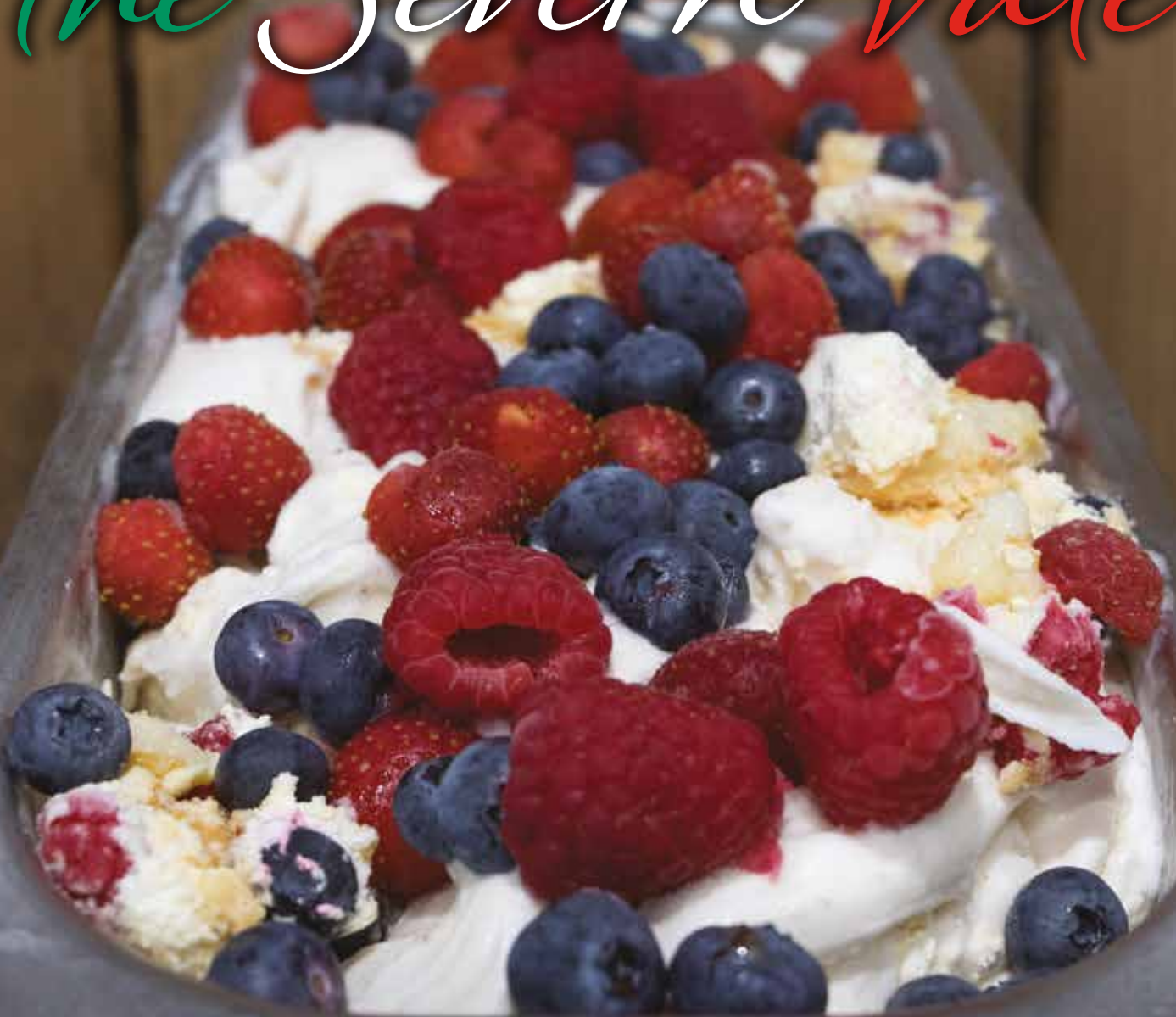


*A little taste of Italy in
the Severn Vale*



“Our signature flavour is Wholly Milk, which is just gelato with no other flavourings – I guess we’d call it vanilla in the UK, but it’s just the flavour of our lovely milk – with nothing else.”



As Wholly Cow Gelato approach their first birthday this summer, Alana Hopkins talks to the team and finds out what makes this Italian-style treat such a hit.

The Hobbs family have been farming and producing milk on the Elmore Estate for nearly 50 years.

The newest additions to their product range are a delicious gelato and butter. As Jenni Hobbs explains, “the Severn vale is, and always has been, perfect for grazing. Our cows – which now include Brown Swiss, Holstein Friesian, British Friesian, Norwegian Red and Fleckvieh – love to graze here. We milk a big happy family of about 200 of these lovely ladies”. The family farms approximately 350 acres, and the cows are out grazing from as early as the weather allows. Last year, the cows were outside from the end of March until November. Jenni and husband Jerry firmly believe that outdoor cows are happier, and produce healthier milk.

The farm has long been supplying another local, family-run business – Cotteswold Dairy in Tewkesbury with free range milk – but in 2018, the Hobbs family branched out into something a little different...

Jenni and her 20 year old daughter Emily dreamt of making quality products from their free range (Pasture Promise) milk for years. Emily describes how she had the gelato idea when her parents looked for ways of diversifying and adding value to the milk from the dairy herd.

After successfully applying for a Cotswold LEADER grant to help realise this dream, Emily and Jenni had everything they needed – with their savings, the grant, and their team in

place, they converted an old calf byre into a processing room. James Webb, Cotswolds LEADER Programme Manager says: “I’m really pleased that the Cotswolds LEADER Programme could support the farm business to diversify and grow. Moreover, this is a fantastic initiative that is putting quality produce from the Severn Vale on the map.”

Emily invested time into training and experimenting to find the perfect gelato recipe and flavour combinations. To make their ‘fior de latte’ gelato, she uses over 70% of their whole milk (unhomogenised). This is pasteurised with free range double cream, on site in their own machines, before sugar is added. The result is an intensely flavoured gelato, served at a slightly higher temperature to give it a perfectly soft, more-ish consistency.

The inventive flavours Emily creates are making Wholly Cow a hit with customers. Inspired by the changing seasons on the farm, Emily makes small batches so she can change the flavours regularly. Summer 2018 choices included quince and prosecco, pear and ginger, strawberry shortcake, spiced plum (with plums from the family’s own garden), hazelnut, and more.

It’s paying off: since Wholly Cow opened its shop, it’s been a triumph. Emily says, “Our signature flavour is Wholly Milk, which is just gelato with no other flavourings – I guess we’d call it vanilla in the UK, but it’s just the flavour of our lovely milk – with nothing else. It’s the flavour that represents what

Mum and I always wanted to achieve – an amazing product that’s made from start to finish right here on the farm. We’re proud of that quality!”

Wholly Cow has seasonal opening times: follow them on Facebook for up to date info @whollycowgelato

Gelato is £2.50 for one scoop, or £3.50 for two. Tubs are £5 for 500ml/£9 for 940ml to take away. Visit Hobbs Dairy at Barhouse Farm, Elmore, GL2 3NT to taste it for yourself. **AH**

Passionate about local produce, Jenni Hobbs gives us her top three tips for finding and supporting the best locally produced food and drink:

- **Get to know your area** – there are great producers on your doorstep, find out which farmers will sell direct from the farm, or supply local shops.
- **Teach your family** about real food. Where is it from? How is it produced? Is it local? Is it free range? Information is everything.
- **Get out of your supermarket comfort zone!** We all need supermarkets to a degree, but *fresh food* is different: it should always be local. Look on sites like bigbarn.co.uk or happerley.co.uk to find your local producers.