

SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS

AS
FEATURED BY
NIGEL BARDEN ON
BBC RADIO 2'S
DRIVETIME SHOW

THE SWEET BEET

FIND OUT HOW WE ARE FIGHTING BACK WITH FLAVOUR



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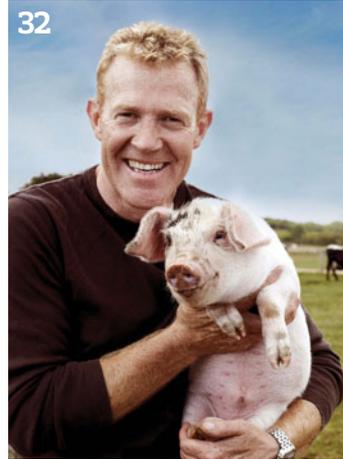
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the June issue of *Speciality Food*. We're well and truly in the summer seasons right now, so what better time to get your summery cheese offering up to scratch? We cover all you need to know about cheeses for the season – from the ones to know and how best to sell them – on page 16. French soft cheeses really come into their own at this time of year (who could say no to an al fresco crusty baguette filled with Brie on a sunny day?), and two experts share their knowledge of French cheeses in the UK. The good news? The country's famed savoir-faire when it comes to dairy products is crossing the channel and is giving our cheesemongers the inside track. Find out what they have to say on page 13. We also share a preview of the upcoming Bellavita Expo (p18), take a look at the biscuits (p23) and condiments sectors (p29), and take a look at vegan alternatives to meat – just in time for barbecue season (p28).

Holly

holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk



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8 x 150ml Indian Tonic Water
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Six reasons why retailers should be using Product Finder

Speciality Food's newly launched Product Finder presents retailers with the biggest collection of independent and artisan products available to the fine food industry. Here's everything you need to know

1 It's simple and easy to use

Product Finder is an online interactive catalogue which allows buyers from independent retailers to browse thousands of products for their shops, all on one convenient, easy-to-navigate platform. Retailers do not need to enter their details, create an account or log in – all of the producers' contact details and information are neatly listed and easily accessible.

2 It's a one-stop shop for stocking suggestions

On Product Finder, buyers can be inspired by new lines of fine

food and drink and contact the producers and wholesalers directly. Whether they are on the look-out for a new olive oil to stock, the latest protein-packed vegan snack bar or wishing to explore the world of kefir, this invaluable platform showcases a raft of product suggestions all in one convenient place.

3 It showcases the best in artisan food and drink

Retailers can find food and drink recommendations all under one roof, with popular categories like cheese, snack food and condiments to browse, users have a quality,

free-to-use and ever-growing source of fine food inspiration at their fingertips. Buyers do not need to wait for a brochure to land on their doorstep, Product Finder's constantly revolving catalogue of artisan produce is filled to the brim with fantastic suggestions.

4 There's up-to-the-minute inspiration

With food and drink producers and suppliers able to create and maintain their own profiles, Product Finder provides a consistently updated and refreshed product guide – it is fast becoming one of the most influential platforms to announce product

launches available today. The fine food industry is currently a hotbed of innovation, with upstarts and recognised companies launching products on a daily basis – if retailers feel that their shelves are looking slightly uninspired, by visiting Product Finder they will be confronted with with the latest and greatest the sector has to offer.

5 Stay up to date with favourite distributors

If a buyer has a preference for the wholesaler or distributor they enjoy doing business with, Product Finder has a dedicated section to the industry's most prestigious

and reliable suppliers. Whether a retailer wishes to keep abreast of the latest, cutting edge products supplied through Cotswold Fayre or wants to broaden their Scottish offering via The Cress Co., they simply need to click on the supplier's respective profile page and will be met with a constantly-updated catalogue of their latest products, with contact details and further information listed, too.

6 Sign up for weekly updates

Operating a retail outlet can be time consuming, so *Speciality Food* endeavours to keep retailers as up to date as possible about the latest and best artisan food and drink. By signing up to *Speciality Food's* weekly newsletter, buyers can stay informed with exciting products presented on Product Finder by keeping an eye out for the Product Of The Week section. This highlights a new product that has impressed the team, and features a short description containing tasting notes and producer story.

Are you looking to bolster your fine food offering? Start using Product Finder today by visiting specialityfoodfinder.com

“ Product Finder is one of the most influential platforms to announce product launches available today ”

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JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



“Spring Report 2018”

That was the winter of our discount eggs” would be an apt description of Spring and Easter this year. (My sincerest apologies to the Bard by the way).

That obscure adage of “an early Easter means sales have a seizure” once again proved to be true in 2018.

This year Easter took place at the height of winter with temperatures at the lowest point for many years. Comparing our sales this year to last year for the four-day holiday weekend reveals that we were 16.8% down. In fact, April sales as a whole were 9.9% down which is the sharpest monthly year-on-year drop we have had in many a decade. Our customer count was 11.3% down as well. In the middle of a few nights recently I have wondered whether Lidl opened a pop-up shop nearby selling Easter eggs.

However, April had a sudden change of personality when it turned into a heatwave between the 18th and 21st of the month. During this period our sales rose by 10.8% compared to the year before and it was a pleasant reminder of normal retailing. Thank goodness for that! Although, sadly a few discounted Easter Eggs lingered in the shop for an embarrassing number of days after the bank holiday.

Looking back to January, it seems incredible that the year actually got off to a good start. It was the best January according to recent records and sales were 3.9% up. February was down by 1.8% but was boosted by our Chinese New Year celebration, when we clawed back some revenue under benign weather conditions. March was down by 1.2%, and considering Beasts from the East

etc this may not look too bad a result. However, the month contained five Saturdays whereas last year only had four and Saturdays are the best day of the week for us, bringing up to 50% higher sales than a weekday. It was therefore payback time in April when last year there were five Saturdays and this year only four, and our sales in 2018 were dramatically down. The one bright spark remains online sales which continue unabated by unpleasant weather, and on the contrary grew by several hundred per cent during the first three months of the year. Albeit on a proportionately much smaller turnover to the main shop.

So what about the future in 2018? May is traditionally our third busiest month of the year in a close battle with October. It also ushers in the second busiest quarter of the year after Christmas. During the next 12 weeks we have the Chelsea Flower Show, a royal wedding, a cup final featuring a local team, a new born royal baby, Wimbledon, Ascot and, dare I say it, the World Cup to put everyone in a positive frame of mind. We are even launching a new gin, Chelsea Flower 2, to assist with mood enhancement and already have an encouraging number of pre-orders online.

Champagne, gin, smoked salmon, cheese and charcuterie hopefully all now take centre stage as I nervously scan the long term weather forecast for the summer.

My friends in the trade often tell me to stop talking about the weather and start talking to customers. I have tried that but we always seem to end up talking about the weather anyhow. It might be a British thing. This year, scarcely surprisingly, spring has sprung sparingly for speciality foods.

“ This year, scarcely surprisingly, spring has sprung sparingly for speciality foods ”

Croots Farm Shop turns the spotlight on customer views



Derbyshire-based Croots Farm Shop recently held customer feedback sessions to shape the business's future.

The shop and café, which first opened in June 2008, asked randomly-selected customers what they liked about Croots and where improvements could be made.

In the shop, the butchery counter emerged as a firm favourite – scoring 10 out of 10 – with customers appreciating the shop's commitment to locally sourced meat. The café's full English breakfasts and cakes were also singled out as a reason to visit.

Kay Croot, co-owner of Croots Farm Shop, joined the business full-time in 2015 after 25 years with major national and international

retail brands. She said that while using focus groups was common practice for large corporations, it was rare for smaller businesses.

“Successful retailers have to give great quality at the right price, but they must also offer fantastic customer service,” she said.

“And the best way to achieve that is by putting our customers at the heart of decision-making. We wanted to know what we were doing well and where we could make things better, either by improving customer service or by improving the range of products and attractions.”

Croots Farm Shop will now consider the feedback in detail, particularly looking at suggestions for a range of improvements, and

will carry out further customer research online with a larger group of customers.

“We wanted to understand what people really wanted from us, so we encouraged open, straightforward feedback, particularly about what we might change in the future and how we can continue to offer the best range of products and services,” Kay continued. “More ready meals and more organic vegetables, a bigger range of gluten-free products, items suitable for diabetics, an expanded deli counter and reducing delays during particularly busy spells were all themes raised.

“People also came up with some great ideas. Themed nights in the café, a picnic area for the summer, extending the children's play area and the possibility of an animal petting area were all suggested.

“The themes raised by customers provide us with a strong starting point for wider customer research in which we will be considering many of the ideas put forward, but it was interesting to note that our customers were adamant the farm shop ethos should remain at the heart of our business and any developments. We will be carrying out further customer research online to test the ideas with a larger group of customers.”



Audited accounts at independent retail farm shop operator, Cobbs Farm Co, show that company has finished the year with “exceptional growth in sales and operating profit”. The business reports annual like-for-like group sales growth of just over 10 per cent. These results have gone on to provide the company with earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of £561,000 – up 5 per cent on the previous year. Annual sales in 2017 were £7,606,000 – a more than 10 per cent increase on 2016. Tom Newey, chief executive for the group said, “At a time when all we seem to hear about is the Armageddon on the high-street, we feel in a prime position to be able to cater for what we see as a now established and ever-growing set of customers who truly care about what they eat and value in-store experiences.”

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CHARLES CAMPION



“The power of telly”

Hands up everyone who knew what Rendang was before Rendang Gate hit the 2018 *Masterchef* series... Greg Wallace and John Terode were faced with Zaleha Kadir Olpin's interpretation of the classic Indonesian dish Rendang, and Greg declared it inedible because the skin wasn't crisp. (He would have been wiser to point out that Rendang is a dish more usually made with beef, and one that needs to spend a long time in the oven – slow and low). Overnight the Twitter-sphere latched on to this bandwagon. IKEA in Singapore launched their own version of rendang chicken wings and one internet source noted that the judges' comments about the dish rankled because of the overtones of neo-colonialism. You would have to bet that Greg and John did not set out for the studio that morning with neo-colonialism in mind.

The tentacles of “reality television” have a long reach, and over the years our response has changed. Between 1950 and 1955 Fanny and Johnny Craddock wrote articles for *The Telegraph* under the pen name Bon Vivere and the partnership went on to get impressive coverage on television. At the height of their fame the twosome could book the Albert Hall for cooking demos. But television was to be their downfall and it came in the shape of a 1976 programme called *The Big Time*. The structure would be familiar to viewers today (an amateur tries to cook as well as a professional, ring any bells?). Fanny's nemesis was a Devon farmer's wife called Gwen Troake and her prize was to cook for Edward Heath mentored by Fanny. Troake's proposed menu was a seafood platter followed by

roast duck and finished with coffee cream made with rum – as a nod to Heath's nautical side – perversely in 2018 this menu sounds fair enough. But Fanny chose to give the Devon lady both barrels and the huge television audience flinched. Fanny had form for being pretty sharp and pretty snobbish but this time she excelled herself. “You could kill pigs with that menu. Do you have any friends in Devon, dear? Living?” Television is a very unforgiving medium and it didn't forgive Fanny Craddock, who went from hero to zero in the blink of an eye.

All of which makes it ironic that today television presenters are never happier than when making the contestants sob – it's so much more real. Good losers pause on their way out of the studio to say how much they have enjoyed their “journey” and how pleased they have been to get in to the last 16, or 8, or whatever. Whether it is Lord Sugar, cake judges or celebs in the jungle, it's the nasty side of things that bolsters the viewing figures. And that probably goes for the numerous talent shows where it seems that the less talent the contestants have the better viewing they make. All of which makes the instant demise of Fanny Craddock even more poignant; if she had been operating in this century she would have been revered for her acid tongue and impressive nastiness. Setting aside a query of two – how do you kill pigs with a seafood platter and a coffee cream? Why should it matter to cooks whether they have friends in Devon? Fanny would have been perfectly at home in 2018, even if it is very unlikely that she would have known what a Rendang was.

Waitrose set to extend meat-free offering with dedicated vegan section

The upmarket supermarket has increased its total vegan and vegetarian assortment by 60 per cent, noting that 2018 is the year “plant-based diets go mainstream”.

After introducing its largest ever range of meat-free foods in October 2017, Waitrose is set to roll out 50 new vegetarian and vegan products.

Among the brands are The Happy Pea and The Vegetarian Butcher – a Dutch company specialising in meat substitutes made using plant-based proteins.

The multiple has recorded an uplift in sales of vegetarian food, which are currently up 34 per cent against the same time last year.

Alongside the extended meat-free offering, the retailer will also have a dedicated, signposted vegan section in its store – a supermarket first, it claims.

Chloe Graves, Waitrose chilled vegetarian and vegan buyer said, “Our current selection of products has been selling really well week after week, with requests for more choice coming from our customers and Partners, so we could clearly see there was an appetite to have more vegetarian and vegan options in our shops.

“Increasing our range builds on the work we did last year to increase choice for our customers in this area. We are working with some fantastic exclusive brands to ensure our shoppers have a really unique selection of food to choose from.

“With flexitarianism also on the rise, we have made sure we have dishes and ingredients for those looking to opt for a meat-free meal, that was suitable for the whole family to enjoy.”

VEGANISM: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

According to recent research conducted by World Vegan Day, more than half of UK adults are now adopting vegan buying behaviours.

Half of those surveyed said they know someone who is vegan and over a fifth admitted to wanting to adopt a vegan diet themselves.

Around half of those surveyed (51 per cent) stated they welcomed the rise in vegan foods available in shops, cafés and restaurants, with almost one in 10 saying they would like to see an even greater vegan food offering available.



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Cotswold Fayre creates heritage-inspired range

Fine food distributor Cotswold Fayre is launching a new heritage-inspired range of products under the brand Ministers of Taste, for retailers looking for traditional food gifts with a contemporary twist.

The Ministers of Taste range includes some of the nation's best-known food and drink gifting products including biscuits, preserves, chutney, teas, confectionery and cakes.

The brand has been created to bring something new to the food gifting market where traditional products can often be depicted as old-fashioned and dated rather than as more modern day classics, states Cotswold Fayre.

Paul Hargreaves, chief executive at Cotswold Fayre, and instigator behind the new brand, believes that the market is ready for something new.

"Following repeated overseas requests for something that was quintessentially British but a little bit different from the norm, we decided to create our own range," says Paul.

"As our plans evolved, we realised that the Ministers of Taste would

also work in the UK market too."

The Ministers of Taste's packaging is inspired by iconic visual statements from recent decades with a clear nod to the sixties and its importance in the nation's culture.

"We wanted the range to instantly belong to the UK, but with a contemporary rather than old-fashioned feel, with modern packaging formats and vibrant colours," continues Paul.

All products are manufactured in the UK, with all of the packaging, where possible, being consciously fully biodegradable or recyclable – including the plastic film and biscuit trays where facilities permit.



Kent-based fine food wholesaler expands into larger premises

Kent-based artisan food and drink wholesaler Curd & Cure has moved into a 10,500 square foot, state-of-the-art, custom-built unit in Staplehurst in order to drive the business forward.

The new facility, funded by HSBC and LEADER grants, will help Curd & Cure to not only stock a wider range of local and Continental farm shop and deli products, but to also obtain SALSA accreditation, work

closer with local producers, increase capacity of its production facility and improve efficiency and service levels. Growing the business in Surrey, Sussex and London is also part of progression plans.

New owner and managing director, Stuart Grant, recently took over the 30-year-old business having worked for the company for over a decade. He states that the company is growing at a fast pace having

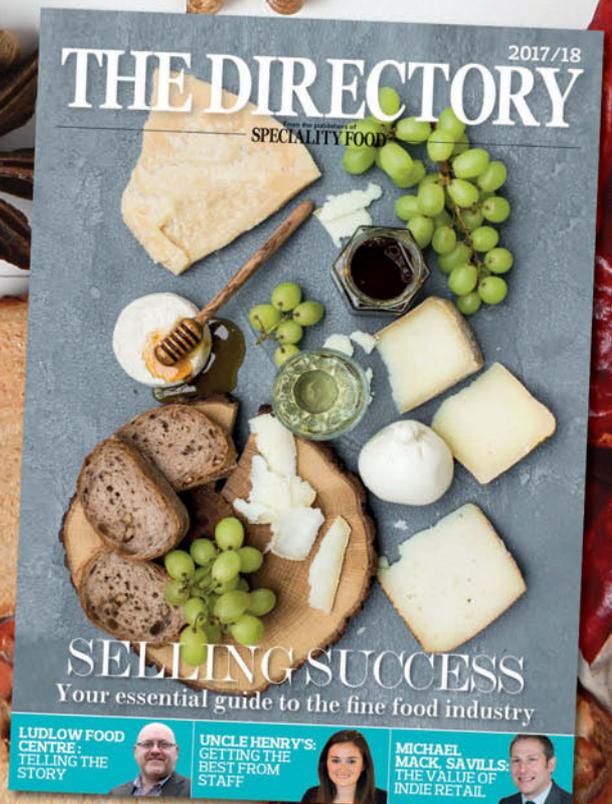
restructured the business and expanded his team in January 2018.

He said, "Building and moving into our custom-built facility was a big milestone for the company and something I have been working towards for a number of years now. We are delighted to now be operating from our new premises and really start pushing our offering and services forward. The dramatically increased space not only will allow us to start listing hundreds of new artisan products but will also increase production capabilities and efficiencies and will also allow us to achieve higher levels of accreditation which is essential for the continued growth of the company."

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MICHAEL MACK OF SAVILLS



“Tough love”

It seems a long time ago that Bath opened its first farmers' market – a lot of lamb chops have been sold at markets across the UK in those 21 years. Back in 1997 the idea of farmers gathering to sell their goods to local people could not be faulted. We also need to think back to the pressures the farming industry was under at that time with the issues of foot and mouth.

Jump forward to today, and are these markets still of value? Do they play the role they should in supporting small farmers and in bringing great local fresh produce to urban and rural communities?

So, food markets have come a long way: street food, artisan markets and the gentrification of town markets have all taken a firm place in consumers' hearts. These bright enterprises with a strong social media presence, offering innovative, high quality food at a time and place that suits the customer, have created some outstanding opportunities for producers. The evolution of the food sector is not going to abate – for example, I'm off to Scotland to explore the idea of a new food hall, a mix of market and retail along the lines of the Time Out Market in Lisbon.

As a guide to consumer interest, a quick look at Google search terms shows that over the last 10 years search enquiries for 'farmers' markets' have dropped by 54% while searches for 'street food' have increased by 475%. There are now double the number of searches for street food over farmers' markets.

