

Innovations

AWARDS ISSUE, JUNE 2009



The winners of the Grampian Food Forum Innovation Awards were announced on 18th March 2009 by chairman of the judging panel, Mr Alex Fisher, Managing Director of 3663 First for Foodservice, at the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa.

Mr Fisher judged products along with Sarah Bonnington, Food & Cook Shop Buyer for Dobbies Garden Centres and Mr Michael Barker, Fresh Foods Editor, The Grocer. The judges spent the day tasting and assessing over 30 new products from 18 north east food and drink companies.

Around 180 guests from the food and drink industry, retail and foodservice sectors attended the dinner, where Alex Fisher also delivered a keynote speech.

"All three judges today have been very impressed with the dedication and commitment from all the entrants. Everyone has believed in what they are doing and believe they can make a success of it. All three judges were slightly concerned that some excellent product may not reach its potential without professional help on marketing and distribution techniques, however we have spotted one or two products which we will endeavour to support within our respective businesses".

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THE GRAMPIAN FOOD FORUM INNOVATION AWARD FOR A NEW INNOVATIVE RETAIL PRODUCT LAUNCHED IN 2008

FOR A BUSINESS WITH MORE THAN 25 EMPLOYEES



1st – Gordon & MacPhail

BENROMACH ORIGINS SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

Benromach Distillery has launched Benromach Origins Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whisky. Benromach Origins (50% ABV), is a series of special bottlings crafted to highlight how small changes in the art of whisky making can help shape the character of the final product.

Benromach Origins is crafted by just two men at Speyside's smallest working distillery.

Distilled, matured and bottled in Moray, the first batch of Benromach Origins was produced using Golden Promise barley, grown in the heart of Speyside and pure spring water from the nearby Romach Hills. Matured in first and second fill sherry casks, this full bodied single malt displays rich, fruity notes, intertwined with peat smoke and soft, spicy flavours.

Experienced distillers personally ensure only the highest quality spirit is filled into hand selected oak casks and laid down to mature in a traditional dunnage warehouse at the distillery. When the spirit has matured to the highest quality standard it is bottled as Benromach Origins Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whisky.

From the outset, the philosophy at Benromach has been to embrace innovation and seek to position itself as a boutique distillery, not unlike the approach of many French Wine Châteaux. Traditional handcrafted values, allied to the small size of the distillery leave room for flexibility in the production process and provide the opportunity to embrace innovation.

Bottled at 50% ABV, Benromach Origins is presented in bespoke a 70cl bottle and tin which retail of £34.99 – £36.99. Although the packaging embraces the design values of the rest of the Benromach range, the mustard and earthy tones provide consumers with subliminal references to the origins of the product.

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2nd – Dean's of Huntly Limited HOMESTYLE OAT BISCUIT RANGE

Premium shortbread manufacturer, Dean's, took a step in a new direction with the launch of the Homestyle Oat Biscuit Range. The introduction of these biscuits is a major new development for Dean's stretching the brand out with shortbread. In addition to offering the loyal Dean's consumer a new premium biscuit eating sensation, these biscuits will also encourage new customers to the brand.

Using only the finest Scottish oats and other natural ingredients, these biscuits maintain the link to the Dean's brand core values by using traditional hand baking methods to produce a luxury biscuit that has a comforting home baked taste, texture and appearance – an indulgent and luxurious addition to the company's portfolio.

With distinctive, Dean's branded packaging there are five varieties being launched; Sultana & Heather Honey, Apple & Cranberry, Coconut & Treacle, Stem Ginger and Original, each in 150g boxes, containing eight biscuits with a retail price of approximately £1.49.

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3rd – Maclean's Highland Bakery Ltd MINI SHORTBREAD "WEE PACKS"

Over the years Maclean's Highland Bakery have seen an increase in the amount of business they have been doing with Hamper companies. It was one of these customers who came up with the idea that there was a real need for a small box of Shortbread.

Initially focusing on Hamper Companies and the gift market it soon became very apparent that this product appealed to many more potential markets. Food service was a big one as Hotels, Trains, and Airline companies placed orders.

Originally budgeted sales of 20,000 units in 12 months were surpassed after just 3 months, the newly estimated sales forecast for 2009 is 200,000 units, with orders placed from as far afield as Japan.

The Luxury Mini Shortbread comes in individual size portions to be enjoyed as a treat or to share with a friend. Portions are packaged in 'wee' cardboard boxes (50gms) promoting the marketing strapline 'when less is more' – at a retail price of £1.00.

"This product is very unique as there is nothing quite like it and we can confidently claim it to be the smallest box of shortbread in the world. It gives our customers a real point of difference when trying to stand out from the competition. It is not a price sensitive product as it gives a real feel good factor to the end user."

