

The Retail Edit

Tasty100

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Brands 51-75 / The Retail Edit

EAT WITH
YOUR EYES™

Discover how small retail is
bringing out the big guns
with our F&B experts



Nibble on the latest
industry food & drink news –
and explore our taste guide



See what's
tasty & trending
on our Instagram

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What's inside The Retail Edit issue

Welcome to the Tasty100, a compilation of food & drink brands we love, here at Eat With Your Eyes™ design agency. Fill your cart with insights and content on all things retail. This issue is stacked to the brim with our expertise, industry news and the brands we think are the tastiest right now!

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Eat With Your Eyes™ Creative Services

Who we are and what we do

From kitchen to cart...

How restaurants are conquering the retail aisle

Not so long ago, if you wanted to experience the magic of your favourite restaurant, you had to book a table, take a seat, and let the chef work their artistry behind closed kitchen doors. Today, that experience might be waiting for you just down the road - not at the restaurant, but on the supermarket shelf.

From signature sauces to frozen dumplings, restaurant-branded products are no longer niche novelties; they've become a booming retail category. In the process, they're rewriting the play book of how food brands are born, marketed, and consumed.



The pandemic push and a permanent shift...

While the trend had been quietly building for years, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated it dramatically. Forced to close dining rooms and find alternative revenue streams, many restaurants pivoted to retail almost overnight.

In London, Dishoom, the beloved Bombay-inspired café, began selling its signature "House Black Daal" and bacon naan kits online¹. Across the country, Wagamama rolled out its now-iconic line of ramen kits and sauces². Even high-end dining spots like Hawksmoor launched bottled cocktails for at-home enjoyment³.

What started as a survival tactic soon revealed itself to be a sustainable, and highly profitable brand extension.

From experience to product...

Restaurants that successfully transition into retail understand one key truth: they're not just selling food, they're selling an experience.

When a jar of pasta sauce from Carluccio's appears on a UK supermarket shelf, it's not merely a mix of tomatoes and herbs - it's a slice of Italian trattoria culture, infused with the warmth and authenticity of Antonio Carluccio's legacy. Buying it isn't just about convenience; it's a way of bringing a touch of the restaurant's charm and heritage into your own kitchen.

This is where design steps into the spotlight. In retail, packaging isn't just a protective outer - it's the restaurant's storefront in miniature, the first and sometimes only chance to make an emotional connection. Colours, typography, photography, and even the feel of the

material are all deliberate choices designed to transport the shopper back to the dining room. A textured paper label can suggest artisan craftsmanship; a matte finish might hint at understated sophistication; a bold splash of colour can evoke the energy of a bustling open kitchen. Every element works together to signal the brand's personality in the blink of an eye.

Take Wagamama's retail line: its clean, bold typography and striking colour blocks echo the brand's minimalist, high-energy interiors. Even the spacing and layout on the packaging mirror the way the restaurant plates its food - uncluttered, confident, and modern. The result? Customers spot it instantly from across the aisle and, almost unconsciously, connect it to the flavours, atmosphere, and memories they've already enjoyed in-store.

Why the supermarket loves them...

Retailers are equally enthusiastic about this crossover. Restaurant brands often bring built-in customer loyalty, cultural cachet, and a strong point of differentiation in crowded categories.

Take PizzaExpress, for example. Long before pandemic necessity, the chain had launched its line of chilled pizzas, salad dressings, and dough balls into supermarkets. The products not only performed well in-store but also acted as year-round advertising with promotions for the restaurant chain itself.

For supermarkets, stocking restaurant-branded goods is like acquiring a "celebrity endorsement" for their aisles, lending authenticity.

“Restaurants that successfully transition into retail understand one key truth: they’re not just selling food, they’re selling an experience.”

The product development challenge...

Of course, translating a dish from restaurant plate to retail packet isn't as simple as scaling up the recipe. There are multiple hurdles:

- **Consistency:** Restaurant chefs can tweak dishes on the fly; retail products need exact replication at industrial scale.
- **Shelf Life:** Freshly made sauces often rely on refrigeration and quick turnover; retail requires pasteurisation, preservatives, or freezing without compromising flavour.
- **Supply Chain:** Securing ingredients at volume while keeping quality high is no small feat.
- **Price Point:** Restaurant dishes can justify higher margins; supermarket shoppers are price-sensitive and quick to compare alternatives.

Itsu, for example, invested heavily in research to ensure its frozen gyoza matched the taste and texture of the restaurant version¹. The brand's retail success lies in maintaining quality while offering accessible price points for everyday shoppers.

