

# TRY YOUR HAND

Ice cream is the true taste of summer – especially when it's handmade on the farm.

By Jane Yettram



**ADRIENNE BOSHER**  
Artisan ice cream maker



From left: baby Katie, Emma, five-year-old Pippa, Charlotte, Freddie and Adrienne

**W**hen you buy a scoop of blackberry ice cream from Adrienne Boshier, you'll know that all the berries have been gathered from hedgerows around her farm in Burnham, Buckinghamshire, and that the milk is fresh from her herd of pedigree Ayrshires.

'People call me the ice cream lady!' smiles Adrienne, 68, who set up Hitcham Dairy Ice Cream eight years ago with her daughters, Emma, 38, and Charlotte, 31. It was a bid to keep the farm viable in the face of low milk prices. Adrienne had already set up a catering business, but – having had knee surgery and with her mother bedridden with cancer – it was impossible to continue. 'I catered for three weddings in three weeks after having both knees replaced,' she says. 'We needed another way to earn money and stay on the farm – we're tenants, but my father took on the tenancy in 1946.'

The seed of the idea for Hitcham Dairy Ice Cream was planted when Charlotte – with dad Freddie, 65, who runs the farm – met an ice-cream-equipment supplier at a dairy event. But the idea was put on the back burner. 'Then, sadly, Gran passed away,' says Emma. 'We decided to use her small inheritance to buy the equipment.'

With the ice cream recipe perfected, a former garage became the hub of the operation, and a shop was opened on the farm. 'Mum's always in the shop,' says Emma. 'She's so sociable, and when she had her hip replaced, customers sent so many flowers and cards.'

## Adrienne's creativity helps her develop different flavours

Hitcham Dairy Ice Cream also started supplying local pubs and restaurants. 'Then a large family farm-park attraction began stocking our ice cream,' says Adrienne.

As family always comes first, their priority has been supporting Adrienne through her operations, and also Emma, who has lost three babies. 'So we're very proud that, despite this, business has grown,' says Emma, now mum to five-year-old Pippa, and Katie, who's nearly one.

Using milk straight from the milking parlour, Adrienne and Emma make the ice cream.

Charlotte – away at university, training to be a nurse – promotes the business on social media. 'Advertising is too expensive, but social media is a great tool,' says Adrienne. 'We want to develop our website further, we're on TripAdvisor as the top attraction in Burnham, and we have over 1,000 followers on Facebook!'

'It's a real family business, though we do argue over who's boss,' laughs Emma. 'Mum or me! I think Mum is the boss of creativity.'

'And Emma is great with costings and paperwork,' adds Adrienne.



Adrienne at work

Adrienne's creativity helps her develop different flavours, such as salted caramel and cookie dough. 'For the cookie dough, I made lots of different batches to get it right.' She develops seasonal flavours, too – for example, 'mince pie' for Christmas and 'hot cross bun' for Easter.

Fruit is locally sourced, creating something different from industrially produced ice cream full of artificial flavours and colourings. 'Our strawberry ice cream is pale pink,' says Emma. 'People are surprised, as they're used to artificial colour, but only the outside of a strawberry is red, so the colour of natural ice cream is very delicate.'

Adrienne also makes ice cream cakes to order. 'I create the shape with meringue, then layer it with our ice cream,' she explains. 'It's very time-consuming, as everything's handmade. I even made a three-tier ice-cream wedding cake with handmade chocolates on top.'

Plus she bakes cakes to sell in the shop, which also stocks free-range eggs, honey, fudge and preserves. Visitors find a countryside oasis less than 30 miles from central London. 'People say it's so tranquil. We have geese, chickens, ducks and sheep,' says Emma. 'And a friend built a small playground that's very popular.'

And the future? 'We're thinking of building another cabin, as we're always asked to run children's parties,' says Emma, and – in a few years – maybe a tea room.'

It's a business born of both passion and necessity. 'Without this, we wouldn't have been able to live,' says Adrienne. 'Things are still difficult, but the farm is a way of life. All of us grew up here, though it's very different now. We used to milk by hand when I was a girl! But we put that love and care into our handmade ice cream. That's what makes it special.'



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## ADRIENNE'S OREO COOKIE ICE CREAM CAKE

### You will need:

- Oreo cookies or something similar
- an 8in cake board
- two ice cream flavours of your choice (we used chocolate and vanilla)
- writing gels
- an icing turntable (optional)
- a palette knife
- a cup of hot water (optional)
- cake decorations of your choice

### What to do

- 1 Place cookies on the cake board in a circular shape to make the base of your ice cream cake. Stabilise them on the board using ice cream or writing gels. (To make things easier, Adrienne works with the cake board on an icing turntable.)
- 2 Layer the ice cream flavour that you want in the middle of your cake onto the cookies until you have the depth you require (approximately 4-5cm). Use a palette knife to shape and smooth the ice cream. It is useful to have a cup of hot water nearby to dip your palette knife into.
- 3 Put a second layer of cookies on top of the ice cream and then place the cake in the freezer for about 20-30 minutes.
- 4 Layer the second ice cream flavour on top and around the sides of the cake, again using the palette knife to shape and smooth it. Place back in the freezer for about 20-30 minutes or until firm.
- 5 Just before serving, decorate the cake.
- 6 Eat and enjoy!

Hitcham Dairy Ice Cream is at Hitcham House Farm, Lent Rise Road, Burnham, Buckinghamshire SL1 7AE. For opening hours, see [www.hitchamdairyicecream.com](http://www.hitchamdairyicecream.com) or call 01628 666678.