

MARKET TIMES

PAGE 2-6
NEWS BITES

PAGE 7
NEW UNITS NOW OPEN

PAGE 8-9
GETTING TO KNOW

PAGE 10-11
FRESH FACED VS WELL-SEASONED



**NEW TUNNEL
TO LINK NINE
ELMS LANE &
WANDSWORTH
ROAD**

SEE PAGE 6

This issue's cover features a montage of images from the Fruit & Vegetable and Flower Market



Editor's Message



For me, May is one of the best months of the year. Spring is in full bloom and everyone is excited about summer, this year more than ever. That's true for New Covent Garden Market, and there's lots to look forward to over the weeks and months ahead.

Firstly, our famous Flower Market reopened for in-person buying on 12 April, following the easing of lockdown restrictions. Traders were amazing throughout the closure of the market as they continued to serve loyal customers via the call/click and collect operation, quickly adapting to new ways of working. This was highlighted on two separate TV news reports, which showed different sides of the same coin. ITV London promoted the Flower Market's huge assortment ahead of Valentine's Day. This was followed by BBC London, who focused on how reduced footfall had impacted trade. One thing's for sure, the further reopening of the hospitality industry can't come soon enough.

Secondly, we've got the opening of Mission Kitchen at the beginning of June, which will focus a new spotlight on our famous market. Located on the first floor of our Food Exchange building, Mission Kitchen is an entirely new kind of shared workspace, designed to help food start-ups grow. The 16,000 sq. ft site includes one of the largest production-standard kitchens in London, along with office and events space. For more on the application process, see page 5.

Thirdly, construction work on the Fruit & Vegetable Market restarted in January. This marked a new milestone in our multi-million pound redevelopment to create a state-of-the-art site that will continue to be unrivalled when it comes to sourcing premium seasonal food and flowers from the UK, the EU, and across the globe. See page 4.

The months since our Winter issue have been busy, with many Fruit & Vegetable Market businesses moving location as part of the redevelopment process. We talk with County Supplies about their rebrand and their new home on the market on pages 8-9. We've also seen new businesses join the Flower Market (hello to John at The Plant Stand), plus existing businesses expanding into the digital world. Flower Wholesaler Porters Foliage launched their first website after 111 years of trading at the Flower Market, proving a digital business can work alongside shop-floor sales. We also saw CSR & Sons return to being a Fruit and Vegetable wholesaler from the start of April, again combining a successful business with a vision for the future.

Finally, I can't finish this column without mentioning one more event. Based at the Food Exchange, FoodCycle is a charity that creates three-course meals for those at risk of food poverty and social isolation. January saw Food Cycle's CEO Mary McGrath awarded an MBE for her 'professional and voluntary services to disadvantaged people' in the 2021 New Year's Honours list. Congratulations to Mary and the entire FoodCycle team from all of us at New Covent Garden.

Garin

Garin Auld,
CGMA Strategy, Partnerships and Communications Team

National Day of Reflection

23 March

Market raised £5,500 for Marie Curie

The National Day of Reflection marked one-year since the first national lockdown. Led by the Marie Curie charity, it took place on Tuesday, 23 March to bring the whole of the UK together to reflect on our collective loss, support those who've been bereaved, and hope for a brighter future.

New Covent Garden Market worked together with Marie Curie at the end of March, highlighting their National Day of Reflection with a dual campaign to raise vital funds and celebrate NHS key workers.

The campaign saw a great response and a total of £5,500 was raised by 59 supporters, exceeding the £5,000 target set at the start. £20 is the hourly cost of a Marie Curie nurse and every £20 donated via our Just Giving page we provided a bunch of British grown daffodils to a key worker as a thank you for all their amazing efforts since the start of

the Covid-19 pandemic.

The market partnered with floral designer Shane Connolly, who holds a Royal Warrant of Appointment to both HM The Queen and HRH The Prince of Wales, to help raise funds to supply vital care and support for anyone affected by a terminal illness, as well as supporting their friends and family.

Daffodils were collected from the Flower Market on the Tuesday morning - the daffodil is the symbol of Marie Curie - and delivered to key workers at London hospitals, Guys and St. Thomas', St. George's, Chelsea and Westminster and Charring Cross.

Daffodils were also delivered to Marie Curie hospices Meadow House, Hampstead Hospice and St Joseph's and the event was featured in national newspaper The Guardian.



