



# More than your standard nuts

**M**ary walks up to the bar where landlord Cyril asks: "Why don't you try my nuts, love?"

"Keep your nuts to yourself" Mary responds. "I only like Nobby's."

"Nobby!" Cyril yells to a punter propping up the end of the bar: "Give Mary your nuts!"

Crude? Perhaps. But Cyril is, in his unsophisticated way, up-selling. Chris Sears, partner of Edgar's Choice, whose snacks include Bar Mix, Carnival

A pint of lager and a packet of crisps still hold good for many pubs, but offering something different could generate more profit

**ANDREW DON** REPORTS

Peanuts and Tai Peanuts, says more pubs should up-sell.

Dave Willis, co-founder of Salty Dog snacks and Darling Spuds hand-cooked crisps, agrees. "I'd always advise bar staff to ask customers if they'd like a snack to accompany their drinks. It's a pretty straightforward thing to ask and a request that's really swift to deal with."

The advice of Sears and Willis is sound when you consider that bagged snacks can give 50% to 70% profit on return depending on the product. ►►

Matt Collins, trading director at KP Snacks, cites CGA Peach consumer research that shows half of all customers on average look to buy a bagged snack.

Alan Barnes, sales director of Fresher Foods, which supplies Pub Original Pork Scratchings and Pork Crunch, says: "There is nothing better than a spicy or salty snack to accompany your drink and these are normally impulse purchases that drive incremental revenue through the till."

Tony Goodman, chief executive of Yumsh Snacks, creator of Ten Acre premium snacks, says pubs can suggest pairings to boost bar snack sales.

"For example, Ten Acre Lucia Popperley's Cappuccino popcorn is delicious served with a glass of Prosecco, whereas Pastrami in the Rye hand-cooked crisps are the perfect partner to beer."

There could even be a pairings board where customers can see which snack goes with their drink, he suggests.

Willis stresses that bagged snacks "provide an extra profit opportunity without the cost of preparing meals".

Fran Howell, head of procurement at Fuller's, says customers have come to expect them.

"We have found that if you offer something different, it gains customers' interest because they want to try something new."

But it is also important to keep the range tight. "Cover the key flavours and then have one or two extra flavours that you can rotate seasonally."

"For Fuller's, the main criteria would be great taste, something new, a British brand and hand cooked," she says.

Barnes warns that pubs stocking mainstream brands will find customers are aware of the retail price and will always compare and possibly grumble about it.

"People are generally looking for something different. They can buy mainstream in supermarkets and forecourts. I would say regional brands are a good idea as it shows the pub is supporting local businesses and helps establish a local identity," he says.

Willis adds: "Sourcing smaller, less well-known brands can provide a point of difference for an outlet because it gives people a sense of discovery."

The market is continuously evolving. Fresher Foods' latest launch is a range of Openshaws of Lancashire premium pork snacks under the Gastro Pub banner in unusual flavours such as Black Pudding, Cumberland Sausage and BBQ Pulled Pork.

KP Snacks' newest O'Donnell's range



## I'd always advise bar staff to ask customers if they'd like a snack to go with their drinks



comes in a range of three flavours of hand-cooked, gluten-free crisps in Salt & Vinegar, Cheese & Onion and Salted flavours.

The London Crisp Company has launched a special edition Salt & Vinnie-gar, in honour of footballer-turned-actor Vinnie Jones. It joins its other London-inspired snacks – Shoreditch Cheese & Onion, Greenwich Prawn Cocktail, Soho Sea Salt and Camden Sweet Chili.



It launched The London Popcorn Company range last month – with each flavour inspired by a different "urban tribe". Lightly Salted (City Slicker), Sweet & Salty (High-Vis Vester), Sour Cream & Black Pepper (Yummy Mummy) and Caramel & Espresso (Hoxton Hipster).

Wilding's, which claims to be creator of the world's first Duck Cracking Snacks is just launching its first flavour – Peking Duck, which creator Adam Wilding says works well with a slightly spicy Shiraz or Malbec.

