

VIPs\*

## \*Very important producers & suppliers



In every issue, we feature the story behind the brand of top-notch products and ingredients that have won stars at the Great Taste Awards.

These awards recognise outstanding food and drink and have 10,000 entries. No mean feat, then, to win Best Regional Speciality...



### SUPREME CHAMPION AND BEST REGIONAL SPECIALITY London and the South East

#### Asad Khan, Snowflake Gelato

When all the regional winners have been decided, they then go forward to the final judging panel, where the judges taste blind and mark their scores. The winner is the Supreme Champion and in 2014, Asad Khan received the ultimate accolade for his raspberry sorbetto.

A former IT professional, Asad has two gelato boutiques in London. In 2013, he won three stars for his strawberry gelato and his customers advised him to enter

the raspberry! The secret, says Asad, "is to keep it 100% natural, only using fresh fruit, guaranteeing a 65% raspberry content. We also make the sorbet by hand in 4-litre batches, allowing the fruits to retain their great flavour and vibrant colour."

They also use grape sugar, which gives a smoother texture, and spring water, not tap, which makes a big difference to the taste. Here, Asad is pictured with his resident gelato chef, Paolo Riviaccio. [snowflakegelato.co.uk](http://snowflakegelato.co.uk)

### BEST REGIONAL SPECIALITY Northern Ireland

#### Peter Hannan, Moyallon Sweet Bacon Ribs

Featuring charismatic Irishman, Peter Hannan as a three-gold-star winner in Feel Good Food is becoming a bit of a habit! In 2014, he walked away with a record 35 stars, he won Supreme Champion in 2012 and has won the award for Best Regional Speciality Northern Ireland for three years on the trot. Peter is the managing director of Hannan Meats, based in Moira, about a 30-minute drive outside of Belfast. This is where you can find his butcher's shop, which is well worth a visit if you are in the area.

Peter does magical things with meat: his beef, which is aged in Himalayan salt chambers, melts in the mouth (you can find it in Fortnum & Mason and in Mark Hix's restaurant, Tramshed); his "guanciale" – unsmoked Italian bacon – is particularly special but for this award, Peter turned his skills to pork. "It's the ultimate meat, it takes on anything you do to it," he says.

Peter co-owns a business called En Place Foods with Paul Clarke, who is a bit of a flavour maestro. Peter's intention was to create the "bacon equivalent of pulled pork", sweetened using a blend of sugars.

The process takes 20 days. First, the ribs are rubbed with salt and laid down in a stack. After ten days of this dry-cure, or when a fifth of the moisture has evaporated, they are transferred to a sugar pit where they are buried in a blend of sugars.

"From curing, the ribs become like a sponge, so they absorb so much sugar they self-caramelize and you're left with a lovely, sticky, salty, sweet and soft piece of meat," says Peter.

Having been on the final judging panel, I can absolutely second that!

[hannanmeats.com](http://hannanmeats.com)



## Our favourite online and mail-order food suppliers

Sourcing good-quality food has never been easier, thanks to the internet, and most of these suppliers are just a phone call away too.

### MEAT, FISH AND POULTRY

#### + DONALD RUSSELL

Great for top-notch beef and venison, welfare-kind fish and seafood. [01467-629666; donaldrussell.com](http://01467-629666; donaldrussell.com)

#### + FISH FOR THOUGHT

Fresh fish from Cornwall, as well as a range of frozen and smoked fish. [01208-262202; martins-seafresh.co.uk](http://01208-262202; martins-seafresh.co.uk)

#### + THE FISH SOCIETY

All freshly frozen, top-quality organic fish and seafood, including smoked fish. [01428-687768; thefishsociety.co.uk](http://01428-687768; thefishsociety.co.uk)

#### + FORMAN & FIELD

Excellent smoked salmon and other fish, plus pies, liqueurs, cheese and patisserie. [\(020\) 3601 5464; formanandfield.com](http://(020) 3601 5464; formanandfield.com)

#### + GRAIG FARM ORGANICS

The award-winning farm offers groceries, baby food, ready meals and more. [01686-627979; graigfarm.co.uk](http://01686-627979; graigfarm.co.uk)

#### + LANE FARM COUNTRY FOODS

For fabulous, Freedom Food-standard pork, gammon, ham, bacon, sausages and salami. [01379-384593; lanefarm.co.uk](http://01379-384593; lanefarm.co.uk)

#### + GODFREYS

For more than 100 years, this family butcher has been supplying superb free-range meat. [\(020\) 7226 2425; godfreys.co](http://(020) 7226 2425; godfreys.co)

#### + THE WELL HUNG MEAT COMPANY

This close-knit operation offers top-notch organic lamb, beef, pork and poultry. [0845-2303131; wellhungmeat.com](http://0845-2303131; wellhungmeat.com)

#### + WING OF ST MAWES

Offers a seasonal selection of fabulous fish from sustainable sources, with great recipes to make the most of your haul. [01726-862489; thecornishfishmonger.co.uk](http://01726-862489; thecornishfishmonger.co.uk)



## BEST REGIONAL SPECIALITY East Anglia and The Midlands



### Jane and Terry Tomlinson, Redhill Farm pork loin

Jane and Terry have been rearing their Duroc cross pigs on their 180-acre Lincolnshire farm for 23 years. They used to supply to bacon factories, which became financially untenable in the 1990s.

