



British food stars



This month British Food Fortnight celebrates 10 years of championing the best of British. **Clare Hargreaves**, our Seasonal & local writer, recommends some of her favourite artisan products

BRITISH FOOD FORTNIGHT
17 SEPT-
2 OCT

BEEF Rhug Estate

Beautifully marbled, properly aged for deep flavour, and melt-in-the mouth in texture, this is the Rolls-Royce of beef and a favourite of leading chefs, including Raymond Blanc. The beef is pure-bred Aberdeen Angus, grazed on grass on the organic farm on Lord Newborough's Rhug Estate in north Wales. Buy by mail order, or by stopping off at the Estate's roadside farmshop, café and grab-and-go meat van. Next year Rhug opens a swanky new shop and 60-seat restaurant (rhug.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Higher Hacknell Organic Farm**, Umlerleigh, Devon (higherhacknell.co.uk).

More wonderful beef, from organically reared grass-fed South Devon cattle. The burgers are fab.

Laverstoke Park Farm (laverstokepark.co.uk).

Jody Scheckter, ex-Formula-One racing driver turned organic farmer, is another man who doesn't compromise on quality. Fantastic rare-breed beef and buffalo.

STAR QUALITY With beef like this, you'll want Sunday lunch every day.



Cattle on the organic Rhug Estate in north Wales



BREAD AND FLOUR The Old Farmhouse Bakery

The big problem with a visit to the Bitmead family's bakery, in Steventon, Oxfordshire, is what not to choose. Breads range from rye sourdough and crusty

cottage loaves, to fresh onion & cheddar cheese plaits. And then there's the best-selling lardy cake. The bakery, a converted shire horse cartshed, uses the village's original 1939 bread oven and baking tins. Kate Bitmead (above) is scrupulous about sourcing top-quality flours and other ingredients as locally as possible (theoldfarmhousebakery.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Hobbs House Bakery**

(hobbshousebakery.co.uk). Gloucestershire bakery that has been producing brilliant bread for five generations. The light rye sourdough is fantastic.

Little Salkeld Watermill (organicmill.co.uk).

Cumbrian watermill stone-grinding fabulous organic flours from British-grown grains.

STAR QUALITY It's great to know there's a growing number of places you can find 'real' bread and flour.

RAPESEED OIL Wharfe Valley

Hailed as the new olive oil, rapeseed oil's list of virtues is seemingly endless. Not only is it British grown, but it contains far more omega-3 than olive oil, and has a very low saturated fat content. It also lends a beautifully nutty taste to a salad. This golden cold-pressed oil is grown, pressed and bottled by Sallyann Kilby and her family on their farm near Wetherby, and sold throughout Yorkshire. You may have spotted it being used on *Saturday Kitchen* by James Martin, a fan (wharfevalleyfarms.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Hill Farm** (hillfarmoils.com).

This Suffolk farm claims to be the original producer of culinary rapeseed oil in the UK.

Oleifera (oleifera.co.uk). Produced from rape grown in Northumberland and the Scottish borders, this is one of the stars of a growing band.

STAR QUALITY If you're trying to avoid food miles, British rapeseed certainly beats olive oil.



CHEESE Lincolnshire Poacher

This county is more often associated with pancake-flat fields of grain than with dairy farms and cheesemaking. But the Jones family (including Simon and Tim, above), who have farmed on Lincolnshire's only hilly bit, the Wolds, since 1917, have proved the county is capable of top-notch cheese. Made from unpasteurised milk from the Joneses' 230 Holstein cows, the cheese is aged for 12 to 24 months. It has bold, slightly nutty flavours, and a silky smooth texture – like a cross between a cheddar and a Swiss mountain cheese (lincolnshirepoachercheese.com).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Montgomery Cheddar**

(farmhousecheesemakers.com). No list of winning British cheeses is complete without a cheddar. This is without doubt the most fabulous and famous.

Loddon Blewe (twohootscheese.co.uk). Made from ewe's milk, this is one of several award-winning blues made by the Berkshire-based Two Hoots Cheese.

STAR QUALITY These producers prove Brits can do cheese just as well as the French – there's now around 700 to choose from.



Stephen and Geoff Kilby of Wharfe Valley

SMOKED SALMON

Marrbury Smokehouse

Vincent Marr (right) has been netting wild salmon on Galloway's River Cree and smoking it since he was a lad. Today the fish he catches, smokes over whisky and juniper, and carves by hand



is keenly sought by Michelin-starred chefs, including Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles. No wonder – not only is this salmon amazing, but it's one of the few smoked wild salmon available (visitmarrbury.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **The Smokeyard** (thesmokeyard.co.uk). Fabulous organic smoked salmon. The fish, from the fast-flowing waters of the Hebridean islands, is smoked on the Isle of South Uist.