On this issue's front cover

Clockwise from top left: Robert Hurren, County Supplies' Managing Director, with his brother Oliver Hurren, Head Buyer. John Hardcastle, owner of Bloomfield Flowers, getting ready for ITV news to film in the Flower Market ahead of Valentine's Day. County Supplies' Oliver Hurren. Rebecca Barrett, CGMA's Head of Strategy, Partnerships & Communications, in the Flower Market.

Flower Market reopened on 12 April



It was smiles all round when our Flower Market finally reopened for in-person buying on Monday 12 April.

The reopening was welcomed by both market businesses and their customers, following more than three months where the Flower Market ran a call/click and collect operation. As well as welcoming customers back into the market, it was also a special day in more ways than one for Bob Cooley (pictured top right): Bob was celebrating

50 years to the day since he started working at the original Covent Garden Market.

Known as 'the cheeriest chappie in the market', Bob's infectious smile and friendly manner have earned him many fans over the half century he's shared his knowledge with generations of colleagues and customers. What people may not know is just how far back Bob's relationship with the market goes. Following in both his father and his great

uncle's footsteps, Bob began his long career working at the original Covent Garden on 12 April 1971. You can now find Bob offering smiles and expert advice in equal measure at L Mills, selling an array of British plants.

What's more, L Mills as a business has been in the Flower Market for well over 100 years as well! From everyone at the market, we wish you many more happy anniversaries to come Bob!

British Flowers Week returns 14-20 June

Remember to decorate your windows with flowers, foliage and plants to show your support this June

It's blooming marvellous news as British Flowers Week returns to New Covent Garden Flower Market this summer, between 14-20 June 2021.

Uniting the floral industry with a love for British flowers, foliage and plants, the week-long campaign marks a return to live events after last year's lockdown saw all events held online.

Share your British flowers in your window to show your support

"This year we are calling on everyone to put flowers in their windows, from a single stem to something more elaborate," says Covent Garden Market Authority's Cassie Burt. "We want the whole nation to celebrate by decorating their windows with British flowers in their home or places of work, where passers-by can enjoy them, between 14th and 20th June."

Cassie adds: "We're really excited about this year's line up. Last year showed us that there was huge appetite across the country to support British Flowers Week and we saw a great response. This year we'll be running a combination of live events at The Garden Museum as well as online events that people can join in no matter where they live in the UK."

What's on: The Garden Museum live exhibition returns

The Garden Museum's annual exhibition returns between Thursday 10 and Tuesday 15 June, in partnership with New Covent Garden Flower Market. Uniting florists, flower growers, wholesalers and flower lovers, it's a celebration of Britain's best blooms and talent in floral design.

This year's exhibition sees celebrity florist and long-time friend of the Flower Market Simon Lycett working alongside four of Britain's top florists: Cyrill Tronchet, Hazel Gardiner, JamJar Flowers and Tattie Rose Flowers to create floral installations using environmentally sustainable methods. They'll transform The Garden Museum into an immersive floral wonderland filled with the scents and colours of beautiful British-grown blooms.

How to get involved

To find out more, as well as download helpful resources including how to guides, flower cut outs, and our British Flowers Week flag, visit our dedicated website: www.britishflowersweek.com



Pictured above: The Real Flower Company shared their wonderful window via the British Flowers Week website. **Inset:** The British Flowers Week flag.

Redevelopment work on track

The ongoing redevelopment work to build a New Covent Garden Market estate fit for the future restarted in January.

Demolition work progresses

The western end of the old A&B and C&D rows in the Fruit & Vegetable Market have been demolished (pictured right) and work is progressing on schedule.

March saw machinery arrive on site to start demolition of the concrete ground slab, which

will be removed. This is part of the ground remediation, which needs to be cleared to form the new building's foundations.

The months ahead see our construction partner Vinci St. Modwen (VSM) undertake more excavation and drainage work.

Wandsworth Road entrance

From Monday 17 May the exit road from the market to Wandsworth Road will become an entrance for construction

vehicles only. This is associated with the Apex site (in front of the Food Exchange building).

New road to link B&C road

Work to link B&C road to D road has started. When complete, the road that currently splits the A2 construction site will be closed.

East Bridge to be dismantled

The strip out of the former East Bridge continues and laying of foundations is due to start in July.



Mission Kitchen to open on 6 June

Work on the first floor of the Food Exchange building to create Mission Kitchen has progressed well and all project works by our construction partner Parkeray are now completed. Mission Kitchen opens on 6 June (see the news story on page 5).

Obituaries

Paul Coleman

We're sad to share the news that Paul Coleman, a former porter at New Covent Garden Fruit & Vegetable Market, sadly passed away on 8 March. His funeral was held on 8 April 2021.

