexo UK & Ireland, says spotting the unexpected made the judging process exciting: "The countless numbers of new products entering the market can be

overwhelming. Some days, I wonder if we are almost at saturation point, but it never ceases to amaze me when I spot the gems from time to time. Those new innovative products, that are bang on-trend, have an ethical attachment and hit the mark in terms of being healthy."

One of those "bag on-trend" products is the range of recovery drinks produced by Antidotefuel Ltd. They recognised that being healthy does not necessarily mean giving up everything you love, but if you do overindulge on a night out their new functional drinks are made from natural ingredients including milk thistle, ginger root, green tea and prickly pear, which are designed to help you recover overnight.

London-based Chief Chocolate Officer has developed a unique tasting experience with its premium chocolate bars uniquely flavoured to match your favourite wine. Each chocolate bar has been created to complement specific grapes – with six delicious flavours on offer, try Pear & Elderflower with Sauvignon Blanc or Blueberry, Vanilla & Black Peppercom with Cabernet Sauvignon.

Encompassing all the UK Future Brands values is Chewsy – the UK's

IN DETAIL

WHAT: Food Matters Live 2019
WHERE: ExCeL London
WHEN: 19th-20th November 2019
WEB: foodmatterslive.com/2019
TWITTER: @FoodMattersLive

first plant-based, plastic-free gum. Naturally vegan and biodegradable, and free from sugar, aspartame, plastic, artificial sweeteners and flavours, Chewsy gum is sweetened with 100% xylitol for healthy teeth and made with a plastic-free gum base which makes it biodegradable.

With more than 170 entries, these companies and more will be exhibiting in the prestigious UK Future Brands Pavilion. Judge Olivier Sevenou says it is a unique opportunity to make their mark on the food and drink sectors: "New companies' success will likely be built on finding the right partners to help them grow. To be showcased in the UK Future Brand Pavilion at Food Matters Live is a great opportunity to gain a high level of visibility with a large range of stakeholders."

Food Matters Live takes place at ExCeL London on 19th-20th November 2019. Register at foodmatterslive.com/2019

“ With ever-changing consumer demands for plant-based, healthy and sustainable foods, the new Future of Retail Trends live theatre will take a fresh look at the challenges for retailers and manufacturers to identify and respond to the new opportunities ”



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- meet forward-thinking producers in the UK Future Brands and International Brands Pavilions
- Explore the latest trends and consumer habits in the Future of Retail Trends live theatre
- let us secure 1-2-1 meetings for you in the Match Meet-the-Buyer Programme



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EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

For one-stop-shop status ensure shelves are fully stocked with the basics – from quality herbs and spices to tinned goods



As a fine food retailer it's easy to be so focused on providing amazing fresh produce such as cheese, meat and seasonal vegetables that the basics can take a bit of a back seat. Pantry products are important as they provide the base for so many different meals, snacks and sweet treats that your customers may wish to create at home. In order to be a one-stop-shop and a destination that locals, as well as one-time visitors, can get everything they need, it's key to get fully stocked on all the daily essentials.

Be sure to have everything from seasonings such as quality salt and pepper, herbs and spices – rosemary, chilli, cumin, basil etc – rice and pasta, flour and baking supplies as well as tins of tomatoes, beans and pulses. Having a selection of quality quinoa, lentils and speciality flours is also ideal to attract a foodie crowd.

Herbs and spices

Vinegar Shed founder Andy Harris explains why it's essential to have a good stock of premium herbs and spices: "When you stock top quality, pristine herbs and spices, they will have a long shelf-life (often years) and when opened will have an array of intoxicating aromas to entice customers. The problem is that there are many low-grade spices in the marketplace and in supermarkets, so it is a shock to many when they first smell and taste high quality spices and herbs. Essentials are dried herbs like oregano, sage, mint and Herbes de Provence. Seeds like cumin, celery, dill and caraway. Cardamom, cinnamon and allspice for baking. Curry blends that are not ground but use whole spices are full of flavour and last longer. Every store cupboard should also have pink, green and black peppercorns to experiment with, and I recommend different single estate and wild pepper varieties like Sansho, Sichuan, wild peppers from Madagascar, Indonesia and Cambodia which add some amazing depths of flavour when cooking. Wild black cumin from Uzbekistan and wild fennel seeds from the Greek island of Chios are both best-sellers on our website."

Rice and pasta

No cupboard would be complete without rice and pasta. Creating a quick and easy meal at home with minimal fuss can be easily done with a bag of pasta and either a delicious jarred sauce or tin of tomatoes. Undoubtedly you should stock the pastas that are well known and loved such as spaghetti, penne and fusilli, but Ian Evans, co-owner of Broad Bean delicatessen in Ludlow,

also recommends; "Having a small interesting pasta such as trofie or orecchiette in the cupboard, both of which sit well along with the traditional store cupboard staples of a medium rigatoni, penne or fusilli and a long pasta like spaghetti or linguine. There are so many types and they are all traditionally used for particular sauces, but our rule of thumb is a wet smooth sauce loves a smooth long pasta and a chunky sauce loves a medium pasta shape. Smaller pastas are interesting and good for something a bit different. I always recommend people keep a good quality gluten or wheat-free pasta in the house.

"Rice-wise I'd keep in a brown and white long grain rice as they are so versatile in both hot and cold rice dishes. Then also a short grain, either a paella or risotto. In general they are similar short grains and do the same job – I know purists will disagree there! Then you are ready to cater for most rice dishes and tastes."

Baking essentials

With a multitude of TV programmes such as *The Great British Bake Off* and social media being a big influence on consumers, it's worth ensuring that you have a home baking line-up that can cater for a variety of cakes, biscuits and breads. Marriage's Millers offers a selection of speciality flours such as Dark Rye and Light Spelt for at-home bread bakers, as well as popular cake flours such as Golden Wholegrain Plain Flour. Essentials like baking powder and bicarbonate of soda, and a range of sugars (caster, light brown and granulated at the very least) will help consumers to see you as a one-stop-shop when it comes to baking basics.

Good quality vanilla is a must-stock, and Little Pod provides extracts, pods and pastes to flavour cakes and desserts. Olly Aplin, CEO at Little Pod, explains, "Our vanilla paste

MUST-STOCK STORECUPBOARD PRODUCTS

- Olive Oil ● Condiments ● Flour
- Ready-made sauces ● Mustard
- Pasta, rice, pulses ● Stock cubes

has been specially formulated to reduce bake-off during cooking. It is also produced using all the farmer's pods, giving value not just to long straight pods. The recyclable tube is beautifully designed and offers professional chefs and home cooks alike a versatile, portion-controlled, quality source of natural vanilla. Our Madagascan vanilla pods are quality, responsibly sourced pods."

For extra brownie points, ensure that shoppers can also get their hands on additional supplies such as icing and decorations to complete at-home baking projects.

Tinned goods

Canned goods provide the base for so many different dishes. Tins of baked beans are a crucial store cupboard product and can be used in stews, bakes and as toppings on jacket potatoes. There's also kidney beans, black beans and white beans – have a variety to choose from and consider getting organic options on shelf, too.

Ian at Broad Bean adds, "Tinned tomatoes and tins of pulses are still firm favourites all year round as they are versatile store cupboard staples and I think that is set to stay the case for the foreseeable future."

Covering the basics is the first port of call, but it's also worth getting in some more exotic products. Jackfruit is becoming a popular plant-based meat alternative and can be used in dishes such as stir fries. Also consider capitalising on the desire for global-inspired meals by stocking things like coconut milk which can be used in curries.

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1 5 years ago, if you ordered rum at the pub the choice was limited: Cuban-style Bacardi, a navy rum such as Lamb's or if you were lucky, a Caribbean rum such as Mount Gay Eclipse. Suddenly, Asda's drinks aisle is packed with rum. The retail market shot up 7.9% in value on volumes up 5% (year to June 2018, Kantar Worldpanel) and last year, annual rum sales hit £1bn. British craft rum distilleries are springing up everywhere. There's even one, Taxi Spirit Co, claiming their white rum, Cabby's, is the first to be distilled in London.

IS RUM THE NEW GIN?

We've been hearing this for some time and drinks brands – including those better known for gin such as The Lyme Bay Winery – are leaping aboard. Lyme launched Luggers Spiced Rum in May. At September's Speciality & Fine Food Fair, Fentimans launched a Tropical Soda for rum cocktails.

WHO'S BEHIND THE TREND?

16 to 24 year-olds, particularly in the North. More than 70% of younger spirit drinkers (according to *The Grocer*) consume rum, perhaps in a cocktail at a tiki (Polynesian-

themed) bar, a Caribbean restaurant like Turtle Bay or a festival. June 2017 saw the launch of Manchester's first rum festival, and a much larger, older festival in London, RumFest, turned 13 this year. A proportion of rum drinkers – let's call them young sophisticates – seek premium, aged rums to sip neat or with ice, as you would a fine whisky. They are curious about flavour profiles and regional differences (*The Grocer*).

RUM IS MADE FROM SUGAR CANE JUICE OR MOLASSES, ISN'T IT, SO HOW CAN ANYONE CLAIM A 100% BRITISH CRAFT RUM?

They can't. To make rum, you distil the raw materials, ferment, and in the case of golden, dark and aged rum, age them. Only white rum is un-aged. While a few craft distilleries import molasses to distil, many add flavours, spices and a designer bottle to imported – usually golden – rum.

RUM

The old man's spirit associated with one-legged sea captains is now captivating younger drinkers, says Sally-Jayne Wright

DOES IT MATTER THEY DON'T MAKE IT FROM SCRATCH?

Only to purists. Just pointing out that it's easier to make gin than rum.

I GOT SICK ON BACARDI ONCE...

Then you'll be relieved to hear that clear rum, traditionally used by bartenders as a base for mojitos and daiquiris, is in decline. Trend Watch's local Waitrose offers twice as many golden and dark rums as white.

WHAT KIND OF RUM IS SHOWING THE STRONGEST GROWTH?

Spiced. A World Rum Award-winning example is the beautifully packaged Ableforth's Rumbullion XO 15 years. One fan described its vanilla, cloves, cardamom and orange peel notes as "Christmas in a glass".

Flavoured rums are also very popular. Trend Watch tasted a

hazelnut rum, Belgrove, at Speciality & Fine Food Fair and thought how delicious it would be in chocolates. Burning Barn Smoked Rum was inspired by a genuine farm fire. Another to try is Plantation Pineapple Stiggins' Fancy – dark rum infused with ripe pineapples.

THESE ALL SOUND RATHER SWEET...

They are, and there's controversy about how much sugar makers are adding. More than 100g of sugar per litre and rum becomes liqueur. Sugar is not the only point of contention. Expert Wes Burgin, who blogs as The Fat Rum Pirate, says, "With whisky there are rules as to what you can call aged. Rum is different. One trick is additives to make a rum appear darker, smoother and older".

International labelling laws would help those discerning new rum drinkers who seek authentic and genuinely aged products.

The terms 'premium', 'super premium', 'plantation', 'estate bottled' and 'aged' can be marketing speak, and a brand name containing numerals, e.g. Bacardi 8, does not guarantee maturity.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE MOST OF THE TREND?