Brand equity as the secret sauce...

At the heart of this movement is brand equity - the intangible value a restaurant has built over years of service, customer trust, and cultural relevance.

When Nando's sells its Peri-Peri sauce in UK supermarkets, customers don't need to be convinced it's good; they've already enjoyed it alongside flame-grilled chicken countless times. That emotional connection can tip a shopper's decision in seconds.

However, the inverse is also true: if a retail product disappoints, it can tarnish the restaurant's reputation. Unlike standalone food brands, restaurants risk damaging not just a product line, but their core business. This is why many partner with specialist food manufacturers who can protect both quality and scalability.

Marketing beyond the menu...

Restaurants entering retail have had to expand their marketing strategies beyond food photography and dining reviews. They are now competing for attention in crowded supermarket aisles - and on Instagram and TikTok feeds filled with home cooking inspiration.

This has led to inventive campaigns:

- **Nando's** built an entire social media persona around its Peri-Peri sauce, creating memes and challenges that keep the product top-of-mind.
- **Pret A Manger** leveraged nostalgia during lockdowns with its coffee subscription and supermarket coffee beans, positioning itself as part of the customer's daily ritual, even at home.
- **Hawksmoor** launched its bottled cocktail range with a mix of recipe videos and behind-the-scenes content.

What it means for the future of casual dining...

The rise of restaurant-to-retail products blurs the line between eating out and eating in. For consumers, it's a win: they get access to their favourite flavours without leaving home. For restaurants, it's a powerful revenue stream that diversifies income beyond the volatility of in-person dining.



It also opens the door to brand communities. Imagine a customer discovering a restaurant through a bottle of dressing, then visiting in person, then engaging on social media, then ordering a meal kit - each touchpoint reinforcing the brand's value.

Not just for the big names...

While big chains dominate supermarket shelves, this shift is also benefiting smaller independents. Regional bakeries are selling their sourdough starters in local grocers. Boutique Mexican restaurants are bottling their salsas for farmers' markets and farm shops. Even neighbourhood cafés are packaging their granola blends for loyal customers.

Digital retail platforms like Dishpatch⁵ have further broadened access, allowing smaller restaurants to ship products nationwide without the backing of a supermarket giant.

The balancing act...

The challenge for restaurants now is finding the right balance between accessibility and exclusivity. Part of a restaurant's allure comes from the idea that it offers something you can't get anywhere else. As retail distribution widens, brands must work harder to keep the magic alive - through storytelling, limited-edition drops, and continual innovation.

When done right, the results are powerful. A shopper might throw a jar of Wagamama Firecracker Sauce into their basket, but what they're really buying is the promise of a Friday night with friends, a table by the open kitchen, and that feeling of satisfaction you only get from the real thing.

Jo Morris
Account Director



Talk to us about your new project...

Paul Pisani, New Business Director / 01234 838932 / 07940 526680 / paul@eatwithyoureyes.co.uk

¹ Metro, 'Dishoom now do meal kits...' by Lizzie Thomson.

² The Standard 'Wagamamas launches home-cooking supermarket range', by Henry Saker-Clark.

³ The Scotsman, 'Hawksmoor at Home launches delivery cocktails across Scotland' by Caitlyn Dewar, by Caitlyn Dewar.

⁴ The Grocer, 'How can restaurant brands succeed on supermarket shelves?' by Lois Vallyely.

⁵ UK Tech News, 'Dishpatch secures £10 million Seed investment...' by Safiya Marzook.

the Nibble

Tuck in to the latest industry highlights & insights.

The Government aims to make it easier to open pubs and music venues

Ministers have recently pledged to change processes making it easier for businesses to open new bars, music venues and cafes in a bid to rejuvenate the high street. With plans to overhaul planning and licensing rules, disused shops can be revitalised into new spaces.



The plan involves a new National Licensing Policy Framework, which will cut cost, complexity and the time it takes to open and operate new hospitality venues, which should in turn make it far easier for small businesses to succeed.

Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds has stated that “Red tape has stood in the way of people’s business ideas for too long. Today we’re slashing those barriers to giving small business owners the freedom to flourish.”

New ‘hospitality zones’ will fast-track permissions, while reforms will also protect long-standing venues from noise complaints by new developments. The hope is that the high street can begin to thrive, without the threat of being silenced.



Harrods cuts ties with big name chefs

The luxury department store is ceasing relationships with numerous chef partnerships, including Tom Kerridge, Calum Franklin and Gordon Ramsay. Instead, the store will shift to opening its own in-house restaurants following a strategic review of customer preferences and current industry trends.

