



Producer Profiles

By Nicole Martorana, Bristol Food Connections

CocoNuts

Cecily Mills
- The Lizard, Cornwall -



Product

Dairy-free coconut-based ice creams

Story

None could say Cecily Mills is unmotivated. A young first-time businesswoman and mother, her passion for her work with CocoNuts inspired her to leave her career in London, move house, and start working again 3 weeks after giving birth. With a background in commercial management, visual merchandising, and business, Cecily is able to apply these skills to her work with CocoNuts. Challenging people to live with vitality and energy, she wants to spread the word that 'free from' isn't the same as 'going without'.

As she was growing up, Cecily, born in Hong Kong to a Guyanese mother and English father, would travel with her family every few years to visit her mother's homeland. Whilst there, they would buy coconuts from the man on the corner, who would swipe them open with a huge machete. Cecily and her siblings would then drink the water greedily before scooping out the jelly. Now mother to a 3-month-old baby girl, Cecily wants to provide similar memories for her daughter while also bringing this flavor to Cornwall.

Awards

Raw Chocolate flavour shortlisted in Free From Food Awards 2015




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Let Them Eat...

Lisa Hackett
- Saltash, Cornwall -



Product

Gluten-free, wheat-free, and dairy-free baked goods, with sugar-free, egg-free, and nut-free products in development

Story

After being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, Lisa Hackett was struggling to find foods that were safe for her to eat. The main prepared foods she encountered seemed to be uninviting, bland, and oddly textured. Bored with the current options on the market, she decided she could do better and thus Let Them Eat... was born.

Lisa's goal is to provide those members of the public that need or choose to be gluten- and/or dairy-free with great tasting food from a recognised brand so people can enjoy a sumptuous treat without fear of cross-contamination. Through her own experience, Lisa understands the importance of provenance of ingredients, scrutiny of the supply chain, and keeping the product protected from point of manufacture through to when it reaches the consumer's mouth. She has plans to expand her products to a full line of gluten-free, wheat-free, dairy-free, sugar-free, egg-free, and nut-free products with nationwide distribution.

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Little Jack Horners

James Hughes Davies
- Frome, Somerset -



Product

Sausage rolls

Story

In his late twenties and working as a chef, James wasn't satisfied and felt a pull to run his own business. They were selling potpies at the restaurant in which he was working and he had an idea. After setting up his own business from the back of a local pub, he had a base for evening-led trade and sub-let the kitchen during the day to make pies for sale at farmers markets. This worked for a while, but it soon became clear that the time was coming for James to consider opening his own restaurant. Simultaneously, he started selling sausage rolls at farmers market for immediate consumption and they encountered solid success. This led to a quandary for James: should he open a restaurant or go on a journey to launch his sausage rolls?

In 2013, James loaded his van full of sausage rolls and went to the Wilderness Festival, where he quickly sold out. Not ready to settle down and looking for an excuse to return to the West Country where he had grown up, sausage rolls seemed like the perfect solution that would also allow him to travel the country working events. Having grown up on a farm, James describes himself as a country boy at heart but had a mid-twenties crisis in the Shetland Islands, trained up as a journalist, and lived for a time in Lerwick working in a dockside pub chasing stories. However, he then returned south to train as a chef, subsequently working as a private chef, restaurant chef, and organic food company manager before launching Little Jack Horners in 2010.

Focused on becoming the country's recognised premier sausage roll manufacturer, James is leading Little Jack Horners to crack the wholesale market. This can be a challenge due to their commitment to only crafting handmade products and using high-welfare, free-range pork and chicken from local producers. But James is committed - no compromises. Jack describes the business as "totally about the South West" and the staff are all based three miles from the company's Mells kitchen. By investing in Little Jack Horners, Jack hopes customers will see they are also investing in a local food community.

Awards

Named 'London's best sausage rolls' by the Evening Standard

Venison pie named one of the top three venison dishes in London by the Evening Standard

Named a recommended food stall at Blissfields Festival 2013 by Mintsouth



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POPTI

Ali Beech
- Bude, Cornwall -



Product

Artisanal savoury biscuits

Story

"Popti" is Cornish for bakery, so this serves as the perfect name for Ali Beech's North Cornwall artisan bakehouse. Built on foundations of quality, integrity and provenance, POPTI is focused on making simple, high-quality biscuits made with only five ingredients and with packaging that allows customers to see the product before buying it.