Local rums such as Morvenna from Cornwall or Barti Spiced Rum from Pembrokeshire make good gifts. Younger drinkers buy online so check out Amazon's bestsellers such as The Kraken Black Spiced Rum, Duppy Share and Red Leg. To please the young sophisticates, stock premium-looking bottles with a clear explanation of geographic and historical origin. Dictador 12 from Colombia would fit the bill.

ANY IDEAS FOR CHRISTMAS?

Miniatures and 20cl sizes – try Nelson's Pineapple Rum – make fun stocking fillers, as do cocktails like Redvulette's new Rum Punch. Got the right mixers? We like Gusto Organic Drinks Real Cola, also their Fiery Ginger & Chipotle Soda. In cans, there's Dalston's Ginger Beer with Zesty Lime. Bailey's lovers will enjoy Sisserou Rum & Coconut Cream Liqueur, an elegantly packaged and not-too-sweet newcomer.

WILL THE TREND LAST?

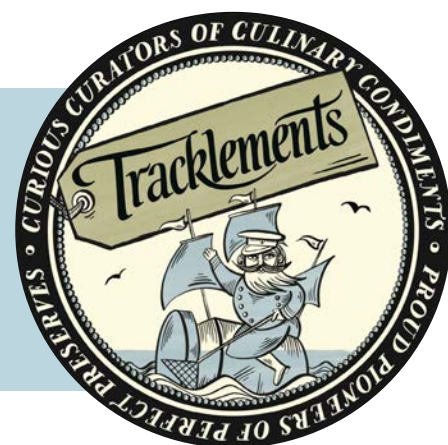
We each have a repertoire, established in our twenties, of the two or three drinks we consume on specific occasions. So logically, if 70% of 16-24 year-old spirit drinkers like rum and nearly 80% of 25-34 year-olds, they may continue consuming into middle age. Even if they trade down in sweetness and up in quality, at current prices, it's cheaper to acquire a premium rum habit than a whisky habit. Rums with authentic heritage and a good story will outlive the gimmicky fly-by-nights.

“Rums with authentic heritage and a good story will outlive the gimmicky fly-by-nights”



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Ensure your customers' Christmas dinners are a roaring success with these satisfying options

1 BELTON FARM AWARD-WINNING CHEESE

Port Wine Derby is marbled with a delicate port infusion and has a slightly sweet berry finish, while the Sage Derby has a green vein and a mild sage flavour. Belton's Cheshire cheese is light and crumbly with subtle hints of fresh citrus and is delicious with a slice of Christmas cake. beltonfarm.co.uk



2 STAG BAKERIES FRUIT CAKE

Part of Stag Bakeries' speciality cake range, the Something Different for Cheese Fruit Cake is an exciting alternative to biscuits with cheese. Rich, crumbly and jam-packed with alcohol-infused fruit, this cake is equally delicious with strong Cheddar, tangy blue cheeses and mellow, ripe soft cheeses such as Brie. stagbakeries.co.uk



3 PETER'S YARD CRISPbread SELECTION BOX

A selection of the brand's popular sourdough crispbreads, including Original, Charcoal & Rye and Spelt & Poppy Seed. Inspired by traditional Swedish crispbreads and made using simple and natural ingredients, these crispbreads are baked until crisp, making them an ideal partner for a well-balanced cheeseboard. petersyard.com





4 GORDON RHODES STUFFINGS AND BREAD SAUCE

What is Christmas dinner without the trimmings? Gordon Rhodes has a flavour-packed, gourmet range of stuffings, and their award-winning, quintessentially British, gluten-free bread sauce is a taste trailblazer. Their full range is artificial flavour, preservative and colour-free and completely gluten-free, too. gordonrhodes.co.uk



5 ADLINGTON CHRISTMAS TURKEY

The Adlington family have been producing traditional slow-grown Christmas turkeys on their farm near Kenilworth for the past 60 years. In a constant drive for perfection, the turkeys are now fed on a natural diet with the addition of whole oats from neighbouring farms. Year-on-year the product is gaining recognition and winning prizes – the Bronze Free Range recently picked up two stars at the Great Taste Awards. adlingtonltd.com



6 DEDHAM VALE RESERVE

An exciting ruby red medium-bodied English wine, made by blending four different varieties of grape – Rondo, Dornfelder, Dunkelfelder and Pinot Noir. This wine yields inviting red berry aromas while developing complex flavours of redcurrants, raspberries and liquorice, leavened by gentle tannins from time spent ageing in French Limousine oak barrels. dedhamvalevineyard.com



7 ARTISAN GRAINS NUT ROASTS

Tasty and easy to make – add water and bake in the recyclable baking tray provided. Artisan Grains Nut Roasts are packed with nuts, vegetables and herbs and make an amazing meat-free, vegetarian and vegan loaf which can be enjoyed by all. A healthy alternative and the perfect vegan Christmas dinner centrepiece. artisangrains.co.uk



10 WAYS TO WIN AT CHRISTMAS TRADING

It's your critical trading period, but is your window display on point? Your gift range pitched just right? Your shop floor a hub of festive excitement?

1 Send a kickass newsletter

Want to cut through the marketing noise in your customers' inboxes? Take a lead from tabloid headline writers. "The most important thing for any email communication is the subject line," says internet psychologist Graham Jones. "It doesn't matter how marvellous the content inside the email might be, if the subject line does not entice and engage then people won't open the message. So stores should spend more time on creating the subject line and getting it right than on the content itself. There are 'headline analysers' that can help guide companies to the best wording. A good example is at headlines.sharethrough.com."

2 Give gifts a green audit

Gifts not shifting? Check their appeal to a newly eco-conscious Christmas shopper. "I think this year's theme of wanting to aim for zero waste will persist," says Jeff Bray, principal academic in retail consumer behaviour at Bournemouth University. "And since plastic reducing is de rigueur at the moment that provides great



gift ideas for retailers: personalised water bottles, reusable coffee cups, refillable containers and foodie subscription gifts. We're still tied into the cultural norm of 'I've got to get my brother something; I've got to spend about 20 quid' and yet we're increasingly keen to avoid buying rubbish that isn't wanted. The only way out of that trap is to gift consumables. Nowadays, frankly if we want something we tend to get it for ourselves; it's hard to buy material gifts that are actually wanted. I see that as a huge opportunity for independent retailers to tap into."

3 Hire a window artist
It just takes a chalk marker and a talented illustrator (or a confident member of staff tracing

from a printed image) to transform your window into a festive Instagram-trap that hides visually boring bits of your display and

brings a sense of occasion to your shopfront. The most successful designs are often those that disrupt the slick lines of commercial signage, bringing a crafty, hand-drawn aesthetic echoing the handmade, craft quality of the produce you stock. Artist Louise Ollerenshaw's work for The Little Pickle Deli in Boscombe is a great example of what's possible. Owner Andrew Spong is looking forward to an exciting Christmas illustration to replace the current Halloween design. "We have it because we can. We're a very community-minded business and like to support local businesses and artists. So what started with a local group's art hung in the windows is now a regular thing. The designs are painted on so they won't smudge with condensation. It's not cheap to have something really good done – unless you're a talented artist, which I'm not – but it makes a big difference to the look and feel of the shopfront."

4 Sort your online snag list

Got a few glitchy functions or some out-of-date content on your site? Now's the time to call your web guys and see what can be done. "There's no point attracting customers to an online store if it doesn't engage and sell," says e-commerce specialist Deborah Collier. "Or if the transactions aren't smooth – from viewing products and buying right through to delivery. Fine food retailers should focus on making the product and category pages engaging, employing effective



cross-selling and upselling with incentives on the product pages, an easy, fast check out experience, and reliable delivery. A trusted click-and-collect option will also be helpful, as well as supporting customers toward online, and online to in-store. These should appear as one seamless experience for customers of multi or omni-channel fine food retailers."

5 Triple-check your signage...

If you're missing sales because browsers are wandering out before a member of staff becomes free to speak to them, your signage needs to work harder. "The trick for the retailer is to imagine no customer ever has the opportunity to speak to someone," says Craig Phillipson, MD at retail consultancy Shopworks. "It's not that much of a stretch; as soon as you have more than a couple of customers you can't speak to them individually, but through signage and point of sale information you can explain why your products are better than a competitor's."

6 ... right through the customers' journey

"Start 20 metres away from the shop," says Craig. "Think, 'What is my shop window saying about the business?' and then when you get the window ask yourself, 'How am I interacting with my customers and encouraging them to go from browsing my window to stepping into my store?' Then on the threshold ask, 'Can they see the categories? Can they see the products? Do they know what business I'm in and why? What's going to draw them to the different

areas of the store?' And then at the product level, 'Do they understand what my offer is and why it's different to my competition?' Better that customers are able to discern those answers visually and without the intervention of a staff member, because at Christmas time staff will be run off their feet. It all has to happen silently. Someone who taught me a lot told me, 'Don't underestimate how impatient customers are'. Don't pretend they're going to read a thousand words because they won't. They'll read two words, so you have to be strategic about what those words are."

7 Upload an aspirational video

"Attracting customers to your site is one thing, but delighting, engaging, and enticing them to buy is another," says Deborah. "Where budgets allow, invest in quality video clips demonstrating cooking, gifting or eating. Your objective is to give the customer the ability to imagine themselves cooking and smelling those wonderful Christmas foods, watching the happy face of the person they are given a product to, or sitting and eating with their families in a magical Christmas dinner setting. If done well videos have the power to captivate an audience, and industry statistics demonstrate an estimated 40% increase in sales with videos (particularly on the product pages)."

8 Up in-store activity

"The key goal is to differentiate your business from the mass market," says Craig. "You're not going to win a price war; people come to you in the knowledge that you're more expensive so they expect something special. Touch and feel – customers being able to see what they're going

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going on'. Invite local artisans and makers to do tastings, exhibitions or a even pop-up concession in your store. Advertise the event locally and ask the maker to market the event as well. You can create a Facebook Event page for the event and 'boost' the event, targeting a specific audience for very little advertising cost."

9 Maximise immediacy

Swaying stressed shoppers can be about reminding them of the ways bricks and mortar retail can out-perform internet sellers – especially as time gets tight. "When it comes to shopping there's probably more panicking at Christmas," points out Craig. "For independent shops beating the internet or the mass market is about personal interaction and immediacy. 'Guess what? You can get what you need right now, you don't have to wait 'til tomorrow. When you walk out of here you know you've secured your item – you're not worried about if it'll arrive, or whether it'll be crunched or broken when it does.' That's valuable to the consumer." Graham agrees that time will be of the essence when it comes to your online sales. "In the last couple of weeks before Christmas the most important thing to emphasise will be convenience," he suggests. "It's the number one reason people shop online, but in those last couple of 'panic weeks' convenience becomes more important. So pop-up windows that emphasise speed of delivery, for instance, will become attractive to people."

to get – is a core advantage that independents can really play on." Okay, so you might be happy to offer tastings, but is that point of difference clear enough to your customers? Can they see that your space is a place they can linger to take in the tastes, smells and stories

of the products you stock? "Always have something going on in your store and share it on social media," says Becky. "The events don't need to be large or well attended, and your store doesn't need to be big to host events. Customers are drawn to stores that have 'something

10 Tell customers a story



"Everything is about storytelling in visual merchandising these days," says US-based retail consultant Becky Tyre, creator of the Retail Details podcast.