Tasty Gift Guide

Add to basket...



- 1. Pistachio everything:** Indulge with the Fatso King's Ransom dark chocolate bar with mint & pistachio, £7.25, [sofatso.com](https://www.sofatso.com)
- 2. Amateur chefs:** Cook with double-churned goodness from All Things Butter Garlic & Herb Butter, £2.85, [ocado.com](https://www.ocado.com)
- 3. Turn up the heat:** Try all the classics from Yellowbird with this Mini Hot Sauce gift pack, £27.99, [selfridges.com](https://www.selfridges.com)
- 4. BBQ lovers:** Fire up the grill with this exclusive BBQ Box by Field Blends from DELLI, £42.00, [delli.market](https://www.delli.market)
- 5. Wellness enthusiasts:** Feel the benefits of lasting focus with Cheerful Buddha Lion's Mane Mushroom Coffee, £13.99, [cheerfulbuddha.com](https://www.cheerfulbuddha.com)
- 6. For the sweet-toothed:** Make no apologies for not sharing with Wild Thingz Organic Gummy Sweets, £3.00, [wildthingz.co](https://www.wildthingz.co)

*All prices correct as of time of printing.

Honi Poke acquires Island Poke to create UK's leading poke brand

The Hawaiian-influenced poke bowl brand has acquired Island Poke, to cement themselves as the UK's leading poke operator. The fast-growing sustainable brand will be adding 18 Island Poke sites to its portfolio – 9 in London and 9 in France.



Fun Foodie Fact!

Hot honey originates from Brazil as chilli-infused honey and has been used for centuries. In 2003 Mike Kurtz, an American college student discovered this and brought the idea back to the US, eventually founding Mike's Hot Honey in 2010.



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A coffee date with the studio

Chloe George, Account Manager talks to Motion Designer, Curtis Reeve about the rise of artisan, niche and start-up brands taking over the retail space and what makes a product memorable.

Q1 / What do you think are the vital components beyond the product itself, to creating a successful retail food brand?

Product reels the customer in, authenticity makes them loyal to the brand. A brand's story and positioning is the make or break to any food brand.

It doesn't need a heart-felt story of how the brand was established in the year so-and-so (which saturated the market in the mid-2010s) but it needs to be concise and conveyed to the customer as efficiently as possible.

A strong understanding of where and how you establish yourself in the market is key, along with an open mind of how to differentiate yourself from your competitors. From the likes of Lurpak, who for years was a below-average selling butter in the UK, to repositioning themselves as the butter of choice for home cooks and becoming a market leader in the UK. To the trusted Tunnock's Caramel Wafer, a product that has been relatively unchanged since its creation in 1952. And let's not forget every marketer's favourite water brand – Liquid Death – who's been a market disruptor since its inception in 2017.

Q2 / What do you think is key to upping a brand's chances to going 'viral' and how important do you think this is?

A brand's focus should be staying authentic to be able to reach the right audience.

No one can decide what will become viral, it will always be up to the consumer. Ocean Spray hit the viral jackpot a few years ago, and they had nothing to do with it. Did TikTok user 'dogface208' go viral because he was drinking Ocean Spray whilst skateboarding and listening to Fleetwood Mac? Absolutely not, it was because it was someone being their authentic self, and it resonated with over 100m people. It really can be luck of the draw!

"How can we make this go viral" isn't what brands should be asking, it should be... "How can we show who we are?"

Q3 / How would you design differently for artisanal or niche brands versus mass-market products?

Artisanal/niche products have the luxury of freedom that you wouldn't usually be able to achieve with mass-marketed products.

It could be as simple as showcasing the batch number or the product in its purest form. You have the power to design your packaging to be an experience that customers can enjoy and connect with, as opposed to 'red tape' you need to adhere to once you go into the supermarkets, and the challenge of standing out on the shelves.

Q4 / What packaging and design trends are you seeing in the food retail space right now, and what do you love?

I think the return of the brand mascot has really made a full comeback in the food retail space. With the likes of M&S releasing mascots for a variety of their own sauces and seasonings (Hot Honey Sauce, I'm looking at you especially). To the UK return of McDonald's Grimace, and the internet smashing Grimace Shake. But with every design trend, brands always need to tread carefully as you never want to be too late to the party!

Q5 / Do you think social media has changed the way small food brands market themselves, even down to packaging?

