

Delilah Fine Foods Ltd (Delicatessen), Nottingham: Entry form

Take a look at their Retailer of the Year winners' video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDsH7Xz4RZk&t=8s>

Winners of Delicatessen of the Year, Midlands Region and Retailer of the Year 2025.

www.delilahfinefoods.co.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/DelilahFineFoods/>

<https://www.instagram.com/delilahfinefoods/>



Entry form:

Please tell us about the recent sustainability initiatives you have applied within your retail store / business (max 20 points):

Delilah is committed to reducing our environmental footprint through sustainable practices. We actively promote the use of eco-friendly materials like paper and jute bags, aim to minimize packaging waste, and streamline deliveries for efficiency. For instance, we coordinate local deliveries, ensuring the most fuel-efficient routes are taken to reduce total miles travelled.

We actively participate in local initiatives and peer group meetings to learn and implement best practices for sustainability. Recently, we've introduced monetary incentives to encourage customers to bring their own reusable containers for specific product categories

where this can make a significant environmental impact. Customers can now receive discounts on:

- Loose leaf tea and coffee beans: Instead of using wax-lined kraft bags, customers can bring their own airtight containers.
- Coffee & Tea refills
- Refillable oil and vinegar: Bring back the original bottle for a discounted refill.
- Olives and antipasti: Use your own suitable container to purchase these loose items at a discounted price.

We are also sourcing high-quality, reusable containers and bottles for customers to purchase as a one-time investment to further simplify this process.

At Delilah, we uphold a strict no plastic bottle policy for all beverages served in our busy café, aligning with our commitment to environmental sustainability. As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce plastic usage and promote local, eco-friendly practices.

We are launching 20 own-label products to celebrate our 20th anniversary. One of the products in this collection is our very own white wine, 'Lilah', which embodies our dedication to sustainability and local craftsmanship. Lilah is made all by hand and features a cork closure with no plastic capsule. The wine is packaged in reused boxes, and delivered to us using an electric vehicle, ensuring a minimal carbon footprint...more products in the same vein to follow.

Sustainability - Please provide supplier and/or customer testimonials

Delilah's Nottingham has been an essential destination for me since my husband and I discovered it over a dozen years ago. Delilah's says it is fiercely independent which it is but its shelves are full of amazing products we don't see on supermarket shelves from equally independent and innovative producers. What is especially nice to discover is the way the Delilah's team work with producers in the Midlands and beyond to learn about their produce from cheese, to wine, and meat, in some cases co-producing produce such as Lilah white wine.

The staff are incredibly knowledgeable and friendly, Delilah's is a true shopping 'oasis' in Nottingham, get ideas for food pairings from their café and themed evenings and enjoy the best espresso in Nottingham! As a customer it is good to be able to shop where sustainable practices are practised including the ability to use our own containers when buying some products at Delilah's. Napoleon is reputed to have said that we are 'a nation of shopkeepers', our high streets would still be vibrant if more took inspiration from Delilah's, Nottingham

Irene Hardill, Customer

How does your retail store / business engage with the local community? (max 20 points) Within your answer, the judges will be looking for at least one customer testimonial.

Delilah has been part of the Nottingham Community for two decades, being awarded the accolade of 'institution'. We have a deep connection with the local community,

fostering relationships through a variety of initiatives emphasising sustainability, collaboration, and shared values. Key ways we engage with the community:

Supporting Local : Delilah prioritises sourcing products from the local area where possible, ensuring that the community benefits from mutual growth. This not only supports small businesses but also promotes sustainability by reducing the need for long-distance transportation.

Local Events and Initiatives: The deli actively engages in city centre and peer group meetings and events, always staying involved in discussions about best practices, sustainability, and local commerce. By participating, Delilah helps shape the community's approach to sustainability and business development.

Customer Practices : Delilah encourages customers to participate in environmentally conscious behaviours, such as bringing their own reusable containers, bags, etc. These initiatives help foster a culture of sustainability within the community, inspiring customers to reduce waste and think more sustainably every-day.

Local Artisans: We partner with local artisans and give them an opportunity to use Delilah as a testing ground for new products and gain customer's perspective which helps them develop profitability and longevity that comes with that.

Educational Tastings: Delilah hosts tastings and events to engage with the community, educating customers on food provenance, artisanal products, and sustainable practices. These events help build a sense of community and shared learning.

Local Charities: The deli partners with businesses who are working with local charities, offering support through fundraising initiatives, donations, and involvement in events.

Local Employment: By hiring locally, Delilah helps sustain the local economy and creates opportunities for community members to engage with and support a beloved local institution.

Building ties with the community, creating a sustainable and supportive environment for everyone.