Set against this, how are farmers' markets doing? It's a bit of a sad story for many, with dwindling returns, reduced footfall and shrinking stall numbers. The exception to this has been in the south east and London, but even markets in these affluent areas are under pressure.

But farmers' markets do still play a role for farmers looking to add

value. I've been working with Old Hall Farm in Norfolk who are developing a raw milk business. These guys have found farmers' markets invaluable for product testing, developing contacts and gaining customer feedback. This is not an isolated story.

This leads me to ponder the question: why are farmers' markets struggling? Having talked to a lot of market managers and stall holders, I feel that we have two fundamental issues. The first is that markets fail to focus on the customer enough and to provide them with a real experience. Secondly, many markets have adopted a protectionist approach to stall selection.

It's all too often that a good number of traders will have been there for years and that the rules of the markets have enabled them to maintain their position without any fear of others coming in and stepping on their toes.

“They have been on the market for years and they always support us”, is the common response from market managers. By not allowing more than one trader of a type, the market stops being of interest to innovative businesses which often have great ideas and energy for promoting the venue. These traders move very quickly to find other operators who are more open to them getting involved.

We need to find ways of making these markets accessible for young farmers and food innovators who will restore ideas, energy and passion. Sorry, but someone who is happy to sit on the market for years and sell a couple of hundred pounds of stock every month may have run out of those?

I would love to see the farmers' markets back in the limelight, but there needs to be some hard decisions made to achieve this. The pressure Brexit is going to place on farmers over the next five years could see the farmers' market become a critical tool for many again.

2018 is the Year of the Butcher at Farm Shop & Deli Awards



Edge & Son in Birkenhead won the coveted title of Retailer of the Year, as well as the Butcher of the Year and North West regional winner accolades at the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2018.

Following over 5,000 consumer votes, the final of the awards, held at Birmingham's NEC, saw 13 category winners and nine regional winners revealed after a rigorous judging process for the awards' fifth year.

The coveted accolades celebrate the best specialist independent retailers in the UK, with judges looking for the most impressive levels of service, product knowledge, initiative, innovation and community involvement.

The judges praised the outlet highly, with one stating, “A lot of butchers could learn a thing or two from Edge & Son. I love their dedication to ‘nose to tail’ eating as well as the education of staff and customers.” Another judge complimented the retailer’s “substantial growth, dynamic work in joining the local food hall and its integral service to the community”.

Callum Edge of Edge & Son was elated with the victory. He said, “This is such a fantastic award for our shop! There's nothing easy about this line of business – that's the reason 80 per cent of butchers have closed – but our team work very hard at a hard business.

“These awards really do make a big difference, and they hopefully go

some way in showing our customers how much we're trying.”

The Goring Grocer in Reading, Berkshire, also won big, taking three awards home including Newcomer of the Year, Delicatessen of the Year and South East regional winner.

The North West dominated this year's awards with four winners from the region. As well as Edge & Son, the other winners were Filbert's Bakery in Lancaster, which won Baker of the Year; Fishmonger of the Year Fyne Fish in Cockermouth, Cumbria; and The Courtyard Dairy in Austwick, North Yorkshire, which took home the prize for Cheesemonger of the Year.

Other regions that saw double wins include the Midlands with Farm Shop Large Retailer of the year and the regional award going to Denstone Hall Farm Shop & Café near Uttoxeter, Staffordshire and North East with Online Business of the Year and regional award going to Farmison & Co, Ripon, North Yorkshire.

Nigel Barden, chairman of judges said, “Many miles have been covered in search of the finest food and drink retailers in the UK. There are some truly talented, imaginative and passionate food purveyors within our shores, who we should celebrate and support. The Farm Shop & Deli Awards provides the perfect platform for bringing them to our attention, including those selling their wares solely online.”

FARM SHOP & DELI AWARDS 2018 WINNERS CATEGORY & REGIONAL

- **Filbert's Bakery, Lancaster**
Baker of the Year
- **Edge & Son, Birkenhead**
Retailer of the Year 2018, Butcher of the Year and North West winner
- **The Courtyard Dairy, Austwick**
Cheesemonger of the Year
- **The Goring Grocer, Reading**
Delicatessen of the Year, Newcomer of the Year and South East winner
- **Denstone Hall Farm Shop & Café, Nr Uttoxeter**
Large Retailer of the Year and Midlands winner
- **Welbeck Farm Shop, Worksop**
Farm shop – Small Retailer of the Year
- **Fyne Fish Ltd, Cockermouth**
Fishmonger of the Year
- **Webbs, Driotwich Spa**
Food Hall of the Year
- **Rafters, Driffield**
Greengrocer of the Year
- **West Malling Farmers Market, West Malling**
Market of the Year
- **Farmison & Co, Ripon**
Online Business of the Year and North East winner
- **Fink, York**
Village Store / Local Shop of the Year
- **The Gog Farm Shop, Cambridgeshire**
East Anglia winner
- **Cunningham Butchery and Food Hall, Kileel, Down**
Northern Ireland winner
- **Blair Drummond Smiddy Farm Shop, Stirling**
Scotland winner
- **Hobbs House Bakery, South Gloucestershire**
South West winner
- **Rhug Farm Shop, Denbighshire**
Wales

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#FSDAWARDS



2018 winners Callum and Debbie Edge, Edge & Son Butchers, collecting the award from Chair of Judges Nigel Barden, 2017 winner Victoria Robertshaw and Adam Leyland, Editor, The Grocer.

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DOS & DON'TS

Do:

- Follow up on all your leads: when you exchange business cards, jot down what was discussed on the back of your contact's card to remind you of points covered in your conversation
- Network your company to other exhibitors: make sure everyone is aware of exactly what your business does and how they can find out more about it
- Brief staff: if you're exhibiting and have staff with you, ensure that they can eloquently convey key messages that you want shared

Don't:

- Be shy: while exploring the venue and taking note of what brands are up to is essential, it's only by conversing with exhibitors that you can really engage with a company and its products
- Bombard your contacts: while you may have struck up promising conversations, make sure that you don't inundate contacts after the show. It's good to wait a couple of days – if you're too hasty your emails may get overlooked while your contact eases back into office life

Trade shows are an essential part of the fine food calendar, but how do you get the most out of your visits? Ensure you spend your time effectively with these pro tips

Don't be a wallflower

While looking in sales and generating leads are the main reason for attending a trade show, they're also incredibly effective marketing and networking platforms. Don't be afraid to go along with a notepad full of questions that you wish to ask relevant attendees: trade shows are great for gathering inspiration, but they're primarily a productive way to streamline the emails or missed phone calls and to discuss business right there and then. Another great thing about trade shows is that they provide a fairly level playing field, so small businesses can sit alongside larger companies, allowing the visitor to experience a variety of different products, and for businesses to welcome a large number of attendees.

One thing to keep in mind is that while trade shows offer a convenient location for you to visit clients, customers and friends all under one roof, it's important not to spend your whole time nattering. It's great to

catch up and foster connections, but remember that you're there for a reason: to make headway with your business.

Invaluable data

Following the Cambridge Analytica and Facebook debacle, the word 'data' comes with baggage. However, collating information from willing participants who have mentioned they'd like to find out more information is a fairly innocuous exercise. There's a general understanding that after somebody has expressed interest in your business or enjoyed a free sample, email addresses are commonly exchanged. Visitors will be trying vast amounts of food and drink products, so a follow-up email sent out to everybody who has shown interest in your products or services a few days after the event is a proactive way to jog their memory. Taking a survey on the day can also prove worthwhile, offering you invaluable insight into

what people involved in the sector are currently on the lookout for. A heavily bolstered database is one of the most vital things you can take from a show.

Effective planning

Whether you're exhibiting or attending, prepping ahead of the show is a shrewd move. For instance, if you've exhibited before, take a look back at what worked well

gen up on who is exhibiting and who you want to talk to and when. While it's inevitable you won't stick completely to schedule, noting down times to explore a certain area and who you want to speak to in those sections can pay dividends. Also, write down a list of objectives you wish to achieve during the show – while this is a simple exercise, you'd be surprised at how an unfocused approach can result in a comparatively fruitless visit.

Trend reports

Most fine food and drink producers will be launching new products at shows, which naturally makes them a breeding ground for innovation. On your way home or when you're back in the office, write down some of the emerging or popular trends that you noticed at the show. A post-show blog or social media post is a good way to not only summarise the experience for your own records, but it can also encourage online interactions with show attendees

“ An unfocused approach can result in a comparatively fruitless visit ”

for you, what marketing material resonated with visitors, whether you encountered any logistical problems, and whether you need to expand or decrease your show staff numbers. If you're visiting for the first time,

or consumers who are interested in cutting-edge developments in the food and drink sector.

Keep an eye on competition

The old adage of 'keep your friends close but your enemies closer' may seem a bit strong for this scenario, but it certainly helps to keep tabs on what your main competitors are up to at trade events. Whether there's a new, similar company growing at a fast pace or a rival business making inroads on social media, trade shows can be great for studying what your prime competitors are up to. Take note of marketing displays, samples handed out or prices quoted – you'll rarely get such invaluable first-hand experience of what other businesses within your sector are doing.



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Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

Big Drop launches limited edition sour beer

Low alcohol craft beer company Big Drop Brewing Co. has announced the launch of a new sour beer.

It is the fifth beer in the range and is available as a limited edition seasonal offering. It follows the release of the brewery's Spiced Ale and Lager and award-winning Stout and Pale Ale.

The new sour option is inspired by the Berliner Weisse-style of beer and is intended to be a light, summer drinking option, and pairs well with a washed rind cheese or seafood. The label imagery follows the theme of previous branding, which takes inspiration from founder Rob Fink's Suffolk background.

Rob said, "While the style is a popular one with many existing brands on the market, brewing a sour beer to just 0.5 per cent ABV has taken a lot of planning and expertise. Our master brewer, Johnny Clayton, continues to challenge the norm so that we can offer a range of popular beer styles for those who are choosing to cut back on their alcohol consumption and the sour is an outstanding example of responding to current consumer trends. Just because someone may be cutting out or cutting back on alcohol doesn't mean to say that they have to cut back on variety and taste."

bigdropbrew.com



Munchy Seeds taps into salted caramel trend

Sweet and savoury roasted seed company Munchy Seeds has launched a new Salted Caramel Seed Mix. The product comprises a blend of roasted sunflower and pumpkin seeds with coconut and a sprinkle of sea salt flakes.

It comes in 120g pots or 25g snack packs and is suitable for vegans, is gluten-free and contains no artificial colourings, flavourings or preservatives.

Lucinda Clay, co-founder of Munchy Seeds said, "The healthy snack sector is becoming increasingly competitive so it's vital to tap into key trends and launch products that appeal to a broad range of consumers. Salted caramel is a hugely popular and very recognisable flavour right now and we knew that our customers would go wild for it. We expect these snack packs to fly off the shelves. Seeds are a fantastic source of protein, vitamins, minerals and natural energy, so they are perfect for today's increasingly health-conscious and clean-eating snackers."

"We're obsessed with the new flavour – you can taste the saltiness and sweetness together and the addition of a little dried coconut adds a brilliant depth of flavour to the blend. They're fantastic as a snack for any time of the day or can add a healthy boost of goodness to yoghurts, porridge, ice cream or smoothie bowls."

munchyseeds.co.uk

Pipers Crisps unveils rebrand and new pea-based snacks

Pipers Crisps has announced the launch of its Crispeas range – designed to tap into the growing better-for-you sector.

Crispeas are low calorie, gluten, wheat and barley-free snacks made from British peas and available in three flavours: Matar Paneer, Salsa Verde and English Mint. They are also suitable for vegetarians and a source of protein and fibre. Pipers notes that the better-for-you market is worth nearly £125m – showing 9.3 per cent year-on-year growth – with over half the population now buying into the category.

Katy Hamblin, marketing manager at Pipers said, "We've looked carefully at the trends that are driving the healthy snacking market. It's clear that there are two key factors: taste and nutritional benefits. Protein as a cited benefit is an important global food trend with over 50 per cent of consumers citing the need for more protein in their daily diet. But, overall, taste is still the key driver for snack purchasing consumers."

The crisp producer has also announced a complete rebrand to run alongside the launch of Crispeas. The new design was a move implemented to distance the brand from its competitors, says Katy.

Katy continued, "This brand development builds on the existing strengths of the Pipers brand, which for end-users is all about snacks as they should taste, and for retailers is all about great shelf presence."

piperscrisps.com



Empire Bespoke Foods brings Chocolate Orchard to the UK market

Fine food importer and distributor Empire Bespoke Foods has announced the UK launch of American chocolate and yoghurt-covered pretzel brand Chocolate Orchard.

Made with no artificial colours or flavours, Empire believes that the product will bring taste and freshness to the category.

Flavours include Milk Chocolate, Yoghurt, Raspberry Yoghurt and Blueberry.

Marion Lebreton, brand manager at Empire Bespoke Foods said, "We decided to launch Chocolate Orchard because there's a real interest from UK consumers in American products. Chocolate Orchard brings innovation to the category with innovative flavours, like the coated yoghurt, as well as fresh packaging design. They perfectly meet shoppers' expectations to find delicious treats to share with friends and family."

empirebespokefoods.com



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New vintage cyder for Gospel Green

Cyder producer Gospel Green has launched its latest Brut Vintage 2016 – its first for two years.

The double-fermented cyder – produced for the first time in 1990 using the Champagne method – has generated a strong consumer following over the years.

New owner and entrepreneur Brock Berguis bought the company from the previous owners in 2016 as he was a fan of the business and wanted to continue its legacy. The company is now based on the Blackmoor Estate in Hampshire – next door to the orchards where the apples have been sourced for over 20 years – reducing the environmental footprint.

Brock Berguis said, “Gospel Green Brut Vintage 2016 has elegant notes of elderflower blossom with hints of lovely crisp apples. There is a slight earthiness to the palate, which together with the persistent mousse creates a smooth and rounded mouthfeel. The soft, yet fresh, acidity leads to a lingering finish befitting of a traditionally fermented cyder.” gospelgreen.co.uk



Fairfields Farm range undergoes visual revamp

Essex-based crisp manufacturer Fairfields Farm has rebranded its entire range following the naming of Richard Glennan as new managing director.

The company believes that the new look communicates its field-to-packet production process, with ploughed furrow illustrations at the top of each package.

Speaking about his appointment and the new direction for the company, Richard Glennan said, “I have known the brand since the early days, and it’s great to be part of the fantastic future they have ahead. The acquisition of Ten Acre has brought a new brand into the fold. This is the start of the next phase for Fairfields Farm. Through new ideas, further potential acquisitions and innovation within the snacking space. I’m looking forward to adding more value and seeing where we can go from here.” fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk

Goat’s milk ice cream brand rolls out retail range

Luxury goat’s milk ice cream company Greedy Goat has launched into retail with a range of eight new flavours sold in 500ml glass jars. A firm fixture at London’s Borough Market for seven years, its new products make it the first retail ice cream in the UK to be packaged in biodegradable, recyclable and reusable glass.

The launch flavours play on cultural and current affair figures, with products including Theresa’s Chocolate Orange, Margoat Thatcher the Biscuit Snatchers, Harry’s ReMARKLEble Banana, Nanny’s Rhubaaarb & Custard, I Goat 99 Problems But A Cherry Ain’t One, The Goatfather (salted caramel), Billy Vanilly and Strawberry Strawberry Neighbourhood Doe.

The products are made from goat’s milk and feature completely natural ingredients. The company states that goat’s milk is naturally lower in lactose and more digestible than cow’s milk, making it more popular among those who are sensitive to dairy.

Jim O’Brien, co-founder of Greedy Goat said, “We are not the first goat’s milk ice cream to the market, but we believe we are the best. Our aim is to build a brand that appeals to a broad audience not because it’s made of goat’s milk, but because it is delicious, features unusual flavours and is made in the UK.

“Goat’s milk ice cream is all too often about the food intolerance rather than the food itself and as a result it doesn’t taste as good as it could. For us, ice cream is about the flavour and the fun, whether it’s made from cow or goat’s milk. Most of our Borough Market customers are surprised that goat’s milk ice cream actually tastes better than cow’s milk ice cream.” greedygoat.co.uk



Doctor Seaweed introduces sustainable product range

Doctor Seaweed has launched with a range of Weed & Wonderful products that champion the use of seaweed for its sustainability and health benefits.

The range consists of a Pure Scottish Seaweed Infused Oil, Smoked Seaweed Infused Oil, Intense Smoked Seaweed Oils and Organic Scottish Seaweed Capsules. Each product features rapeseed oil which is infused with seaweed, while the capsule supplements

are made from specially-selected Organic Hebridean Ascophyllum seaweed powder.

The seaweed used in the range is specifically selected for its natural iodine levels – the company states that a significant percentage of the UK’s population is iodine deficient.

Seaweed is also an environmentally sustainable resource and requires no fresh water and grows around 30 to 60 times faster than traditional crops. Weed & Wonderful’s organic

seaweed is sustainably wild harvested in the Scottish sea lochs around the island of the Outer Hebrides.

Dr Craig Rose, marine biologist and owner of Doctor Seaweed said, “Seaweed has a vital role in the food chain and I believe can offer many sustainable solutions to help improve our lives and general wellbeing. A growing number of consumers are aware that seaweed is deemed to be a healthy food option, but sadly, many people don’t know what to do with it, yet. I’ve created a range of creative, consumer-friendly products that demystify seaweed’s incredible properties.” seaweedandco.com



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For all your frozen needs

Artisan and smaller food and drink producers in the Republic of Ireland are being positioned front and centre in a new strategy to drive growth in tourism.

Fáilte Ireland, the Republic's tourism body, has taken a lead on other food and tourism bodies in the UK to produce a comprehensive and integrated food and drink strategy to enhance the industry's tourism potential. The new five-year strategy is the outcome of research showing that visitors typically spend around 35 per cent of their budget on purchasing food and drink.

It aims to show potential visitors that there's more to Ireland than Guinness and potatoes.

By targeted investment and effective promotion of the quality food and drink experiences, the strategy claims that the food industry could help grow the Republic's tourism revenue by almost £400 million over the next five years. Revenue from overseas visitors last year totalled just over £6 billion with approximately a third spent on food and drink.

Growth on the scale projected would have a massive impact on smaller producers, in particular, in Ireland and the concerted international marketing of Ireland as a premium food destination could boost exports of Irish food and drink in targeted markets such as Great Britain and the US. Hotels and restaurants in the Republic would be encouraged to focus on locally-sourced food and identify these on their menus to a much greater extent. It will see Irish food and drink promoted worldwide in tandem with measures to highlight major tourism attractions such as the Wild Atlantic Way in the West, the Ancient East, and the dynamic food scene in Dublin.