Born in London on 12 October 1953, Paul worked for wholesaler R Tealing until the company closed in January 2016, which is when he decided to leave New Covent Garden Market.

Paul lived and worked in London all his life and his main interests were horse racing and supporting Chelsea Football Club. He was also a huge fan of dog racing and he owned dogs for many years.

"Paul was a well-known man within New

Covent Garden Market and his passion for racing, Chelsea and the market were legendary," says Gary Marshall, Chairman of the Covent Garden Tenants Association. "Paul was very well-liked and will be sadly missed by all his friends across the market."

Bobby Parker, who worked with Paul, says: "Paul he was reliable, never late, honest and a good worker."

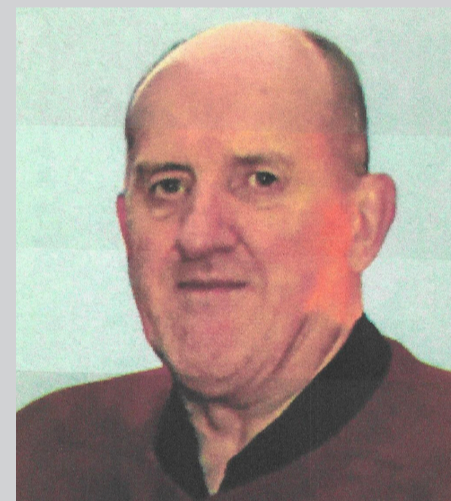
Paul's cousin Karen Lovegrove has thanked everyone at the Fruit & Vegetable Market for their kind thoughts, prayers, and expressions of sympathy on his passing.

"Paul was always a very generous man who always showed respect for everyone he

met," says Karen. "Paul was loved so much by so many and in so many different ways. He sadly lost his mum Mary in 1992 and his dad Dennis in 2004. It was that day I think we lost a bit of Paul as Dennis wasn't just his dad but his best friend.

We were fortunate enough to spend every Christmas and many weekends with Paul, who used to enjoy regular visits to Crawley and Horsham to spend time with us and the family. He used to call us his country relations. That will never be the same."

Everyone at New Covent Garden Market sends their condolences to all of Paul's family at this difficult time.



“ Paul was a well-known man within the market and his passion for racing, Chelsea Football Club and the market were legendary. He was well-liked and will be missed ”

Richard Smith

It is with deep sorrow that we share news of the death of Richard Smith, a well-loved customer at New Covent Garden Flower Market. Richard fought a four-month battle with Covid-19 and unfortunately passed away on Wednesday 7 April.

Known as 'Mr Flowersmith' after his successful florist business Flowersmiths of London (located in the Putney Exchange shopping centre), Richard was a larger-than-life character who will be missed by all.

"Richard burst into the Flower Market in the late 1980s with his brothers, following in the footsteps of his father and uncle and continued to support the Flower Market buying flowers for the following 30 years,"

says Graeme Diplock of Zest Flowers Ltd. "Richard loved visiting the market obviously for his stock, but he loved the banter and all the traders and customers, along with the chance for a bid up! He'll be sadly missed by everyone and the Flower Market is already a quieter place."

Richard's brother Robert remembers the pair starting out on their business career working for the family fruit, vegetable and flower business, W. Smith Bexley.

"With his love for the flower business in particular, Richard saw the opportunity to strike out and create his own successful company," says Robert, "with sites ranging from London and Kent to Brighton."

"Over the 40 plus years of his career, Richard built strong relationships with many people from the market, most of whom, like Richard had started their careers as young men and now run their own successful Flower Market businesses. Richard not only had business relationships but long-time friends with whom he would laugh with daily. He poured his heart and soul into his business. Richard loved his life with his wife Sonia for over 30 years and his son Zak. He was looking forward to new ventures in his life. We will miss him greatly."

The thoughts of all at New Covent Garden Market are with Richard's family.



“ Richard loved visiting the market, obviously for the stock, but he loved the banter and all the traders and customers. The market is already a quieter place ”

YouTube channel visits market for careers advice



Pictured above: Tom and Calum from the People on Work YouTube channel interviewing Sonny Martin from Flower Market wholesaler Dennis Edwards Flowers.

A film crew from the People on Work YouTube channel visited New Covent Garden at the end of April, interviewing a cross-section of people from the Fruit & Vegetable and Flower Markets about their career choices.

Aimed at helping school leavers

Aimed at helping school leavers and young adults make career choices, People on Work interview people across the country discussing their careers. School leavers can then access the channel and explore different careers and how to get into them. "It was a pleasure visiting the market overnight and seeing the people who make everything happen," says Tom Lethaby, the man behind the channel. "We got some great interviews and I really enjoyed meeting so many different people."

