

it works for us...



Sue Jewell (above) became a first-time deli owner in 2007

The Mouse Hole Deli High Street, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

When first-time retailer Sue Jewell saw a deli for sale in the pretty village of Fordingbridge last October, she decided it presented the perfect opportunity to pursue her passion for food.

The New Forest, where Fordingbridge is located, attracts around 13.5 million holidaymakers and day-trippers every year. But Jewell estimates around 80% of her trade comes from locals, who tend to be a mix of retirees and foodies. "Promoting local produce is really important," she says. "Tourists are interested in it and locals are knowledgeable about farms in the area and want to support them."

The Mouse Hole is housed in 300-year-old premises, and the building has had various former incarnations including a chemist and a carpet shop. It was already a deli when Jewell bought it, which meant many of the fixtures and fittings she needed were included in the sale. A re-fit was undertaken, however, because Jewell wasn't happy with the layout, particularly the chiller cabinets which were too far back.

Soon after opening, she faced a series of disasters when her coffee machine, boiler and air-conditioning units all broke down. But 2008 started on a positive note, when new lighting was fitted and Jewell discovered the full benefits of her inherited Avery Berkel till and linked scales. Now she uses the till, which had not been properly programmed, to shed light on stock management, monitor sales, scan barcodes and make VAT calculations.



The shop used to carry pasties and sausage rolls, but Jewell decided to replace these with cakes, sandwiches and baguettes. She also introduced a range of pies from Bristol-based Pieminister (above) including Heidi Pie made with goats' cheese and PM Pie with beef steak, kidneys and ale.



Free-range eggs are enormously popular: Jewell says she doesn't think shoppers notice that they are priced cheaper than supermarket eggs, but she does like to know that they are from a local farm and enjoy being able to select their own dozen.

Beaulieu chocolate is Hampshire-produced and popular with both locals and tourists. Varieties



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£1.5
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A range of Purbeck's flavours in large and small tubs are on sale. Jewell is aware that there is a New Forest ice cream producer but says staff and customers alike prefer Purbecks. She particularly likes the fact that the mint ice cream is white and not green.



Jewell has found that sampling is the best way to attract interest in these jars of spicy nuts and goods.

The unappealing packaging makes these Italian breadsticks a slow seller but sales soar when tasters are put out.