Community - Please provide supplier and/or customer testimonials

"Good mornin'," quipped this optimistic West Indian nurse. 8:10 in the morning over croissant and coffee, I invited Anthony to take the bar stool next to me. Delilah had been open only a few weeks; just ten seats but already busy: a deli with cheeses, proper charcuterie and wines quite distinct from supermarket offers. My brother had recently moved to Edinburgh where famous Italian deli, Valvona & Corolla, had become his place to shop. I was envious, but now Nottingham had an embryo, with - important to any successful outlet - friendly staff who know their customers; Sangita certainly does.

In time, her lease up, and with impressive ambition, Sangita acquired Nottingham's grand Victorian former Midland Bank main branch. This was to be V&C written large.

Independents are the true heartbeat of the high street, today so distressed. Just off the main drag in Nottingham, Delilah is an Aladdin's cave. Arrive for breakfast, poached eggs on spinach, spicy harissa yoghurt and Welbeck granary toast. Accompany this with a glass of Fizz. Is 10am too early?

And then shop! Cheeses from France, Italy, Switzerland; but also local cheeses from Cropwell Bishop, Colston Bassett, Long Clawson, or the nearby Peak District; a fresh loaf from North Notts' Welbeck Abbey.

A true ambassador for the East Midlands, Sangita sells the best regional fayre alongside exotic charcuterie and ambitious kitchen essentials, transforming home cuisine.

She was brave, and ahead of her time, taking on a former banking hall, when most became chain restaurants or pubs. Friendships are formed here at the bar, or on wine tasting evenings.

Recently, I raised my eyes and across the counter was Anthony. We'd lost touch since his retirement.

"Let's have some wine," I said, choosing a celebratory bottle from the impressive selection.

That's Delilah for you.

Richard Tresidder

Please tell us about your store layout and design (max 20 points). Judges will be looking for how you have designed your store and merchandised it. Why have you chosen certain categories for certain areas? How do you encourage shoppers to shop the whole store?

Delilah is beautifully housed in a listed former banking hall, the space boasts tall ceilings, original architectural features, and a two-level layout. The mezzanine eatery offering a cozy, elevated dining experience, while the ground floor showcases the deli's full range, including a vibrant food bar at the rear.

The food bar is attached to an open kitchen, this draws our customers to walk the whole length of the store to investigate what's on the menu. As the customer steps through the large, iconic doors, they are greeted by a windowed entrance giving a sneaky peek. We have also lowered the front windows to tempt the passers-by.

Upon entering, customers are immediately drawn to the cheese and charcuterie chillers, strategically positioned opposite the entrance. A selection of 200+ cheeses, 50+ meats, olives & antipasti, designed to be the first thing seen.

All fresh breads, etc. are right at the front of the store, again securing the stamp of freshness, on entry.

The center of the deli has 4 shopping aisles and gondola ends packed with products. Using principles of eye-level is buy level on all shelves. The front aisle is for seasonal highlighting; then impulse/gift purchases, forcing the consumer to pass these before they get to anything they may have come in for, such as ingredients, oils and vinegars.

We use adjacency marketing where possible, so chutneys and crackers are located near the cheese/meats; honeys and jams near breads; wine department near the food bar to tempt customers into a bottle to take home having partaken in a glass (or two) and loose leaf tea, coffee beans, etc is in a cave-like room at the rear of the store. Tables are also nestled in any nook and cranny we have at our disposal so customers are truly submerged in deli-goodness.

What Initiatives do you have available for staff development? (max 20 points). Within your answer, the judges will be looking for at least one staff testimonial

At Delilah, our staff are the heartbeat of our existence. Their passion for food, paired with their knowledge and enthusiasm, is what sets us apart.

We are fortunate to have excellent staff retention, a rare feat in our industry, and we credit this to the comprehensive training and ongoing support. While it's often difficult to reward outstanding staff financially as much as we'd like, we focus on creating a positive work environment, including sensible working hours, diverse roles, and continuous opportunities for growth.

We believe in experiential learning, offering our team unique opportunities to deepen their understanding of food and drink. E.g. this year our staff have:

- Visited a cheese dairy and made cheese.
- Met the coffee supplier to see how our beans are roasted and learn about the process.
- Attended wine tastings to broaden their understanding of grape varieties.
- Participated in trade shows to interact with artisan producers and experience their passion.

We invest in formal education for our team, funding qualifications like social marketing degrees, WSET wine courses, and supplier-led training programs. These opportunities not only expand their knowledge but also allow them to grow while earning. We take pride in the fact that all of Delilah's managers and those in leadership have risen through the ranks, starting as front-of-house or kitchen staff. Watching their growth in both confidence and expertise has been incredibly rewarding, creating a team of people who genuinely love working at Delilah.