Fáilte Ireland's director of commercial development, Paul Keeley says the vast majority of overseas visitors are "positively surprised and satisfied by the overall

Ireland is on a mission to boost tourists' appetite for Irish food and drink. Sam Butler introduces the plan, and what it could mean for the Emerald Isle and beyond

quality of Ireland's food and drink offering and return home having had a memorable experience during their visit but, prior to coming, their expectations of Irish food and drink are lower.

"Food and drink consumption is an intrinsic part of the tourist experience. Quality experiences are now a major contributor to increasing holiday satisfaction, creating positive memories and driving advocacy. Amongst those deciding on a holiday location, the expectation of good food is nearly as important as hospitality. We undoubtedly have the product and expertise, we have natural produce, fresh ingredients, and great fish and meat, but we need to ensure that our food and drink offering gains a global reputation that matches the reality on the ground," Mr Keeley continues.

"As part of this, we need to ensure that our visitor attractions use local foods to deliver an offering representative of place, we need to enhance our national menu in areas such as the Irish Breakfast, support pubs in bringing authentic experiences to life and assist the tourism industry in tailoring Ireland's local food story," he adds.

Fáilte Ireland's new tourism strategy, of course, will also build on the impressive achievements in Britain and other global markets of Bord Bia, the Irish food body, responsible for marketing the quality and innovation underpinning Irish food abroad. Bord Bia has been marketing the heritage, provenance and sustainability of Irish food and drink and farming in its successful Origin Green international campaign.

REVENUE FROM OVERSEAS VISITORS LAST YEAR TOTALLED JUST OVER £6 BILLION WITH APPROXIMATELY A THIRD SPENT ON FOOD AND DRINK

The result of the new strategy will be a concerted campaign by the two bodies highlighting Ireland's natural environment and its 'clean', wholesome and safe food and drink.

The strategy says Ireland's food and drink offering has a significant role to play in delivering great visitor experiences, increasing dwell time around the country and growing spend.

Food and drink experiences, according to the strategy document "played a substantial part in helping to generate and sustain economic opportunity and development by increasing visitor numbers, dwell time, spend and satisfaction in visited areas".

It points out that there had been "great strides over recent years in the quality of Ireland's food and drink offering - now including 16 whiskey distilleries and more 15 gin distilleries, over 60 micro-breweries, upwards of 7,000 pubs and over 2,400 restaurants, including 12 Michelin starred properties,

over 60 food festivals, 160 farmers' markets, 40 cookery schools and 27 active food networks".

The strategy pledges to:

- Increase the availability of great Irish food and drink experiences across the country and across every day-part. In this regard, we will seek to collaborate with relevant agencies to underpin the quality and sustainable practices of the Irish food and drink sector
- Increase the capability of Irish food and beverage operators to deliver a world class offering that is consistent

- Intensify efforts to ensure Irish food and drink features more prominently in the collective marketing and sales efforts of Ireland's tourism industry

Key themes in the report are product authenticity, high quality, close to source with a distinctive story and a unique narrative. Iconic food experiences could further enhance the attractiveness of regional destinations such as Dublin, the Wild Atlantic Way and the Ancient East.

"Providing innovative food experiences is a relatively easy way to amplify local culture, increase share of impulse spend, and develop local jobs," the report continues. It says tourists wanted "a more natural feel", "low footprint menus", foraging/trails, gourmet fast food - bringing "street food to the masses", slow food - "preservation of local and regional cuisines and cooking methods", "food pairing - growth of craft had increased interest in the pairing of beer and spirits with food, and "indoor markets - local and

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

Artisan and smaller food and drink companies in Ireland stand to benefit from the new tourism strategy. Among companies hoping to reap the benefits of the new strategy in terms of increasing business in Ireland and overseas are:



Achill Mountain Lamb from Co. Mayo. Martina Calvey is commercial director of the family-owned business which rears free-range lamb on remote Achill Island.



Breda Butler of Cuinneog, a traditional Irish farmhouse butter, with husband Tom at Castlebar, Co. Mayo and already exports the handmade butter to Great Britain and other parts of Europe and is keen to grow exports.



Christine McAndrew owns Mariko in Belmullet, Co. Mayo, Ireland's first sparkling green tea



Colm Connolly of Rucksacks, a dried beef snack, in Clonkirk, Co. Monaghan sees opportunities to expand into the British market between the Quicke family and the land they have nurtured for nearly 500 years.

regional cuisines and methods".

The imaginative strategy provides inspiration to other food and tourism bodies in the UK and further afield about the huge economic potential of a collaborative and fully integrated approach between two key industries, that also embraces the ambition and innovation of artisan and smaller food producers which add distinctive flavours and enterprise to a nation.

“ We undoubtedly have the product and expertise, we have natural produce, fresh ingredients, and great fish and meat, but we need to ensure that our food and drink offering gains a global reputation that matches the reality on the ground ”

PAUL KEELEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT FÁILTE IRELAND

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JASON FISHER ROWCLIFFE

“A bumpy ride for French cheese”

Few countries can compete with France’s variety of cheeses and unparalleled quality – it’s a pleasurable experience sourcing cheeses from small farmhouse producers. There are an estimated 350-400 cheese producers in France. However, due to many artisanal producers creating their own original handcrafted cheeses, it is difficult to confirm the final number of cheeses available; some people have speculated anything from 1,000 to 10,000. In recent times, the French cheese industry has found itself in challenging times. From global competition, where producers from overseas are starting to push the cheese making boundaries with creativity and continental influences, and industry

changes – what is the future for French cheeses?

The hovering threat of Brexit has led to an increase of price points in the past 18 months. Although the market is starting to stabilise and turnover on French cheeses is slightly up year on year, volumes are still unsettled. The recent PDO status (Protected Designation of Origin) of one of France’s most iconic cheeses, Camembert, has been changed and it has created big waves across the industry. With recent restrictions on Comté production and the limited availability of certain age profiles of the cheese, there has been shortages in some cases. These restrictions have eased and going forward it looks as though Comté will be more readily available in the year. Also there is an increasing demand for British produced traditional French-style cheeses, such as Baron

Bigod, Tunworth, Pave Cobble and Rollright to name but a few. With British farmhouse producers successfully adopting the French style craft, these cheeses are not only here to stay but will be tough competition – and the more so as Brexit progresses.

The PDO battle started a few years ago. The artisanal cheese makers fought against the industrial production of Camembert using unpasteurised milk and not meeting the strict PDO standards, and yet still seemingly to be of the same quality of handcrafted Camembert. The French officialdom originally supported the protection of the smaller cheesemakers, who arduously worked to meet the standards of the status. However, a huge turnaround has meant that a controversial new legislation will enter in 2021 and the Institut national de l’origine et de la qualité (INAO) has now allowed the usage of pasteurized milk. This allows for two versions of the cheese: one made with pasteurized milk, 30% from local cows and the remaining 70% from cows anywhere in the world. The other is a high-quality unpasteurised milk Camembert, now named ‘Véritable Camembert de Normandie’.

What is the future for French cheeses? The need for small artisanal produced pre-pack sized cheeses on counters is growing,

especially goats cheeses. In the uncertain economic climate, achieving that affordable RSP, is more important than ever, which means there will be inevitably a focus on unit sizes. Even at the premium end, hitting the price points is key.

As well as the traditional artisanal cheeses that have been produced for centuries, staying faithful to their heritage and using the same production techniques, some farmhouse cheese makers will be veering away and diving into new product development. To stay ahead of the curve and to deliver a point of difference, product innovation is the future – as it is for so many countries. It opens up the opportunity to add value and reposition the cheeses. This could be by adding natural and local ingredients such as truffles, fruits, honey and even flowers. This type of development doesn’t mean there will be a dilution in product integrity for these speciality producers, in fact, it reinforces the provenance in their make – which is an appealing proposition for consumers.

It may be a bumpy ride for French cheeses, but there are still lots of development opportunities for long-term success which is good news for the producers but also the end user who gets to eat these artisanal cheeses.

“ The recent PDO status of Camembert has been changed. A huge turnaround has meant that a controversial new legislation will enter in 2021, and the Institut national de l’origine et de la qualité (INAO) has now allowed the usage of pasteurized milk. This allows for two versions of the cheese: one made with pasteurized milk, 30% from local cows and 70% from cows anywhere in the world ”



ALEXANDRE GUARNERI ANDROUET

“French blue cheese has been overthrown”

French cheeses have always been really popular and are still used as a reference when our customers are looking for something specific. For example, it is not uncommon to be asked for an English Brie-type cheese. Even our producers, once the ice has been broken, confess from time to time that they have been inspired by a French cheese or technique. And yet, one great mystery remains for us: which was born first – the Cheddar or the Cantal?

Here at Androuet we follow the seasonality of cheese, and we have realised since we have established

ourselves in London that British producers and consumers are keener to follow the seasons than French ones. Unlike in France, you will have issues to find a big variety of goat’s cheese during winter in Great Britain.

French cheeses are usually quite popular in the UK, especially the world-famous Comté and Brie-type cheeses. Regarding the latter and soft cheeses in general, the oozier the better for the British consumer.

Even though the French PDOs are really popular, such as the pungent Epoisses, British people are not afraid at all to get off the beaten track and try non-PDO cheeses.

For example, at the moment our best-selling washed rind cheese is our Burwash Beer: a partnership in which we have worked with a local producer from East-Sussex (the Traditional Cheese Dairy) and the Redchurch Brewery from Bethnal Green, and combined it with our French savoir-faire (the cheese is washed on site for five weeks).

However, one family has been overthrown by the British: the blue cheese. Even if Roquefort

is still sought after, our range of blue cheeses is mostly from the UK to the suit our customer’s tastes.

To conclude, even if we are – of course – very proud of our French cheese range and heritage, and France is still considered the country of the ‘Grand Fromage’, we are also delighted to see a keen interest growing all over the world for true farmhouse artisan cheeses like in the US or Canada.

“ Even if we are very proud of our French cheese range and heritage, and France is still considered the country of the ‘Grand Fromage’, we are also delighted to see a keen interest growing all over the world for true farmhouse artisan cheeses like in the US and Canada ”

Talk Cheese

New retail perspectives from industry experts

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

New triple cream cheese from Northern Irish dairy farm

Ballylisk Dairies in County Armagh, Northern Ireland has developed a new farmhouse Triple Cream cheese, made from pasteurised cow's milk sourced from its own herd.

Dairy farmer Dean Wright created the cheese and announced that there are several other new products in the pipeline, including a blue version of Triple Cream, as well as a Brie and a butter.

He said, "Food critic Charles Campion tasted the Triple Cream in early 2017 and advised us of some changes. I made sure I listened to the experts and I think what we have now is pretty special. It is a rich, decadent cheese made from pasteurised cow's milk with added cream. It has a white mould with its full flavour balanced by salty, lemony notes. There is nothing else quite like it on the market."

Triple Cream has now gone into commercial production and is aimed at delis and speciality food suppliers across the UK and Ireland, with Ballylisk also eyeing up export markets.

Dean took over the family farm from his father in 2007 and has almost doubled it in size. It is now around 200 acres with 200 Friesian dairy cows, 50 dairy replacements and 200 Aberdeen Angus and Belgian Blue beef cattle. The diversification into cheese production followed an extensive period of market research to identify new business opportunities in dairy.

Dean continued, "Everything born on the farm stays on the farm to preserve the herd's high health status. To do something fully traceable is very important to me. Everything we do is based around provenance and herd health. A healthy herd of cows, a good farm and great raw material is the core of what we do."

The Wensleydale Creamery launches Yorkshire Cheddar

Yorkshire cheesemaker The Wensleydale Creamery has announced the expansion of its dairy portfolio with a new Yorkshire Cheddar.

Made using local milk by the creamery's team of cheesemakers, the Cheddar is typically aged for up to 15 months to lend it strength and character.

With Cheddar accounting for nearly half of the cheese market in the UK, with a spend of £1.358bn, the company sees it as a "perfect growth area for the business".

David Hartley, managing director of The Wensleydale Creamery said, "We're thrilled to be launching Yorkshire Cheddar, made from Yorkshire milk and carefully crafted by our experienced cheesemakers. Cheddar is a signature British cheese and we are delighted to be adding it to our range of high quality Yorkshire produce."

"The Yorkshire food brand is fast gaining recognition for its world-class offering – it's fantastic to be a part of this food movement,



and we are particularly proud to be introducing Britain's favourite cheese to our family, marking a new and exciting stage in our growth.

"We've tasted, perfected and considered every part of it, all to create a deliciously rich Cheddar that delivers a rounded multitude of flavours, with creamy, subtle, sweet, nutty notes and a savoury finish, brought together in a distinct firm

and rugged textured extra mature Cheddar cheese."

Yorkshire Cheddar is available in 320g pre-pack and 1.25kg deli-size formats, with a 200g pack set to be available shortly. It will join the company's other Yorkshire dairy products, including Yorkshire Wensleydale, Yorkshire Brie, Yorkshire Butter and Yorkshire Yogurt.

UK cheese exports grow with Cheddar leading the way

Exports of cheese from the UK broke the £615m mark last year – rising 23 per cent from 2016, according to the latest figures from HMRC.

The data shows volumes of exported cheese rose by five per cent from the previous year, reaching just over 170,000 tonnes. Cheddar dominated exports, but fresh cheeses – especially Mozzarella – also experienced strong export growth.

Most cheeses were shipped to European markets, with Ireland, France and the Netherlands remaining the most important destinations. Shipments to Germany have seen decline and have been replaced by increased sales to Denmark and Poland.

Figures also reveal that there has been an increase in cheese exports to Asia, in particular the Philippines, with exports up 27 per cent year-on-year.

Lucy Randolph, senior export manager at Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), said that the latest figures show that high quality cheese produced in the UK is enjoying a growing reputation.

She said, "The 2017 data shows another strong year of growth for our cheese exports. While the EU is still our main market and is vital for UK dairy exports, it is encouraging to see both volumes and value increase outside of Europe."

"AHDB is continuing to work with cheese producers in the UK to grow our exports in existing markets as well as developing new opportunities across the globe."

Entries open for Great British Cheese Awards

The third edition of the Great British Cheese Awards, a celebration of the best British artisan cheeses produced and distributed by independent cheesemakers and retailers, is now open for entries.

The general public is involved heavily with the awarding of accolades – last year around 9,000 people voted for their favourite cheeses, producers and retailers, with voting numbers expected to be in the tens of thousands this year.

Retailers and producers have until 19th June to complete the free online entry form. The public can also nominate their favourite cheeses, producers and retailers until 19th June. Those with the most nominations and entries will be shortlisted and will go to a public vote, which opens on 14th August. A panel of judges will then taste and vote for the overall category winners.

Ollie Lloyd, CEO and founder of Great British Chefs, the website behind the awards, said, "We launched The Great British Cheese Awards two years ago with the objective of producing a catalogue of great artisan cheese and to also discover up-and-coming cheesemakers. The response we have received has been way above expectation and we are grateful to the remarkable support from producers, retailers and especially the general public."

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

It appears that Paxton & Whitfield is not the only cheesemonger entering the podcasting arena, with The Courtyard Dairy releasing its own video-cum-podcast content. Free to download on iTunes, the new series, called *Cheese Chats*, features owners Andy and Kathy Swinscoe talking to prominent cheesemakers and mongers about issues and topics relevant to the industry. Guests so far have included Graham Kirkham or Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire Cheese, Andrew Hattan of Low Riggs Farm and Martin Gott of St James Cheese, with Barry Graham from The Specialist Cheesemakers Association scheduled to feature next.

The natural choice for cheese

PETER'S YARD



CHEESE NEWS IN BRIEF

QUICKE'S UNVEILS CHEDDAR MADE USING CORNISH SEA SALT

Devon-based Quicke's has released the first wedges of its Vintage Clothbound Cheddar made using Cornish Sea Salt – a whole two years after the collaboration began.

The cheese underwent years of testing, tweaking and maturation, with the addition of Cornish Sea Salt adding a new complexity to Britain's longest-aged clothbound Cheddar.

MICHEL ROUX JUDGES AT BRITISH CHEESE AWARDS

The British Cheese Awards 2018 has welcomed three Michelin-star chef and restaurateur Michel Roux Snr as a senior judge at this year's event.

The awards, which took place on 30th May at The Royal Bath & West Show in Somerset, marked the 25th anniversary of the initiative, and saw judges tasting and scoring 1,000 different cheeses.

Michel Roux's Michelin-starred Waterside Inn restaurant in Berkshire is renowned for its cheeseboard, which features a number of British cheeses, including Stilton, Cornish Blue, Golden Cenorh, Black Bomber and Tunworth – a two-time Supreme Champion of the Great British Cheese Awards.

Michel Roux Snr said, "I am delighted to be a senior judge at this year's British Cheese Awards. A deep passion since childhood, my fascination with cheese has led me to many corners of the world – English varieties are some of the best I've tasted."

Peter Mitchell, chairman of the awards said, "We're delighted to welcome Michel Roux as a judge at this year's awards, our 25th anniversary."

Brindisa announced as Academy of Cheese patron

The Spanish food specialist has become the organisation's 22nd official patron and will now provide essential funding and training.

The Academy of Cheese was set up to promote cheese knowledge and provide career development, both within the industry and amongst the wider public.

Tracey Colley, director of the Academy of Cheese said, "Brindisa's operations cover wholesale, retail and foodservice so it has a really comprehensive overview of the industry. As a valued stakeholder, our relationship with Brindisa demonstrates the mutual benefits that patronage can provide. We have opened dialogue about shaping the Academy's course content, to ensure that UK audiences are better educated about Spanish cheeses."

Monika Linton, founder of Brindisa said, "It is really rewarding to be aligned with an organisation that fundamentally understands the need for education throughout the supply chain. The Academy has the potential to ensure the long-term security of artisan cheesemakers, not just in the UK, but also around the world."

The Academy of Cheese's Level One Associate accreditation was launched in 2017. The one-day courses are delivered by seven Training Providers in the UK. Delegates are tutored on key subjects, such as the cheesemaking process, right through to the identification and tasting of 25 classic cheeses. Level Two will launch later in 2018 with Levels Three and Four (Master of Cheese) currently in development.

JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



"Homing in on the range"

I spent a happy morning proof-reading the entries for this year's British Cheese awards. As I scanned the entries, my imagination savoured the tastes, textures and smells of this pantheon of cheese. There were many names new to me, and I made a note to check them out, as will many retailers, looking for new additions to their stock ranges.

From the wartime 'year zero' of Government Cheddar (and nothing else), our industry has grown to provide a dazzling variety that almost no shop could display in its entirety, even were they to ignore the continental classics. So how do most retailers choose what to stock, display and hopefully, sell?