Just three simple questions

Each interview is around three or four-minutes long and asks three questions: What do you like about your work? How

did you start out? What would you say to someone starting out today? Just for us, they asked a fourth question: What's the best thing about working at New Covent Garden?

Interviews reveal a 'special' market

"The pride people feel working at the market and the many family connections really came across," says CGMA's Garin Auld. "The early starts were the least popular thing, but the camaraderie and the fact they're playing a vital part in feeding and flowering London and beyond were common themes."

Using the slogan 'it's hard to be what you can't see', the channel helps its audience see and hear what others have done. "Our questioners get first hand information, which can be hard to find," says Tom. "Our contributors get to help others the same way somebody may have helped them."

You can see the interviews here

The videos will be available to watch from early June. Visit www.peopleonwork.com and search for New Covent Garden Market.

Mission Kitchen opens in June

A new chapter in New Covent Garden Market's history starts on 6 June when Mission Kitchen opens its doors to its first members.

The 16,000 sq. ft site is located on the first floor of the market's Food Exchange building and includes one of the largest production-standard kitchens in London, along with office and events space to be used by small and ambitious food businesses.

As a new string to our bow, it will offer start-up businesses the opportunity to make amazing food with all the professional tools and equipment they need. From shared kitchens with flexible memberships, private kitchen units, office space, hot-desking membership, and a fully-equipped training and development kitchen, there's something for every budding food business.

Mission Kitchen will include a café and bar, with a seasonal menu. It's a key part of the market's redevelopment program and more than 30 businesses are already on board to become Founding Members during the two-month soft launch period.

"After the trials and tribulations of 2020, we are hugely excited to finally be opening Mission Kitchen at New Covent Garden Market," says Charlie Gent, Co-Founder, Mission Kitchen. "We hope that the project will play a positive role in helping London's food sector bounce back after an immensely challenging year.

With London's finest fresh produce suppliers on our doorstep, and opportunities to collaborate with some of the UK's most exciting food brands sharing the Food Exchange building, there couldn't be a better place for Mission Kitchen to open its doors. We now can't wait to meet our first group of members."

How to get involved or find out more

Mission Kitchen will start to accept applications again from June onwards. "We'd love to hear from anyone who wants to find out more," says Charlie. Visit the Mission Kitchen website for more information: <https://www.missionkitchen.org/apply>



Women share their thoughts on working at the market

Pictured above: Verna Taylor-Barker, Sales Person at Porters Foliage Ltd in the Flower Market

As part of March's International Women's Day celebrations, the New Covent Garden Market website profiled three women who work at the market.

Verna Taylor-Barker, a Sales Person at Porters Foliage Ltd in the Flower Market, explained how her career path has meant she's always looking to give back. "Working at the market allows me to share my horticultural expertise and years of experience with so many wonderfully creative people," says Verna.

"I want to encourage people to work in the horticultural industries, be that in gardening, floristry or at the market. I would love the opportunity to pass on my knowledge and experience and I will continue doing everything I can to inspire, support and encourage other women to be who they want to be. All you need is guts, determination and a good work ethic, then the possibilities are endless."

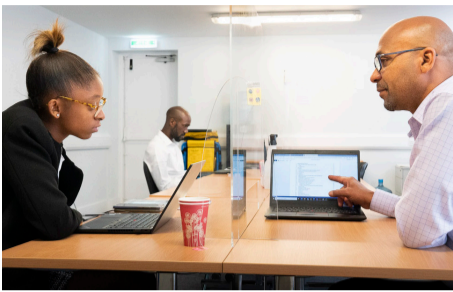
Visit the New Covent Garden Market website to read the full International Women's Day interviews.



Pictured above left: With full-time Mission Kitchen membership, you can enjoy dedicated use of your own bay in the shared kitchen, with two private workstations and unlimited access. **Pictured above right:** With part-time membership, you can book shifts 'on-demand' in a top-notch, open-plan kitchen, where you'll work alongside other food makers. **Inset:** private studio space is available for teams who work in food but not in the kitchen. Suitable for teams of between 6-8 people.

News in Brief

If you've got vacancies, Workmatch offer a free recruitment service



If you're a market business looking for new talent or need expert advice on recruitment practices then Work Match Wandsworth offer a totally free service. Work Match has a growing talent pool of local people across Wandsworth and can introduce candidates to opportunities quickly and efficiently. Work Match's Muhit Rahman is our dedicated contact and can screen candidates on behalf of market employers to assess their suitability. Visit the website via www.wandsworthworkmatch.org or call 02088715191 with the reference WMNGCM.