As many of our managers are new to leadership roles, we also focus on teaching them the business side of operations, from understanding accounts to the elements that drive profitability. This fresh perspective has reinvigorated Delilah, bringing a renewed sense of energy and ambition.

In summary, it's a place where people are nurtured, encouraged to grow, and are truly passionate.

Staff Development - Please provide staff testimonials to support your answer

I joined Delilah whilst studying a professional chef diploma at college, aiming to work in a kitchen one day; but following a collaborative event involving my college and Delilah, which provided an insight into what Delilah is about, I was offered a front of house position. I didn't hesitate to accept.

Even so, I was amazed by the incredible deli counter full of exceptional cheeses and charcuterie from around the world, and by the unique restaurant concept showcasing retail products on the menu. I was soon passionately involved in this amazing sector of the hospitality industry.

5 years on and I have gained much knowledge and many new skills thanks to the comprehensive training and support provided – along with the added bonus of eating cheese every day! Being part of Delilah Fine Foods is something I am truly proud of.

Amy (Retail & Deli Merchandiser)

I moved to the UK from Naples in 2016 and joined Delilah as a chef de partie - my first real job in the "English workforce". Even though I was already a chef for 5 years back in Italy, at first it was particularly challenging as I spoke very little English, and was unfamiliar with many of the ingredients and the very different kitchen dynamics.

8 years later, I've held just about every position in the business from bottom to top, from new start who doesn't speak the language, to running the whole show, (now with good English, but a strong accent!)

I'm very thankful for the opportunities and support Delilah has given me for personal and professional growth through the years.

As a small independent, we rely on team members' growth in order to represent Delilah at its best. As we often say: our staff IS Delilah!

Leonardo (Operations Manager)

F:What is your average basket spend?

£21-25

Judges comments:

This business is an inspiration to all in retail, hospitality and service. Stunning, well thought through environment, and space. The commitment to the team and standard of training is to be admired. This is certainly a business I would love to visit and enjoy.

Very strong entry. store looks amazing (mini Fortnums). love the inclusion of bar and restaurant wrapped into the deli and looks like the sort of place you could get lost in for hours. good socials and website and videos submitted really bring the entry to life. Financials very impressive too 50% growth in a year!! if I have one minor criticism it is when you say you source from local artisan producers PLEASE tell us who they are!!

No mention of electrics/bulbs etc in sustainability. Examples of charities engaged with etc Love the store and it's layout, Great feel. Get the feel that staff are well looked after. Socials good use of video, makes me want to visit, poss more staff pics?

The sustainability element is evident with the promotion of refilling using customer's own vessels, this is great. No mention of recycling, green electricity, charity support (other than supporting local companies charity activity). Electric vehicles or bike delivery - if they deliver(?) Green Waste disposal company. Do you have a Palm Oil policy? A higher score would have been awarded for these additional sustainable measures.

The locals obviously love the store and the community buzz it encourages. Almost want to take the trip to Nottingham to be a part of it :) The customer testimonial was so well written it earned an extra point - well done Richard!

Delilah has certainly made great use of every inch of the store, they aren't joking that every nook and cranny used! The image shows the overall look very well, the video is great showing the shelves which are presented very well. They have put a great deal of thought into the positioning and also the merchandising.

Reading the staff development gave me a sense of community and a group of people who appreciate each other. This will shine through to consumers and will of course be enhancing the experience. Great feedback inclusion (which runs through this application) Would have liked to have seen more dedicated training, incentives for great staff or perhaps the possibility of Living Wage.

Great website, informative, online shop, promoting all aspects of the store and offerings for consumer and corporate. Great images of the store too! Socials are up to date, vibrant and interesting. 15k followers across Fbk/Ig too. Great stuff. Good basket spend and great to see growth with planned additional growth for 2024 - which is expected for this great store.

Wonderfully diverse team of ages, genders and backgrounds. Great to see. Sustainability: All good basic initiatives - not above and beyond. Extremely clever use of video! Community: active engagement beyond just up-selling or sales drive. Big plus point. Great engagement with suppliers also, helping them out whilst bringing in a new range. Clever.

Educational shows they really care about their consumers. Loved they went to make Stichelton! very local. Layout: Space sounds fantastic - I want to go. Fresh products in customer eye sight clever. Beautiful shop. Well merchandised cheese. Very neat and shelf space used well. Seating incorporated into the deli not seperate - great. Also upstairs overlooking the produce is fantastic. Staff: Seem's like they are focused on staff retention as much as possible. Good to see. Very large average basket spend. Good albeit basic website. Social media could be improved with more focus - seems very generic and not properly thought out.