Generally a speciality food shop will have a mixture of cheeses chosen for their show-stopping quality, and those that are more basic, but will generate the majority of the turnover. The first type adds to retail brand equity; the second improves the bottom line. I chose to specialise in West Country cheese, as I had a sizeable tourist clientele, and this informed most of my selection of cheeses to stock. Others have chosen to specialise in raw/unpasteurised milk cheese, or continental cheese. Customers learn to know what to expect from each cheese shop.

Like cheese itself, a shop's range is best when it's a living thing, changing and maturing with the seasons, reflecting what's new to capture the imagination and wallets of the customers. It is vital to step back every now and then, to take a hard look at what we have on offer, and also check that each line is still delivering the expected gross profit. However, if we don't have the luxury of unlimited space and a growing

market, then something will have to be de-listed as each new line is added. Otherwise, the cheese range can grow like a weed.

A major retail chain owner told me a cheese story that illustrates how a range can have a life of its own, effectively running away from the rest of the business and, even worse, the customers. Returning to the food chain he had founded, after exit and buy-back, the mass-market retailer was astounded to see the breadth, variety and quality of cheeses now on offer in the chillers. At the next board meeting he unveiled two whiteboards – one with pictures of the cheeses, and another with headshots of the chain's customers. The chairman challenged his directors to match the cheese with the shopper. None seemed to belong together. "That's because they want mild Cheddar!" opined the retail titan. Sometimes common sense can be our best guide.

If our range doesn't evolve, our offering will start to appear 'stale' to regular customers, but I suggest this is best done as part of a regular process, via 'cheeses of the month', and by featuring award-winning cheeses as the competitions' results are announced. I made a major mistake in stocking some lovely Chaurce after it had been featured as the readers' favourite in a weekend supplement – some of my customers came in that Saturday and asked for it; by the time I was able to stock and display them, interest had moved on. I had a bunch of great cheeses that I had to push hard to move through. Now if I'd had advance warning of the coverage, it would have been a different story. But I kept trying new things, and would never retreat to just offering "mild Cheddar!"

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SPOTLIGHT ON: SUMMER CHEESE

When the opportunity to eat alfresco arises, cheese sales can soar. Here is how to capitalise on this demand

The British public waits so long for summer to kick in that the whiff of barbecued food sets everyone running to their local food retailer. As soon as sunshine bursts through the clouds, the grill is immediately dusted off, gin and tonics are poured and picnic blankets are thrown down. Sun-drenched euphoria is often best served with fantastic alfresco food, with cheese often playing a starring role. Grilled burgers can reach a whole new stratosphere with the addition of a quality blue cheese, barbecued asparagus with a squeeze of lemon and a sprinkling of grated Parmesan makes for a fantastic side dish, and what's a picnic without an oozy Brie de Meaux served with a crusty baguette?

When the warmer months hit, multitudes of shoppers will be visiting your shop looking for fresh, unctuous cheeses, hence the reason that softer varieties are hugely popular during this time of year. Other cheeses that have grown in demand exponentially over years are Mediterranean varieties, most notably Feta and Halloumi. The latter appears to have really found a place in the nation's heart, with upmarket supermarket Waitrose recently reporting a huge spike in sales. "It's easy to see why Halloumi popularity has soared in the UK," said Chris Dawson, cheese buyer at Waitrose. "It's a tasty, quick, midweek meal option and we've seen sales increase 26% in the past two years."

If you run an establishment with a British focus, there's no need to fret – there are plenty of UK varieties of the famous Mediterranean cheeses. Sussex-based High Weald Dairy's Halloumi is sought after and Shepherds Purses' Yorkshire Fettle can hold its own against the very best varieties from Greece. It's not just these more mainstream styles of European cheeses which have benefited from British incarnations; the oozy, creaminess of Italian Burrata has proven a huge hit on these shores recently. So much so that North Acton's La Latteria started producing its own version, which has been very well received.

Village Maid's Wigmore, or its recently released IPA-washed Maida Vale semi-soft cheese, are fantastic options to enjoy on a warm day. Tunworth with its robust and easily transportable packaging and unique flavour makes it simple to serve and enjoy during any alfresco jaunt. A goat's cheese, like the very highly regarded Ragstone made by Neal's Yard Creamery or the lemony Trickle by White Lake, makes for a wonderful topping on a sourdough pizza, especially served with slices of courgette.

And it's no surprise that come rain or shine, the demand for Cheddar is never on the wane, so make sure not to sideline classic varieties like Montgomery's or Westcombe in favour of an exclusive collection of soft or goat's cheeses.

SUMMER AND WINTER CHEESE: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Milk, like all agricultural products, changes with the seasons. Although the process of understanding the grazing and birthing cycle of the cows may seem like a bygone tradition, it's of incredible importance to skilled dairy farmers and cheesemakers. Other aspects that can influence the end product of the milk and cheese can be the climate and regional location of a farm.

The summer months are hugely anticipated in terms of milk quality. The cows can graze on fresh, verdant grass to their heart's content, which leads to aromatic and fresh characteristics in the cheese itself. Ricotta is a good example of a summer cheese – it only takes around a fortnight to mature, so varieties made with summer milk are fresh and delicate and can contain lemony or herbaceous notes.

Winter cheeses are distinctive due to typically being strong in character. This is because winter cheeses tend to be produced in summer and stored until the winter, resulting in big, mature flavours. Stilton is recognised for being a stand-out winter cheese, with the milk produced in summer and left two to three months to create the pungent cheese.



INTRODUCING BUTTON MILL

Matthew Hall, commercial manager of Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses, tells us about the dairy's newest soft cheese, released just in time for summer:



"Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses are one of the only farmhouse dairies in the UK making hard, blue and soft cheese. Three years ago we identified that there was a distinct shortage of British-made soft cheeses – never ones to shy away from a challenge, the team set to work!

"Our newest cheese, Button Mill, is made in a painstaking way. It's how we ensure quality, flavour and form – creating Button Mill really is a labour of love. It starts life in our dairy at Wilson Fields Farm in miniature artisan basins, which produce small batches of cheese at a time. We treat each Button Mill as an individual right from the beginning, when it's gently placed – by hand – into its own cheese mould. From there our unique recipe of cultures – developed by our master cheesemakers – behave differently with each cheese, which is why Button Mill is carefully nurtured through a seven-day process to create the distinct and delicate rind that makes the cheese so unique.

"As with all of our cheeses, Button Mill has a distinct flavour a long way away from its delicate persona. On the palate it is distinguished and complex, so much so that you just keep wanting more. With time it continually develops from a firm texture to one that is soft and more sumptuous."

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RETAILER PERSPECTIVE

Harry Baines, co-owner of Love Cheese in York, gives us the low-down on successfully selling cheese in summer:



"During the warmer months I love recommending and stocking a wider range of softer cheeses. They can easily be served

as part of a picnic and can often act as a central component of a social gathering, like a baked Camembert.

Accompaniment-wise, light and sweet chutneys work really well and suit an extensive range of cheeses. Also, in the summer it's all about crusty bread instead of crackers. Prosecco and rosé both come to the fore during the warmer months and pair fantastically with soft, fresh cheeses, like Brie or goat's.

Softer cheeses are a preference

in the summer for many people, so it's important to note timing. Bries go from unripe to ripe quickly, which drastically alters the flavour. It's important to find out when the customer wishes to eat the cheese – whether it's that evening, the weekend or the following week – and recommend the most suitable Brie based on the ripeness.

We do a number of tasting evenings during the summer – we tend to host them in our garden. They create a really lovely environment and it's a different way in which we can enlighten people about the cheeses we sell."



Steve Cooper, co-owner of Pistachio & Pickle Dairy in Camden, London, speaks to us about the shop's summer favourites:

WHAT ARE YOUR MUST-STOCK SUMMER CHEESES?

Although we stock predominately British cheeses, our best seller over summer is Burrata. We have a weekly supply delivered from Puglia – we can't order enough! The soft light creamy texture is perfect for summer salads – my favourite is to serve it with grilled peaches.

WHAT ACCOMPANIMENTS PROVE POPULAR?

We see a rise in onion chutney and chilli jam – they're perfect with a slice of Colston Basset Stilton on a barbecued burger!

WHAT TIPPLES COMPLEMENT SUMMER CHEESES?

We've just received a fantastic Sancerre rosé – it's a light and crisp wine from Andre Neveu which

matches wonderfully with goat's cheese. It's a real taste of summer.

HOW DO YOU STORE AND DISPLAY SUMMER CHEESES?

Refrigeration is key in the summer – it's important to keep the soft cheeses in a good condition and not let them run too much. Soft cheeses such as the Tunworth or Winslade are contained in their box or spruce wrap and good to travel with.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO SELLING THIS SUMMER?

On the British front, we love Blackwoods Cheese Company's Graceburn, which is a good alternative to Feta. It comes in a good quality oil enriched with herbs and peppercorns – it's great for dressing salad leaves.

“Refrigeration is key in the summer – it's important to keep the soft cheeses in a good condition and not let them run too much”



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PREVIEW: BELLAVITA EXPO 2018

The unmissable event returns to London for its fifth year, bigger and better than ever

Tradition, innovation and quality. These are the pillars of Bellavita Expo London, the international food and beverage trade show dedicated to the excellence of Italian produce taking place on 17th – 19th June 2018, at the Business Design Centre in London. At its fifth year, Bellavita Expo has become an unmissable date for UK trade professionals looking for the latest innovations in Italian food and beverage. 200 exhibitors will showcase thousands of tantalising products, with a focus on new and different specialities. From wine, beer and spirits, to pasta, cheese, oils, charcuterie, bakery, chocolate and more, Bellavita Expo will present 362 never-seen-before products, providing buyers with a unique sampling and sourcing opportunity all under one roof. In addition, the three-day event is a platform for thousands of trade visitors to learn about the latest trends in Italian cuisine and take part in talks, networking events and panels featuring Michelin star chefs and top experts in the field.

Following the recent joint venture with VPE, a company of Veronafiere S.p.A. (Vinitaly) and Fiere di Parma S.p.A. (Cibus), Bellavita Expo London will launch the new format of the trade show, where Cibus and Vinitaly will expand the range of food products and wines by introducing a new selection of iconic Italian brands to the event. Bellavita Expo can also count on the institutional support of ITA (Italian Trade Agency), the government body dedicated to the promotion of Made in Italy produce abroad, whose role has been crucial in championing authentic Italian F&B in the UK.

Made in Italy innovations

Each year, Bellavita Expo gives buyers the opportunity to meet exhibitors from all over Italy and go on a virtual journey through the unique flavours of each region. This year is no exception, with an array of products that span from traditional Italian recipes to innovative releases.

Home to nearly 500 cheese varieties, Italy's cheese exports to the UK increased by 10% in 2017. As always, the Expo will introduce niche varieties from smaller artisan producers such as Pecoricco, a sheep cheese made in Sicily by Nebrolat, stuffed with olives, rocket



but also lemon, walnut, pepper grains, pistachios and more.

Last year, Britons consumed a third of the whole prosecco production, with millennials driving sales of Italian sparkling wines. Prosecco producer Villa Sandi will showcase its range of new biodynamic wines, rivalling champagne for their unique notes and iconic flavour. Palmento Costanzo's vineyards on the other hand grow on the terraced slopes of Mount Etna – the most active volcano in Europe – at 600 to 800 metres of altitude. The lava-infused soil and local climate make this an area particularly suited to vineyards, giving life to a range of organic reds and whites that are as complex and interesting as they are easy to drink and pair.

To end on a sweet note, gluten-free and organic treats will tempt even the most health-conscious customers. And for the most experimental, there is Picogrammo's gin and chocolate cream, a true vertigo of the senses especially selected for the UK market.

Italian wine knowledge

This year, Bellavita Expo London will also have a unique focus on Italian wine with the fourth edition of Bellavita Best UK Sommelier, The Italian Wine Professional – ISWA Award, a competition focusing exclusively on Italian wine knowledge and service skills. Le Gavroche, Aquavit, Roux at Parliament Square and Locanda Locatelli are just some of the top restaurants in the country to compete for the title of Best Italian

Wine Professional. The competition is open to all UK restaurants and their sommeliers who will be scored by renowned Master Sommeliers and Masters of Wine from the best restaurants and wine outlets in the UK:

- **Ana Sapungiu** master of wine, wine buyer at Oddbins
- **Yves Desmaris** master sommelier, head sommelier and wine buyer at Lutyens
- **Alistair Cooper** master of wine, BBC radio presenter, consultant and Decanter judge
- **Bruno Besa**, managing director and founder of Astrum wines
- **Martin Lam**, chef, restaurateur, consultant and wine buyer for the Zetter Group, Brindisa and Grain Store

The competition is supported by WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust), *Harpers* and *The Buyer*, and it is sponsored by ISWA (Italian Signature Wines Academy).

In the meantime, on the Bellavita Wine & Beer Academy, Harpers and The Buyer will host the largest distributors and wine importers in the UK for a series of talks on the latest wine trends. WSET will also run guided tastings to members of the trade following WSET systematic approach to wine tasting, while ISWA will host five masterclasses with the Italian wine producers that have made history in Italy and beyond: Villa Sandi, Allegrini, Feudi di San Gregorio, Fontanafredda and Frescobaldi. Highlight of the Academy will be craft beer maker Birrifico



Angelo Poretti who will host a beer tasting and discuss upcoming hop varieties and techniques that are transforming the beer industry in the UK.

Pizza celebrations

This year's edition will celebrate the art of Neapolitan pizza making – recently included in the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity – a long-standing symbol of Italian cuisine that perfectly embodies tradition and innovation.

On Tuesday 19 June, Bellavita Food Academy will host UNESCO Pizza Day, a day entirely dedicated to the profession of 'pizzaiuolo' (pizza master). At 11.15am Le Centenarie, Naples' ten oldest and most renowned pizzerias will host an insightful masterclass revealing the story behind their success.

Throughout the show, Bellavita Pizza Academy will invite visitors to discover the secrets of traditional Napoli-style pizza and the best products to create it. Starita Pizza Academy team will be the official

resident pizzaiolos, continuously spinning and cooking their famous pizzas throughout the show.

Italian-style mixology

As the craze for Italian-inspired cocktails continues to grow in the UK and globally, Bellavita Expo's Mixology Academy will explore the evolution of Italian cocktails in a series of masterclasses with 12 bartenders from the top restaurants and cocktail bars in London and beyond.

From bitter aperitifs to elegant creations inspired by forgotten recipes, Bellavita Expo's mixologists will reinterpret the past in a completely modern way with a focus on simplicity and food pairing. Paolo Viola, award-winning former bartender at The Ritz and master mixologist at Ritorno in London, now bar manager at Terrazza Calabritto in Milan and Bellavita Expo's resident mixologist, will share his know-how on how to maximise profits and the secret of running a successful bar.



- **Paolo Viola** – award winning former bartender at The Ritz and master mixologist at Ritorno in London, now bar manager at Terrazza Calabritto in Milan
- **Agostino Schiavo** – head bartender at The Arts Club
- **Alessandro Geraci** – bar supervisor at Aqua Shard

Mixologists involved include:

- **Danny del Monaco** – world winner of the Bacardi Martini Grand Prix 2002, president and founder of Italian Barman Style, art director and teacher at “Cocktail in the world mixology”
- **Davide Arcucci** – head mixologist at Quaglino’s and D&D in London

Food focus

Bellavita Food Academy will provide the opportunity to learn about new trends in Italian cuisine, with talks and masterclasses hosted by top chefs and industry leaders.

Food Academy’s special guest will be Michelin star chef Carlo Cracco – pioneer of modern Italian cuisine and TV host at Masterchef Italy – who will take centre stage

on Monday 18th June to showcase a series of cutting-edge recipes and techniques.

Kicking off the show on Sunday 17th June will be Jacob Kenedy, chef-patron at Bocca di Lupo, who will host a talk on the pleasures of shopping for new ingredients, how to attract new customers and keep them coming back for more. Ending the day will be Macellaio RC’s owner Roberto Costa and chef Simona Ranieri, who will run a session on the challenges and joys of launching a new restaurant concept following the recent opening of Ardiciocca, a gluten-free, dairy-free and sugar-free eatery in London.

Monday morning will be all about coffee with a sensory experience by Lavazza on their new sustainable Terra range, followed by an industry panel on the importance of food in the coffee shop industry and how to

conquer the UK market. The panel will feature Paul Ettinger, Caffé Nero Co-founder; Markus Hoffmann, former global head of food-to-go at Shell and founder of 1st Crack Coffee Chain; Penny Manuel, managing director at SOHO Coffee Co and more.

On Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th respectively, Theo Randall and Francesco Mazzei, decorated chefs and long-standing supporters of Bellavita Expo, will be on stage to create ground-breaking dishes using products directly handpicked from the stands.

Four leading Italian cheese consortia will be at Bellavita Expo for the first time, presenting creamy Gorgonzola, tangy Taleggio, aromatic Asiago and herbaceous Pecorino Sardo. Chef Nicoletta Tavella and cheese expert Alessandro Grano will host



IN DETAIL

WHEN: 17th–19th June 2018
WHERE: Business Design Centre, Islington, London
WEB: bellavita.com
TWITTER: @BellavitaExpo

a guided tasting of these four amazing cheeses: how to buy them, use them and sell them.

Finally, Bellavita Expo’s media partners *Restaurant Magazine* and *Speciality Food Magazine* will host debates to unpack the latest trends within the restaurant world and the retail sector – an exclusive opportunity to enjoy lively discussions with the industry’s top movers and shakers.

The registration is open to all F&B trade operators – register for your FREE trade pass today at bellavita.com.



