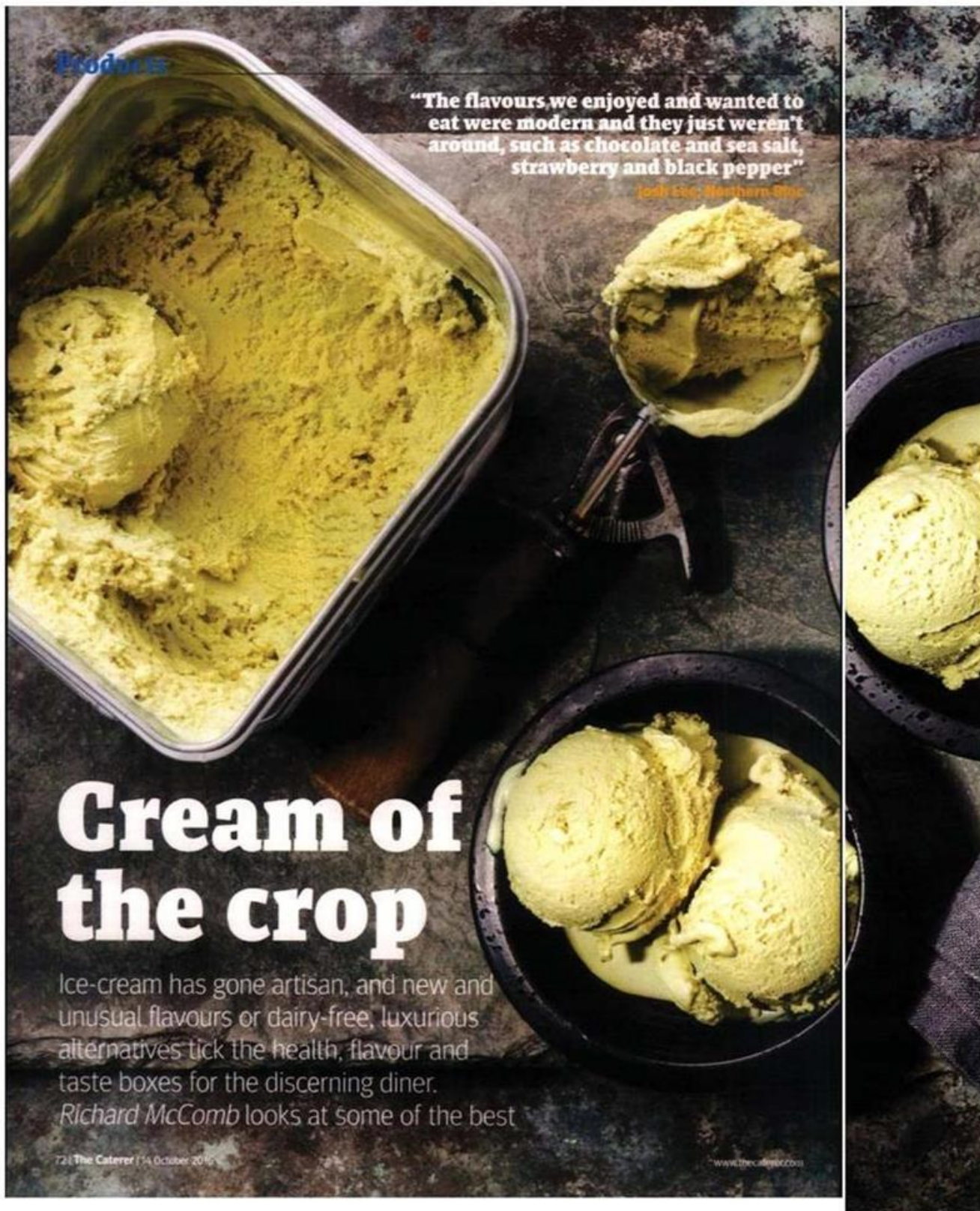


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Gone are the days when an ice-cream meant a 99 cone, a vanilla wafer sandwich or a scoop of rum and raisin. Today the talk is of artisan flavours, salted caramel, strawberry and black pepper, fromage blanc sorbet and “dairy” products without dairy.