Tony Robinson visits Fruit & Vegetable Market for history of London TV show



New Covent Garden Market welcomed a knight of the realm when Sir Tony Robinson dropped into the Fruit & Vegetable Market to film his new TV show, celebrating the river Thames. Channel 5 show 'The Secret Life of the Thames with Tony Robinson' explored the history of the capital, visiting historic landmarks along the river. Probably most famous for playing Baldrick in the classic BBC comedy Blackadder, Sir Tony began his exploration at night and spent a few hours rolling up his sleeves to lend a hand at the Fruit & Vegetable Market (pictured above). Visit www.tinyurl.com/sb82v33h to watch the full episode.

Free eco-bike trail is still available



All market businesses are being offered a fully-funded, electric cargo-bike delivery trial. This free service can be used by all businesses that deliver into Soho and Covent Garden and is already been used by several businesses on the Fruit & Vegetable Market. Ecofleet are a highly reputable company and are liable for the delivery. The bike has a 275kg capacity and can be fitted with ice packs for refrigeration. Call Anusha at the Cross River Partnership on 078 112 26861 to find out more and book a bike.

Rail tunnel to 'open up' the market

Due to open in the autumn is a new railway tunnel linking Wandsworth Road and Nine Elms Lane.

Located opposite the Food Exchange building, the tunnel is referred to as 'Arch 42' and will enable pedestrians from the new Nine Elms Tube Station (due to open in late October 2021) to pass through the market to reach Ponton Road and Nine Elms Lane on the other side.

'Tunnel Visions' (pictured right) by architect firm Projects Office was the winner of the Arch 42 design contest.

Chosen from six finalists by a judging panel that included Wandsworth Council and the London Festival of Architecture, the historic railway arch will be transformed over the months ahead. Tunnel Visions was chosen for its innovative and imaginative design in a historic context, alongside its robustness for long-term maintenance.

A temporary walkway leading from



Pascal Street to the railway tunnel will be built in a partnership between CGMA and our contractors VSM. This will be

completed by early August, ahead of the Tube station and the railway tunnel opening at the end of October.

“ We'd be surprised if there's anywhere else in London where simply opening up a railway arch will have such an impact...”

David Gallagher runs his own firm of architects, DGA, based at the market's Food Exchange building. Here, David shares his view on how important the new tunnel will become over the months ahead. "For those of us lucky enough to work in the Food Exchange which directly overlooks the arch in question, the prospect of this new link between two long-separated

parts of Nine Elms is exciting. We'd be surprised if there's anywhere else in London where the simple act of opening up a railway arch will have such an impact. To be able to walk or cycle straight from the market into the new linear park connecting Vauxhall with Battersea Power Station and the Thames will transform movement in and out of the market.

Projects Office are worthy winners with a clever design for the arch and the approaches to the tunnel from both sides. They've celebrated a classic architectural railway motif throughout, all the more apt in light of the historic land use on either side of Arch 42 before the market arrived, containing as it did some of the biggest railway sheds in the UK."

Final chance for artists to submit entries

Below: the central panel of BLOOM! by the BLKbrd Collective, which can be seen on the Flower Market's Nine Elms Lane facade.



Proposals from artists for the final edition of Vitrine, a paid commission for a 20m long public art space on Nine Elms Lane, close on Wednesday 27 May.

After two successful years, this is the third and final year of Vitrine, London's freshest art commission celebrating London's oldest wholesale market.

Open to all, the contest seeks artists who can lift the lid on the market to explore the colossal pick of fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers, foliage and plants that have made the market famous.

The Nine Elms Lane location sees 25,000 vehicles pass by every day – more than 9 million a year – and many people walking by too. This is a vast art canvas with an enormous public audience.

The current artwork, 'Bloom!' by the south-east London based BLKbrd Collective, was chosen after more than 230 artists submitted entries for the commission during 2020. It's a celebratory mural of the market and its integral workers, highlighting the importance of the fruit, vegetable and

floral industries that kept London running throughout the lockdown.

It'll be on display until October, when this year's winner will be revealed. To find out more, visit the news section of the New Covent Garden Market website.

The Vitrine Art Commission is founded and funded by Vinci St. Modwen, the market's redevelopment partner, and delivered in collaboration with Art Night, London's all-night free contemporary art festival, and Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA).