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2 STOKES CONDIMENTS

The ultimate collection of alfresco condiments: Stoke's Real Mayonnaise is made with extra virgin olive oil and British free-range eggs, Sticky Pickle is scrumptiously sticky and made with a blend of vegetables in a sweet and spicy sauce, and Chilli Jam is a deliciously sticky jam featuring sweet chilli and red peppers - it's perfect for slathering on oozy cheese. stokessaucos.co.uk



3 WESTEND BAKERY CAKE RUSK

A traditional Indian biscotti made out of strips of cake that are twice-baked so that they're golden and crispy. They are traditionally enjoyed with tea or coffee, often being dunked first. These tasty, exotic treats are part of Westend Bakery's Saffron brand. westendbakery.co.uk





4 WESTEND BAKERY BOMBAY MIX

Bombay mix is a popular Indian snack consisting of a variable mixture of spicy dried ingredients, such as fried lentils, peanuts, chickpea flour ghatia, corn, vegetable oil and chickpeas. Part of Westend Bakery's Saffron brand, this product is easily transportable, making it ideal for taking on a picnic.

westendbakery.co.uk



5 WENSLEYDALE CREAMERY YORKSHIRE CHEDDAR

A brand new addition to the Wensleydale Creamery's iconic Yorkshire range, Yorkshire Cheddar is an essential cheese for an al fresco lunch. Lovingly handcrafted using local milk by the Creamery's team of skilled and passionate cheesemakers, it is typically aged for up to 15 months for proper strength and character.

wensleydale.co.uk



6 PAT GORMAN PIES

Pat Gorman's pies are all hand-made, in traditional way, to our original family recipes and are perfect for picnics, parties or as an everyday treat. They come in a range of sizes and with a variety of fillings and toppings. Our products are regularly awarded Great Taste stars and will shortly be available via the company's website.

patgormanpies.co.uk



7 CHASTITY NO-SIN GIN

All the taste sensation of a small batch gin but with none of the alcohol. Produced in part by the same methods used to make high-end gin, the world's first No-Sin Gin is a process of distillation, maceration, fermentation, steam extraction and inventive alchemy. It's steeped in botanicals to achieve the perfect nose and mouthfeel.





DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF BISCUITS!



IT'S CRUNCH TIME

The biscuit category is bursting with innovative flavours and formats. Here are the brands to know and the products to stock

Whether it's innovatively-flavoured and British-made biscotti, indulgent Italian florentines or vegan and gluten-free ginger nuts, the savoury and sweet biscuit sector is one of the most exciting out there. The appeal of the biscuit has stretched way past just a humble accompaniment for a mug of tea, with varieties coming in a multitude of exciting guises. Like most categories, this output of innovative flavours and formats reflect the ever-changing demand of today's customer, with free-from options catering for those with dietary constraints while more traditional creations appeal to shoppers with a taste for provenance and classic flavours.

The ideal thing about the myriad varieties of biscuits available to consumers today is that retailers can stock traditional, firm favourite options like shortbread or double chocolate chip cookies which provide a guaranteed revenue stream, and the rest of the shelf space can be filled by products that could be considered more left field. Variety is the spice of life after all, and your customers will be looking to have their interests piqued by unconventional fare.

Sustainability and innovation

One producer which has not only broken the mould in terms of making biscuits but also in how a business can be run is Island Bakery.

Owners Joe and Dawn Reade were straight out of the University of Edinburgh when they started baking bread in a converted garage on the Isle of Mull off Scotland in 1994. When they heard that the local baker was retiring, they swooped into action to supply the islanders with fresh loaves.

Shortly after, they bought a premises on the island's main street, which became the Island Bakery Delicatessen. It was through stocking the deli with speciality foods that Dawn realised that there was a gap in the market for organic biscuits. Keen to create something that could travel beyond Mull, in 2001 the pair launched Island Bakery Organics. Initially the range had four varieties and was all about

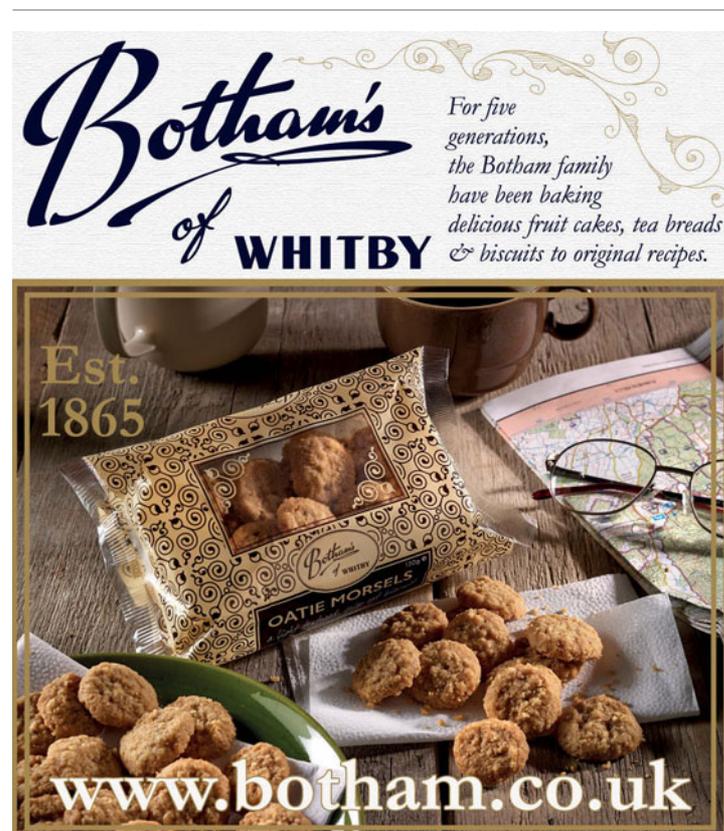
quality rather than quantity, and its first customers included Harvey Nichols and Selfridges.

Now the company boasts a range of six varieties of organic biscuits: Shortbread Biscuits, Oat Crumbles, Apple Crumbles, Chocolate Limes, Chocolate Gingers and the incredibly popular Lemon Melts. An organic ethos underpins the production of the biscuits, with Island Bakery's message clearly resonating with customers far and wide. "We are keen to do as much as we can to operate sustainably," explains Dawn. "We made a conscious decision to be an organic business from the outset as we

believe this system of farming is better for the environment and that organic food is better for us. Obviously biscuits cannot be considered good for us in terms of diet, but enjoyed in moderation they can be good for the soul!"

All of the ingredients used in the range are traceable back to the farms where the wheat is grown and the cows milked to make the butter. "An organic biscuit is a cut above conventional fare, and organic certification means that there are no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives," she says. "Island Bakery biscuits are also free from palm oil, which can be associated

“ Obviously biscuits cannot be considered good for us in terms of diet, but enjoyed in moderation they can be good for the soul! ”



Organic all butter biscuits

THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE IN OUR RANGE

only renewable energy • the best organic ingredients • no palm oil • made on the beautiful Isle of Mull



with a devastating loss of habitat in many parts of the world.”

It’s not just the ingredients that are local – all of the production processes use locally-generated energy. “We use local wood to fuel our ovens and to heat the water for radiators and the taps in the factory,” explains Dawn. “Our electricity is generated by a hydro-electricity turbine and a wind turbine within a short distance of the bakery. There is plenty of rain and wind on the island, so we can be

assured of a reliable supply!”

With a huge and passionate list of customers, it can often be tricky to keep up with demand for products, let alone new product development. “We are doing our best to work on a small number of new products but we have been having a few problems recently with keeping up with demand for the biscuits we already make,” says Dawn. “We must be able to fulfil orders for the existing range before attempting to add to it.”

The demand for traditional-style

biscuits doesn’t look like it will be petering out anytime soon, says Dawn. “A TV advert from the not too distant past said that a drink is too wet without a biscuit! So as long as people drink tea and coffee, we hope there will still be a hankering for a biscuit to go along with it.”

Modernising a traditional brand

One company renowned for its traditional-style shortbread is Scotland’s Walkers. Founded in 1898 by Joseph Walker, this independent family business has constantly focused on producing the highest quality shortbread and speciality bakery products, which has won the company a legion of fans. “Our main range is the widest range of pure butter shortbread available anywhere,” explains Jim Walker, joint managing director. “We claim to make the finest shortbread in the world. The company was founded by my grandfather and its shortbread has

“ All of our products are made in one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland – we believe that our provenance is second to none ”

been made by the Walker family for 120 years – we’re now in the fifth generation.”

The shortbread-focused range of biscuits has been created using traditional skills honed over many years in the picturesque village where it all started. “We have the most wonderful staff who live where we’re based in Aberlour in Speyside,” he says. “Many of their grandfathers worked for my grandfather – we have many entire families who work for the company. All of our

products are made here, in one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland – we believe that our provenance is second to none. Where many people have to make up a provenance story, ours is exactly as it is.”

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RETAILER INSIGHT:

Emma Evans, buyer at Denstone Hall Farm shop



We sell a lot more of our own-made cakes and tray-baked biscuits than we do bought-in products. This, I believe, is down to farm shop point of difference – homemade means we don’t need to compete on price with the supermarkets.

Local Ashbourne Gingerbread is our best-selling bought-in biscuit line – we are always very keen to promote local above major suppliers, and locally-made biscuits are a very good seller for us. Other sweet biscuits best-sellers are Borders’ Dark Chocolate Gingers and Farmhouse Biscuits’ Oat Flips, Mild Ginger and Shortbread Fingers. Savoury biscuit top sellers are The Fine Cheese Co.’s Water Biscuits

and Sea Salt and Wheat Fingers. Novelty kids biscuits are also great for us – the best this year has got to be an iced unicorn, which is very on-trend.

Gluten-free is certainly picking up in sales and there’s a lot more interest in this area. We are looking at more healthy lines when it comes to biscuits, things like energy bars and items containing less sugar and more natural sweeteners. We run a small selection, but the healthy options are definitely what more people are looking for – it’s important that they are still really tasty.

Voted Best Biscuit Brand 2017 by independent retailers

The natural choice for cheese

great taste PRODUCER

PETER’S YARD



The business has remained true to its original ethos of consistently creating the finest quality shortbread. "Some of the packaging and techniques have improved, but we still use the traditional recipe made using the finest ingredients," explains Jim. "We've never used any artificial flavours, colourings or additives – it's a very simple product made by traditional methods in small batches. Demand for traditional shortbread is really healthy and steady – it's a product that's loved by all generations and creeds. It's suitable for international clientele, plus it's vegetarian and certified kosher. We continue to innovate and bring out products featuring ingredients like raspberries, lemons and almonds, and they all sell, but it's the core traditional lines that sell best. People love the taste of the finest pure butter – it's the buttery flavour that sets us apart. We only use well-produced butter made by happy cows."

Jim believes that the simplicity of shortbread means that the company needs to continue to appeal to different customers. "Because our product is relatively simple, we need to keep innovating the packaging, and every year we bring out new ranges," he explains. "We have new Keepsake Tins that we've just launched to market and we've also doing a new range of small 100g cartons and 3D cartons. We also make a range of cookies, as well as brand new shortbread Thins cookies. They're crunchy, thin biscuits that come in contemporary presentation to keep us modern. We also have a range of foodservice biscuits, which are currently being revamped."

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT: THE LITTLE HERB FARM

Well-known for its range of vinegars and dips, Lindsey Anderson, director, tells us what influenced the company to develop a new Little Dippers savoury biscuit range:

WHAT DOES THE NEW BISCUIT RANGE COMPRISE OF?

It's a range of savoury snacks which consists of four flavours: Mediterranean Tomato, Cheese & Black Pepper, Roquefort & Poppy Seed and Chilli & Red Pepper. They are all bite-sized and free from additives and preservatives.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO BRANCH OUT AND CREATE BISCUITS?

We are fairly well-known for our range of dips, with many shops across the country selling them. I am often asked to do an in-store tasting day and always have to go to the supermarket to buy crisps for customers to sample the dips with! It struck me that we should be offering something ourselves that can be used with our dips.

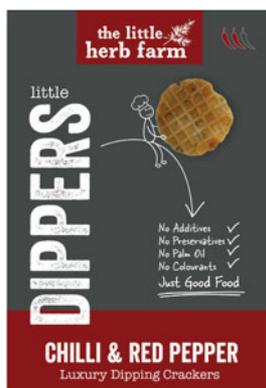
WHAT'S THE INITIAL RECEPTION BEEN LIKE?

Very positive! The Little Dippers are unique in that they are bite-sized and come in interesting flavours. We have carefully paired each one with one or two of our own dips, which customers seem to like. They are a luxury

savoury biscuit due to the high quality ingredients that go into making them, and they taste great!

WHY SHOULD INDEPENDENT RETAILERS STOCK THEM?

There isn't really anything else like them on the market, and the fact that they are free from additives and preservatives fits in with the ethos that many farm shops and delis have of providing just food without all the nasties. You can't buy our Little Dippers in any supermarket, making them an ideal product for independents.



“ You can't buy our Little Dippers in any supermarket, making them an ideal product for independents ”

PARTNER CONTENT

THE LITTLE TREATS BAKERY

Everyone deserves a treat every now and again

At The Little Treats Bakery, we make, bake and decorate sweet treats and biscuits for every occasion. Made in the heart of Cheshire at our family-run bakery, we certainly know a thing or two about biscuits. You can taste the passion of our bakers who've been honing and refining recipes for over 25 years, as they lovingly craft each new little treat. We're proud to champion top-notch ingredients, because we know our customers love to treat themselves and we want them to enjoy every moment!



Of course, traditional gingerbread will always be a firm favourite (as nearly a third of our customers tell us), but we've found some, especially younger ones, also love the taste of our yummy chocolate and sweet vanilla shortcake. So naturally we've taken these flavours across our whole range of scrumptious biscuits, lollipops and mini bites.

But what really sets The Little Treats Bakery apart is our sense of fun. In a world where so many things are run of the mill, our delightfully decorated biscuits will appeal to customers who are looking for something different and more exciting.



Our GIANTS biscuits really big up some of the nation's favourites. British classics like Chocolate Bourbons, Custard Creams and Jammy Sandwiches let customers satisfy their taste for nostalgia with a whopping great treat!

And we've had some real family fun with our licensed range of Peppa Pig biscuits. From splashing in (chocolate) muddy puddles, to building Peppa Pig's gingerbread house, we've really brought these loveable characters to life, to create a range that little kids and their parents will simply adore.

“ What really sets The Little Treats Bakery apart is our sense of fun ”

Together with our playful dominos, rocket lollipops or even summer daisies, our recipes whisk together warmth, character and a generous sprinkle of fun! Delicious bakes that taste as yummy as they look, our Little Treats are guaranteed to raise a smile with biscuit lovers young and old, whatever the occasion!

With 48% of consumers in the UK saying they allow some budget each month for treats, our biscuits certainly tick the boxes for an array of occasions. From creative playtime with kids, birthday parties and sleepovers to family days out and even cosy nights on the sofa.

These tasty treats are a lovely touch on special occasions, a little reward to say well done or the perfect excuse for a moment of indulgence. Cleverly designed to share and enjoy together as a family, or as a thoughtful gift for someone special.

At The Little Treats Bakery, we bake personality into every biscuit and our charming, colourful designs are packaged up a treat too, making them even harder to resist. Because everyone deserves a little treat, don't they?

For more information about The Little Treats Bakery call 01606 815 466 or visit thelittletreatsbakery.co.uk





GREAT BRITISH BISCIOTTI SOUR CHERRY & DOUBLE CHOCOLATE

Flavoursome cherries marry well with rich chocolate in this British take on the Italian classic.

greatbritishbiscotti.co.uk



VAN STRIEN CHEESE PALMIERS

The top selling product by this family bakery from Holland, they're topped with Gouda and perfect with a glass of wine or beer.

van-strien.nl



SHORTBREAD HOUSE OF EDINBURGH SHORTBREAD WITH AROMATIC LAVENDER

From a range of five new flavours of shortbread in unique octagonal-shaped tins.

shortbreadhouse.co.uk



ISLAND BAKERY LEMON MELTS

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islandbakery.co.uk



FARMHOUSE BISCUITS RED VELVET CRUNCH

A rich velvety shortbread bite is met with chunks of white chocolate – truly irresistible.

farmhouse-biscuits.co.uk



WALKERS SALTED CARAMEL THINS

These delicious thin and crispy, crumbly cookies are a new twist on the traditional shortbread biscuits.

walkersshortbread.com

INTRODUCING IMAGE ON FOOD

Market Drayton-based biscuit manufacturer Image on Food has been trading in Shropshire for over 30 years. The business, which originally started as a family-run high street bakery, now manufactures over 100 tonnes of gingerbread a year. The company also supplies local Shropshire businesses directly and prides itself on being the only remaining gingerbread bakery left in Market Drayton – the home of gingerbread. Here, Julia Roberts, marketing manager, walks us through the ranges:

TELL US ABOUT THE IMAGE ON FOOD RANGES

We produce two ranges of gingerbread biscuits: our award-winning, bespoke, hand-iced and hand-decorated gingerbread novelties with characters such as farmyard animals, summer flowers, insects and unicorns, plus seasonal ranges for high days, holidays and celebrations such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas. There's also a bespoke, personalised and tailor-made service for special celebrations, such as weddings and birthdays. The biscuits are the perfect treat for children and families, and they make for fun and interesting gifts for special occasions and promotions.

Our heritage gingerbread brand is Billington's Gingerbread, which is the oldest gingerbread brand in the country. It's been in continual production since 1817 – that's over 200 years! The crisp and spicy gingerbread fingers, traditionally dunked into port, have been baked by a continuum of artisan bakers

“ Elaborately decorated gingerbread became synonymous with all things prestigious and elegant in England, and this is still reflected today ”

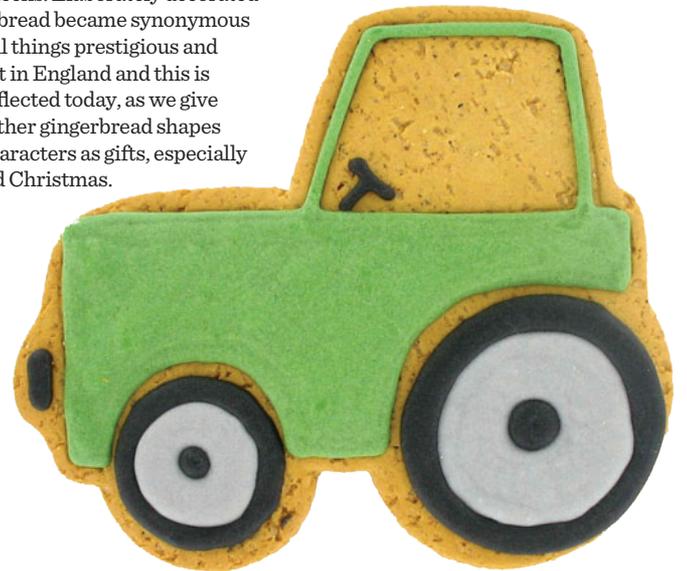
over the past two centuries using a secret spice blend. Billington's Gingerbread makes a wonderful biscuit to enjoy at home, or at your desk, and is superb for dunking! The beautifully illustrated soft touch packaging with history and serving suggestions makes the product a wonderful gift. It's positioned towards the adult market due to having alcohol included and being historically partnered with port.

WHY IS GINGERBREAD SUCH AN EVERGREEN FAVOURITE?