The Snaffling Pig Co's newest product is Maple Flavour Porky Snacks, while Gruntled Pork Cracking is the latest from the Salty Dog stable in Cornish Seas Salt, Habanero and English Mustard.

Kettle Chips extended its range this summer with Crispy Bacon & Maple Syrup, which is designed to tap into the sweet and salty trend.

David Milner, chief executive of Tyrrells – whose range includes Hand-Cooked crisps, Furrows crisps, its Alternatives range of Thai Chilli Rice Crackers, Spicy Coated Peanuts, Root Vegetables Crisps and popcorn brand Poshcorn – says growing exposure in the media to health issues has led to increasing numbers of people seeking healthier snack options.

"As demand continues to grow, pubs are more willing to stock the likes of popcorn and vegetable crisps, but it's even more important in this channel that these products deliver on taste."

Taste remains an important aspect for many consumers, with a growing trend for seeking out distinctive flavours, and international snacks are having a strong influence on new products, he says.

"As consumers increasingly venture outside of crisps into the wider snack market, it's likely we'll start seeing a rise in more globally sourced ranges offering a premium product, broader ►►



consumer choice and better margins for pubs.”

The health issue has become apparent both within and outside of the pub sector. Karen Riley, who runs award-winning Crave, a shop in Kirkham, Lancashire, that supplies food for take-away and outside catering, says: “Crisps nowadays are classed as a fattening treat – more so than a little chocolate bar.”

Matthew Smith, marketing director of Golden Wonder, Mr Porky, REAL Crisps, Jonathan Crisp and Tayto brand owner Tayto Group, maintains that limited editions are a great way to add a little interest for customers.

Willis advises that food-led pubs should offer, as a minimum, crisps and nuts, but if the outlet is predominantly wet, it is a good idea to extend the range to include scratchings, cheddar biscuits, biltong/jerky, bacon fries and other similar snacks.

“If they only sell a limited range, then plump for the top three flavours of crisps,

salted peanuts and dry roasted peanuts.”

He says deciding which snacks to offer depends very much on the pub and its clientele. “The snack offering should reflect the customer base and this will vary from site to site and area to area.”

The Vine Inn, Hillingdon, west London, is signed up to KP Snacks’ SnackPartners Perfect Pub category-driven programme which manager Becky Earnes claims helped her to merchandise her products in the best way possible.

Dean Packman, landlord of the



## Snacks are normally impulse purchases that drive extra revenue through the till



**35%**  
WOULD BE WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR SNACKS WITH ALL-NATURAL INGREDIENTS (MINTEL)

**14%**  
WOULD CONSIDER PAYING MORE FOR A REGIONAL PRODUCT (MINTEL)

**34%**  
WOULD LIKE TO TRY POPCORN WITH DIFFERENT TEXTURED COATINGS (MINTEL)

Forester, a Fuller’s pub in Ealing, west London, has found working closely with Pepsico’s Walkers led to a 55% year-on-year increase in crisp sales by value this July, according to EPoS data.

A Walkers rep encouraged the pub to add clip strips and counter-top units to showcase the full range of crisps and snacks to encourage impulse sales.

“Sales are really strong and I never have any wastage,” Packman says.

Tom Lock, managing director of The London Crisp Co, suggests pubs can increase snack sales through innovative displays but they should also look at “combo deals”, such as a set price for a pint and a packet of crisps or nuts.

Lock says his crisps are most suited to wooden crates or on smart chrome clip strips. “Keeping them under the bar is a bad idea. Pubs will sell three to four times as many snacks when they are nicely displayed.”

Andy Allen, chief marketing officer of The Snaffling Pig Co, says: “A carded product or a cheap box has a time and a place, but that’s missing out a large chunk of the market.

“Great design teamed with well-thought-out PoS can suddenly move a product from under the bar and into a feature on top of it. I think we can draw parallels with the rise of the craft beer market. Product quality is king, but visually, identity can often come a close second.”

Tayto Group advises encouraging impulse purchase, and pub cards continue to offer a ready-made display solution that can be used along with a simple sample display of available snacks.

So next time someone asks for a pint of lager and a packet of crisps, show them everything you’ve got. ■