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LESS THAN 25 EMPLOYEES

1st – Loaf Face Cookery Co-Operative Ltd SWEET SWIRLS

Loaf Face is a workers' co-operative created to synergise business and family life. Founded in 2007, it currently employs 3 staff.

As three health conscious mothers, they wanted bread without preservatives or other unnecessary ingredients, and as experimental and creative cooks, wanted to make bread that was not just white or wholemeal.

With no artificial flavours, preservatives or other additives these breads have lively real flavours and freshness.

They are available in two varieties - Berry Nice - a soft, sweet buttery bread laced with Auchtydonald strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, and raspberries with a twist of black pepper; Toffee Apple - a soft, sweet buttery bread twisted with Pitmedden apples, spices and toffee sauce. Each loaf weighs approximately 600-650g, can provide 6-8 servings, and sells for £4.00.

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2nd – The Store HOMECOMING SAUSAGE

The Store was established in July 2000 with the aim of supplying consumers with the finest Aberdeen Angus Beef & Lamb from their own farm through their farm shop and farmers markets. The Store has now grown to include a second outlet in Edinburgh, with 5 Star hotels and restaurants as customers and an expanding internet client base, as well as supplying Waitrose.

The Homecoming Sausage was developed to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns. The ingredients optimise Scottish product use and include Aberdeen Angus Beef, haggis and a traditional Scottish black pudding recipe. The sausages are sold in packs of 6 (450g) and retail at £3.50.

This product is differentiated from its main competitors, by fully utilising local produce, primarily sourced from their own farm. This allows full traceability of ingredients and a connection with the local countryside for the consumer. The range has a low salt content which allows the full flavour of the product to be experienced by the consumer.

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3rd – Ola Oils OLA EXTRA VIRGIN COLD PRESSED RAPESEED OIL

Westfield Farms began Ola Oils as a farm diversification in May 2008. Ola Oils comprises husband and wife John and Connie Sorrie who grow and harvest the crop, dress the seed prior to pressing and then filter, bottle, cap and label the bottles on their farm in Inverurie.

Ola Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil is a healthier alternative to imported olive oil. It has less than half the saturated fat of olive oil and has 10 times the amount of omega 3 EFA. A versatile oil, it can be used for all types of cooking including salad dressings, marinades, baking and because of its high smoke point (230C), is particularly good for roasting potatoes, vegetables etc. The variety of seed is carefully selected to give the best flavour and colour.

The Ola Oil range comprises - Ola Extra Virgin Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil 250ml bottle RRP £3.30, Ola Extra Virgin Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil 500ml bottle RRP £4.95, and Ola Extra Virgin Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil 500ml bottle in presentation tube RRP £5.95

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JOHNSTON CARMICHAEL AWARD FOR THE BEST MARKETING PLAN

Winner – Mackie's of Scotland
DOUBLE AWARD WINNER!

SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE AWARD FOR A NEW INNOVATIVE FOODSERVICE PRODUCT LAUNCHED IN 2008

FOR A BUSINESS WITH MORE THAN 25 EMPLOYEES

Winner – Mackie's of Scotland LUXURY DAIRY ICE CREAM



Mackie's has been a working farm business since the early 20th century and diversified into ice cream making in 1986.

Mackie's environmental activity and recent investment in 3 private wind turbines which provide all their power means that their products are all "made with renewable energy" - an added feel good factor for the ethical consumer.

Mackie's have recently updated 3 of their best selling flavours from their Luxury Dairy Ice Cream 5 litre napoli "scooping" tub range - New Improved Chocolate, Butterscotch and Chocolate Mint. Chocolate has been a staple favourite in the range but their Traditional is still the UK's best selling luxury dairy ice cream.

Through extensive testing Mackie's found that using melted chocolate as the flavouring (instead of a cocoa powder) enhanced both the taste and texture of their Chocolate variety. Butterscotch and Chocolate Mint varieties have also had recent updates and improvements.

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LESS THAN 25 EMPLOYEES

Winner – The Store HOMECOMING SAUSAGE

The Homecoming Sausage has made its mark on The Store sausage range and is here to stay. The use of local produce has proved a vital ingredient in the success of the Homecoming Sausage with young professionals and working families who have an increasing interest in food provenance and healthy eating.

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MARCLIFFE HOTEL & SPA AWARD FOR THE JUDGES CHOICE

Winner – Aunty Betty's

An ice-cream and sweetie shop, Aunty Betty's was opened in October 2008 by Lesley Duff.