It has been enjoyed around the world for hundreds of years and was particularly favoured in medieval times when the biscuits were something gilded with gold leaf and shaped like animals, kings and queens. Elaborately decorated gingerbread became synonymous with all things prestigious and elegant in England and this is still reflected today, as we give each other gingerbread shapes and characters as gifts, especially around Christmas.

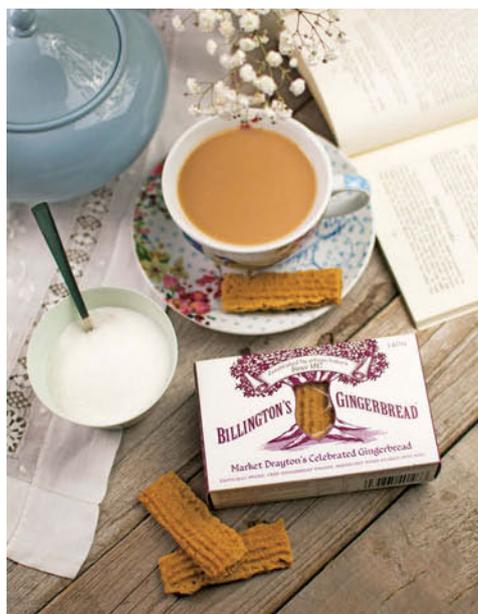
WHAT MAKES THE PRODUCTS A GOOD FIT FOR SPECIALITY FOOD OUTLETS?

Gingerbread is a popular snack biscuit enjoyed by many people nationwide. It also makes a perfect gift for those looking for a beautifully designed and special treat to give a loved one or friend, and at a very reasonable price. Farm shops and delis should stock the range as they add variety and spectacle to their shelves. The Billington's Gingerbread reinforces strong links to the farming community, as well as provenance and heritage. Being the oldest gingerbread brand in the country which is still in production, independents can stock a little piece of British history and provenance.



“ Sweet biscuits have so far been insulated from concerns over sugar, with consumers continuing to treat themselves but looking for quality and more indulgent biscuits over quantity. Value sales are being helped by strong innovation and marketing support by leading brands, including the launch of new products that offer an element of portion control, such as ‘thins’, bitesize biscuits, and mini packs that are also more convenient to eat on-the-go ”

RICHARD CAINES, SENIOR FOOD AND DRINK ANALYST AT MINTEL



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In the heart of Borough Market, there's a street food stall called Big V London selling burgers with cheese and bacon. Young Vegans in London's Camden Market will sell you a steak-and-ale pie and at Waitrose you'll find Vivera shawarma kebab shreds. Not one of these foods started life on a farm.

WHAT ARE VEGAN 'MEATS' MADE OF?

The ideal meat substitute is high in protein and can be processed to take on the toothsome, stretchy texture of beef, pork, chicken or lamb. Launched in the mid-1980s, Quorn is the original. It is fermented fungi bound with egg albumen or for vegans, potato protein. Chefs also use seitan (wheat gluten), or soy; a combination of the two works best.

THEY ALSO USE A VEGETABLE CALLED JACKFRUIT TO MIMIC PULLED PORK, DON'T THEY?

Yes, Starbucks offers a wrap with barbecued jackfruit, slaw and spinach, and healthy fast food retailer, Cruss, sells jackfruit Mexican tinga, a dish traditionally made with shredded chicken. Jackfruit has great texture but isn't as high in protein as the other replacements and is harder to source.

HOW DO PLANT MEATS TASTE?

The protein base is pretty bland. It's up to cooks and manufacturers to try to replicate the Maillard reaction – that deeply savoury caramelisation you get when amino acids react with sugars at high temperatures. Browning on your steak, in other words. They pack in umami flavour using garlic, smoked paprika or shiitake mushroom powder plus yeast extract, herbs, salt, barbecue and other seasonings.

WHY TRY TO MIMIC MEAT IF FLESH IS THE ENEMY?

Because new vegans say you sometimes long to 'sink your face into a burger', tuck into a full English or have roast beef with all the trimmings. Another reason is sociability. The closer your meat-free meal resembles what everyone



VEGAN 'MEATS'

From pie to pulled pork, bacon to burgers, it's meat, but not as we know it. Sally-Jayne Wright investigates the new plant-based lookalikes

else is eating, the less of a party pooper you feel. A third reason is familiarity. It's easier to take a meat-free version of a food you know such as a sausage and serve it with mash and gravy, than learn a whole new way of cooking. This is especially true when you come home tired and hungry.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY THEN?

You bet, and Linda McCartney Foods sussed this out over 25 years ago. Found in most supermarket freezers, their vegan range includes sausages, beef roast, beef, mushroom

“Swallow your preconceptions, forget yesterday's grey-brown soya granules and try the meat that has never been near a farm”

and spinach wellington bites, scampi bites and shredded duck. In the last year, Tesco has seen demand for frozen meat-free foods increase by 70%. Accordingly, in January, they launched Oumph!, a range of flavoured and neutral soy protein chunks and strips.

HOW CAN INDEPENDENTS MAKE THE MOST OF THIS TREND?

Ask your customers if they'd like to buy vegan meats and ready meals. Older consumers may be looking to reduce red meat for health reasons. They may struggle to feed children or

grandchildren in their 20s, a quarter of whom are either vegan, vegetarian or flexitarian (YouGov survey, 2017). A good time to promote your offering is Veganuary, National Vegetarian Week and Meat-free May, but once a week you can declare a meat-free Monday.

Are there any meat and dairy-free mains on your café or restaurant menu? If your chefs lack confidence, consider sending them on a vegan cookery course. They don't have to use seitan, tofu or jackfruit. At healthy fast food chain, Leon, Trend Watch tried some delicious new meatless meatballs made from aubergine, onion and black olives in a breadcrumb of rice and chickpea flours. Much of the pleasure of meaty vegan treats is down to borrowed interest – punchy gravy, toasted sesame buns, smoky ketchup, juicy fried onions and in the case of the meatballs, well-made tomato sauce.

WHOSE PRODUCTS SHOULD I BUY?

Quorn sales were up 19% in the first half of 2017 so that's a good place to start. Expert Sean O'Callaghan who blogs as Fat Gay Vegan and is the author of *Eat, Drink and Live Like You Give A Sh-t!* says vegan meats have improved beyond recognition in the last five years. He recommends the Tofurky brand and also Sgaia – 'one of the best vegan brands on the planet'. Based in Scotland, Sgaia makes pastrami, streaky bacon, rare roast beef and Italian pepperoni from a soy and wheat gluten mix.

Food consultant, Arianna Halshaw, likes the frozen herb schnitzels from The Fry Family Food Company and The Tofoo Company's products. Experienced vegan cooks like her will want to buy tofu, wheat gluten powder and neutral meat replacements like Manna Plant Meat's soy mince for preparing themselves, but most would rather someone else did the hard work. Don't forget, seitan isn't suitable for gluten-free customers.

WILL THE TREND LAST?

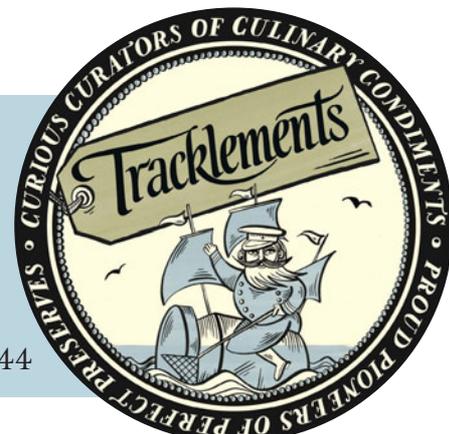
Oh, yes. Flexitarianism is here to stay. A Mintel report found that 28% of meat-eating Brits had reduced or limited meat consumption in the previous six months to August 2017. So swallow your preconceptions, forget yesterday's grey-brown soya granules and try the meat that has never been near a farm.



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CONDIMENTS: WHAT TO STOCK

The condiment aisle is a hotbed of innovation and quality right now – here's how to make the most of it



HOW WE SELL: CONDIMENTS

Candice Fonseca, owner of Delifonseca

HOW IMPORTANT ARE CONDIMENTS TO DELIFONSECA?

It's a section in which the popularity changes with the seasons throughout the year and heavily depends on good and regular sampling in-store. There are condiments of habit, such as tomato and brown sauce, but then we also find that people can get hooked on new products like beetroot ketchup. I think the British are particularly fond of condiments that are added to dishes at the table, with sauces historically adding flavour to plain food. Fast-forward to present day and we're a country with one of the widest palates in the world, open to all sorts of spice and seasoning, which gives innovative condiments a ready market.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE BUYING DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS?

As we start to get into the warmer months barbecue sauces are flying off the shelves, and although British brands do have fantastic products, American brands always seem to do the best. I put this down to their authentic branding and bigger sizes, making them an ideal product for sharing, which is what barbecue is all about.

As the weather heats up, we see

more salads on the menu, and on the back of this we often see a surge in the sales of good quality red and white wine vinegars, as well as fruit vinegars and an increase in good quality oils. Balsamic vinegars do still sell but not in the volumes that they did six to seven years ago. Salad dressings are a big seller from May through to August – we sell Olives Et Al, Farrington's Rapeseed Oil Based and Briannas ranges.

Delifonseca has stocked Uncle Roy's range of mustards for years. We are big fans and use the Smoked Mustard on our pastrami and rye restaurant sandwich. As a result, that out-sells everything else by miles. During the summer, I increase the mustard range to include crazy things like Green Tarragon Mustard.

WHAT PRODUCTS HAVE CAUGHT YOUR ATTENTION AS OF LATE?

The staff favourite at the moment is Black Garlic Ketchup by Hawkshead Relish and we will be scheduling some tastings for that off the back of its popularity. Keeping with the garlic theme, we're big fans of The Garlic Farm's oriental products – the Hoisin and Teriyaki sauces are fabulous, and when customers try them they get hooked.

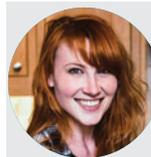
Sales are also influenced by foodie trends and we're currently selling

a lot of raw and unpasteurised Mother Apple Cider Vinegar by Willy's due to its perceived health benefits. We also stock Lancashire Sauce by Entwistle's of Ramsbottom, which can be added to fish and chips or cheese on toast, but we often recommend it as a vegan alternative to Worcestershire sauce. Speaking of which, we sell a good amount of Biona Organic Worcester Sauce, which is both vegan and gluten-free, making it perfect for the conscientious shopper.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE CONDIMENT SALES?

We find that customers love a gift set, and so we are always looking to pair up products for bespoke hampers. Uncle Roy's range of salts work well and we always add a jar of its Smokey Scotch Whisky Salt to a male-orientated food hamper. Regular tasting events are a fantastic way to introduce customers to new flavours and condiments that they may typically shy away from. Beetroot Ketchup by The Foraging Fox is still proving popular following tasting sessions in the past, and as a result we now stock the entire range.

I've also recently decided to place Stokes Ketchup and Brown Sauce bottles on tables during breakfast service. This has gone down a treat with customers and we are selling a lot of retail bottles as a result. Once people try it, they start moving through the range, with the Stokes Bloody Mary Ketchup currently retailing strongly.



GET TO KNOW: THE SWEET BEET

Lizzy Hodcroft, founder, talks us through the company's array of flavour-forward and exciting condiments

"The Sweet Beet is the perfect storecupboard essential for creative cooks and aspiring amateurs across the nation, whether they're adding some flavour to their favourite sandwich or slipping a spoonful into their own creations. With a bold new look, growing distribution and an expanding range, The Sweet Beet is becoming a permanent fixture on shopping lists across the nation. Over the summer, farm shops and delis have a great opportunity to maximise sales by promoting our products for use as a marinade for barbecue meats, an innovative ingredient for homemade cocktails or as a glaze for sophisticated scallops alfresco.

"In less than 12 months The Sweet Beet range has grown from the Great Taste Award-winning Maple Bacon Jam to include an additional four varieties offering consumers a diverse variety of flavours. The range now also includes Habanero Lime Jelly, Oak Smoked Apple Butter, Texas Beer Jelly and Strawberry Chipotle BBQ.

"Born in Texas but made in the UK, The Sweet Beet is fighting back with flavour and inspiring cooks to get creative in their own kitchens. With

consumers looking for bolder, deeper flavours – and not just heat – we harness the best quality ingredients to produce condiments that taste great straight from the jar, slapped on a steak or incorporated into a more complex dish. The Sweet Beet stands out from its competitors on two fronts: the innovative flavours pack a punch and bring excitement to the most mundane of dishes. Also, because there's a variety of uses, consumers buy it more frequently than regular condiments as they're getting through it so quickly.

"Farm shop and deli shoppers are often looking for authentic, different and high quality brands – they're all elements which The Sweet Beet delivers by the bucket-load. Having invested in a striking new look, the brand will be even easier to find on-shelf, and having featured at local markets, food fairs and sampling events, we're becoming established on shopping lists across the country. We also caught the attention of well-known foodie Nigel Barden, who recently featured the brand on Simon Mayo's BBC Radio 2's *Drivetime* programme, driving awareness with over six million listeners."

“ Lizzy Hodcroft has produced an interesting and well-thought through range of products based on her Texan upbringing. Her Habanero Lime Jelly was a revelation when we used it on BBC Radio 2 – it paired remarkably well with a slow-roasted topside of beef. The Sweet Beet is a clever and tasty range which Lizzy should be proud of ”

NIGEL BARDEN ON THE SWEET BEET

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HAWKSHEAD RELISH BLACK GARLIC KETCHUP

Crushed black garlic bulbs are combined with fresh tomatoes, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, spices and Anglesey Sea Salt. hawksheadrelish.com



THE SWEET BEET MAPLE BACON JAM

Smokey, salty, sticky and sweet, this jam can be added to a burger, made into a sauce or used as a marinade. thesweetbeet.co.uk



STOKES BLOODY MARY KETCHUP

A classic tomato ketchup made with a dash of real vodka and a splash of Worcestershire sauce. stokessaucos.co.uk



TRACKLEMENTS SWEET MUSTARD KETCHUP

Made with a combination of wholegrain and smooth mustards and a measure of sugar and spices – delicious with a steak or halloumi salad. tracklements.co.uk

5 MINUTES WITH... GUY TULLBERG
managing director at Tracklements



WHAT CONDIMENTS DOES TRACKLEMENTS MAKE?

Handmaking Tracklements has been our obsession for almost 50 years; it's in our blood. The reason we call them Tracklements rather than condiments is because we think of them as so much more – we think of them as versatile powerhouses of flavour to lift and enhance every meal, whether it's a

mustard adding piquancy to a cheese sauce or a sweet, sticky relish to perfectly balance a tangy, acidic cheese. Our comprehensive range stretches from our signature range of wholegrain mustards, through chutneys, savoury jellies, traditional sauces to the thoroughly modern range of relishes. There are 59 different products in the range in total – there's no excuse not to have a Tracklement with every meal!

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE THE MOST POPULAR?

We have a hero range of 10 products which have proved their enduring popularity with the consumer. We believe this is because they're the very best examples of their type. They don't have to be fashionable or have a novelty factor but they do have to deliver on quality and taste – they have to have that 'mmm' factor. There are several that jockey

for the top spot: Strong Horseradish Cream, Fresh Chilli Jam, Original Onion Marmalade, Robust Wholegrain Mustard, and of course, Strong English Mustard. We think that list demonstrates that there will always be a place for the classics.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR CONDIMENTS FROM OTHERS ON THE MARKET?

Part of the Tracklements ethos is to make things a little bit better every day. Since we started 48 years ago, Tracklements has been championing British Fairtrade, which means that we have made a commitment to buy British where possible and pay a fair price for the best ingredients available. We endeavour to have a direct relationship with all our suppliers to ensure continuity of supply and ownership of the process. We also visit all top suppliers regularly to learn about the challenges that face them and how we can work together to ensure consistently superior ingredients. We never compromise on quality or cut corners, and we invest time and effort in making our products in the best way possible.

VINEGAR SHED
EST. 2016



INTRODUCING... JULES & SHARPIE



Pele Heydon of Thursday Cottage tells us about its Jules & Sharpie brand

"Jules & Sharpie was originally formed by a couple of foodie friends in Suffolk who loved chutney but wanted to

create products that had a bit of a twist to them. The brand was bought by Thursday Cottage – part of Wilkin & Sons – in 2011 and production was moved to the Tiptree site, where the products are handmade in small batches and hand-poured into jars.

"Jules & Sharpie is a range of jellies and chutneys handmade using a tiny amount of scotch bonnet chillies to give them a little kick. The products are available in both 300g and 112g jars as well as part of a gift pack.

Hot Pepper Jelly is definitely the

most popular product in the range, followed by the Hot Mint Jelly. They are both so versatile: you can use them as dips or in recipes to add a little something special to your meal.

"Every jar in the range is handmade and hand-poured; the extra time and care taken to ensure every single jar is perfect really does make the difference in producing an extra special product. The added chillies give you that little something extra to the taste experience that other condiments don't offer."

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VIEWPOINT: ADAM HENSON

Farming, rare breed conservation and a passion for sustainability power this television personality

I'm a born and bred farmer. My father took on the tenancy of our farm in the North Cotswolds in 1962, and I was very much brought up on the farm. I always wanted to be a farmer, and went to agricultural college then travelled the world doing some farming in Australia and New Zealand for a year before coming home and working on the farm. I became business partner then took over the tenancy of the farm, and now run it with a business partner – Duncan Andrews. We share the 1,600 acre (650 hectares) 50/50, but also are involved in a joint venture with

a neighbour, farming on various local farms. We're now farming around 5,000 acres of arable – wheat, barley and oilseed rape – and have a commercial flock of sheep, producing lamb for the table; we manage a herd of Hereford cattle for our neighbour, producing pedigree breeding stock and meat for local butchers; and we have a tourist enterprise, called Cotswold Farm Park, which showcases rare breed conservation.

This was started by my father in 1971 – he had a passion for rare farm breeds – and it's still an important part of what we do. We

welcome around 145,000 visitors through our open season – we also have a café, shop and caravan site – and as well as rare breed conservation we're educating people about food production and British farming.

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust, which my father was founder chairman of in 1973, has done an amazing job of educating people about rare breeds. When he first started collecting them and opened the farm park, people thought he was mad, because in the UK the industry was focused on food production and getting the most of our animals and land – now there's a much more sustainable train of thought about different animals suiting different regions, regionality informing food demand and people wanting to eat food produced in the local area, and the popularity of farmers' markets, farm shops and local delivery systems. Even the supermarkets are realising now that consumers want food which has a traceable origin. My local Co-op is now selling products from the area, complete with QR codes so customers can find out the farm their food come from – this is a big step in the right direction.