This is the golden age for small brands on socials. You may be outspent on ad space, but organic content is where they can even the playing field, especially on TikTok. From the viral (and now household name) Little Moons, that became a new favourite back in 2021, with sales even increasing by 700%. To Daadi Snacks, an account that rarely shows the product, but creates content highlighting the absurdity of the mentality of some influencers. By being authentic to their values, they've broken down the barriers of what a brand should be, and have become a brand that not only entertains, but one consumers can trust.

Q6 / How do you find yourself discovering new retail brands, is it on the shelves, via social, word of mouth?

I love wandering the aisles of the supermarkets and looking at what's new but getting a product into a supermarket is an expensive task. My favourite places to go are local delis and independent stores, you'll always find something new. I find these products to have an extra level of authenticity and quality, from the extra details found in their packaging to the joy of experiencing a new product.

Q7 / What's been your favourite new discovery this year – give us something weird and wonderful!!

Oh that's a tough one! I don't know if it's because of my love for the talk show 'Hot Ones', but I've really gotten into chicken wings and hot sauces. Jethro's Naga Fire is a favourite of mine and Mr Vikki's range of sauces are incredible (they also do an incredible Garlic Pickle which is great alongside a homemade curry!)

If I had to pick one new discovery though (or rather rediscovery, after a friend offered me a taste years ago), it would have to be Soffle's Pitta Chips. From that beautiful hand drawn packaging and that paper-y bag that just ruffles in a way no other crisp packet does. Let's not forget that the flavours are to die for (I'm going to try the chilli & garlic flavour next!) Paired with a lovely brand story and a quality that I haven't experienced elsewhere, it's a 10/10 from me.



"How can we make this go viral" isn't what brands should be asking, it should be... "How can we show who we are?"





zilk®

zero to hero!

This creative turned a simple plant-based milk alternative into a vibrant brand that baristas can't stop talking about.



We were asked to create a brand for a new range of plant-based barista alternatives – oat, soya and coconut. We positioned the range as ‘fabulous for frothy cappuccinos and uniquely silky for latte art – designed for baristas and coffee lovers’.

The name zilk derived as an alternative spelling for plant-based barista alternatives. The logo style evoked the simple, super-modern name.



The zilk brand is all about going deeper into the coffee experience, so our illustration style reflects this with contemporary people relaxing within a drink. Bold colours create immediate shelf stand-out against competitors and a clear differential for each product within the zilk range. All brand creative was documented in a full standards.

“Our customers are loving the look and taste of our new range of plant-based barista alternatives. The response has been very positive, with huge praise for the quality, taste and branding. A big thank you to Eat With Your Eyes who are super easy to work with and delivered on what they promised.”

Andy Small / Snowdon and Bridge
Senior Brand Marketing Manager



Team: Tony Chambers, Account Director /
Steve Oakey, Lead Creative /
Jake Lockett, Illustration /
Trevor Frances, Lead Artwork



We ask Jake Lockett, Senior Creative Designer, about his process when illustrating for packaging...

What's the first step you take when starting a packaging illustration?

Understanding the brand and the product is the most important first step. Every part of the design should work together to support what the brand wants to communicate.

Do you usually sketch ideas by hand or digitally?

It's always helpful to sketch out your ideas first, your hand is much more free flowing than a computer and you can work through dozens of different compositions and styles really quickly.

How much does the product itself influence your first ideas?

The product completely influences the illustrations, both the actual content of the images and stylistically; everything should lead back to supporting the visual approach of the product.

How do you make an illustration stand out on a crowded shelf?

I feel that the strongest images are all about balance; dark and light, texture and negative space and a complimentary colour palette. In most cases imagery should enrich the brand's personality without overwhelming the overall design.





Tasty100

Brands 51-75 / The Retail Edit

Food is seasonal and so are we. In each quarterly issue of the Tasty100, we'll be counting down our top 25 brands for each sector, so there's more for you to savour!

Our foodie creatives' votes are in... look for our Team Fav, Super Tasty and Creative Juices throughout the brands.