Aunty Betty's prides itself in creating the perfect ice-cream cake for any Birthday, Christening, Wedding, Anniversary or Corporate Occasion.

Using award winning Ice-cream by Moira and Dougal Simpson of Buckie, Lesley and her staff create innovative ice-cream cakes to order.

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TASTE OF GRAMPIAN RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR THE BEST USE OF LOCAL PRODUCE

Winner – The Auld Kirk, Ballater

Set in the heart of Royal Deeside, within the Cairngorms National Park, the Auld Kirk has built a reputation for good food, comfortable accommodation and a warm welcome that is the hallmark of Scottish hospitality.

Recently refurbished in 2006 and re-launched as a Restaurant with Rooms, The Auld Kirk provides a pleasureable eating experience, using the best of Scotland's larder and traditional Scottish recipes, while giving them an appropriate contemporary twist.

The high vaulted ceilings, cathedral windows and ornate chandeliers of the 'Spirit Restaurant' provide a unique and elegant dining experience in which to enjoy great food and wine. The Minister's room is a small intimate room which can be reserved as a private dining room in the evenings and for private functions up to 16 people.

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ANDERSON'S PACKAGING (ABERDEEN) LTD AWARD FOR THE PRODUCT WITH THE BEST PACKAGING

Winner – Loaf Face Cookery Co-Operative Ltd

To minimise their carbon footprint and support local business, these hand-made, preservative-free products are crafted using locally sourced and fairly-traded ingredients where possible. All breads are attractively packaged in bio-degradable bags, using twine and recyclable card labels, with a recyclable sticker to name the product and list the ingredients.

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SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN 2008

Winner – Lossie Seafoods Ltd "The Pride of Scotland"

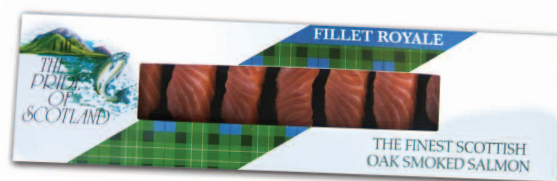
BESPOKE SCOTTISH SMOKED SALMON

Lossie Seafoods successfully exports their premium quality product in a wide variety of formats around the world.

Personal contact and bespoke service are key to how they operate. A major USP is their ability to provide product to the individual customer's exact specifications and crucially by developing individual brands and packaging for clients ensuring that customers won't find the same product being sold by someone else.

Overall what impressed the judges was the company's totally integrated approach to their business, covering product, process, spread of markets, customer care and the investment they have made in developing and encouraging a loyal and dedicated workforce.

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THE ROWETT INSTITUTE OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH AWARD FOR COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY EATING

Winner – J G Ross (Bakers) Ltd GARIOCH OAT BREAD

JG Ross is a privately owned family business established in 1962. In February 2007 the business made a massive step forward and moved into a new purpose built £4.2 million bakery, offices, convenience store and coffee shop at Highclere Business Park, Inverurie. The company now has over 380 employees working across 2 food production sites and 26 shops.

The Garioch Oat bread has over 30% oat content. This bread has a much higher proportion of oats than many other commercially available breads. The oats used are milled locally and guaranteed to have been grown in Scotland. The bread was developed as part of a collaboration with Macphie's of Glenberrie and the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health.

Craft bakeries in the North East in particular are assumed to offer only high fat/sugar and indulgent type products. JG Ross hope to alter this perception and make healthy products an extensive category within their core range. Approached by the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health to develop an Oat bread for one of their clinical trials it seemed the perfect opportunity to make a serious attempt to launch a healthier baked product. Whilst the bread was developed for a specific study into type 2 diabetes it has been targeted at all consumers who are health conscious by promoting the attributes of oats and lower salt levels and the loaf complies with the FSA 2012 targets for salt levels in bread.

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AWARD FOR THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT FROM THE 2008 GRAMPIAN FOOD FORUM AWARDS

Winner – Highland Country Foods Limited SLICED PORK, SAGE & ONION STUFFING FOR SANDWICHES

Based in the heartland of Scotland's natural larder, Highland Country Foods have been an integral supplier to the Scottish food industry for more than 30 years.

Sliced Pork, Sage & Onion Stuffing was developed specifically with the sandwich industry in mind. It is cooked in a meatloaf style, lightly browned on top, with each slice rectangular in shape with a coarse meaty texture. In addition to the sliced product for sandwiches, they now offer this product in crumbled form for use in hot wraps and mayo mixes.

The success of this product has encouraged Highland Country Foods to look at using the same process for a range of rustic crumble pizza toppings; Italian Sausage, Spicy Beef and Spicy Pork.

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