"Buyers scour the wholesale markets early in the year looking for that key theme in products that will drive their end-of-year holiday window story. Christmas 2019 will not be defined as the 'year of the nutcracker' or any such obvious theme. Instead, I see individual store personalities as the inspirations for many store windows built around a product scheme. These may range from whimsical to elegant, depending on what your store sells."

“ Is your point of difference clear enough to your customers? Can they see that your space is a place they can linger to take in the tastes, smells and stories of the products you stock? ”



TRY THIS...

"Store window design materials and props that are popular for 2019 are oversized illustrations," says Becky Tyre, creator of the Retail Details podcast. "Try to picture cutouts of classic Christmas cards, enlarged for emphasis and built into displays or for a more modern approach, a repeating wrapping paper pattern as a backdrop, then have the elements enlarged, cutout and hanging for visual interest. The key to making this work is choosing a design that works with the window shape and the products that will be displayed, also allowing for any current window lettering or signage that already exists."






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THE EUROPEAN PIZZA & PASTA SHOW 2019

Olympia National Hall opens its doors 13th-15th November for one of the most vibrant food shows on the London scene

The European Pizza & Pasta Show, organised by IPR Events London Ltd in association with PAPA – Pizza, Pasta and Italian Food Association (UK) and supported by Visit Britain and the International Pizza Senza Frontiere, stays devoted to its name and concept, bringing together the best of pizza and pasta industry, focusing on live cooking, rather than traditional B2B trade show style, giving its participants a unique chance to demonstrate their best products in action.

A concept of live cooking show allows not only to connect exhibitors with perspective buyers, but also invites important players on its stage:

pizza and pasta chefs, who represent the essence of Mediterranean cuisine, establish highest industry standards and set new trends.

This year the show has strong presence of speciality food and ingredients producers and distributors, bakery, snacks and drinks brands as well as equipment manufacturers. Along with long-time partners and returning customers, this fall visitors will see new names on the market. Alongside the audiences favourite Molino Caputo, Jestic, GI Metal, Salvo 1968, Carnevale, Casa Julia, Mamma Fiore, Surgiva, Petra, GMI/Eurostar Commodities, Cibosano, Cater-Bake, Arla, Api-Tech, Delitalia and Gourmeat, Morello

Forni, Qualitops, Fire and Ice, Mobi Pizza Ovens, Chimflue and Exoflue we have the latest from White Foodservice Equipment, Nelson Commercial Dishwashers, La Tua Pasta, Fossa Mala, Lateria Soligo, Compagnia Alimentare Italiana, Steriltom, Kimbo, Follow Your Heart, LISA, Arivia, Molino Piantoni with Italicatessen, Molino Videvano, Bbuona and many, many more.

Star guests

2019 celebrity guest list will include industry legend Ian Neill, Phil Quinn from Papa John's, Riccardo Ferri from Steriltom, Andrew McLeod from Emilia's Crafted Pasta, Bryony Tinn-Dinsbury from Jack-Bry, world

pizza champion and restaurateur Tony Gemignani, chefs: Enzo Oliveri, Marco Fuso, Giuseppe Cutraro and Luciano Passeri. 4,000 buyers are expected to visit the event over three days. With four international competitions running, such as The European Pizza Championship and The International Pizza Acrobatics the event is a must attend occasion for everyone striving to learn from the best in the art of pizza making.

Buyers and NPD teams from UK and Europe's largest retailers, wholesalers, pizzerias and Italian restaurants, bars, pubs, hotels, catering companies as well as over 2,000 family-run businesses have already pre-registered to visit. From the largest multiple units to the family run restaurants and delicatessen – all will come together to see, taste and hear about the latest products and innovation in the industry of pizza and pasta making.

New this year

The European Pizza and Pasta Show goes through changes year on year, growing in number and quality of products exhibited. For the first time the event will build two cooking stages, hosting over 150 chefs and 15+ industry speakers.

The European Pizza Championship will, for the fourth year, host over 50 competitors with judges Raanan Yossi Nussel from Israel, Thierry Graffagnino and Massimo Costanzo representing France, Mauro Di Leo

IN DETAIL

WHAT: The European Pizza & Pasta Show 2019
WHERE: Olympia London
WHEN: 13th-15th November
WEB: pizzapastashow.com
TWITTER: @Pizzapastashow

and Giorgio Riggio from the UK, Mike Arvblom from Sweden, Luciano Passeri from Italy, Tony Gemignani from USA and Umberto Napolitano from Germany.

Also for the first time, a Live Cooking Academy for Professionals will take centre stage with guest chefs Antonio Sorrentino and Davide Civitiello, sharing the best recipes in Neapolitan cooking. Every year the Live Cooking Academy will present a national or a regional cuisine through the ages – from the beginning to today's culinary innovations.



“ The 2019 European Pizza and Pasta Show promises to be greater, hotter and tastier than ever. If you are a buyer, food innovator, pizzaiolo, chef or you are planning to open your own restaurant business, come and join us! We promise not to disappoint you ”

AVA BLAGOEVA-DUSCHELL, MD, THE EUROPEAN PIZZA & PASTA SHOW 2019





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THAT'S AMORE

An exploration of Britain's enduring love affair with Italian cuisine



CREDIT: GARAFALO

“We are very much still in love with the romance of Italian culture and I think what we enjoy the most is the generosity of the eating and drinking culture,” starts Jim Fisher



of Luigi's Bar. “The UK has had a bit of a love affair with Italian food for many years and I think it's fair to say that the Italian food scene in the UK has come a long way. We only have to look at the influence of Elizabeth David back in the 70s, through to the ‘Modern British’ cuisine of the 90s which was heavily influenced by Italy. Restaurants such as Kensington Place, The River Café and Alistair Little were pioneers, and let's not

forget the numerous pizza and pasta offerings on today's high street. Once upon a time we looked to the Mediterranean for a healthy way of eating, but really, it's all about enjoyment and that's what Italian food is at its best.”



The British love for Italian food spans generations, and London's Lina Stores has seen this first hand, having opened its doors in 1944. “The longer our business stays open, the more generations of customers we have seen walk through the doors of our deli and restaurant. 75 years is a long time indeed and a lot of our customers have literally grown up with our Italian food,” says its head chef, Masha Renner. “Some customers used to come with their parents when they were kids, only to now continue the tradition and introduce their own children (or grandchildren!) to our food at Lina Stores. It's really something very special for us to witness every day.”

During those decades, the level of understanding and recognition of great quality food has risen. “In general,” she continues, “we have observed that customers and restaurant guests have become extremely knowledgeable about Italian food and we hope that some of it has been inspired by our shop experience. We can see how well informed some of our customers are; their passion for Italian cuisine has translated into expertise over the years. For us it's all about keeping up-to-date on the best Italian produce available and to maintain the rich cultural heritage by staying true to the recipes we've garnered over the years.”



Claudia Galetta, director of Bellavita Academy and Bellavita Expo London, agrees that not only are consumers interested in the taste experience of great Italian food and drink, they're also

keen to learn more about Italy's culinary culture as a whole. “The Bellavita Shop, opened in September 2016, sells premium, made-in-Italy food and wine and, via the Bellavita Academy, which is located at the rear of the shop, we are committed to promoting and spreading Italian culinary culture to both the food trade and to food lovers in the UK,” she says.

“While consumers enjoy the experience of shopping for new, premium Italian products and taking part in tastings and classes, behind the scenes the Bellavita team works with every single producer directly,” she continues. “We help each brand to benchmark their products in the market, run tastings, demos and promos, collect feedback, sponsor events and set up professional training for the trade.”

“We can see how well informed some of our customers are; their passion for Italian cuisine has translated into expertise over the years”

Bellavita's premium product range combined with an educational experience has proved to be a winning blend: “At the shop, one can find premium versions of supermarket products, as well as new and authentic Italian products they do not know. The regular product tasting in the shop combined with the food education activities of our Academy are the winning formula to convert store visits in actual sales – the ROI speaks for itself.”

The provenance pound
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GELATO: “NOT JUST THE ITALIAN WORD FOR ICE CREAM”



Annie Hanbury is a Bologna-trained gelatiere and founder of Baboo Gelato, which is available from beachside kiosks and independent retailers in the South West.

“First things first, gelato is not just the Italian word for ice cream. It is a different recipe, with a lower fat content. The gelato is churned more slowly, meaning less air is injected into it, and it is served at a warmer temperature (typically -12°C rather than -18°C). This results in a more intensely flavoured, softer ice cream, which is obviously proving very popular with the British public.

“Gelato is typically an artisanal product, made with small batch machines (six litres is typical). This gives the producer far more ability to play with ingredients to create unusual and amazing flavours. As a producer, I love this freedom to experiment; the possibilities are endless. Just last week I created a crystal malt flavour using malt

from Otter Brewery in Devon. There is no need to stick to traditional flavours, and customers enjoy the increased choice available and trying new tastes.

“I suspect that it isn't only the flavour that is driving this boom in gelato. More and more people travel to Italy they bring back their memories which they want to relive at home.

“It is not only in the UK that there is a boom in gelato, in fact this trend has been going on globally for a few years now. When I go to SIGEP (the gelato trade fair in Rimini each year) there are over 200,000 visitors of which only a tiny fraction come from the UK. I believe we're still at the start of this boom.”



great quality Italian food or drink, they've become less accepting of British counterparts. "Over the past few years, we have become more interested in the specific regional foods and less about trying to Anglicise generic Italian food," comments Jim Fisher of Luigi's.

"Provenance is always a key topic within the industry and it directly translates to the mainstream consumer," agrees Masha at Lina Stores. "Our customers and guests really care about where the ingredients for their food have come from and how their dish was made. This level of detail and respect for the process is something that we embrace daily and make sure is being communicated from kitchen to front of house staff to the guest. Whether it's our slightly sweet datterini tomatoes, which we get from Sicily, or our Mortadella from Emilia Romagna, we aim to educate our guests on Italian provenance as best as we can."

An evolving market

"As far as the range of products we offer," says Bellavita's Claudia, "We sell more halal, vegan and organic food products than in the past and only 20% of the range are new products not known in the UK. What's changed at a strategic level

is the vision to develop shop-in-shop and branded corners within other retail stores – to this point, let me take the opportunity to make a call to the trade for any interested retailer to get in touch!"

"Vegetarianism is massively on the rise as many choose plant-based diets," says Masha. "These trends are not going away – as seasonality, sustainability and quality become even more important. It's not just about the dish itself any more, it's about everything that comes with it, including the story and how it can also be made healthy!"

Consumers are demanding health credentials from everywhere these days, but traditional pasta brand Garafalo is evolving its range to suit the new breed of nutrition-driven consumers. "The negative health benefits from refined carbohydrates in pasta may have reduced its appeal for some, but recent launches of pasta made from pulses and ancient grains such as the range Garafalo launched 2018 made with the ancient grains teff, amaranth, sorghum and buckwheat meets the demands of consumers looking for greater health benefits from the pasta they choose," explains Sally Assinder.