New market units are raising the bar

Grant Stanton from Bar Fruit Supplies explains the benefits of the units in the redevelopment of the market



Phase One of the New Covent Garden Market's redevelopment is now complete, with the first tenants moving into their new purpose-built units.

The very first of these was Bar Fruit Supplies, who relocated to their new B-block unit at the start of January.

A family-run business with owner Grant Stanton (pictured right) at the helm, we spoke with Grant to find out more about how he's finding his new home.

Q: You moved at the start of January. How do the new units differ from the old units?

A: We're really pleased with everything since we moved onto the new B-block, especially the extra space. It measures six metres across compared to just four-and-a-half metres in our former unit. It makes a big difference when you are moving pallets, as the extra space is so useful. It's bright and a lovely environment to work in.

We've been closed for nine months over the past year as the hospitality industry has been stop and start following Government guidelines. The fact we were in lockdown helped us with the move as it gave us more planning time.

Q: What would you say to a market business that was considering moving to one of the new units?

A: I'd recommend anyone to move, it's been a brilliant deal for us. I couldn't have chosen a better location or unit anywhere else! We've allowed ourselves space to expand in the future if we need it, as we could put in a mezzanine level. It's a much-improved working environment which we've been able to fit out exactly as we

wanted it, with our own refrigerated unit.

I'd like to say thank you to Gary Marshall as Chair of the Covent Garden Tenants Association (CGTA) and everyone at the Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA) for all their help. I'm delighted with the move and how it's all been put in place.

Q: We've heard the Bar Fruits Supplies unit is a little like a 'show home', with lots of visitors.



A: Yes, we've had at least 15 tenants come around to look at our unit and how everything is set out. I'm happy to be the guinea pig and I've worked closely with the CGTA to test things out, such as the letterboxes. There are a couple of things that we have suggested could be improved but, overall, we're very pleased.

Q: Tell us a little about Bar Fruits Supplies and how you got started at the market.

A: We're a family business, originally based on nearby Northcote Road in Battersea. I'm now the third-generation greengrocer in my family, following the family tradition which started more than 80 years ago. We only specialise in fresh fruit for cocktail bars, and traditionally the most used fruit for cocktails are fresh limes and fresh mint.

What type of fruit is the most popular now?

Currently, passion fruit is our best seller as it's in big demand for cocktails. We buy more than 500 boxes of passion fruit per week. However, anything that can go into

a cocktail we supply. When we started 25 years ago, we supplied lemon, limes, oranges, pineapple, and mint. Now we have hundreds of ingredients. When mojitos were in fashion, we would have almost 250 boxes of mint delivered directly from Israel. We supply more than 25 different sweets, such as Haribo, and biscuits that customers use to create their drinks. We also supply funkini puree that doesn't need to be refrigerated and can be kept at ambient temperatures. My purees are used in bars for speed, whereas restaurants would order frozen purees.

What are the most popular purees?

Passion fruit again is very popular, although lime juice and lemon juice are our best sellers. We sell around 3,000 litres of lime and lemon juice per week.

Why do your customers always return to Bar Fruits Supplies and how important is repeat business?

We've worked hard to build up our reputation as a business that can deliver. No matter what you require we try and get. As anyone who works in the fresh produce industry will tell you, prices of fruit can fluctuate from one week to the next. But no matter how much prices change, our quality needs to remain the same. Our customers know that and that's why they return to us again and again, because of the quality they expect from a business that's based at New Covent Garden Market.

To find out more about availability of the new units on the Fruit & Vegetable Market, or to arrange a viewing, contact CGMA's Michael Sharkey: michael.sharkey@cgma.co.uk.

Getting to know: the story behind County Supplies

With more than 15 years of successful trading as a wholesaler on the Fruit & Vegetable Market, family-run business County Supplies now has a new image and a new location. We meet the team to find out more.



Above main image: Robert Hurren, Managing Director of County Supplies, with his brother Oliver Hurren, Head Buyer. **Inset top:** Robert and Oliver on Buyer's Walk. **Inset mid:** Liz Hurren, Customer Experience Manager, on Buyers' Walk. **Inset bottom:** everyone looks the part in their new branded uniforms.

It's been a busy 12 months for Fruit & Vegetable Market wholesaler, County Supplies. As well as moving location as part of the market's continuing redevelopment project, the family-run business has introduced a new brand look and feel, continued to successfully trade during the lockdown, and launched a new home-delivery service offering restaurant quality produce.

Based at New Covent Garden Market since 2005, County Supplies serve professional kitchens with the finest fruit and vegetables, with the right amount of London charm. With their new motto, 'Hand picked, hand packed and hand delivered', they make a simple promise to their customers. We spoke with Liz Hurren, County Supplies Customer Experience Manager, to find out a little more.

