

Provenance, people and cyber security to top the agenda at Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2025

The seminar programme for Speciality & Find Food Fair will include discussions around cyber attacks, AI in retail, greenwashing, and new food & drink trends

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The latest food, drink and retail trends will be under the spotlight when [Speciality & Fine Food Fair](#) returns to Olympia on 9-10 September this year. Industry leaders from across the artisan food & drink sector will be taking to the stage to discuss topics including AI for independent businesses, incentivising return customers and the importance of staff training in speciality retail.



Speciality & Fine Food Fair stage

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Alex Emmanuel-Jones

Alongside hundreds of quality artisan suppliers, the show will feature a compelling line-up of speakers, panel discussions, and brand-building opportunities designed to spark fresh thinking and real commercial impact.

With a newly launched Village Square networking and sampling area, an expanded Pitch Live programme in partnership with IND!E, and an agenda bursting with high-profile names from across the sector on the Food for

Thought stage, the 2025 edition promises to be the most dynamic and insightful yet.

Food for thought

The Food for Thought stage at this year's event will be packed with insightful sessions over the course of the two days, from trends insights by thefoodpeople's Charles Banks and Egg Soldiers' Kateline Porritt to panel discussions with leading mainstream and independent retailers.

The topics covered as part of the programme will include cyber resilience, with Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre discussing the wholesaler's recent cyber-attack, a session on the women shaping the drinks industry, ethical sustainability and a discussion on the power of product knowledge and the value of staff training, hosted by Guild of Fine Food's John Farrand and featuring speakers Mark Kacary of The Norfolk Deli and Stefano Cuomo of Macknade.

Mark comments: "In the rush to drive shareholder value, it's easy to forget that this is a people business. Building close, genuine relationships with suppliers turns you and your team into true advocates for the products you sell.

"When it comes to customers, it's about more than just transactions; it's about understanding their needs and creating meaningful, personal experiences that make them feel valued and understood. I'm looking forward to diving into this conversation and sharing insights on how we can bring that all-important human touch back to the heart of food retail."

Day one of the fair will also feature a candid conversation with Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones MBE and Alex Emmanuel-Jones, the father and son team behind The Black Farmer, who will discuss the recent expansion of the retail brand and selecting products that align with their values.

Alex comments: "Right now, people want more than just a good product — they want to know what a brand stands for. I built this brand by trusting my gut and staying true to what I believe in. This session is about sharing the real, behind-the-scenes stuff: the risks, the wins, and how having a mission can guide you through it all when the market gets tough."

Niamh McCormack, commercial trends & acceleration lead at Holland & Barrett, will join the discussion 'Healthier by design: Turning wellness expectations into retail opportunity', and says:



Speciality & Fine Food Fair show



Drinks Quarter

"I'm thrilled to represent H&B at this year's Speciality & Fine Food Fair. Over the past few years, we've begun reimagining our food and beverage range to build a market-leading wellness proposition. It's a real privilege to share our journey and insights as part of this year's panel discussion."

"More than ever before, consumers are taking ownership of their well-being and proactively seeking simple, everyday ways to support their health. A shift towards non-UPF products is central to this movement, and it's not a passing trend. To stay ahead, both brands and retailers must explore how we make non-UPF choices more accessible, better understood, and truly relevant to how people live and eat today."

Danni Horsley, senior brand builder at Elephants Can't Jump, will be presenting a session titled '10 ways to use provenance to supercharge your brand & story' alongside the company's MD Bob Bayman, and comments: "Provenance has always mattered - but in 2025, it's more important than ever."

"As consumers demand more transparency, local produce and retailers seek stronger storytelling, understanding how to use provenance as a strategic brand tool can unlock real commercial advantage. Our session is all about showing brands and retailers how to use it well, and perhaps when to hold back."

Pitch live

Pitch Live, in partnership with IND!E, which sees emerging brands pitch their products live to panels of leading retailers, has expanded for 2025 and will have its own dedicated stage.

Confirmed buyers include representatives from Selfridges, Ocado, and Booths, and an independent retailer panel featuring Stefano Cuomo of Macknade, Laura Roberts of Laura's Larder, Sam Morgan of Drapers Lane Deli, Tom Newey of Cobbs Farm, and retail expert and former Superette Store manager Greg Ivison, bringing together some of the most respected voices in the sector.

Matt & Hannah Hopkins, founders of IND!E, say: "We're thrilled to be back at the Speciality & Fine Food Fair in an even bigger way for 2025. Pitch Live, which this year forms part of IND!E's pavilion, has become one of the most exciting opportunities for challenger brands in the UK to get in front of serious retail buyers, and the energy in the room is always electric. Working with the team at the show to elevate small brands and bring fresh innovation to the market is a real privilege, and we can't wait to see what this year's line-up brings."

An Ocado spokesperson adds: "Pitch Live at Speciality Fine Food Fair with IND!E is one of the standout events in our calendar for discovering emerging talent. It gives us a front-row seat to some of the most exciting new brands in food and drink, and a direct line to the founders behind them. The format is fast-paced, energetic, and full of potential, exactly the kind of environment

that breeds retail success."

Find out more about everything happening as part of this year's event, and secure your trade ticket, at specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk.

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