"Gluten-free pasta sales continues to grow as more people switch to a gluten-free diet through necessity

“Mostly I notice that people do want to know what they eat; they ask a lot more questions and they love to be given tips on how to enjoy a new product. A portion of our customers take it all a step further by enrolling in a cooking class too”

“Once upon a time we looked to the Mediterranean for a healthy way of eating, but really, it's all about enjoyment and that's what Italian food is at its best”

and choice. Gluten-free buyers are seeking out pasta that has the taste and texture of 'normal' pasta," she continues, "and with this knowledge Garafalo improved its gluten-free pasta recipe to include brown rice, giving a firmer texture and to taste even more like 'normal' pasta." Interestingly, shoppers of gluten-free pasta are more adventurous with their shape choices than shoppers of conventional pasta, with casarecce and mafalda corta topping Garafalo's gluten-free sales.

What sells?

"Dried pasta has pole position at the Bellavita Shop," says Claudia. "Customers are becoming more discerning and this is reflected mainly in their dried pasta and wine choices in the store. The pasta and cooking classes in the Academy, both professional and for food lovers, reflect this entirely. Artisanal cured meat and cheese, as well

as wine follow suit – nothing too revolutionary. Consumers prefer to go for an upgrade version of what they already know over a new unfamiliar product." Shoppers at Bellavita are fans of upgrading their usual staples; "We are pleased that they invest a little more to get better products from us for their weekly dinner or special occasion."

At Bellavita, consumers "do want to discover new products, but they rarely buy unknown products from the shelf just to try them," says Claudia. "Luckily for us, tastings are a strong selling point of ours, and we run many of them. They work well for sales and everyone in the supply chain is happy."

"Italian wines in general [sell well], with Prosecco heading the list," says Claudia. "In food, artisanal pasta, Mozzarella, burrata, stracciatella and cheeses in general; gluten-free, vegan, organic and halal alternatives to these are increasingly popular also."

At Lina Stores' delicatessen in Brewer Street, "the 30-month old Parmigiano Vacche Brune DOP is one of our most popular products," says Masha. "A mature cheese with strong flavour, it's exclusively produced from the milk of the Bruna (brown) cow. From our cured meats selection, our Prosciutto di Parma DOP is the best in London. Straight from the Parma area, it has a beautifully balanced fat-and-meat ratio with a salty, yet slightly sweet, aftertaste."

"Of course," he continues, "our handmade pasta, which we have been making fresh every day since 1944 is also a big crowd pleaser. Whether it's our traditional Pappardelle or a recent addition to the pasta display, like our Truffle Agnolotti, there's a take-away pasta for everyone!"

The enduring appeal of pasta in the UK market

A recent YouGov study reported that Italian cuisine is the most popular in the world. As expected, the biggest fans of Italian food are the Italians themselves, with 99% enjoying their national cuisine. In the UK we are also big fans, with 91% who have tried Italian food reporting they like it. The report makes it clear the Italian cuisine we like consists primarily of pizza and pasta, and a quick internet search of favourite dishes in the UK over the past decades sees pasta dishes in the top 10 year after year. But what is the enduring appeal of pasta for UK consumers?

APERITIVO CULTURE



Jim Fisher, Luigi's Bar:

"Luigi's Bar has only launched recently. However, it is interesting to see the uptake on the all Italian wine list, featuring some well known grapes alongside indigenous varieties. Our guests also enjoy our aperitivo style menu, either popping by for a drink and snack prior or post dinner or simply ordering a number of items as dinner with our Italian influenced cocktails. I feel this demonstrates our embracing of the Italian eating and drinking culture. We have a large range of vermouth on our drinks menu and back bar, and this was once considered rather niche. We also stock a range of beers sourced direct from craft breweries in Italy. However, what we have noticed is the high number of guests asking about vermouth and wanting to give it a try which shows a real move towards the mass consumer wanting to be more adventurous."



CREDIT: LUIGI'S



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The vast majority of dry pasta is made from just durum wheat semolina and water, and from these two simple ingredients hundreds of different shapes are formed. "With so many different shapes to choose from fusilli is the firm favourite shape that has come out top in volume sales for the last four years," says Sally Assinder of Garofalo. "Penne and spaghetti vie for second place each year but together the three shapes are the nation's favourite, and it doesn't look like any other shape will knock either one of the three off their top positions in 2020." That's not to say that consumers aren't experimenting, "there is an increase in speciality shapes driven by people as they become more adventurous and armed with knowledge from cookery programmes, magazines and visits to restaurants," explains Sally. "The shape paccheri, also known as schiaffoni, is a large tube pasta shape used in dishes seen on

many restaurant menus and now after popular demand found on the retailers' shelves. Sales of orzo and orecchiette continue to grow year on year as they become mainstream in customers pasta repertoires."

"It was once all about the sauce, with the pasta just a carrier, now however the consumer understands more about the quality of pasta and appreciate that it is not all made the same. There is an understanding of the importance of the protein level for a firmer, more al dente, cooked pasta. There is knowledge that pasta formed through a bronze die will allow the sauce to stick to it, and now consumers are searching out high quality Italian pasta for everyday use."

"10 years ago," says Lina Stores' Masha, "pasta was considered a fast food, available at low price and low quality. There's been a real shift in the quality of ingredients and the creativity of chefs, elevating pasta to new heights but staying true

to its affordable roots. In general, restaurants have become more modern and experimental by coming up with exciting, new pasta recipes. You'll always find your popular dishes like Gnocchi Alla Genovese and Spaghetti Alla Carbonara at Lina Stores, but we innovate as well by adding new ingredients and experimenting with new pasta shapes. For example, our 30-egg Tagliolini pasta is served with Italian butter, Vacche Brune Parmigiano and a generous serving of freshly shaved truffle."



CREDIT: LINA STORES

“ The traditional simplicity of Italian foods goes a long way back, and the ever-increasing consumer demand to know not only what is in each food stuff but where that originates from has seen a resurgence in ‘back to basics’ food produce that is much sought after – when good Italian food utilises only the very best, naturally grown and sourced, artisanal ingredients. These authentic processes and elements ensure that the food is of the best possible quality with a genuinely authentic flavour. Why add unnecessary ingredients when a handful of the very best is more than enough to create a first class food experience that comes simply and elegantly packaged? ”

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GRANA PADANO PDO

No cheese counter is complete without a wheel of this versatile Italian cheese

Time is an essential ingredient in the production of Grana Padano. As the cheese matures, its aromas and flavours evolve. There are three different vintages of the cheese: Grana Padano (aged between nine and 16 months), Grana Padano 'over 16 months', and Grana Padano 'Riserva' (over 20 months). The different maturation stages give it a versatility that allows it to taste great with a wide variety of wines and recipes.

Strict controls are carried out throughout the entire production chain by members of a Consortium dedicated to protecting and promoting the product. Only the products that meet the highest standard required receive the Grana Padano Cheese fire-branded marks grading them as PDO products; these marks provide information that allows complete traceability, even down to the farmer that produced the milk. Grana Padano is recognised as a Protected

Designation of Origin (PDO) product, protected by the Italian State and European Union. Its PDO status means that it is essentially and exclusively linked to the particular area in Northern Italy where it is produced, and is therefore inseparable from the climate, culture, and people that create it. This ensures the ultimate in quality, authenticity and traceability, making it the world's best-selling PDO product.

The EU believes that protecting

“ Over a thousand years ago, the Benedictine monks who farmed the land around the Po Valley in Northern Italy created Grana Padano cheese as a way to preserve milk. The long-ripened hard cheese was named ‘Grana’ because of its grainy structure; the ‘Padano’ was later added to the name to link it to its area of production (Valle Padana) ”

WHAT DOES PDO MEANS:

RELIABILITY

That the products are regulated by Italian and EU laws

TRACEABILITY

The products come from a defined geographical area

LINK WITH THE TERRITORY

All the products are obtained using traditional methods. The bond between the product and the land create special characteristics in each product

TYPICALITY

Respect for traditional production methods and preservation of the typical characteristics of the product
Retailers should explain this information to their customers in order to clarify the difference in cost and value



IN NUMBERS:

- Over 1,000 litres are needed to make two twin wheels of cheese
- A mature wheel has a weight of around 38kg
- Grana Padano PDO is produced in 32 provinces in five regions of Italy

- Grana Padano PDO was awarded protected status by the EU in 1996

- 30g of Grana Padano PDO contains the same nutritional value as a pint of milk – important proteins, iron, vitamins and minerals, and no lactose



Real Grana Padano PDO cheese can be recognised by the small diamond lozenges on its rind. So, in order to ensure that your cheese is genuine, always check there is some rind on the piece you are buying

GENUINE OR FAKE?

geographical names to use for product names in this way is central to promoting quality produce across the world. Therefore, manufacturers and retailers should be able to add value to their cheese range by promoting PDO cheeses and emphasising the unique characteristics, history and quality of each, much in the same way as wine is promoted to consumers. Grana Padano PDO cheese is distinguished and characterised by a series of distinct markings which are divided into marks of origin and marks of selection.

These two types of marks have different functions and are also distinguished by the methods by which they are applied onto the

cheese wheel and by the producers that apply them. The markings can be maximised by retailers in order to hero this PDO status. The PDO status guarantees the various levels of the production process: origin, source of raw materials, location, and traditional quality of the production process.

Caring for Grana Padano PDO

Grana Padano should be stored in the least cold part of the fridge, where the temperature is normally around 4°C.

In this case it is advisable not to put cheeses of different flavours and aromas together in order to prevent the stronger and

more penetrating cheeses from contaminating those with more delicate characteristics. It is also advisable to wrap Grana Padano in good quality clingfilm or a freezer bag.

How to serve

Grana Padano is best served on its own with salad or as a snack, and is also delicious when served grated or flaked with risotto, pasta, fish and meat.

If enjoyed as an aperitivo, ideal wine matchings are:

- Grana Padano with young, fresh, and light white wines such as Pinot Blanc
- Grana Padano ‘over 16 months’ with slightly tannic red wines such as Bardolino or Valpolicella
- Grana Padano Riserva ‘over 20 months’ with strong red or fortified wines such as Barolo or Moscato

THE UK IS THE **FIFTH** HIGHEST **IMPORTER** OF **GRANA PADANO PDO**, AND IMPORTED **125,757** WHEELS IN **2018** ALONE

- Grana Padano has been a PDO-accredited cheese since 1996 and is now the best-selling PDO cheese in the world

- It takes 15 litres of naturally partially-skimmed milk to produce 1 kg of Grana Padano PDO

- 30g of Grana Padano PDO contains the same nutritional value as approximately half a litre of milk (one pint)

- 50g of Grana Padano PDO provides 600mg of calcium – 60% of the daily requirement for adults, 50% of an adolescent’s requirement

- Grana Padano is lactose-free due to the characteristics of its production and ageing process. It contains a Galactose content of less than 10mg per 100g

- Grana Padano also contains important proteins, iron, vitamins and minerals

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ROLAND BARTHELEMY, GUILDE DES FROMAGERS



“Learning from the past, together”

In 1966 the *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers* was founded in honour of Lucio Guzon, a shepherd from the 12th Century who revolutionised the cheese world with the creation of a new technique: thermal caseification. Lucio shared his plentiful cheese with the poor, and because of his exemplary life and his death as a martyr, today he is the patron of the cheesemakers. Inspired by their medieval roots (this includes the medieval attire donned by new recruits!), The *Guilde* – also known as the *Brotherhood of Cheesemakers* – honours actors within the cheese industry including cheesemakers, affineurs and chefs. Every year, existing members of the *Guilde* with more than five years of seniority can propose to the association's headquarters new candidates with long experience related to the world of cheese. It is the first way to honour the work of these professionals, induct them into the *Guilde* and to showcase the quality of their work.