Pinney's of Orford, Suffolk (butleyorfordoysterage.co.uk). Having smoked fish since the 1950s, the Pinney family has got it to a fine fishy art.

STAR QUALITY These smoked salmons are all a far cry from the oily mass-produced stuff.



ICE CREAM

Simply Ice Cream

The creamiest and most indulgently luxurious ice cream I've tasted is made by caterer Sally Newall in Kent. Not surprising when you look at the label: the ingredients are simply double cream, milk and sugar, plus original and delicious additions – homemade honeycomb crunch (her best-seller), locally grown fruit, or marmalade and stem ginger (simplyicecream.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Roskilly's** (roskillys.co.uk). Cream of Cornwall's ices, containing organic cream and milk from Tregellast Barton Farm.

Cream O'Galloway's Maid Fair range (creamogalloway.co.uk and maid-fair.com). Luxury ice cream using organic milk from Wilma and David Finlay's Scottish dairy farm.

STAR QUALITY These producers show you can still create ice cream the way your grandmother made it, even if you're commercial.

ENGLISH BUBBLY

Ridgeview

A decade ago if you'd said that we'd be producing sparkling wines to match French Champagnes, you'd have been treated as delusional. But Mike Roberts is giving the French a serious run for their money with the vibrant bubbly produced on his Ridgeview Estate on the South Downs of England, in Sussex.

Last year one of his sparkling wines beat the French Champagnes in an international blind tasting, and as climates get warmer, Mike is confident that England could soon be where it's at. The Queen clearly agrees: she served it at her 80th birthday bash (ridgeview.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Breaky Bottom**

(breakybottom.co.uk). Another beautiful Sussex bubbly, crafted by the half-French Peter Hall.

Camel Valley (camelvalley.co.uk). Produced

in Cornwall by former pilot Bob Lindo.

STAR QUALITY It's nice to know we can stop apologising about English wine. Cheers!



CHOCOLATE

William Curley

If I had to choose my final nibble, it would be one of William Curley's chocolates. Top of my list has to be his sea salt caramel creations, but I also love his more unusual apricot & wasabi chocolates. If you're spotting a Japanese influence, you're right – William is married to Osaka-born Suzue, a pâtissier. Their chocolates tick ethical boxes, too – the chocolate is sourced from Amedei, a Tuscan company that improves the conditions of its cacao growers (williamcurley.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Demarquette** (demarquette.co.uk). Marc Demarquette is another award-winning London chocolatier whose inventive creations send me to chocoheaven every time.

Chococo (chococo.co.uk). There's a regional flavour to the luxury chocolates made by Clare and Andy Burnet in Purbeck, who use Dorset cream among other local ingredients.

STAR QUALITY Who said only the Belgians could make chocolate?



Creative chocolatier William Curley



APPLE JUICE

Day's Cottage

When the Gloucestershire orchard planted by Helen Brent-Smith's great-aunt in 1912 produced a bumper crop in 1992, she and partner David Kaspar realised apples were their destiny and quit their London jobs. They began selling their juice locally and now make around 30,000 bottles of juice, cider and perry annually. These include 30 apple juices made from single varieties, some unique to Gloucestershire, such as Taynton Codlin and Flower of the West. The orchards are unsprayed so wildlife flourishes, too (dayscottage.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Chegworth Valley**

(chegworthvalley.com). Another great juice from fruit grown on a family farm in Kent. Nice blends too, using pears, raspberries, beetroot, rhubarb and more.

Orchard Pig (orchardpig.co.uk). Cloudy juices from apples cultivated in ancient Somerset orchards.

They even do a sparkling one, which is a winner.

STAR QUALITY With juices like this, what more delicious way to get 1 of your 5-a-day?

SAUSAGES

Castellano's

Born in Sicily and trained in France as a charcutier, Vincent Castellano knows a great banger. He now runs a deli-charcuterie in Bristol, where he produces an array of sausages, all made from free-range locally sourced pork. Best-sellers are his Gloucester Old Spot and his Bristol Banger (with ginger and mace), but I also love the sausages he sometimes makes from wild boar and from venison. Vincent produces superb salamis, chorizos and black sausages, too (castellanos.co.uk).

TWO MORE TO TRY... **Redhill Farm** (redhillfarm.co.uk). Farm making typical Lincolnshire sausages using coarsely ground pork from its own free-range pigs.

Taste Tradition Ltd (tastetradition.co.uk). Smooth-textured sausages from rare and traditional breed pork, crafted by Charles Ashbridge and his mother Joyce on their family farm in Yorkshire.

STAR QUALITY Happily, traditional British bangers, using wholesome ingredients, are alive and well.



• For details of British Food Fortnight, 17 Sept–2 Oct, visit lovebritishfood.co.uk. We would also love to hear about British foods you'd go out of your way to find. Make your nominations by 14 Aug for this year's BBC Food & Farming awards – visit bbc.co.uk/foodawards