This is a sector where there is no room for complacency and the challenges faced by the industry have been laid bare by Mintel in its *Ice-cream and Desserts* report, which revealed that sales of ice-cream, sorbet and frozen yogurt dropped 7% between 2010 and 2015. The downward trend in volume sales is predicted to continue until 2020. So-called premiumisation in the market, boosted by new product development, is where the market is at, according to Mintel.

The health dangers attached to heavy sugar consumption sparked a major food debate in 2014, and Mintel found that 30% of purchasers now limit ice-cream consumption due to its sugar content. Conversely, the healthy eating agenda presents opportunities for innovation in low-sugar variants and luxury products designed for special occasions.

Cool flavours

Leeds ice-cream company Northern Bloc is among the new breed of manufacturers developing low-sugar and dairy-free products for catering. Director Josh Lee says: “We set out wanting to create a natural product, low in sugar and fat with a high-quality taste, texture and ingredients. The flavours we enjoyed and wanted to eat were modern and they just weren’t around, such as chocolate and sea salt, or strawberry and black pepper.”

Northern Bloc plans to launch an all-natural children’s range of ice-creams, made using no refined sugar, in November.

“Customers are moving away from large, cheap tubs to a more bespoke, artisan ice-cream, similar to the trend for quality coffee that has become prevalent in recent years,” adds fellow director Dirk Mischendahl.

“The ice-cream market is very competitive, with a number of brands playing largely on the posh farmhouse trend or experimenting with outlandish, crazy flavours. However, the issue of sugar seems to be a massive one and has led to consumers becoming more conscious about the type of treat they have and looking more to the ingredients list than ever before.”

Make it fun

Suncream Dairies urges caterers to maximise the indulgence factor of ice-cream, while ensuring what they serve children meets with parental approval for nutrition. “Parents need to be confident that their children’s choices contain natural and wholesome ingredients, especially in light of the many allergy and dietary factors,” says Rebecca Manfredi, managing director of Suncream Dairies.

“The temptation is to play safe and just offer the traditional ice-cream flavours, especially on a children’s menu, but don’t be afraid to push the boundaries and offer something new or unusual. Ice-cream enjoys year-round

popularity, so there are some great business-building opportunities available if you’re prepared to devote time to planning and developing your ice-cream menu.”

Caterers should think carefully about the way ice-cream is served, especially to children. Manfredi says: “Child-sized portions can still be generous and offer good value for money, but don’t overwhelm children with enormous servings as parents will then think these are a waste of money if they don’t finish them.

“Serve the ice-cream in attractive dishes, maybe even unbreakable ones for very young children, and appeal to their sense of fun or adventure by decorating the ice-cream with some fun accessories, sweets or fresh fruit to reflect and complement the main flavours.”

Suncream’s fun new Gelato Gold Bubblegum & Marshmallow Italian-style ice-cream, made with fresh double cream, is an ideal choice for children. The light blue colour is achieved through the use of spirulina, a natural and safe micro water plant.

For a dairy-free alternative, Suncream recently relaunched its range of premium sorbets in response to increased consumer demand for lactose-free desserts. Containing just 0.5% fat, the fruit purées are still imported from Italy, but the small amount of milk that was previously included has been eliminated.

The real deal

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Suncream's Gelato Gold Bubblegum & Marshmallow ice-cream



“Ice-cream enjoys year-round popularity, so there are some great business-building opportunities available”

Rebecca Manfredi, Suncream Dairies

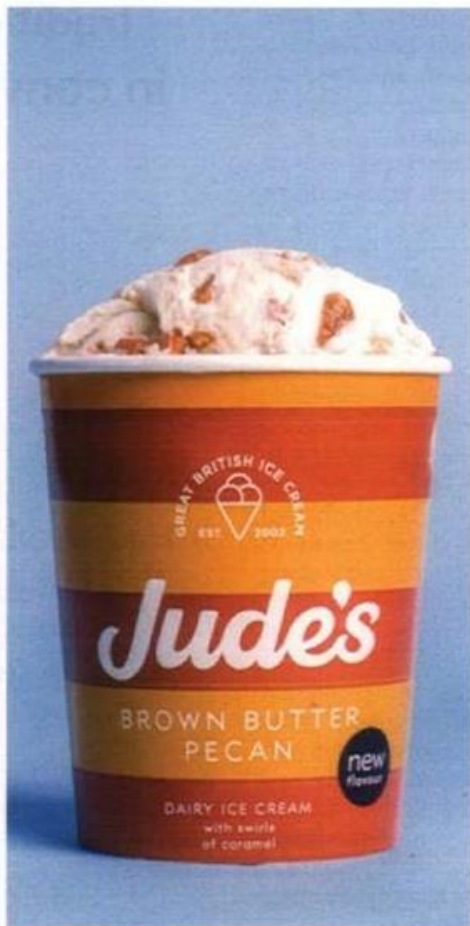
According to Mintel, the UK gelato market is still embryonic, but there are indications that the Italian ice-cream category is starting to take off. Remeo Gelato is made in Italy from natural ingredients and is served in hand-filled