Q. The new branding looks amazing, what was it that inspired the change? It was a brave move given the circumstances.
Yes, the past 12 months have been tough

for the hospitality sector. However, we decided despite Covid-19, to go ahead and rebrand County Supplies. After launching a new website in April last year, we followed with newly customised vans – all with a unique design – new uniforms and we recently moved into a new warehouse. The new look County Supplies is finally complete! It took a little longer than we'd hoped but we're delighted with the result.

Q: You're moved to a different warehouse as part of the market's redevelopment. How do you like your new home?

We moved into our new warehouse in November 2020, just in time to celebrate our 15th birthday! Although it was sad to pull the shutters down on our old warehouse, it was very exciting to move into our new 7,000 sq. ft. warehouse - our new home for the next five years. With its own prep facility and temperature-controlled rooms, we can now offer a wider range of services.

“After launching our new website in April last year, we followed with customised vans, new uniforms and recently moved into a new warehouse. The new look County Supplies is complete!



Above top left: Liz Hurren, Oliver Hurren, Robert Hurren and Matthew Green, Sales Executive.
Below: the new County Supplies' branding highlights the team's capital city credentials.



All change...

What does it take to relaunch an already-established brand with a new look and feel? Here, the County Supplies team explain the thought process behind their new brand identity.

Meet the new look

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the team at County Supplies were already busy working on a new brand and website. The website launched in April 2020, followed by the rebranding of uniforms, packaging, vehicles, and finally a move to a new location on the market with a brand new logo in place.

The rebrand reflects County Supplies commitment to sourcing the finest-quality produce and delivering first-class service, with a side dish of London charm.

County Supplies' family roots

County Supplies are proud of their roots and describe themselves as 'a New Covent Garden family'. The County Supplies management team have all been with the business for 10 plus years and, collectively, have more than 150 years' of experience in buying and operations. And all based here in Nine Elms, the heart of New Covent Garden Market.

In the words of County Supplies Managing Director Robert Hurren: "We would never have grown into the company we are today were it not for the CS team. I'm proud to be surrounded by people who care about fresh produce as much as I do."

Hand picked, packed & delivered

County Supplies hand select their produce daily to look, feel, smell and taste great. That's why their sustainable produce is served in some of London's finest restaurants and at high-profile events such as the BAFTAs: serving a range of customers from pubs, restaurants and schools, to contract caterers and events. David Ridgeway, Smart Group, Executive Head Chef says: "We've worked with County Supplies for five years, and they consistently deliver to our exact specification and requirements for every event. Their attention to detail is fantastic - everything is picked and packed the way we need it."

Rebranding during the Covid-19 pandemic

Launching a new brand identity in the middle of a global pandemic could be considered a risky venture. Can you tell us about how County Supplies faced up to the changes and so much unpredictability?

"It has been an extremely difficult year for the hospitality sector, the hardest year on record, says Liz Hurren, County Supplies Customer Experience Manager. "Yet, through the challenges we adapted to support our customers.

We've all seen how the industry has pulled together and supported one another, showing true resilience."

How did County Supplies fair during the Covid-19 lockdowns of the past year?

"We're incredibly proud to have worked with our event and catering partners during lockdown who cooked over 50,000 dishes for hospitals, care homes and the local community,

supporting more than 20 hospitals and key community groups like Soup Kitchen London, Operation Nightingale and Cook-19.

Many of our partners also adapted their business models for home deliveries and take-away services, while others embraced technology, creating cook-along experiences for people to create restaurant-quality food from their very own homes."

“ We're incredibly proud to have worked with our event and catering partners during lockdown, who cooked over 50,000 dishes for hospitals, care homes and the local community, supporting more than 20 hospitals and community groups...”

Fresh faced vs well-seasoned: the market

We get a glimpse of the market through one of our fresh-faced tenants, La Sovrana, which has been at the market for one year since joining in 2020. Alfonso Picaro, La Sovrana's owner, explains more.



Above main image: Some of the unique Italian produce that Alfonso Picaro's La Sovrana can supply their customers. **Inset:** Alfonso specialises in produce imported from Italy.

Q. How do you feel being a newcomer at the market?

A. As a newcomer and a new business, we're really enjoying being a part of New Covent Garden Market. There is so much history here and the most amazing assortment of produce.