Ali's original bakery business was born in her farmhouse kitchen, where she made pies, pasties, cakes and traybakes. After receiving positive customer support, Ali moved the bakery into Norton Barton Artisan Food Village alongside a producer of fine charcuterie and a cheesemaker with whom she founded a not-for-profit food festival for 8000 attendees.

POPTI's initial range of savoury biscuits were developed specifically to fill a gap in the market for artisanal Cornish savoury biscuits as identified through feedback from delis and farm shops. Having developed the initial range of four flavours of crunchy, moreish, wafer-thin savoury biscuits, Ali invited feedback from potential stockists and received an overwhelmingly positive response. On 4 February 2015, POPTI Ltd was incorporated.

In terms of next steps for POPTI, Ali is focused on developing the website and creating bespoke packaging, as well as further expanding the range of products. Currently in development are a variety of cheese nibbles to accompany drinks as well as Cornish-inspired biscotti in flavors like Whortleberry Pie.

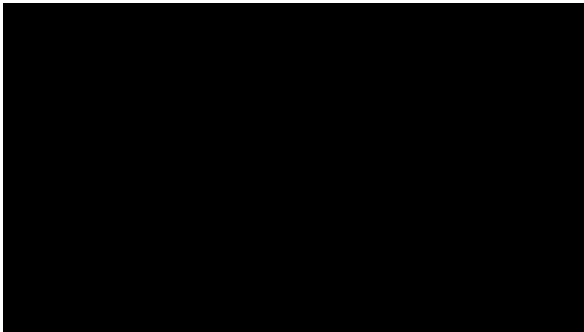
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/POPTICornishBakehouse



Sweet Cumin

Binixa (Bini) Ludlow
- Clapton, Radstock -



Product

Luxury traditional Indian ready meals

Story

Taught to cook from age 7 and able to run the family home by age 13, Bini Ladlow has a long history of knowing her way around a kitchen. After working as a secondary school teacher for over 15 years, she received her big break after entering the TV competition, 'Food Glorious Food,' for which she became a regional winner.

Educated to BSc Hons in Production and MSc in Marketing & Production, Bini founded Sweet Cumin four years ago to fulfill a market need of teaching others that there is more to traditional Indian food than Chicken Tikka Masala. From the outset, her goal was to teach Indian cooking skills whilst developing award-winning products.

With a thriving cookery school, Bini has turned her attention to further developing and supplying a range of products to high-end, delis, farm shops and supermarkets with the aim of providing busy working people with the convenience of home cooked Indian food ready meals with authentic flavours.

Awards

Guild of Fine Food 1 & 2 Stars recipient
Taste of the West Gold Award winner
National Cookery School Awards finalist
Food Glorious Food TV regional winner



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Teatonics

Charles Grummitt & Rosie Marteau
- Shaftesbury, Dorset -



Product

Mind Awakening Yerba Mate (yerba mate, grapefruit, citrus peel, peppermint, rose hips)

Laid Back Botanicals (green rooibos, chamomile, lavender, hops, elderflower)

Story

Charles and Rosie met as students at Cambridge University. Charles, chiefly responsible for product development, is a PhD biochemist with a background in academic labs and biotech startups and an understanding of the bioactive properties of plants. Rosie weaves her flair for the written word and background in modern languages into fundraising, communications and social media strategy.

In 2013, the duo traveled from Costa Rica to Argentina where they continuously encountered yerba mate on Uruguayan beaches, Montevideo's streets, an Argentine ranch, and a Paraguayan roadside stand. They were particularly inspired by the old *curandero* (a kind of apothecary or healer) at the roadside stand, where he combined herbs, roots, leaves and flowers to make on-the-spot bespoke blends based on each customer's ailments.

Partly inspired by the South American way of life and yerba mate culture, and looking for a way of combining complementary skills of a scientist and a communications professional, Rosie and Charles created Teatonics. Their goal is to provide organic botanical infusions of novel tea-like herbs from other cultures, artfully blended to energise, relax, rejuvenate and nourish. Although the ingredients come from around the world, everything is blended and packed within the region and involves local partners and suppliers.

Awards

Shortlisted for Ocado's Next Top Supplier 2014 and 2015

Grocery Accelerator 2015 finalist

Yeo Valley British Business of the Month 2015 winner

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