As well as my father's original passion to stop animals from becoming extinct, he

believed that they were a genetic resource for the future of farming – that they had genetic information which would be useful for generations of farmers to come. Provenance and localism played a key part in what he did, and he was a trailblazer in that sense. He was way ahead of his time. Everything he spoke about then is now coming to the fore, which is wonderful to see.

In terms of clarity and quality when it comes to food choices, celebrity chefs are working really hard to build on healthy eating – we've had sugar campaigns and ones promoting vegetables, as well as things like Love British Food. These initiatives all promote understanding of where our food comes from. Despite this, there's still a huge void in understanding. There was a recent survey for which thousands of children were asked questions about the origins of food, and 30% thought that cheese came from a plant. 13% thought that pasta came from an animal. This is just unbelievable. Happerley, an organisation I work with which endeavours to promote provenance in food, has just launched an initiative called 'Please Sir! Feed Me Truth', for which we work with schools to educate children about food and supply chains, and even in some cases teach children how to eat with a knife and fork. At Cotswold Farm Park we have a lot of visitors who have never seen a lamb being born or a cow being milked, or held a baby chick – most of them understand that cheese is made using milk from an animal, compared to the swathes of children who don't because their parents have never told them. The children of today are the parents of tomorrow, and if they're going to make informed choices about the food they eat, it's our responsibility to teach them.

TALKING POINTS

CONSERVATION...

Conservation is an issue close to my heart. My partners and I farm within a higher level stewardship scheme – we manage the land very sensitively and have wildlife margins with pollen and nectar mixes for pollinators. We also create seed mixes to feed birds in the winter, focusing on targeted species of farmland birds. We manage our hedgerows, rivers and areas of permanent pasture with wildflowers, too, and are proud to look after these elements of our land.

GOVERNMENT...

Michael Gove, Defra secretary, is keen for farmers to look after their natural environment – this works in synergy with what we're doing: food needs to be produced sensibly and carefully to be a sustainable source of nutrition for the UK and beyond, and thanks to stringent regulations producers in the UK can really shout about the quality of their supply.

“ We want the British public to understand and appreciate the food they're eating, but that's a challenge when there are lots of mistruths around ”

THE BIG PICTURE

I started working in the media in 2001 and present *Countryfile* on BBC1 on Sunday night, mainly talking about farming stories at home and around the world. From that, and because I'm passionate about rare breeds, localism and food production – on a small and big scale – and particularly about farming within the

legislation that we have in the UK, I've come to the conclusion that we have some of the best producers in the UK and am proud to work with some producers on telling the story about their traceability and localism.

Independent retailers are already doing a lot to spread the message about food production and the origins of food, and they need to continue to be active in terms of

social media, marketing and events to keep spreading the word. Also, it's important to connect with local schools – in both rural and urban areas – going out to them and having them come to you. A surprising number of people in the UK are malnourished in terms of the food they're eating, and it's being said that at this moment in time more diseases are being caused by malnutrition than

by infection and other diseases. Heart attacks, diabetes and cancers caused by insufficient nutrition are putting strain on resources across the world, and we must educate the masses in order to bring forth change. If we can start at the bottom and encourage people to think about what goes into their food, and to have a connection with what they're eating, we can make a difference.

In line with this, I've been working with Matthew Rhymer, founder and CEO of Happerley, looking at clarity and honesty within the food chain. There are a lot of labels out there which are misleading and defective, which is undoing the work of people across the industry who are working hard to create understanding around the food industry.



UP IN SMOKE

The heat is on as smoked foods continue to grow in popularity. John Bensalhia looks at the background, benefits and products available

Looking back through history, smoked foods were popular even in prehistoric times. Having discovered the wonders of fire-making, cavemen would cook their meat this way. In the Medieval era, the likes of Henry VIII would heartily tuck into a banquet that included smoked meats. Meanwhile, other foods such as cheese were smoked. Back in the day, the Romans also enjoyed cooking cheese this way. In the age of the Emperor Diocletian, the cheese trade had developed to the point where the maximum price had to be fixed for a popular apple-smoked cheese.

Adding flavour

So why do smoked foods remain in vogue today? "A reason for smoked foods' growing popularity is the fact that more people are travelling," says Frank Foster, owner and director of Meadow Farm Quality Foods Ltd. "They have experienced smoked foods from countries such as the United States of America and Canada. When they get back home, they want to try smoked foods again for themselves."

"People seem to like smoked foods as meat is made more tender and smoking adds flavour," says Alison Grange of Durloughmarsh Farm Shop. This is a notable plus point of smoked foods, especially when smoked at a hot temperature of around 52 to 80 degrees centigrade. Hot smoking can result in tasty, fully cooked foods with a moist texture. Smoking food can also help to get rid of unwanted fat, and also bacteria. The method of wood smoking is a notable example of this. Because wood smoke contains phenol and other phenolic compounds, these antioxidants can slow the progress of animal fat developing. Similarly, the antimicrobials present in wood smoke can slow the growth of bacteria.

Tom Campbell and Bernard Thain, partners at Fencebay Farm Shop

& Smokehouse Ltd, say that the secret of a good smoked product is to enhance the flavour rather than swamp it. "The key to a good smoked product is to enhance flavours rather than overwhelm. Our smoking process ensures that the food maintains a fresh subtle taste and not swamped by heavy smoke."

However, the product itself also needs to be of a top quality to ensure an equally first class result. "A very important aspect is to ensure that the quality of the original product is of the very highest," say Tom and Bernard. "You can't make acceptable smoked salmon from sub-standard fish. Quality is of overriding importance, giving a distinctive flavour."

"We offer a 'high end' product which is hand-cut into long slices. It is vital that we have repeat customers and sure enough, they come back time and again."

Popular choices

At Fencebay Farm Shop, the smoked salmon is a hugely popular choice, whether hot or cold. "Our smoked salmon is one of our most popular smoked fish products," explain Tom and Bernard. "Hot smoked salmon sells constantly throughout the year but cold smoked is mostly in demand over Christmas and during summer months."

"Presently we are focusing on producing and marketing our core products such as smoked salmon. In the past, we have offered smoked items such as eel but since the recession demand for exotic smoked items has declined significantly. However, in our restaurant The Catch at Fins we offer smoked meats such as duck, chicken and turkey, depending on the season."

Alison Grange comments on the most popular smoked products at Durloughmarsh Farm Shop: "The most popular smoked foods are Weald Smokery cold smoked salmon, naturally smoked haddock, smoked

chicken breast and hot roast smoked salmon. Also Grant Oak Smoked Cheese. A new favourite for us is Chalk Stream cold and hot smoked trout and smoked trout pâté."

"Our smoked chicken fillet is very popular," comments Frank Foster, discussing smoked offerings at Meadow Farm Quality Foods Ltd. "Plain chicken, whether by itself or in a salad, for example, can be a bit bland, so when it's smoked, this method enhances its flavour. It makes the taste of chicken come alive, and can liven up the flavour whether it's in a salad, a sandwich or a roll. Our smoked chicken wings are also very popular for this reason, and make for great additions to the party season."

Meadow Farm also serves up other takes on smoked meat: "One of our most interesting offerings is smoked duck wings, which are selling really well," says Frank Foster. "Smoked brisket is another popular choice, as it makes for a new alternative to the traditional version. Smoked beef too is proving popular, since it's that bit different to the kind of meat traditionally served in roasts, salads or in sandwiches."

The recently launched Doctor Seaweed's Weed & Wonderful was developed as a means of introducing consumers to the numerous benefits of seaweed. "I appreciate that some people might initially view seaweed as a bit of a weird ingredient," explains Dr Craig Rose, founder. "Therefore, to help overcome this, we developed a seaweed-infused smoked oil and an intense smoked seaweed culinary essence as a carrier for the seaweed." Craig explains that this felt like an accessible and familiar format that would inspire lovers of fine food to embrace seaweed's potential. "Seaweed has an incredible umami flavour that adds another dimension to dishes. When paired with a naturally smoked organic rapeseed oil it really delivers a complex and appealing flavour."

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT: INVERAWE SMOKEHOUSES



Bertie Thewes, sales director at Inverawe Smokehouses, talks us through the past and present of the renowned brand

The company was founded by Robert Campbell-Preston in 1974. He started farming trout and after a couple of years turned his hand to the truly traditional way of smoking fish. In those days there were a handful of suppliers producing smoked fish in a manner that dates back some 2,500 to 3,000 years. He saw an opportunity to do this in place of the more modern methods which create a very different product.

At Inverawe we smoke fish in large brick kilns over oak logs. The difference is huge. Most commercial smokers smoke large fish in metal boxes over wood chips. This way of smoking takes around nine hours and although it produces a reasonable product, it is far from how our own fish are smoked and the wonderful result it creates. Traditional smoking requires smaller, leaner fish, and the actual smoking process takes anywhere between 36 and 72 hours. That time spent over the gentle billow of the logs creates a lovely smooth, oaky fish which is drier and

firmer than the alternative.

Robert identified that customers who understood the traditional methods wanted this product. He began with salmon and Loch Etive trout and grew the product selection from there. We have remained consistent in our production and methods and, by never compromising on how we go about smoking the fish, we do tend to find we have a good customer base. Our growth lies in export and we have customers now all over the world – particularly in the United States where tastes have changed and where consumers are now actively looking for quality produce.

We have a wide selection of smoked produce – from the traditional cold smoked salmon and trout to pâté, terrines, kippers, gravadlax, hot smoked salmon and trout and much more. We are constantly looking at NPD and have some exciting new lines we are working on for a release later this year.

HEALTH INVESTIGATIONS

One notable issue with respect to smoked meats is that of PAH levels. Alison Grange explains: "There are health concerns about eating smoked foods around smoked meats and PAHs". PAH refers to Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, which are formed during the burning process.

A study carried out in the early 2010s by FERA (Food and Environment Research Agency) at the Food Standards Agency (Food.Gov.UK) found that there was no major cause for concern. The survey looked at Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in cereals,

vegetables and traditionally smoked foods.

FERA tested for 28 PAH compounds in 230 sampled foods, and the samples included 120 traditionally smoked foods. Out of these, a majority of 115 sampled smoked meat and fish products complied with the lower limits of benzo[a]pyrene and PAH4 that were introduced in 2014. The report said that compliance would be "readily achievable for the small number of products that exceeded current regulatory limits". The regulatory limits (Regulation 1881 of 2006) ensure that PAH levels are kept as low as possible to avoid risk.

THE EVOLUTION OF 'BAKE AT HOME'

Free-from, quality and healthy alternatives are key to tempting today's home bakers

As the power of *The Great British Bake Off* continues to boost sales of flours, sugars and home baking accoutrements across the UK, the fine food sector has been growing its range of products suited to the discerning baker – great news for independents wanting to expand their offering, and customers looking to experiment beyond the realms of the classic farmhouse loaf.

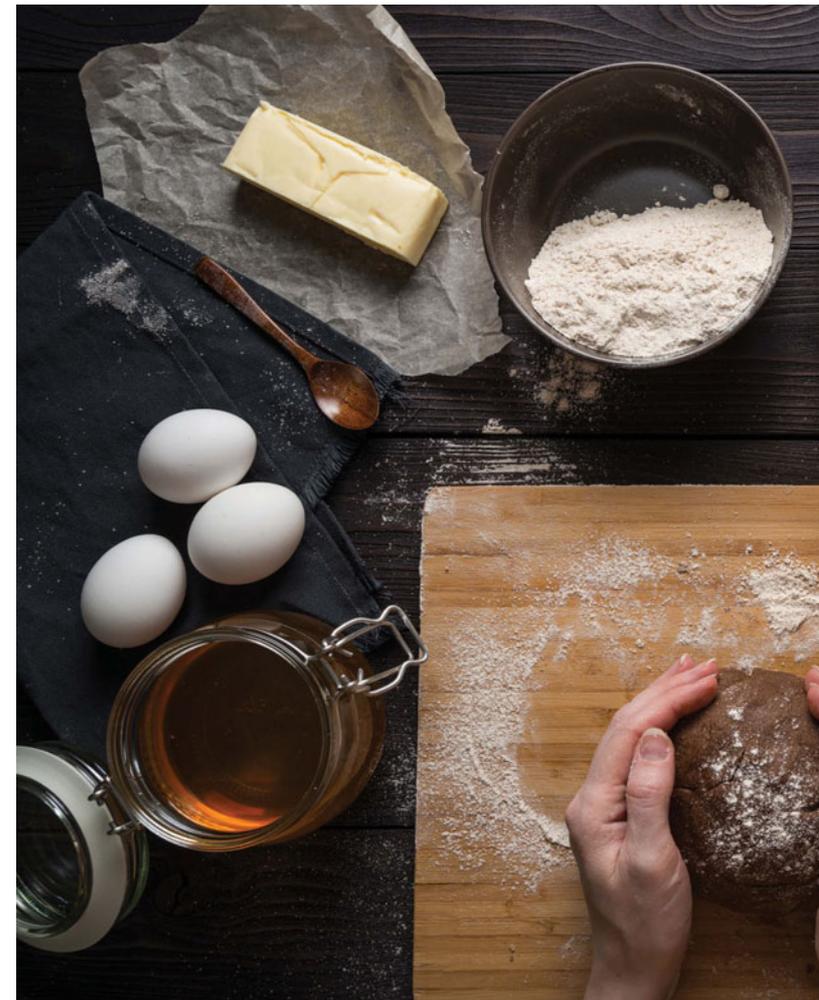
Free-from has certainly changed the landscape of home baking;

while conventional flours and sugars will always have a place on shelves up and down the country, smart retailers will also be selling alternatives – flours free from gluten, coconut sugar instead of cane, agar instead of gelatine. Lucinda Perks, founder of Cao Kitchen has created a raw cacao and maple syrup spread – suitable for brownies, mousses, flapjacks, cheesecakes and icing – ideal for customers wanting a sweet treat without the sugar and additives

which are often involved in baked products. "Healthy baking can make eyes roll – people assume it means boring, tasteless and unappetising – but this just isn't the case," she explains. "As a mum and someone with an insatiable sweet tooth, I spend hours sourcing and baking treats that we can eat on a regular(ish) basis but are still worth getting excited about. For me, it is not just about reducing sugar and fat, it's about real food, using natural not artificial ingredients. Baking at home gives control over ingredients and portion size!"

"It's about knowing what's in our food"

There are some simple swaps consumers can make to make healthier versions of their favourite bakes, she says. "Using wholemeal rather than white flour boosts fibre and vitamin intake and is kinder on blood sugar levels. Spelt, barley, rye and other flours are also great nutritionally and add a beautiful nutty flavour. If you're not keen, using half and half with white can be a good compromise." Meanwhile, she says, "Replacing cocoa and chocolate with raw cacao powder and nibs can supercharge



recipes as they are packed with antioxidants and more nutrients because they are unprocessed."

When it comes to butter replacements, Lucinda prefers to use oil instead of spreads. She explains: "Care needs to be taken so that the mixture doesn't get too wet, but getting it right creates

wonderfully moist cakes – as can using fruit and vegetables. This also adds fibre and sweetness, thereby reducing the need for additional sweeteners."

Speaking of sweetness, "Substituting refined sugars for naturally derived alternatives with a lower Glycaemic Index is easy and tastes great," Lucinda

“LittlePod offers vanilla extract without sugar for sauces and general cooking. Sugar plays a vital role in baking, helping moisture retention and quality, producing flavours beyond simple sweetness – hence using it in our paste. It's suitable for vegans and allergen-free”

JANET SAWYER BEM, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LITTLEPOD



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“Ultimately, it’s about knowing what’s in our food, using natural and wholesome ingredients and enjoying the process and every crumb!”

right baking offer.”

Organic since the brand was first created 40 years ago, organic has been core to the business philosophy of Doves Farm. “Consumers interest in organic is echoed by an interest in health, with more than 27% of the food and drink UK shoppers consume chosen for ‘health reasons’ (Kantar Worldpanel).

“It is important for retailers to be on-trend with health,” she says, “and free-from remains a motivation to consumers, significant to both those living a free-from life for health reasons and so many free-from lifestyleers looking to add variety to their diet using naturally gluten-free flours.

Under FREEE by Doves Farm, our gluten free brand, we offer products made with naturally gluten free ingredients and without the likes of hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC), colourings, artificial flavourings and GM ingredients. The best-selling free-from store cupboard essentials from FREEE by Doves Farm are Plain White Flour, Self-Raising Flour, Rice Flour, Baking Powder and Xanthan Gum.

What’s next? “It’s definitely time for ancient grains to shine,” says Clare. “These add real variety to home baking and alternative grains that are naturally free-from, such as buckwheat, quinoa and brown rice flour are growing in demand as interest for healthy alternatives in baking continues to rise.”

continues. “Maple syrup is around three times as sweet as regular sugar with fewer calories. Other good options are agave or fruit syrups or stevia. Again, it’s not always a straightforward swap of sugar with the sweeteners, so a bit of trial and error is needed but that can be half the fun! There are also lots of recipes from chefs who’ve done the hard work for you. To finish healthier bakes, making water- (rather than butter-) based icings can ease the impact on your waistline. Ultimately, it’s about knowing what’s in our food, using natural and wholesome ingredients and enjoying the process and every crumb!”

“Be on-trend with health”

The belief in the importance of

LAST YEAR SHOPPERS SPENT AN EXTRA **£230M** ON **FREE-FROM** FOOD AND DRINK AND MARKET VALUE SURGED **40.1% TO £806.1M**

KANTAR WORLD PANEL

free-from and health credentials is shared by Clare Marriage, founder of Doves Farm.

“For independents to stand out from the multiples when it comes to home baking, the secret is to offer breadth and depth in their range to ensure both organic and free-from markets are tapped into with the

THE NUMBER OF **BRITS** WHO CLAIM TO **REGULARLY** SHOP AT THE FREE FROM FIXTURE HAS ALSO MORE THAN **DOUBLED** IN **TWO** YEARS – RISING FROM **19% TO 43%**

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4 WAYS TO BOOST HOME BAKING SALES

with Hannah Marriage, director of Marriage's Millers

1 “BETTER QUALITY INGREDIENTS GIVE BETTER BAKING RESULTS”

“Baking is a science”, says Hannah, “so by spending a little more on quality ingredients, consumers are more likely to have successful results at home and then repeat purchase. At Marriage's we source top quality bread-making wheats, even for our cake flours, which means a better baking performance for the home baker. We also supply independent and artisan bakeries around the country, which means we have a real focus on flour performance and consistency.”