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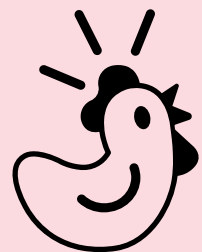
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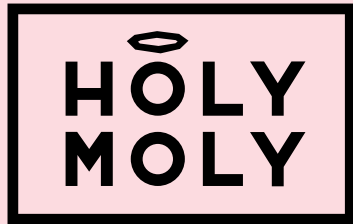
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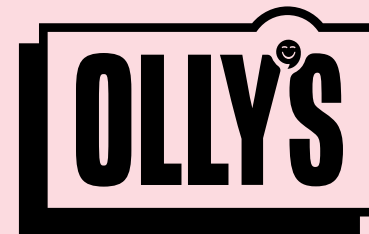
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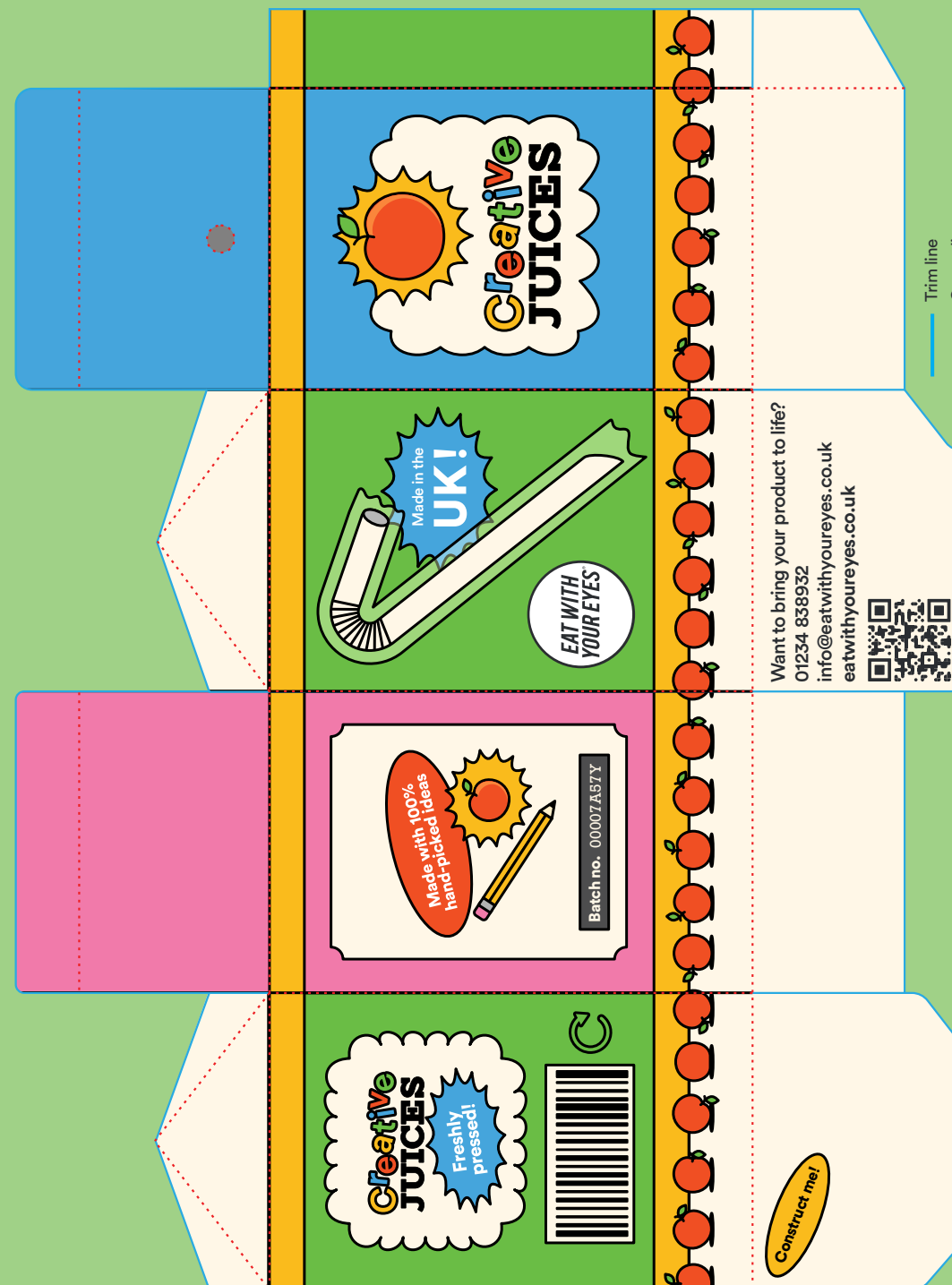
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Creativity and innovation

Brand strategy

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Brand naming and registering
Logo creation / development
Brand tone of voice
Brand launch
Brand guidelines

Brand activation

Artworking and production
Site auditing
Signage installation
Point of sale systems
Counter menu systems

Specialisms

Branding
New concept development
Foodservice tenders
Packaging design
In-store POS
Exhibitions and events
F&B photography and filming

Digital

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Footer



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