# Speciality & Fine Food Fair pivots to practical threats as independents seek resilience and new listings



Independent retailers attending the Speciality & Fine Food Fair at Olympia on 9–10 September will be offered a programme explicitly framed around the practical pressures facing today’s food and drink sector — from cyber resilience and shifting consumer health expectations to finding the next breakout brand. According to the event website, the Fair positions itself as the UK’s leading showcase for artisanal food and drink and combines a seminar strand with curated exhibition areas designed for buyers, independents and hospitality professionals.

One of the headline sessions, “Cyber Resilience for Restaurants, Retailers & Food Businesses”, has been organised with independent traders in mind and will be chaired by Andrew Goodacre, chief executive of the British Independent Retailers Association. The organisers say the panel will include cyber specialists and retail leaders; the inclusion of Katie Barnett, director of cyber security at Toro Solutions, brings board‑level security experience and familiarity with assurance standards such as Cyber Essentials and ISO 27001 to the discussion. The session is billed as offering practical steps independents can take to reduce exposure to online threats.

The fair’s “Food for Thought” programme also puts retail strategy and brand purpose centre stage. One session featuring Wilfred Emmanuel‑Jones MBE, founder of The Black Farmer, with his son Alexander, will examine how a clear set of values and coherent brand identity can underpin customer loyalty and sustainable growth — lessons organisers say are particularly pertinent for smaller, value‑driven traders looking to deepen local customer relationships.

Changing consumer attitudes to health and wellbeing form another strand of the seminar programme. A panel titled “Healthier by Design: Turning Wellness Expectations into Retail Opportunity” will explore how independents can respond to growing scrutiny of ingredients and the prominence of ultra‑processed foods, balancing reformulation or range changes with commercial realities on tight margins. The Fair frames these sessions as practical, trade‑facing conversations rather than high‑level theory.

For retailers hunting for new lines, Pitch Live — run in partnership with IND!E — will again spotlight challenger brands. The Pitch Live platform invites exhibitors to present to an elite buyer panel that event materials say will include representatives from Selfridges, Booths and Ocado; winners can expect potential listings and post‑show publicity, making it a direct route from sampling to shelf. Organisers describe the competition as an intentional route to surface innovations that might quickly become customer favourites.

The exhibition floor is designed to mirror those discovery opportunities. Curated areas such as the Start‑Up Village and a new IND!E Pavilion are dedicated to founder‑led, emerging businesses, while the Village Square will host showcases from wholesalers and regional partners. Exhibitor listings confirm the presence of established suppliers — including B‑Corp wholesaler Cotswold Fayre — and the Fair also highlights award winners in a Great Taste Deli alongside premium drinks in a Drinks Quarter and Wine Cellar. Taken together, the floor plan aims to give independents a one‑stop view of trends and supply options.

Practical details for visitors are being handled through the Fair’s official registration portal, which lists opening times for 9 and 10 September and provides the trade registration form for complimentary entry. The organiser’s site also sets out exhibitor and programme information and indicates the event is targeted at trade buyers and hospitality professionals, with a vetting process for trade passes.

For independents weighing the value of attendance, the Fair offers a compact package: sector‑specific learning on topical commercial threats, curated sourcing zones to identify new products, and direct buying opportunities through pitched showcases. According to the organisers, the combination of seminar content and a targeted exhibitor mix is intended to help smaller retailers build resilience, refresh ranges in line with evolving consumer demand and spot the next products that could drive footfall and loyalty.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[2]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[4]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/speakers/andrew-goodacre-1), [[5]](https://www.nationalcybersecurityshow.com/speakers/katie-barnett)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[2]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[2]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[3]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/pitch-live)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[2]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/), [[6]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/exhibitors/cotswold-fayre)
* Paragraph 7 – [[7]](https://sfff-2025.reg.buzz/sfff-website), [[2]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/), [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/), [[2]](https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://premierconstructionnews.com/2025/08/19/cybersecurity-customer-loyalty-and-emerging-brands-in-focus-at-speciality-fine-food-fair-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/> - Speciality & Fine Food Fairs is the official website for the Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2025, confirming the event will take place at Olympia London on 9–10 September 2025. The homepage outlines the show as the UK’s leading showcase for artisanal food and drink, highlighting features such as the Food for Thought seminar programme, the Start‑Up Village for emerging brands, the Drinks Quarter and Wine Cellar, and the new Village Square. The site invites buyers, independents and hospitality professionals to register for free trade entry and provides links to exhibitors, speakers and the full event programme.
3. <https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/pitch-live> - The Pitch Live page describes the Fair’s live pitching feature in partnership with IND!E, inviting food and drink brands to present to an elite panel of buyers. The page explains that retailers such as Selfridges, Booths and Ocado will be represented on the judging panels, offering winners potential listings and post‑show publicity. It sets out entry details, timelines and prizes for Pitch Live 2025, emphasising the opportunity for challenger brands to secure retail listings and media coverage. The page makes clear Pitch Live is open to exhibitors and is designed to spotlight emerging products to buyers.
4. <https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/speakers/andrew-goodacre-1> - This speaker profile for Andrew Goodacre confirms his role as CEO of the British Independent Retailers Association (BIRA) and lists his speaking commitments at Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2025. The page shows Goodacre is scheduled to host a Food for Thought session titled “Cyber Resilience for Restaurants, Retailers & Food Businesses” on 9 September 2025, underlining his involvement in discussions about challenges facing independents. The profile summarises his retail and hospitality background and explains his advocacy for independent traders, placing him as a credible chair for sessions on cyber resilience and wider retail strategy.
5. <https://www.nationalcybersecurityshow.com/speakers/katie-barnett> - The National Cyber Security Show speaker page profiles Katie Barnett as Director of Cyber Security at Toro Solutions, detailing her fifteen years’ experience in IT and security. The biography describes her work at board level, delivery of assurance against standards such as Cyber Essentials and ISO 27001, and her role as an event speaker on contemporary cyber threats and defences. The page demonstrates Barnett’s subject‑matter credentials for participating in panels on cyber resilience for small businesses, illustrating why an event panel seeking practical steps for independents might include a cyber professional with her background.
6. <https://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/exhibitors/cotswold-fayre> - The exhibitor listing for Cotswold Fayre confirms the wholesaler’s presence at the Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2025, including its stand number and a summary of the company’s role in supplying independent retailers. The page highlights Cotswold Fayre’s B‑Corp certification, range of products and commitment to sustainability, and promotes the company’s activities at the Fair. As a named exhibitor and sector partner, the page supports the article’s claim that regional groups and wholesalers – including Cotswold Fayre – are featured at the event and involved in on‑floor showcases and discussions within the Village Square.
7. <https://sfff-2025.reg.buzz/sfff-website> - This registration portal is the official online sign‑up for Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2025, providing the trade registration form and event practicalities. The page lists opening times for 9–10 September at Olympia London and guides visitors through ticket options, login and check‑in. It functions as the destination for complimentary trade passes and confirms the organiser’s vetting approach for attendees, while offering links to the event website and further information about visiting, exhibiting and the seminar programme. The page is the active channel for independents to register for free trade entry to the Fair.