

# British Isles

SALE  
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## SHOP

MONTGOMERY  
CHEDDAR

KEEN'S CHEDDAR

COLSTON BASSE  
STILTON

APPLEBY'S CHES

KIRKHAM'S LANC

APPLEBY'S DOUB  
GLOUCESTER

DUCKETT'S CAER

## 'Supermarkets want to see the blue mould, but the blue mould isn't always where the flavour is'

### Randolph Hodgson – Dairy Merchant

Having completed a degree in food science at London University, Randolph Hodgson was horrified by the advances in food production and food science and didn't fancy working in an industry that seemed bent on making everything larger, quicker and cheaper. He volunteered, as a favour, to open a dairy in Neal's Yard at the end of the '70s, to sell cheese and yoghurt for the summer, but became hooked and took the premises on full-time. Today, he has established Neal's Yard Dairy as a top quality cheese supplier, credited on restaurant menus.

But it hasn't been easy. The big three old-fashioned cheeses that now define the Neal's Yard style, Cheshire, Cheddar and Stilton, wouldn't sell. "People wanted the newer varieties of blue cheese and soft cheese but by this time I had started travelling around the country and meeting the cheesemakers. One of my favourites was a classic Cheshire, which was the number one British cheese up until the '30s, not cheddar. The only way I could sell these was to offer a piece to a customer and ask them to try it," he says. It took some persuasion, but gradually buyers came to trust his judgement.

"What I noticed from the start was that every day's cheese production turned out differently. A classic cheddar like Montgomery's from Somerset has a style; it is drier than most, but after nearly two years' maturing you can taste the difference between a cheese made on Monday and a cheese made the next day. This sort of subtle variation in taste makes these cheeses so memorable but it means that chefs have to trust us."

More than half of his restaurant customers now do just that. Neal's Yard deliver the cheeses they feel are the best on the day. "The secret of a really good cheese," Hodgson explains, "is the milk. It must be fresh, not frozen and is sometimes a combination of sheep, goat, cow and even buffalo. Most of the farms I deal with have all these breeds on their own land. But the recipe and the way it is made can transform the taste."

In his quest for perfection, Hodgson has been going to his Stilton maker in Leicestershire and dictating exactly when he wants the wires to be inserted. "They're getting a lot better," he says, "but so many modern cheesemakers are used to making stilton for supermarkets. They want to be able to see the blue mould in the packet, but the blue mould isn't always where the flavour is."

### MAKING BRITAIN A GREAT PLACE TO EAT

For the UK food revolution to happen, Britain needed a culture of great dining. Here are 20 people who changed British taste, championed British food and helped get it to where it is now

- 1 Terence Conran – inventor of modern restaurant style
- 2 Peter Boizot – perfectionist who gave us Pizza Express
- 3 Michel and Albert Roux – inimitable French brothers who brought a new style and understanding of food to Britain in the '70s
- 4 Marco Pierre White – first British chef to achieve three Michelin stars. The first true modern British chef
- 5 Rick Stein – chef who brought a new identity to seafood and regional restaurants
- 6 Maïa and Lorenzo Berni – creators of the celebrity San Lorenzo restaurant in London, still going strong
- 7 Peter Langan – though sadly no longer with us, his dream and passion for restaurants spawned other success stories. Jeremy King and Christopher Corbin, who started out at Langan's, went on to resurrect The Ivy and Le Caprice and Richard Shepherd kept the beacon alight and guided Langan's into the 21st Century
- 8 Fergus Henderson – the first great chef to champion British ingredients and obscure British food at his restaurant St John
- 9 Luke Johnson – chairman of Signature Restaurants, which owns the Ivy and Belgo group
- 10 Julian Metcalfe – whose Pret A Manger brought new inspiration to one of the oldest and most hackneyed of British creations: the sandwich
- 11 Ruth Rogers and Rose Grey – their River Café brought us upmarket Italian peasant food and introduced us to modern Mediterranean eating
- 12 Jamie Oliver – though he has had little impact on restaurants, the simplicity of the cheeky chef has inspired millions to take up cooking and to enjoy food
- 13 Gary Rhodes – the one with the spiky hair has long been a champion of British food and his efforts have awoken many to dishes we had chosen to forget
- 14 Germaine and Annie Schwab – modern day champions of local British produce
- 15 David Collins – the designer whose stamp is noticeable in almost all modern restaurants
- 16 The Eyre Bros – inventors of the gastro pub movement. Their pub The Eagle broke the mould of casual eating out
- 17 Francis Coulson – sadly no longer with us but he established Sharrow Bay as the quintessential British country house hotel
- 18 Robert Carrier – it is easy to forget the huge impact this famous American food author and restaurateur had on the British knowledge of good food. Shaun Hill, amongst others, trained in his kitchens
- 19 Iqbal Wahhab – is taking Indian food and making it great again (see page 36)
- 20 Alan Yau – for introducing a new culture of dining with Wagamama and now Hakkasan