At the same time as the *Guilde* was formed in 1966, I was learning from my father – a cheesemaker and affineur in Paris – the art of affinage, the ability to choose the most promising cheeses and mature them to perfection. In 1998 I was appointed *Provost*, the highest authority of the *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers* association, and continue this role today. I am extremely passionate about all aspects of the cheese world and travel across five continents engaging members of the *Guilde* on all things fromage.

The *Guilde* reminds us of the values of yesterday, and we have a lot to learn from them. It also reminds us that all that we sow today, we will reap tomorrow. It reminds us that the quality of the grass depends on the quality of the environment, and that all of this impacts on the quality of

the end product.

The distinctive and special thing about the *Guilde* is that there are members from across different universes – that's what makes it so rich. Multidisciplinarity brings an extraordinary openness. Nutritionists, sommeliers, chefs and journalists are all represented along with the farmer, the cheese producer and the independent retailer. This creates a network of endless possibilities for knowledge exchange through international product competitions, ceremonies and networking around the world. In each country, members organize and gather around different cheese projects which enrich the cheese world. Today there are more than 6,000 members from across five continents.

The missions of the *Guilde* are to optimise and promote the quality and diversity of dairy products, generate new encounters and opportunities in the cheese community, encourage exchange of knowledge and to showcase cheese specialities.

The UK has exceptional cheese values, a great diversity and strong identity of products, and above all passionate professionals. Here, our relatively young association has many opportunities to influence the rest of the cheese world and to ensure that cheese culture in the UK continues to thrive. The independent cheesemonger, whether in a farm shop, deli or food hall, is at the heart of this, since they are engaging the everyday consumer with all of the amazing breadth of cheeses from across the world. The *Guilde des Fromagers* is able to enrich this thriving community of cheesemongers across the UK, providing a network and resources to communicate and live the values of the *Guilde* every day.

PATRICIA MICHELSON, LA FROMAGERIE



“The joy of French cheese”

La Fromagerie wouldn't be the business it is today if I hadn't fallen – literally – in love with Beaufort Chalet d'Alpage. That was in 1990 – but way before that, in 1978, as a young family we went on a road trip around France delving into French culture and food; mesmerised by the sights, sounds and smells of food markets, cheese shops and *Epicerie Fine* galore. Fast forward to 2019 and I still find the exact same cheese shops and markets operating as if time has stood still. Is that good? In some ways yes because it shows how confident a food culture is when you respect the traditions and regionality. Each year my family tries to have a holiday en-famille – renting a farmhouse in Provence. I visit the beautifully kept boutique fromagerie in St Remy where perfect local, bright and tempting goat cheeses sit alongside wedges of hard and blue cheeses. Monique, la patronne, is a force to be reckoned with – do not get on her wrong side – and now she has a few tables outside where you can enjoy a degustation with a glass of local wine – her nod to the new ideas.

However, there is a younger and more enterprising group entering the scene and their voices are loud in not only preserving a culture which has over the last few years appeared to be looking a little threadbare around the edges, but also bringing a fresh point of view to the way they sell cheese. Paris is the place to go if you want to see both traditional and new wave – it's not something that has been pulled out of a hat by the French, but rather by seeing what is going on in other cities like London and New York.

I always remember, back in the early noughties a group of French cheesemongers came to visit us in our Marylebone shop and amongst them was Philippe Olivier – a man

I have revered since starting my business and we buy direct his Northern French speciality cheeses, too. He remarked how different our way of selling cheese was compared to France, that having an eating area within the shop was a great way of celebrating produce and he hoped others would follow by example.

In Paris you can see Fromagerie Beauflis in the edgy area of Belleville, where Christophe Lesoin tends his farmhouse cheeses that also include a smattering of fine English, Italian, Belgium, Spanish, Greek and even farmhouse US varieties. He regularly visits cheesemakers and brings lovely stories to his customers. His ambition has encouraged those who have worked with him to open their own shops to interpret cheesemongering in their way. Emmanuel Carbone's elegant minimalist *Au Lait Cru* in the smart 18th district has a clear message: to find only small production raw milk cheese to showcase in his shop, especially those from Brittany where cheesemaking is being brought to life by young entrepreneurs new to cheesemaking or, like Charlotte Salat making a breakaway de-classified *Salers*. Then there is Alex Renault who has just opened his shop *C-O-W* (Cheeses of the World) on Boulevard St Germain; what a brave way of challenging the old guard of French cheesemongering! He is taking it to the next level by selling the very best farmhouse cheeses from everywhere – and will no doubt be including Japan, Australia and New Zealand too I am sure.

Whether you love the crusty traditionalists or the new wave explorers, France has definitely woken up when it comes to selling cheese not just from their own regions but also from the wider world. *Entente Cordiale* indeed!

Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts



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PETER'S YARD



CUSTOMER SERVICES

The key to getting repeat business is to consistently provide a special experience for customers. Here's how:

As a specialist retailer visitors to your shop will be coming in with the intention to buy, but however wonderful the produce you sell is, that alone is not always enough to swing a sale. Customer service is key to running a successful business, and as a cheesemonger it's an opportunity to showcase your passion for the produce and to encourage shoppers to return time and time again.

It's essential to ensure that the basics are covered when it comes to customer service and that they are performed to the highest possible standards. Staff need to be fully trained and up-to-speed on the latest information when it comes to the products and able to answer any question that a customer may ask regarding storage, cutting, background and pairings for the whole range of different cheeses.

Jen Grimstone-Jones, cheesemonger at Cheese Etc, The Pangbourne Cheese Shop, says that there are three things that they do as standard as a business to provide a quality service, the first of which is training. Jen says, "All of our staff know all of our products. We make sure that our staff can talk to a customer about everything that we sell, we all know the provenance of our goods and we only sell things in the shop that we would buy ourselves. People come to us for our knowledge and expertise so it is crucial that our staff live up to expectations."

According to Jen, recognition is also key. She says, "Our customers love the fact that we know most of them by name and we know the sort of things they like to buy. This means we can suggest alternative products that we know they will like. We chat

to our customers and treat them like friends. You have to give a bit of yourself in order to get people to open up to you but people come back to the shop time and time again because they feel valued. We sometimes bump into customers outside of the shop and they are always appreciative when we take the time to stop and say hello. Invariably they will pop into the shop the next day and talk about whatever mutual activity we were doing."

Third is awareness: "We always stop and say hello to customers when they come into the shop. Even if we're serving someone else just taking a second to acknowledge someone has come in and letting them know you'll be with them soon makes it a lot less likely that people leave without buying anything."

Presenting produce in a professional way is also a sure-fire

way to have your business stand out. The Cheese Lady's Svetlana Kukharchuk says, "Our customers can be sure to expect a personalised and professional service. We are experts in helping people find the right cheeses for their palate, drink of choice and occasion. We also pay particular attention to how we retail our fine cheeses. They are always cut from the wheel and never vacuum-packed. Cut-to-order wedges are expertly wrapped in specialised cheese paper which plays a crucial role in keeping cheeses fresher for longer."

When cutting and wrapping cheeses for customers why not talk them through what you are doing and why in order to keep them involved in the process from start to finish? It's a great way to provide a more interactive service.

Making each individual customer feel well looked after and catered for is one part of the equation, but there are also extra ways to go above and beyond. For Svetlana it's the additional advice they offer which

SERVICE TICK LIST

The Cheese Lady's Svetlana Kukharchuk on the dos and don'ts of interacting with customers:

DOS:

- Be friendly and approachable
- Make sure to offer personalised recommendations
- Give customers time and space to browse, if that's what they want, but be available to answer any questions
- Offer plentiful samples
- Go the extra mile

DON'TS:

- Don't be snobby about cheese
- Don't assume anything

makes the experience of shopping there so positive for each customer that walks through the door; "We do try to make each interaction unique and tailored to the customer's needs and desires. And of course, we always aim to go the extra mile. We always offer extra tastes, beverage and condiment recommendations, as well as tips on composing cheese boards and cooking with cheese."

For Jen at The Pangbourne Cheese Shop, customer service goes beyond just what's happening in-store, and what makes the business different is the commitment to the community around them. She explains, "We have recently launched our local shopping service for our less mobile customers. If someone lives in the village (or just over the river in Whitchurch) we will pick up small amounts of shopping from the village shops and deliver it, along with their cheese, at no extra cost. It is a level of service that we are proud to be able to offer and it means that local people can still patronise the local shops even if they struggle to get here. We also offer a free local delivery service within a 20 mile radius of the shop which has no minimum order value. We try and make shopping here as accessible to all as we can."




PETER'S YARD

The natural
choice for
cheese

New retail perspectives from industry experts

New brand The Yorkshire Creamery rolls out three cheeses

Wensleydale Dairy Products – the parent group of The Wensleydale Creamery – has launched The Yorkshire Creamery in a bid to expand its presence in the cheese category and to celebrate locally sourced milk and sustainable British farming. The brand has three cheeses; Extra Mature Yorkshire Cheddar, Yorkshire Red and Double Yorkshire and are all made using milk from specially selected Yorkshire farms.

David Hartley, managing director of Wensleydale Dairy Products, commented, “Just like our much-loved Yorkshire Wensleydale cheeses, The Yorkshire Creamery is a range of good, honest, tasty, authentic products made with character and integrity. We’re extremely proud of our surroundings, as well as our people – the passion and care of our farmers for their herd, the grass they graze on, the attention and tradition that goes into making our dairy products – that is the difference consumers will taste when they try our cheeses.”



Mary Quicke honoured with Dairy Industry Woman of the Year award



Mary Quicke MBE, from Devon-based cheesemaker Quicke's, has been awarded the Dairy Industry Woman of the Year award, which was presented during the national Women in Dairy Conference in Worcester. Mary has overseen the evolution of farming practices and cheesemaking since taking over the Quicke's family farm in 1987. She has shown commitment to

the industry as a whole, sitting on boards at the Food Standards Agency and Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board Dairy Sector, judged at various cheese competitions around the world and was instrumental in the establishment of the Academy of Cheese in 2017.

Mary commented, “I’m a great admirer of the work that’s been carried out by the Women in Dairy project since it was first established in 2015, so winning this award is a huge honour and a tremendous achievement for me and all the team. We have so many challenges and opportunities before us in dairy, including the chance to improve the carbon sequestration value of permanent pasture to make sure that eating dairy actually helps save the planet, but in order to thrive we must make the best use of all the people, regardless of their background or where they come from. There are so many amazing women in the dairy industry and I am very proud to be one of them.”