Q. Tell us a little more about La Sovrana and how your business is set up.

A. We are a small family business, supplying unique produce imported from Italy. We know Italian food and culture really well as I was born in Italy. The La Sovrana business is run by me and my brother, with me based here at New Covent Garden Market, whereas my brother is based in southern Italy, where we have our farm. When we first started the business, at the beginning we only sold the products from our farm. But we've expanded over the past year and have found success with a range of products.

Q. So at first you were a supplier and now you've become a wholesaler supplying other businesses?

A: That's right, we're now wholesalers. At first, I worked as an agent for our farm business, with my brother running the operation in Italy. Then, after the disaster that happened on 20 March 2020, when we went into the first lockdown, all of a sudden we had to find a way to change our business! We started to source and import products from across our home region and all around Italy to give as much choice as possible to our customers.

Q. Was it hard to change your offer? How did you spread the word about what La Sovrana can offer?

We already had a network of customers and we used our contacts to start supplying shops. And in this case, now after just over one year of trading as a wholesaler, here we are. We're keeping on fighting and trying to bring our passion to the market. We're the third generation of growers in our family and have a lot of tradition back home. We're proud to have 'Made in Italy' on our products, which we see as a badge of honour for our business.



through two different lenses



Above main image: Hannah Turner, Head of Marketing at Classic Fresh Foods, part of the S Thorogood and Sons' group. **Inset:** A photo from the S Thorogood and Sons' archive.

We get a glimpse of the market through one of our well-seasoned tenants, S Thorogood & Sons, which has been at the market since 1974. Hannah Turner tells us more about how Thorogood's got started.

Q: Tell us how S. Thorogood & Sons got started.

A: The Thorogood family have a long involvement with the wholesale of fresh produce, going back nearly 100 years starting in the old Borough Market in 1922. In addition, the family business has been growing vegetables in Essex since the nineteenth century and continues to do so, growing asparagus in Southminster, Essex.

For the first 50 years, the business sold directly to the public. We grew our produce on our own farms and took it to the markets on horse and cart. The family then moved into wholesale and began working with a range of other farmers. This helped us build relationships with high-quality British farmers. (We've been working with L.J Betts since the 1980s when they came to us after buying our cabbages).

Our history has given us an excellent position, we have well-established relationships with some wonderful like-minded British growers and producers; meaning we can bring our customers the very best each season directly from the growers.

Q: How did you join New Covent Garden Market?

A: When New Covent Garden Market opened its doors in 1974, all tenants at Borough Market were given the

opportunity to move to the new site – we've been trading here successfully ever since. As the New Covent Garden Market business expanded and prospered, we had the chance to grow our presence in London further when New Spitalfields Market opened in May 1991 and we've had a continuous spot since that date. In 1993, with business going strong at our market stalls, we purchased a lease for the other major wholesale market in London – Western International.

Q: What makes New Covent Garden Market special?

New Covent Garden Market is an essential part of the capital's fabric of food and hospitality because it's a concentrated hub of industry expertise and knowledge. There also aren't many industries or areas that have a collection of so many small, niche companies. It's a much more personal experience than dealing with big multi-nationals.

Q: Which other businesses fall under Thorogood?

A: Classic Fresh Foods was formed in 1997 and specialises in supplying the very finest fresh produce to demanding and discerning chefs at hotels, restaurants and gastropubs in London. In addition to fruit and vegetables, Classic also stock

a comprehensive range of essential dairy, dry and frozen goods. Based at New Covent Garden Market in bespoke premises, Classic have a highly trained team who really know the difference between a good product and a great product.

S. Thorogood and Sons acquired Rushtons the Chef's Greengrocers, a fruit and vegetable supplier to many of London's finest restaurants, pubs and bars, in March 2020. Rushton Scranage the owner of Rushtons has been in the industry for 36 years, and will continue to operate independently but with the support of the wider group.

Q: If S. Thorogood and Sons could be remembered for one thing, what would it be?

Going back to our roots, it would have to be championing British produce and our fantastic, talented British farmers who deliver us with the most superb fresh produce.

Q: If you could be any fruit, vegetable, or flower, what would you be and why?

It would have to be asparagus because we love it and have been growing it on the family farm in Southminster, Essex for over 25 years.

Four facts and a fake

Fruit & Vegetable wholesaler Le Marché Limited is a premium greengrocer and catering supply company that can trace its roots back to 1770. Here the team share four facts about their business and one deliberate fake. Can you guess which one it is?

The answer is upside down at the foot of the page.

Pictured right: Le Marché's Director Ben Cartwright, who runs the business alongside fellow Director Marcus Rowleron.



Market Times wants to hear from you

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