2 “HAVING A GOOD RANGE OF QUALITY BAKING INGREDIENTS IS A GOOD WAY OF DIFFERENTIATING YOUR STORE”

When it comes to making your indie shop stand out from the multiples, quality is key. “Having a good range of quality baking ingredients is a good way of differentiating your store – and means you can position yourself as a one-stop shop for home bakers, perhaps inspiring shoppers with new ideas and flavours as well,” says Hannah. “For example, for a bread making recipe – a consumer might not only want strong (bread) flours and dried yeast – it could be other storecupboard items like premium sea salt, seeds and nuts (almost any variety can be used in bread making), dried fruit (raisins, chopped apricots), olive oil, rapeseed oil and dried herbs. In terms of accessories, proving baskets for making sourdoughs and baking tins for more traditional breads are also useful.”

3 “MAKE THE MOST OF KEY SEASONAL SALES PERIODS”

Independent retailers can also make the most of key seasonal sales periods and encourage purchase of premium/ niche products”, Hannah says. “For example, around Pancake Day we see a significant spike in plain flour sales. As well as having prominent displays and promotions of quality plain flour, local eggs, interesting artisan honeys, jams and spreads (for toppings) could feature.”

4 “ACCOMMODATE MORE ADVENTUROUS CONSUMER TASTES”

Hannah continues: “At Marriage's, we have expanded our home baking range significantly in the past five years or so to accommodate more adventurous consumer tastes. We now produce 18 award-winning flours for home bakers – with seeded bread flour and spelt flour particularly popular speciality varieties.” The number of bread varieties being made at home in the UK has grown, too. “Making sourdough bread at home has become much more mainstream,” says Hannah. “Consumers are inspired to have a go at making sourdough and long fermentation breads for themselves at home – both by the boom in artisan bakeries across the country in recent years, and also by the many sourdough bread making courses now on offer. The impact of social media has played a role – people want to share successful bakes that look good on Instagram – and you are more likely to have success making bread or cakes at home if you use quality ingredients as the baking performance will be better.”

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ALL WRAPPED UP

Selecting the wrong packaging or label can prove disastrous. Don't come unstuck: these experts explain the options available to the fine food industry

We talk to Maxine Chuwen, managing director of LabelsPlus, about green labelling solutions that don't cost the earth:



Consumers are demanding more: not just from a product, but also the packaging it comes in. Research suggests that more than a third of shoppers prefer to buy from brands

which are sustainable or environmentally-friendly.

As a long time food label supplier we know that food producers and retailers are acutely aware of becoming highly trusted for their provenance, sourcing and production. As suppliers of bespoke labels we know an environmental

and ethical ethos is often at the heart of our client's products. Labelling is intrinsic in communicating this – but it can't just stop there. Consumer expectation means a label can't just shout about green product credentials – the label itself has to be part of the green solution, too.

The challenge: how to balance eco-conscious consumer demand with statutory requirements and production costs in a label which will perform in a range of distribution, storage and handling environments.

The solution: a new generation of eco-innovations delivering biodegradable and compostable labels. Our biodegradable labels are made from non-wood-based materials with fully compliant compostable adhesives.

We've been investing in these solutions, because we were increasingly aware that some speciality producers were being priced out of these most innovative and sustainable packaging solutions due to prohibitive minimum supply restrictions.

Understanding the specific and market needs of our clients and with our own ethos of helping our clients grow and develop their businesses, we were determined to make a difference. Using our expertise amassed over more than 25 years, we

championed the needs of food and drink customers by securing access to these next generation labels in a variety of supply quantities and, most importantly, affordable smaller production runs. Our insight and innovation help producers grow their brands, enabling them to keep their product values centre-stage without compromising on cost or the environment.



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Alex Pawley, sales and marketing manager at Icertech

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A lot of our customers are new to the process, and we work closely with them to understand their requirements and offer advice on the best solution for them. We're also able to offer custom print on quantities as low as 300 boxes, while providing our customers with clear guidance on how to really bring their brand to life on a box.

Our packaging solutions allow businesses such as delis, farm shops and independent retailers to deliver products on a national level. We are flexible on quantities, and small to medium retailers are able to benefit from the economies of scale offered in our stock range of packaging solutions. Our Foil-Box solutions offers these companies significant savings when compared to the use of moulded polystyrene boxes. For the majority of food retailers, all of our solutions will provide them with the performance they require. The Foil-Box in particular is an excellent choice, and has proven to be extremely popular for food retailers: it's cost-effective, offers up to 48 hours performance, is easy to dispose of, looks professional, and takes up very little space on a pallet.

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5 MINUTES WITH... MIKE IMPSON

sales director of Saxon Packaging



customers and aim to be a packaging company willing to provide advice as packaging can be a complicated journey with so many options to choose from and lots of specific terminology used.

WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NEW PRODUCERS LIKE?

We often work with start-up organisations and are prepared to work with them exploring their quirky packaging ideas and help develop a truly unique packaging solution that suits their needs. I feel we are rather creative as a company and passionate about every project we work on – this helps a great deal.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PROJECTS?

Some of our favourite packaging would be: a bespoke-designed flexo three-colour gift packaging for Popcorn Shed, a flexo three-colour Christmas hamper containing seven assorted condiments and oils for Scarlett & Mustard, luxury gift packaging for Maldon Salt which was bespoke and designed and litho-printed with spot UV and a soft laminate finish, and a bespoke-designed luxury litho-printed gift packaging with soft touch laminate and block foil for Seedlip.

WHAT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES DOES SAXON PACKAGING PROVIDE?

We offer a wide range of corrugated packaging solutions plus standard and bespoke design as we have our own in-house design team. This includes various print processes and specialist print finishes.

WHAT MAKES SAXON PACKAGING UNIQUE?

We supply a wide range of packaging solutions and have over 30 year's packaging experience. Our in-house design team is definitely what helps us stand out as we are able to design packaging bespoke to a client's needs. We take the time to build relationships with our



Miguel Campos, export sales manager at food packaging expert Advanta, breaks down how primary packaging can also impact brand perception

- Maintaining harmonious branding should be considered from the initial development stages of a product's packaging, right through to the manufacturing and marketing of the product

- Product branding through packaging is often pigeon-holed as the colours, fonts and imagery used on the outer sleeve of the product. However, branding should also consider the material, size, shape and quality of the packaging

- Food manufacturers should be considering primary packaging factors – that's the functionality, strength and quality of the overall product packaging

- Clever copywriting and attractive graphics are a sure-fire way of grabbing a customer's attention. However, maintaining the same level of consumer confidence is only possible if every aspect of your product, including primary packaging, meets the same expectation



SUPPLIER INSIGHT: JB PACKAGING

Samantha Barrett, customer services administrator, discusses packaging solutions and environmentally-friendly options

WHAT PACKAGING SOLUTIONS DOES JB PACKAGING OFFER?

JB Packaging offers a large range of temperature controlled packaging and sundries from stock, which includes food transit boxes manufactured in the UK in expanded polystyrene or expanded polypropylene, outer cardboard boxes and ice packs as required. We boast over 36 years' experience in the industry, very knowledgeable customer services and speed of delivery.

WHY SHOULD INDEPENDENT FOOD BUSINESSES TURN TO YOU?

We have two distribution depots: one in Livingston in Scotland and another in Torpoint in Cornwall. We also offer online ordering in any quantity from one item to a pallet-load. We also deliver trailer loads if required.

WHICH JB PACKAGING PRODUCTS ARE BEST FOR FOOD RETAILERS?

Our durable yet lightweight EPS and EPP shipping boxes offer thermal

protection which helps to maintain temperature-sensitive products at a constant temperature longer than other traditional packaging. Furthermore, when used with ice sheets, the boxes can maintain food frozen or chilled for a couple of days. This is ideal for both mail order and for delivery.

EPS is manufactured from styrene monomer – low levels of styrene occur naturally in many plants, fruit, vegetables, nuts and meat and is 100% recyclable.

For home delivery, we recommend the consumer reuses the box to keep food fresh when shopping or to reuse it as garden containers as plants are very happy to have warm roots! EPS can also be crumbled and dug into soil for aeration – it's amazing how many different ways that the product can be used!

INTRODUCING AXICON LABELS



Axicon Labels is a specialist supplier of self-adhesive labels, and as well as knowing all there is to know about labelling, the company has expert knowledge of barcoding.

"Our company started out creating barcode images, and then we realised that our customers needed self-adhesive labels to add

these barcodes to their products," explains Adam Carey, print manager for Axicon. "We have progressed a long way since then, and we now specialise in being able to produce any quantity of labels, in a complete range of qualities. These can be blank, for overprinting, in black and white, two or more colours, and in full colour.

"Our labels don't have to include barcodes, but if they do, we can guarantee that they will scan properly. Generally our customers keep coming back to us because we offer any size of print run, very quick turnaround times, and we know about the requirements of

retailers. Helping with advice on the EU 1169/2011 food information regulation which requires allergen information to be displayed correctly is just one example of how we can help".

Weston on the Green-based Axicon Labels has over 30 years' experience of producing labels, with this wealth of experience meaning it's able to provide labels for all types of product. "We really enjoy working with some of our smaller customers, as they often don't realise how sensibly-priced good labels can be, and how they can transform a product into something really special and attractive," added Adam.

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Last Words

The final word on fine food

THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Michelin-starred TV chef John Burton-Race reveals his favourite Devon-based retailers and why quality ingredients are essential in haute cuisine



We are so lucky to have so many fantastic independent shops in the Devon area, but there are two in particular which I would wholeheartedly and genuinely recommend to anyone. The first is Rodney Cleave Country Butcher, based on East Street in Ashburton – it sells the most beautiful meat and produce. I would also recommend the Sharpham vineyard and dairy. Not only is it a stunning location geographically, but they make their own cheese and sparkling rosé on-site, too. For the price point of the

rosé – £25-per-bottle – it is as good as anything produced in France.

Independent retailers really rely on what they are selling. The failure or success of their business relies on the selling of good quality products and superb service. Without exception, they will always provide a

better shopping experience than the alternative. One of the reasons that I visit these places is that they provide the best of the best ingredients, which is crucial for a chef. If you have bought good meat, don't over garnish or complicate it with too many flavours - 50% of cooking is just the ingredient itself. Especially when cooking at home, I keep the focus on the main produce and firmly believe in 'less is more'.

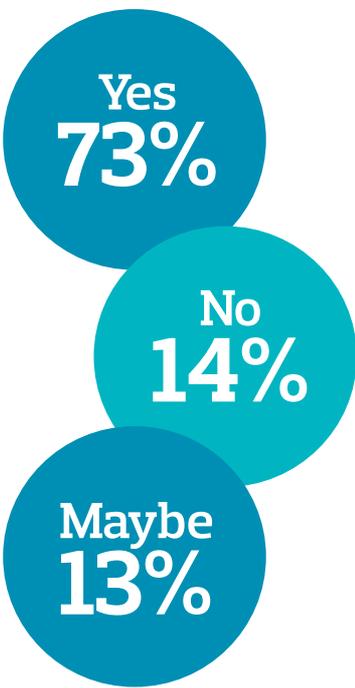
When I'm cooking with the meat from Rodney Cleave, I won't overpower it because I know the taste and quality is there already. I follow the same principle when I'm making anything with the cheese or wine from Sharpham. For example, coming into summer you may want to make a fruit salad for after dinner with accompanying cheeses. Why would you want to taste anything but the beauty of the ingredients already there? Whatever you cook or make with the produce from those retailers, remember to keep it simple. Half of the work has already been done for you.

My latest favourite discovery from an independent retailer is Exmoor Caviar. No one will believe you when you mention that you can get good caviar from Devon, but it's truly amazing. I have started serving it in my restaurant and people thought I was being silly by telling them it was from Devon. It's the only caviar farm in the UK – the company's ethos is to produce outstanding caviar and they achieve just that.

“ We are so lucky to have so many fantastic independent shops in the Devon area ”

TWITTER POLL

Does your shop have a food-to-go section?



SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

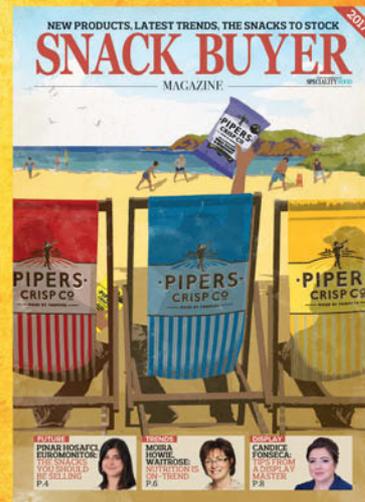
The next issue of Speciality Food includes:

- Essential Products for Autumn & Christmas
- Seafood
- Nantwich International Cheese Awards Preview
- International Cheese Trends
- American Food

For more information please contact Jess on 01206 505901 or jessica.stevenson@aceville.co.uk

SNACK BUYER MAGAZINE

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TALKING SHOP

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Does your business have an online shopping function? Most delis and farm shops don't, and it more than likely serves them well. In a digitally-saturated world where a huge percentage of the general public's time revolves around staring at a screen, the act of visiting a fine food and drink shop can provide the much-needed opportunity for some reprieve. With the likes of Amazon and other grocery behemoths proving so influential on the online marketplace, it can be a hard nut to crack. That being said, there are some fantastic independent online food businesses currently making inroads into the digital market. For brick-and-mortar retailers, the good news is that despite



constantly being told that the high street is in a precarious state, there are lots of reports that indicate that shoppers are opting for the physical shopping experience over the digital kind. Also, the coveted millennial demographic's shopping habits appear to be very much in tune with the offering of speciality retailers. For instance, according to a recent report published by retail insight analyst Acotsa, millennials are more likely than any other age groups to shop at three or more brick-and-mortar outlets per

week – with 44% of millennials opting to visit numerous shops per week, compared with 29% of all shoppers. The evidence suggests that price is a huge motivator for them heading to different retailers, but most importantly, physical proximity and availability of certain brands trumped all other aspects.

Connecting with your customers through events can also make a difference; engaged shoppers may well go on to be valuable ambassadors for your business.

Have you felt the need to put your offering online? Or are you against it? Let me know by emailing james.fell@aceville.co.uk

5 MINUTES WITH... GAVIN COX CEO of Benefit Shakes



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

My job would always have to involve food I'm afraid, so either a chef or a farmer

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

A cellar boy when I was 13 – I cleaned the pipes in a hotel and restocking nine bars

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Family obviously, but seeing people fulfill their potential

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

Delivering pizzas. I had to wear red trousers, a red hat and drive a yellow Fiat Panda with a giant illuminated phone on top of it

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

When you go into a store, pick up your own product and get it scanned through the till, and that first ding of the till means that you know that all your hard work has finally paid off!

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

Paperwork – I'm a salesman

TEA OR COFFEE?

Probably the hardest question! Coffee in the morning and a tea with a biscuit in the afternoon

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY – IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO CHANGE?

Sending 20 emails to then get a one word answer is frustrating

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

A 100-course tasting menu, cooked by a chef called Jeff Baker - the head chef of a restaurant I used to work at

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

Deeds not words

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

I've unwittingly eaten pan-fried bull's testicle (chef's humour)

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest or *Larousse Gastronomique*

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Savoury all the way

DIARY DATES

June

5th – 6th FOOD & GIFT SHOW

Cranmore Park
foodandgiftshow.co.uk

14th – 17th BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW

NEC, Birmingham
bbcgoodfoodshow.com

17th – 19th BELLAVITA

Business Design Centre, London
bellavita.com

21st – 24th ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW

Edinburgh
royalhighlandshow.org

30th – 2nd SUMMER FANCY FOOD SHOW

New York
specialtyfood.com

July

6th COTSWOLD FAYRE CHARITY BALL

cotswold-fayre.co.uk

6th – 8th ALLERGY & FREE FROM SHOW

Olympia, London
allergyshow.co.uk

JUST TV SHOW

Olympia, London
justtvshow.co.uk

LOVE NATURAL LOVE YOU

Olympia, London
lnlo.co.uk

THE EAT SMART SHOW

Olympia, London
eatsmartshow.co.uk

10th – 12th GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW

Harrogate
greatyorkshireshow.co.uk

PARTNER CONTENT

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Martin Chudleigh, marketing director, introduces Dalebrook Supplies: the business to know to boost your display skills and sales



Dalebrook has over 70 years' experience in food display. In fact, the reason the company was founded was to put butcher's garnish in between empty trays post-war when meat was rationed. Our purpose has always been to help retailers create appealing displays.

We've worked with independent retailers of all sizes, before supermarkets even existed; but recently have focused on specialist retailers, sharing with them our expertise of working with a global customer base.

When you're charging a premium price for quality produce, it's surprising how many independent retailers don't display that produce effectively. You may have the best possible food in your counter and be able to talk about the provenance of your produce, how to prepare and cook it, but if the produce doesn't look appealing, the customer won't be tempted to buy it.

Today's customer is discerning, expecting an experience when they're spending their money, so a visually stimulating display is paramount.

Our new Central London melamine displayware showroom is easy to visit, you'll get a hands-on experience viewing our counter display solutions. We organise merchandising events for independent retailers, to help them understand how our melamine bowls, trays and dishes can improve their counter displays, reduce wastage and increase sales.

Contact us using the details below to find out more.

Top display tips

- View your display from your customer's side of the counter. Can you see the full diversity of your offer? Is it easy to differentiate between your speciality and standard products? Do your customers know, without having to ask, why a product is worth what you're charging for it?
- Try the pyramid technique: put a product you'd like to highlight on a higher level – on a pedestal, as it were – and display other products coming down from that. A display of differing heights draw the eye better than a 'flat' one level display.
- Odd numbers work better than even numbers, thanks to the brain's desire to seek patterns wherever it's looking. Display products in groups of 3 or 5 to attract attention.
- Make your displays pack a punch with repetition – using identical elements, repeating them over-and-over again. For example, line up a series of products that are the same style, but different colours. Make sure they're positioned in the same way or the display will lose impact.
- Texture is key to selling food. Your counter is your stage, and it needs a base on which to let the other products sing. Look at different textured food safe display products: try our melamine slate look - great for cheese, or our modern concrete or rustic wood melamine platters all designed for professional retail display.
- It's important to remember you don't need to make one big investment to reinvigorate your counter – in fact, it's better to regularly update elements of your display so it constantly catches your customer's attention. Even just changing the container your product is in, or the format in which it's displayed, can reintroduce your customers to old favourites and increase sales.



Dalebrook has a wide range of melamine products – from platters, bowls, crocks and risers, to utensils, ticket stands, garnish and display accessories – and the expertise to help independent retailers display products to their full potential. To attend a networking event make a showroom appointment, or request more information call 01376 510 101, email sales@dalebrook.com or visit dalebrook.com

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