Dairy farmers crowdfunding to save creamery

A group of Kintyre dairy farmers, named the Mull of Kintyre Milk Supply Cooperative, launched a crowdfunding campaign to save Campbeltown Creamery, producers of the Mull of Kintyre Cheddar. The creamery has been producing cheese, using milk from 29 farms in the area, since 1923. These farms have joined forces to launch the campaign to purchase the creamery and the Mull of Kintyre brand from current owners First Milk, which announced plans to sell in 2018.

The aim of the campaign was to raise £50,000, and at the time of going to press this target had been met. The group will also be funding the purchase through the use of a levy from every litre of milk produced, as well as external funding.

Local dairy farmer Thomas Cameron commented, “We are currently facing a huge and exciting opportunity with a clear mission – to secure the future of the Campbeltown Creamery for the benefit of the Kintyre community. We will also be

in a position to save a well-known brand and contribute to Scotland’s reputation as a land of food and drink.

“Dairy farms in the area need the creamery in order to thrive and the creamery needs us! Given the challenges of sustaining a vibrant economy in this remote part of Scotland, the role of the dairy sector in Kintyre is fundamental to its success. Mull of Kintyre Cheddar is made to a long-established recipe and it is its provenance as well as taste which is sought by buyers, including those from Tesco and Sainsbury’s, from across the UK.”

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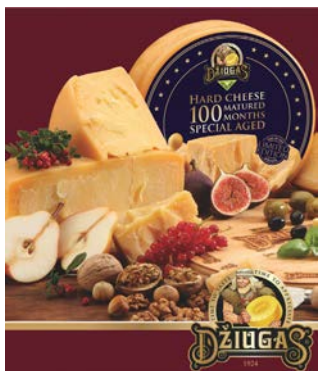
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Džiugas offers special aged 100-month matured cheese

For cheese retailers looking for something unique for cheeseboards for customers this Christmas, Džiugas has the answer. Made in Lithuania, the special aged 100-month matured cheese maintains the smooth, rich and fruit flavours that are valued in its younger varieties and has a spicy bite and salt crystal crunch which are valued assets of the ageing process. It is still an approachable cheese, ready for everyday eating, served with nuts and dried fruit or a drizzle of honey – perfect for a festive cheeseboard. It has also been recognised by the leading Italian Premio Roma cheese competition in the innovation category. Only 200 wheels of this cheese are being ear-marked for release to specialist gourmet cheese retailers.

No artificial colours or flavours are used, only skilled husbandry to oversee the natural process and ensure the cheese remains in perfect condition right to the point of consumption.

For more information about Džiugas contact: d.asanaviciute@zpienas.it



CHEESE FACT FILE...

ROQUEFORT

- **Country of origin:** France
- **Milk:** Sheep's
- **Type:** Blue
- **Tasting notes:** Featuring a texture that is both creamy and crumbly, this cheese tastes sharp, tangy and salty



Patricia Michelson owner of La Fromagerie shares how blue cheeses fare in their overall offering:

“We have 34 blue cheeses at the moment from the UK (including Southern Ireland & Scotland), France, Italy, Spain and Bavaria. We have from time to time U.S. artisan cheeses which add another two to the list. Blue cheese is a vital link to making up cheeseboards and selections – it brings together all the different flavours from mild to strong when you taste the blue at the end”

JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



“Myths and legends of Turophilia”

Have you heard the one about Henry VIII and the washed-rind cheeses? How about the shepherd boy dallying with his young love in a cave, together with a bag of cheese?

Most cheese lovers amass a bunch of stories about the object of their passion, some demonstrably true, some a mite whimsical, perhaps. As a seller of cheese, such tales are daily tools in telling customers how cheese has developed over time and adding to the provenance of their purchases. Stories of Henry VIII are far more memorable than a scientific explanation of the effect of B. Linens on a cheese.

How do we learn these stories? In my case I went on a bunch of cheese courses and read a lot. A LOT. I'm sure we've all been asked time and time again which cheese is our favourite. For a monger an interesting question might be to ask their favourite cheese book. Mine? At times, it's been books by Pierre Androuet, Juliet Harbutt, Patricia Michaelson or latterly Bronwen Percival. My current fave book on cheese is Ned Palmer's *A Cheesemonger's History of the British Isles*.

Ned now runs the Cheese Tasting Company, but was at Neal's Yard Dairy for seven years or so – and knows his stuff. He's made cheese with a large number of UK makers and uses their cheeses to illustrate how the making of cheese in these isles has developed over the last six thousand years. Along the way, we learn of the impact of human

migration, the cheeses enjoyed by the builders of Stonehenge and the dietary results of conquests by the Romans and Normans. He looks at how the Industrial Revolution impacted our business, with canals and, later, trains bringing dairy produce from distant farms to the growing cities. For me, the most valuable part of the book lies in the last chapters, where he looks at the regeneration of British cheese following the Second World War and the knock-out blow landed by rationing. Thankfully British cheese got back up again, and most of us can now enjoy a huge variety of high quality cheeses, whether creamery or farmhouse-made. Ned talks about the people who were instrumental in the renaissance of our cheeses and looks at the impact of Rance, Randolph, Harbutt, Dyas and others. The current diversity of British cheese is celebrated in the chapter entitled *Post Modern Cheeses: Let a Thousand Cheeses Bloom*. The book concludes with a brief directory of 'some favourite cheeses'.

The best music books should make one want to hear the tunes being written about. This book made me salivate for some cheeses that I don't yet know. I'd recommend it as part of your personal Christmas wish list – if you can wait that long. For shop-owners it represents another sales opportunity – a selection of cheese books can sell well. *A Cheesemonger's History of the British Isles* makes a great supplementary purchase for those who have Juliet Harbutt's or Patricia Michaelson's authoritative works.

Artisan cheesemaker unveils Black Truffle cheese



Award-winning cheesemaker Croome Cuisine in Worcester has unveiled a new cheese:

Black Truffle. The subterranean truffle has been added to the mature, creamy Cheddar base for an earthy addition to the product range.

MD Nick Hodgetts says, “Truffle, on its own, is not to everyone's taste and the price can be exorbitant, but there's no doubt that it has a uniquely distinctive flavour which excites food connoisseurs all over the world. I felt it had real potential as an ingredient and used subtly (due to its strong flavour), I think we've got the balance just right.”

Croome Cuisine has also picked up a multitude of awards for its cheeses this year, scooping first and second place in the People's Choice Cheese category for its Sage & Red Onion and Worcester Sauce & Shallot products at the Royal Three Counties Show. The company also won Silver and Highly Commended awards for Worcestershire Hop and Hobsons Ale & Mustard respectively at The International Cheese & Dairy Show.

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FEELING THE BLUES

More than just a Christmas cheeseboard essential, blue cheeses should be celebrated on the counter all year round

Blue cheese is a wonderful thing, but doesn't come without its challenges. When you think of blue cheese it's likely to be on a Christmas cheeseboard, and while it's true that no festive cheeseboard would be complete without a blue, it is a category of cheeses that can get overlooked at other times of the year. Meanwhile, shoppers may announce to you with conviction that they don't like blue cheese, and there will of course be

those that truly don't, but it's likely that many haven't found the right flavour profile for their particular tastes yet. Why not use the festive season as an opportunity to help customers not only find the perfect blue for their cheeseboards, but also to discover new favourites that they can enjoy all year round?

Claire Millner, owner of Hartington Cheese & Wine Co Ltd., explains that the stronger smell and appearance of blue cheese can be

the reason customers are adverse to trying it. Some will find the mould disconcerting, so focusing on taste is a good start. Claire recommends the mild and creamy Dovedale Blue because, "It has no bitter aftertaste and melts in the mouth, and it has recently won Best Soft Blue Cheese at the Global Cheese Awards 2019. We have found that often a person's taste changes as they get older and more people will try blue cheeses as they hit their thirties and forties. Often people associate blue cheese as a cooking cheese, used in soups, pies and sauces, which is such a shame. We encourage people to try blue cheeses and have samples out most days. Some customers don't want to try blue cheese because of the colour of the veining and the stronger smell, but actually if they closed their eyes they wouldn't usually know that it is a blue cheese they are eating."

Make room for modern British cheeses

Most customers will be aware of the Continental classics such as Stilton, Roquefort and Gorgonzola. However, there are many modern British cheeses that are able to hold their own against the classics, and Oxford Blue was at the forefront of innovation when it launched into the market over 20 years ago. Founder Baron Robert Pouget says, "When we launched Oxford Blue in 1995 we were among the first innovative new blue cheeses on the market. The landscape of English Blues was virtually non-existent apart from the established types such as blue Stilton, blue Wensleydale, Dorset Blue Vinny and Shropshire Blue, all similar semi-hard blue cheeses. We came along and developed Oxford Blue and had it made initially at Hartington Creamery. It became an instant

success. We were very surprised with how quickly it took off but the reason was because it was one of the first English semi-soft blues which attempted to compete with the European blues. Oxford Blue has quite a sharp flavour and when it matures it gets creamier, more salty and pungent. Within a few months we were selling several tonnes a month. Then, of course, other producers starting making blue cheese and now there must be 50 different English blue cheeses on the market!"

PRODUCER PERSPECTIVE...

Caroline Bell, director at Shepherds Purse

WHAT TYPES OF BLUE CHEESE DOES SHEPHERDS PURSE PRODUCE?

We make a range of soft and creamy blue cheeses: Yorkshire Blue, Harrogate Blue, Northern Blue, Mrs Bell's Blue and Buffalo Blue. They differ in terms of strength, maturation profile and milk type.

ARE THERE CERTAIN BLUE CHEESES THAT ARE BETTER SUITED TO THE SUMMER MONTHS? WHAT ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

We're big believers in the year-long enjoyment of blue cheese, it just depends how you want to

enjoy it. At Christmas the traditional accompaniments of sweet and spicy chutneys and rich fruity drinks create added warmth, and then in the summer it's perfect to add depth of flavour to a salad or a burger. At any time of the year blue cheese and crackers is a perfect snack.

WHAT ACCOMPANIMENTS PAIR WELL WITH DIFFERENT BLUE CHEESES?

We encourage experimentation with fruity and sweet flavours. We love fruits like dates and figs, we love honey and walnuts and a surprising one to some is dark chocolate – absolutely delicious.



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“Shoppers may announce that they don’t like blue cheese, and there will of course be those that truly don’t, but it’s likely that they haven’t yet found the right flavour profile for them”

The brand’s contribution to the blue cheese market doesn’t stop there, as there is a new creamier version of Oxford Blue in the pipeline. Robert explains, “Our Oxford Blue has been made by different dairies to our recipe over the years and we are now working on an extra creamy version which will rival Saint Agur. We’re aiming to launch it in time for the Farm Shop & Deli Show next year, which is Oxford Blue’s 25th birthday”

According to Claire, the most popular cheeses at Hartington Cheese & Wine Co Ltd. are “Hartington Stilton, Peakland Blue and Dovedale Blue. That is because not only are they locally made but also because they are delicious! The vast majority of our customers who visit all three of our shops are tourists and they like to try local produce and always ask which ones we would recommend. We always push the locally made ones because they are synonymous with our part of Derbyshire and cannot be found easily elsewhere in the UK.”