transparent jars to preserve taste and recreate an Italian gelateria experience.

The gelato, shipped from Italy every week, is 35% lower in fat than regular gelato and has a



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Top tips

Investing time in developing your ice-cream menu will pay dividends, but planning is vital. Here are some tips from Suncream:

- Offer both traditional and contemporary flavours to ensure there is something to suit everyone.
- Don't be afraid to push the boundaries by introducing new or unusual flavours – you'll soon know what's popular and what's not.
- Be clear on food intolerances and allergens – for example, state if products are gluten-free, egg-free or suitable for vegetarians.
- Presentation matters – make sure your crockery complements the ice-cream. Try serving a tasting platter of different flavoured mini-portions of ice-creams in shot glasses to encourage tasting without over-indulgence.

- Stock as many flavours as is economically viable, but consider the practicalities – the greater your range, the more freezer space you'll need.
- Stick to recommended storage instructions, as accurate freezer temperatures are key to keeping ice-cream in optimum condition.

reduced air content compared with regular ice-creams thanks to a slow-churning method. Quality ingredients are crucial, including milk from northern Italy, Italian espresso, Madagascan vanilla and pistachios from Sicily.

Remeo Gelato also has a Caffè Espresso flavour, made using 30% liquid espresso, as well as a mango sorbet, made from Alphonso mangoes sourced in India. It is dairy-free, fat-free and made with inulin from the agave plant, a natural ingredient rich in fibre.

The company forecasts growth in the high-end market. A spokesman said: "Food is going more and more towards premium and luxury and customers are looking for things that are unique and make them feel special and that are at the same time authentic. Free-from is definitely a trend that will remain. We are assessing whether to launch a lactose-free line."

Modern British

It's all about flavour innovation and collaboration at Jude's Ice Cream, which uses a traditional crème anglaise base flavoured with natural ingredients. A new Gin & Tonic Ice-cream, made with Sipsmith gin, and Brown Butter Pecan flavours were the first of their type. They are clean tasting, creamy and indulgent. In the summer, Jude's also created a limited edition Crunchy Peanut Butter ice-cream with peanut butter brand Whole Earth.

There is also the option of old meets new when it comes to dessert offerings. At Fresh Direct, head of food development Duncan Parsonage says "trendy" ingredients or flavours can be mixed with the classic staples for dairy-inspired desserts, such as miso and orange

cheesecake, salted caramel crème brûlée, matcha tea mousse or smoked beetroot.

Kerrymaid Angelito Ice-cream Mix offers caterers a vanilla ice-cream base for sundaes, allowing caterers to change their sundae offering seasonally. Jessica Lalor, brand manager for Kerrymaid, says: "Ice-cream is a real



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contender in the foodservice channel as operators look to move away from traditional flavours in favour of something unconventional.

“Ice-cream sandwiches are making a reappearance with a modern twist, as the traditional wafer is replaced with homemade cookies. Ice-cream flavours, including avocado, cardamom and bourbon caramel, will be favoured by consumers, and inspiration will be taken from popular cocktails, such as Margarita with a mix of lime and tequila flavours.”

Suppliers

Brakes
www.brake.co.uk

Northern Bloc
www.northern-bloc.com

Colston Bassett
www.colstonbassettdairy.co.uk

Remeo Gelato
www.remeogelato.com

Jude's
www.judes.co.uk

Suncream Dairies
www.suncreamicecream.com

Kerrymaid
www.kerrymaid.com

Mintel Ice-cream report
<http://store.mintel.com/ice-cream-and-desserts-uk-june-2015>

Nonno Nanni
www.nonnonanni.it/en



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Brakes' Cream Fudge ice-cream