Jane's lightbulb moment arrived when she realised 15 years ago that the ham she was buying from her local butcher was imported, and her vision to make British pork farming sustainable was born.

She threw herself into launching farmers' markets in Lincolnshire to sell their own free-range, outdoor-reared meat. Now 80% of what they produce is sold in farmers' markets and they supply bacon, sausages, pork pies and pork to top restaurants and delis, though you can also buy online. Their pork belly joint scooped up two stars over two years, but it's their pork loin joint that gave them this accolade.

[redhillfarm.com](http://redhillfarm.com)

## BEST REGIONAL SPECIALITY Wales



### Jenny Whitham and Margaret Carter, Patchwork Red Pesto Pâté

Margaret started Patchwork in 1982 from her kitchen in North Wales and, as more customers appreciated the quality of her pâtés, the business grew, offering frozen pâtés with meat, fish and vegetable bases.

This award-winning vegetarian pâté began life more as a houmous – but as Jenny says, "It had too much depth to it – so we reincarnated it as a pâté and it has picked up a much better following."

It contains chickpeas, extra virgin olive oil and a red pesto recipe with a base of sun-dried tomatoes.

"Besides spreading it on toast, we've stirred it through pasta, used it as a topping for fish and created starters with black pudding and shrimp," says Jenny. "You can use it as you would a red pesto, but it's not as overpowering because it's mellowed by the addition of chickpeas."

Patchwork sell their pâtés locally but you can buy direct too.

[patchwork-pate.co.uk](http://patchwork-pate.co.uk)

## BEST REGIONAL SPECIALITY Ireland

### Aileen and Michael O'Neill, Irish Atlantic Sea Salt with dill pollen

Aileen and Michael are based on the stunning west coast of Ireland, where Michael's late father, Bernie, came up with the idea of making sea salt.

Michael had spent many years in the fishing industry, but his father believed that the high-quality waters of West Cork, literally at their back door, could produce a very special salt. Sadly, Bernie passed away before he could witness their success, but through a process of age-old salt-making methods and energy-efficient technology, they have produced a sea salt that's pure and natural, with no additives, anti-caking agents or preservatives.

All the trace minerals – potassium, magnesium calcium – are retained. "Only the purest 'grade A' seawater is gently evaporated to produce Irish Atlantic sea salt flakes," says Aileen.

Aileen and Michael have developed a range of infused salts and, using wild dill pollen, managed to nail this award.

[irishatlanticsalt.ie](http://irishatlanticsalt.ie)



## BEST REGIONAL SPECIALITY North of England

### John Metcalfe, Metcalfe's Beef and Pork Butcher's, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire, dry cured back bacon

For second-generation butcher John, 2014 was the first year he had entered the Great Taste Awards. A good move as he picked up this award for his dry cured back bacon. He had two other products, a different bacon – dry cured middle – and an apple wood-smoked gammon steak, which also collected a star each.

This award-winning bacon is made by hand to an old family recipe from free-range pigs reared by Anna Longthorp in East Yorkshire. These Landrace-Duroc cross pigs are free to roam in their family groups and are slaughtered locally to prevent stress.

The bacon is cured and hung for about four weeks before it's ready, and it is worth the wait. It's mild, lightly sweet and crisps up to perfection, unlike any bacon



that's mass-produced. "Our bacon is different to any other," says John. "It shrinks less because there's no added water, it's never harsh or salty and, because of its mildness, you can appreciate the natural flavours."

[metcalfes-butchers.co.uk](http://metcalfes-butchers.co.uk)

## ORGANIC VEGETABLES & FARMERS' MARKETS

### + ABEL & COLE

Award-winning shop for all things organic.  
**08452-626262; abelandcole.co.uk**

### + RIVERFORD ORGANIC FARMS

Fantastic home-delivery service for fruit and vegetables, plus meat, wine, dairy and eggs.  
**01803-762059; riverford.co.uk**

### + A LOT OF ORGANICS

Search engine where you can find organic suppliers, plus ethical and Fairtrade websites.  
[alotoforganics.co.uk](http://alotoforganics.co.uk)

### + FARMERS' MARKETS

Find a certified farmers' market from more than 500 in the UK. [localfoods.org.uk](http://localfoods.org.uk)

## CHEESE

### + THE FINE CHEESE CO

A great selection of British cheese and extras, including Devon clotted cream, pickles, crackers and chocolate truffles too.  
**01225-448748; finecheese.co.uk**

### + NEAL'S YARD DAIRY

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**(020) 7500 7575; nealsyarddairy.co.uk**

### + PAXTON & WHITFIELD

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**01451-823460; paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk**

### + THE TEDDINGTON CHEESE

British and Continental cheeses, hampers and cheese wedding cakes.  
**(020) 8977 6868; teddingtoncheese.co.uk**

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