



Jess's Ladies Organic Farm Milk

olive meets Jess Vaughan of award-winning, family-run Hardwicke Farm in Gloucestershire

Words EMILY KERRIGAN Photograph SEAN MALYON

'I grew up on the farm, learning my ABCs on an upturned bucket in the corner of Dad's milking parlour. My grandfather started keeping cows here after WW2, naming the first three, Bluebird, Gypsy and Glow-worm, after his old tanks. Today Dad and I have about 80 British Friesians, but the essence hasn't changed, it's always been very much as nature intended.

We call our cows our 'ladies' and give them names. When you milk them every day you get to know them on sight. My favourite is Bunty; all the ladies are calm and contented, but she's super-friendly too.

'If I were a cow, I'd want to live on our farm. We keep our herd deliberately small so that each lady gets plenty of pampering. They wander free on organic pastures and we'd never feed them up to boost

yields, we just graciously accept the milk they give us because we believe that happy, unpressured cows make the best milk.

'Our secret is to bottle at source. Our milk tastes really creamy because Dad and I have complete control over it from start to finish. We don't homogenise it (which means we don't blast it with heat purely to extend its shelf life), all we do is milk the ladies in the morning and pasteurise and bottle up the milk ourselves on site. Then we load up our delivery van and our beautiful, organic milk is fresh on nearby shelves the same afternoon.

'Great British Menu judge Oliver Peyton is a Ladies' man. His chefs at the National Dining Rooms cook with our cream and serve it on scones. Matthew Fort and the

Hairy Bikers are fans too. We're stocked in around 60 delis across Gloucestershire and we hope to supply London and more of the Southwest soon. As long we can keep it small and sustainable, we'll send Jess's Ladies Milk far and wide.'

Buy from delis and shops in Gloucestershire and the Southwest. Milk and cream also served at Oliver Peyton restaurants. (www.theladiesorganicmilk.co.uk)

HOW ETHICAL IS JESS'S LADIES ORGANIC FARM MILK?

Organic? Yes Hardwicke Farm has been 100% certified organic since 2000 and animal welfare is guaranteed.

Food miles? Low All forage and feed is produced on the farm and all milk is pasteurised on site.

Recycling? Good All packaging is recycled and recyclable by the consumer and no raw material goes to waste. Waste milk, for example, is fed back to the calves.