Perfect pairings

During the festive season customers will need to know what to pair their cheese with. Traditional accompaniments such as honey, figs, nuts and dried fruits are always a good recommendation, as the sweetness from these foods provides a good contrast to the punchy blue cheese flavour. When it comes to drinks, Frances Sterry owner of Cheese Please advises trying new pairing options. She suggests, “a sweet dessert wine like Monbazillac with a Fourme D’ambert, the sweetness of the wine will cut through the rich creaminess of the French blue.”

There are plenty of ways to enjoy the stronger taste of blue cheese at other times of the year as well. Don’t hesitate to impart your knowledge of how a variety of blues can be enjoyed in different ways to encourage your customers to expand their palates and horizons. Fran adds, “Blue can be a difficult sell outside of Christmas, but there are plenty of ways to enjoy

it in the warmer seasons. I was once given by a customer a recipe for a blue cheese, fig and prosciutto salad – it has never failed me. Melt the blue cheese slightly onto the figs and prosciutto and serve with rocket and dress with a balsamic vinegar. I use Cashel Blue, but any creamy firm blue will do. If just enjoying it on a cheeseboard, try to go for a light mild blue. Brighton Blue is incredibly delicate and loved even by those usually averse to blue cheeses.”



COUNTER QUESTIONS

Patricia Michelson, founder of La Fromagerie
What blue cheese would you recommend for a great Christmas cheeseboard?

Everyone has a piece of Stilton at Christmas – it is the go-to cheese with a glass of Port. However, we like to create cheeseboard selections that are a little bit different and ones to bring out over the festive season when all you want to eat is cheese, charcuterie and crusty bread. A favourite is Regalis, a wonderful ewe’s milk blue cheese from the Pyrenees. The cheese has a wax coating to keep all the sweet whey in the cheese rather than expelling it. The cheese is soft and melting, with that sweet earthiness redolent in ewe’s milk and the mineral blue veins give that sharpness to offset the richness. A perfect cheese for pairing with Sauternes and walnuts, as well as harder ewe and goat’s cheeses.



PARTNER CONTENT



THE CRAFT REVOLUTION OF BLUE CHEESE

The rise of Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses’ Blacksticks Blue

When considering the changing face of the cheese fixture, there are few cheeses that stand out like Blacksticks Blue. With its vibrant orange colour and beautiful veins, it is not a blue cheese that has been made to blend in. Celebrating its 15th year, the boundary-pushing Blacksticks Blue is the original, contemporary farmhouse blue cheese. It burst onto the scene in 2004 and is unlike anything else in the blue cheese arena; the product of amazing skill, years of craftsmanship and incomparable cheesemaking passion.

AWARD-WINNING CHEESE

As a form of rebellion, Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses, the creators of the brand, wanted to develop a product that didn’t conform to what the industry expected a blue cheese to be, but still represented the quality and the skills honed over multi-generational family farmhouse cheesemaking. 15 years later Blacksticks Blue is still dominating at competitions, this year winning multiple top awards, including Gold at the International Cheese Awards.

The fact it still remains a champion, beating all blue newcomers, is a testament to Butlers’ commitment to consistency and the ongoing, constant development of the dedicated craft cheesemakers who continue to tweak the recipe in the pursuit of perfection to this day.

As one of the few remaining cheesemakers in the UK that makes farmhouse cheeses across all three varieties – hard, soft and blue – Butlers is uniquely positioned to create a blue cheese of exceptional quality on this scale, with the knowledge in-house to ensure that the cheese is reliable, achieving the consistency demanded of a nationwide brand.

RECOGNISABLE PACKAGING

Popular with the on-trade as well as on-shelf at retail, Blacksticks Blue also benefits from its eye-catching packaging. Bucking the trend for pale colours, reds, blacks and creams, Blacksticks Blue sits proud with its orange, purple and blue jacket – which has remained popular since launch. Perfect for independents who are looking to add excitement and colour to their offering, Blacksticks Blue’s unique flavour profile also offers retail a new dimension. Known to convert even the most blue cheese-averse, Blacksticks Blue is more popular than ever. A contemporary farmhouse blue, it is surprisingly creamy whilst still boasting a bright robustness that epitomises classic blue flavour.

UNIQUE PAIRING PARTNERS

Although the UK has seen a rise in blue cheese launches over recent years, the reality is that few have reached the versatility of this cult creamy blue. Equally at home nestled as part of a Michelin-starred cheeseboard as it is melted on the ultimate burger or cheese toastie, Blacksticks Blue gives stockists a huge opportunity at the premium end of the blue cheese market.

As part of the recent Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses experiential store at Goodwood Revival, Butlers have been encouraging consumers to try Blacksticks Blue with an unusual pairing – ginger biscuits. Playing on the nation’s love of sweet and savoury, it’s a combination that has been delighting customers and one they would encourage others to try in-store. Other excellent pairings include Christmassy festive favourites such as Blacksticks Blue and brussel sprouts and brunch classics such as Blacksticks Blue paired with bacon for a fun twist on eggs benedict.

A rebel in the cheese aisle, but a serious contender when it comes to taste, quality, consistency and flavour, Blacksticks Blue remains and continues to be the most exciting innovation in blue cheese. As we celebrate 15 years of Blacksticks Blue, we also look to the future, and the future is blue.

01772 781500 hello@butlerscheeses.co.uk butlerscheeses.co.uk



HOT DRINKS 2019

Sally Wynter explores the powers at play in the evolving hot drinks market

The market value of hot drinks has seen another steady year of growth in 2019, with a value of £2.8bn, and is on track to hit the £3bn mark next year according to Statista. But within this growth, British consumer habits are shifting. Sales of 'normal' tea bags (black tea) are on the decline. Cold-brew, iced and canned coffees (known as RTDs or ready to drink) are on the up. And plastic, environmental impact and compostability are becoming hot button issues that are swaying consumer decisions.

Tea

The United Kingdom remains the third largest consumer of tea per head in the global running – after Ireland, intriguingly. Black tea remains the core offering in volume terms. But despite Britain remaining a nation of loyal tea drinkers, tastes are starting to shift away from the beloved black tea bag to the more exotic offerings of herbal, green and 'wellbeing' teas.

Richard Caines, senior food and drink analyst at Mintel says, "Products focused on health and wellbeing, those targeting different need states at different times of the day (eg energising in the morning, calming in the evening) and cold versions of hot drinks all offer

opportunities for growing sales in light of consumer interest."

The drive towards herbal and wellbeing teas has been attributed to younger consumers in the 16-34 age group who drink less black tea and have more variety in their purchasing habits. According to Mintel's *Hot Drink Report* for 2019, they are also prepared to spend more on tea with functional health benefits, particularly on infusions with added vitamins and minerals.

Offerings in the wellbeing tea space reflect the research findings with brands such as Free Soul, a female-orientated health and wellbeing brand, marketing Sleep and Wake teas which retail at £8 for 20 teabags. This works out at 40p per teabag, compared with market leader Twinings' Everyday which comes in at around 5p per serving, reflecting the willingness to spend more.

Mint tea has long been popular for its natural taste and digestion-boosting qualities, and Summerdown Mint's English Peppermint teabags are a great option to stock. Award-winning and a showcase of the very best of English peppermint (a flavour lost for generations), this crisp and refreshing tea is perfect as an after-dinner beverage and a great tasting option for consumers wanting to

utilise the natural benefits of mint.

Meanwhile, *Dragons' Den*-backed vitamin tea, Tea+ are hot on the consumer trend with their infusions offering 100% of the recommended intake of certain daily vitamins. They currently market four variations: Cleanse, Vitamin D, Energy and Defence.

Emerging trends

In a bid to tackle sales erosion from competition in soft drinks and RTD coffee drinks, Twinings have made a jump into cold-brew tea with their Cold Infuse range. Available in six different flavours, the heat-treated tea bags are designed to be added into a 500ml bottle of water and infuse within five minutes.

Another exciting space to watch this year is herbal teas for kids. Small & Wild, a start-up offering parents a healthier alternative to sugar-packed hot chocolate and squash, is now being sold in independent deli chain Eat 17. Kate Towers, co-founder, says, "We felt when it comes to drinks, there was really no need for high sugar levels in the products kids are drinking – it just feels unnecessary. People are looking for better alternatives than what's on offer."

The sugar tax, which came into force in April 2018, has significantly increased awareness for parents about the levels of sugar in drinks consumed by their kids. Officially called the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (or SDIL), the tax puts a charge of 24p on drinks containing 8g of sugar per 100ml.

Andrew McDonogh, head buyer at Eat 17, suggested that parents are now more clued-up than ever about the contents of the products they are buying. "Parents coming into our stores are increasingly conscious about the contents of the food and drink they are buying for their children. Their priorities are for products that have no added sugar but at the same time are natural – rather than full of sweeteners and additives."



"Our customers love tea and we've seen an increasing interest in herbal and wellbeing blends, so the fact we can offer wholesome teas for the whole family now is something we're really pleased about."

Another one to watch is hibiscus tea. Boasting antioxidant levels on par with matcha (Japanese green tea) but at a fraction of the price, it could well be the next big thing.

Coffee

Coffee pods and capsules remain to be the must-stock item in the hot beverage sector. With three in 10 UK households now owning a machine, retailers have seen sales shoot up by 29% over the past two years.

Innovation in the sector has been led by growing consumer interest in sustainability. According to the John Hopkins Centre for a Liveable Future, the environmental impacts

of the 400 billion cups of coffee that are consumed annually across the world range from huge demands on water to deforestation. Recent research by the Water Footprint Network estimated that it requires 140 litres of water to grow, process, and prepare a single cup of coffee. As a result coffee certified as coming from sources that are 100% sustainable have become a popular choice over the past year.

Based in the heart of Brighton's North Laines, Nick Langley from Infinity Foods says sustainability and ethics are key considerations when it comes to deciding what goes on the shelves. "We're trying to get products that are high in ethics but also in flavour because our customers are critical. Brighton is full of coffee shops and competition is high." The shop has found that single-origin as well as locally

“CBD is set to be one of the hottest trends in the food and beverage industry this year”



“Coffee certified as coming from sources that are 100% sustainable have become a popular choice over the past year”



roasted coffee has been a particular hit with customers. "Right now there's a Machu Pichu range that's selling really well. That particular region in Peru is renowned for growing amazing coffee and produces a particular floral flavour profile that's quite unique. We're selling loads of that."

Sitting alongside the more traditional offerings are the new(ish) kids on the block: mushroom coffee. Produced by a company called Four Sigmatic, the mushroom supplement drinks are supposed to help boost the immune system as well as energy levels. The sachets, resembling instant coffee in appearance, retail for between £1 and £1.50 and have been a best seller at Infinity Foods. "The past two years have really seen mushroom drinks grow in popularity. We stock them next to the coffee and we sell out regularly," says Nick.

The rise of CBD

CBD is set to be one of the hottest trends in the food and beverage industry this year, with hot drinks being no exception. Short for cannabidiol, the natural compound extracted from hemp has become

popular with those seeking relief from hangovers, anxiety and even sports injuries.

Despite its novel-food status in the UK, the hemp-wellness market is now worth a whopping £300m and businesses such as Planet Organic now stock a significant range of products, ranging from oils to edibles. Buying director, Al Overton, is open about using CBD oil "on and off" for two years. In response, a number of cosmopolitan coffee shops in areas like London and Brighton have started offering coffee infused with CBD droplets. And in product, a company called High Tide is early to market with a vegan, sugar-free cold brew RTD that boasts added CBD and markets itself as a sports drink.

RTDs

Consumer demand for convenience showed no signs of waning as cold-brew and iced 'ready to drink' coffee was named the fastest growing category in the sector, according to World Coffee Portal. In their report, *Project Iced UK*, they concluded that UK sales grew to £395m last year, up 14.3% on 2017. Until recently, product offerings in this sector

were largely limited to high-sugar, low-strength coffee drinks. 2019 has seen the rise of the cold-brew canned coffee. These RTDs resemble the higher quality coffee customers would expect to receive in a coffee shop and tend to have both higher caffeine contents as well as lower sugar.

Vegan-friendly versions made with oat and almond milks have also started to appear on shelves, catering for the growing number of consumers who are now 'dairy-free'.

Must-have accessories

As Britons wake up to the 2.5 billion coffee cups which are used and

mostly sent to landfill each year in the UK, the re-usable coffee cup is now an item many won't leave the house without.

The cups, typically made from recycled plastic or glass, are not only kinder to the environment but also on the pocket, with Pret a Manger and other chains offering up to 50p discount for those coming prepared.

Straws made from titanium and bamboo have also become popular for those seeking eco-friendly alternatives to plastic. Their ability to withstand higher temperatures has seen more people using straws for hot coffee in a bid to avoid staining their teeth.

“The market value of hot drinks has seen another steady year of growth in 2019, with a value of £2.8bn, and is on track to hit the £3bn mark next year”



IN TECH

A temperature-controlled mug called Ember is making lukewarm coffee a thing of the past. The mug, retailing at Selfridges for £89.95, is sold by a company called Smartertech whose other offerings include a self-cleaning thermos.

There are now Wi-Fi-enabled coffee machines that can be programmed to have your morning brew waiting for you the moment you wake up. Ranging from £180

into the thousands, most models are compatible with Amazon Alexa or Google-Assistant enabled devices and can be controlled through an app.

A device that uses edible ink can now print your face onto the surface of any drink. Known as the Ripple Maker, it allows customers to upload images to the machine via an app, which it can print onto coffee in a matter of seconds.

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THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Chef Vivek Singh is the founder and executive chef of five renowned restaurants



I've moved around a lot in my life, which means my favourite delis and butchers are spread all across London, but I always love discovering new places and people working with exciting produce. I think being a chef it comes with the territory that we want to work with independent producers – you create a bond and become friends as you're always there with them talking about provenance and what new things they're experimenting with. It's a lot more than going to a supermarket and picking something off the shelf, it's a partnership.

When I lived in New Cross, we

were fortunate enough to have Bambuni as our local. When I first went into their deli in Nunhead I was taken aback by the wonderful cheeses, wines and oils lining the walls and shelves. I recently moved not too far from there to Lewisham and I'm still discovering the area a little; I've been recommended so many great places so my wife and I are trying our best to tackle the list. Brockley Market is a great find, it

pops up on a Saturday morning in a car park and boasts some great independent food stalls and artisan winemakers, all within strolling distance of my house.

Recently a friend of mine introduced me to London Smoke & Cure in Streatham, a small company who specialise in smoking and curing meats and fish. They're absolutely brilliant and so passionate, I pop in to chat with Ross, the founder, or Simon and look at what they're currently testing and what they might be playing with. It's so great how they go out to farmer's markets as well – I've visited

them at Crystal Palace – engaging with people and spreading their knowledge, it really makes such a difference. The evolution of taste only happens with a combination of education so showcasing what they do and how that alters the flavour of their meats is brilliant; their five-month aged London Standard Coppa is delicious.

I love the dumplings at Seewoo, an Asian Grocery in Greenwich. They have about three locations across London I think, but I couldn't not mention them as every time I walk in there I feel like a kid in a candy shop! The number of ingredients is overwhelming, in the best way, I don't think I ever see any clear shelf space as it's all rammed in there. I've developed a weekly ritual of heading to Sillfield Farm's Borough Market stall to pick up their Cumbrian sausages. They're a family-run farm up in the Lake District rearing Wild Boar, Rare Breed Pigs and Herdwick Sheep. The beauty of this is that I know how the animals are reared and we all run to nature's clock. That's the best thing about working with independent producers – you work with what's in season so you get the best available and create a menu around that.

TWITTER POLL

How important are attending trade shows for you as a business?

ESSENTIAL
33%

SOMETIMES
ATTEND
50%

NOT
IMPORTANT
17%

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

Inside the next issue of
Speciality Food:

- Chocolate
- Scottish Food & Drink Special
- Scotland's Speciality Show Preview
- Product Sampling – Taste Direct 2020



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TALKING SHOP



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The biggest news for us as a team this issue has been the much-anticipated Future Food Awards. After months of preparation and counting down to the awards, the day arrived to head to Bread & Jam for the final. Having never been to the start-up festival before I was instantly greeted with a buzzy atmosphere that created a great and positive start to the day. With the interiors of the Institute of Directors a grand backdrop to the event, it became clear that this really was the place to be for start-ups in the food and drink industry. This is the event for food and drink founders to make connections, exchange ideas and to hear from experts in the sector.

When it came to the final of the Future Food Awards itself it was a real pleasure to watch the nine category winners deliver their three minute pitches to the panel of expert judges. For some, getting up on stage to present their business and product must have been a nerve-

wracking experience, but for all involved the passion and love for what they do shone through. After plenty of deliberation from the judges the Supreme Champion was announced as Nourished – a win that was very much deserved.

I took away plenty from the day but one thing that stood out was the message of how important it is for companies across the board to support one another in this industry. It's a tough time to be running a business in the food and drink sector, and especially challenging being a start-up in this climate, so it's refreshing to see an event that is brimming with supportive energy.

It's also easy in business, as in life, to look around and compare

what you are doing to others that are doing something similar in a negative way. This is especially prevalent these days with social media and the ease with which we all have

access to everyone's activities. There has been plenty of press circulating this year about negativity online and trolling on social media, and everyone from individuals to companies can be affected. Healthy competition is a real driver for a start-up to make their mark on their sector and events like these bring everyone together. I welcomed the

sight of people making the effort to congratulate each other on pitches that were being done that day, taking an interest in new products being showcased and just all-around positive engagement. It's definitely an attitude to take forward in a post-Brexit landscape.

Do you have an inspiring story about the food and drink community coming together? Do you have a suggestion for ways in which the industry can make any positive changes for the future? We would love to hear from you, so get in touch via lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk.

“One thing that stood out was the message of how important it is for companies across the board to support one another. It's a tough time to be running a business in the food and drink sector, and especially challenging being a start-up in this climate, so it's refreshing to see an event that is brimming with supportive energy”

DIARY DATES

November

7th-8th
BELLAVITA EXPO
Business Design Centre, London
bellavita.com

13th-15th
THE EUROPEAN PIZZA & PASTA SHOW
Olympia, London
pizzapastashow.com

19th-20th
FOOD MATTERS LIVE
ExCel, London
foodmatterslive.com

21st-24th
TASTE OF LONDON
Tobacco Dock, London
london.tastefestivals.com

28th - 1st December
BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW WINTER
NEC, Birmingham
bbcgoodfoodshow.com

December

5th-7th
HALAL EXPO
ExCel, London
halalexpolondon.com

January 2020

12th-14th
TOP DRAWER
Olympia, London
topdrawer.co.uk

19th-21st
SCOTLAND'S SPECIALITY FOOD SHOW
SEC, Glasgow
scotlandsspecialityfoodshow.com

19th-21st
THE WINTER FANCY FOOD SHOW
Moscone Center, San Francisco
specialityfood.com

5 MINUTES WITH...
ELLIE WEBB,
CO-FOUNDER AT CALEÑO

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

I love shows like *Spooks* and *Line of Duty*, and as a kid I always wanted to be an MI5 secret agent.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I started waitressing at 16 which paid for my car, holidays and uni nights out.

TEA OR COFFEE?

Colombian coffee every day!

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

Hmmm, cleaning the inside of wine spittoons has to be up there!

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

At the moment it would be a BBQ. I'm obsessed with them at the minute.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I'm really inspired by strong female leaders who have used their influence to make a difference in the world such as Marie Curie (first woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize), Oprah Winfrey and Sheryl Sandberg, to name a few.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

I love that every day is different and every week I get to meet someone new.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

Admin. Emails, and the fact I'm constantly playing catch up.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

I love how much innovation, creativity and skill there is in the food industry

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

Always live your life to the very fullest, as you only get one. Take advantage of every opportunity.

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

I ate some strange deep fried bugs when I visited Vietnam.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

It's got to be *Harry Potter*.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Tough call... savoury I think!

TRIED & TESTED

FREE STAR PREMIUM ALCOHOL-FREE BEER

I've been seeing launches for non-alcoholic beverages left, right and centre, so I was intrigued to try this one by Free Star. I was pleasantly surprised at how similar this tasted to beer, but with a tangy citrus element that made it really enjoyable to drink, just without the effects of alcohol. 100% natural and gluten-free, this award-winning drink is definitely one well worth a try. freestar.co



COCONUT MERCHANT ORGANIC YOUNG GREEN JACKFRUIT

As a long-standing vegetarian I am finding the influx of alternative options to meat coming to market now very welcome, and a product that I have been wanting to try for a while is jackfruit. Sourced from Sri Lanka, this organic, 100% natural option can be used in a range of dishes including stir fries and burgers. A tasty alternative to the more processed meat alternatives out there, the jackfruit is soft in texture and makes for a delicious plant-based meal. This is one I would definitely reach for again when cooking. coconut-merchant.com



NONSUCH SHRUBS BITTERSWEET APPLE & CARDAMOM NON ALCOHOLIC APERITIF

There are plenty of alternatives to alcoholic beverages around these days, some of which are truly great – see Free Star above – but I still get excited when I come across something truly new in this sphere. At this year's Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival (I go every year and can highly recommend it) I discovered Nonsuch Shrubs' newest release and was instantly smitten. Punchy with spice and apple, I've been enjoying it with ice and ginger beer, or hot water for a thoroughly warming evening drink, and it's sure to be a popular choice on the drinks trolley this party season too. nonsuchshrubs.com



PELLAS ORGANIC DROPS ROSEMARY EVOO

My household is rosemary mad. The rosemary bush in the garden is visited multiple times a week, its fragrant fronds adding flavour to more recipes than I have the space to mention. There's just something about its instantly recognisable, savoury, herbaceous notes that makes it a can't-be-without presence in my kitchen – but any time I've tried a product claiming to be a viable alternative (in an attempt to give my live plant a break) I've been left unsatisfied. Enter this extra virgin olive oil from Pellas. Its rosemary flavour is so pure and punchy that it's successfully replaced fresh leaves in much of my cooking – high praise indeed. vinegarshed.com



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