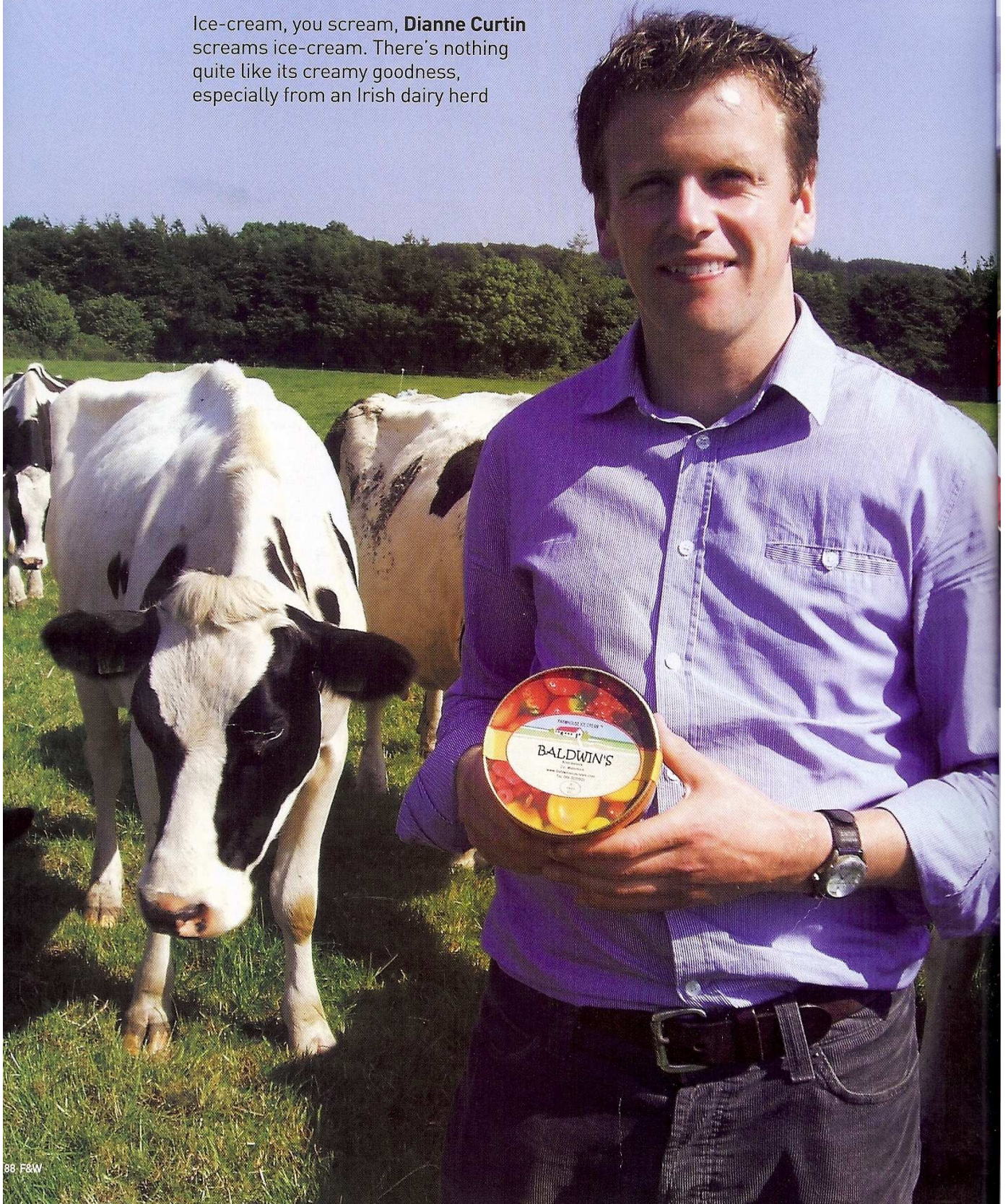


VIP

VERY IMPORTANT  
PRODUCER

# The Cream

Ice-cream, you scream, **Dianne Curtin** screams ice-cream. There's nothing quite like its creamy goodness, especially from an Irish dairy herd



# always rises



## RECIPE

### Baldwin's ice-cream sundaes

Thomas says many make the mistake of serving ice-cream too cold to appreciate the creaminess and flavours. He recommends taking his ice-cream from the freezer a few minutes before serving. This simple sundae idea is delicious.

Serves four

75g best dark chocolate, 70% cocoa solids  
1 teaspoon cocoa powder  
50g caster sugar  
100g chopped nuts  
500ml tub Baldwin's Vanilla Madagascar or Chocolate Chip Ice-Cream

- 1 For the sauce, place chocolate, 150ml water, cocoa powder and sugar in a pan and heat gently till chocolate has melted.
- 2 Add another 150ml water and bring to bubbling.
- 3 Boil rapidly till sauce is reduced, dark and shiny. Cool completely.
- 4 Dip rims of glasses into cool chocolate sauce and then into nuts. Chill for a few minutes.
- 5 Layer scoops of ice-cream in the glasses, sprinkling nuts and drizzling sauce in between. Serve immediately.

**T**his time of year, ice-cream captivates us all, young and old. Not much beats a scoop or two of your favourite flavour, loaded onto a crackly cone and eaten outdoors as the early summer sun shines (we hope). At Baldwin's, Thomas Baldwin has turned that old-fashioned and much-enjoyed experience into a gourmet delight.

How does fruity Strawberry, exotic Vanilla Madagascar, boozy Bailey's or sensuous Chocolate Chip grab you? Or perhaps you're more of a refreshing Mint Chocolate Chip, rich Honeycomb or sweet Caramel Fudge lover? Thomas' artisan produced ice-creams make the mass-market stuff pale into paltry insignificance. No artificial flavours here. No mushy soft scoop in sight. Just good old fashioned ice cream, made from rich creamy milk produced by the Baldwin herd of sixty-five pedigree Friesian dairy cows, who graze the lush pastures round the farm. Now are you getting it?

The fields around Knockanore make good grazing country – and as such, give birth to great dairy produce. This artisan ice-cream business was born in 2007 as a result of taking a sideways look at expanding the existing farm's potential and profitability. Thomas took over the family farm from his father in 2004, after training in farm management at Kildalton and Clonakilty Agricultural Colleges, and spending six months farming in New Zealand. It was clear from early on that if it was to succeed as a profitable enterprise in a time when milk prices weren't stable, the need to upgrade was vital. Alongside that, the necessity to add value to the milk produced was paramount if optimum income was to be achieved. Nearby cheese producer Eamonn Lonergan was instrumental in the early days of the Baldwin Ice-Cream adventure. Eamonn, of Knockanore Farmhouse Cheese, had increased the value of his own farming enterprise by making cheese on-site twenty-odd years before. Thomas says:

"Eamonn was certainly an inspiration and an encouragement. He'd started up from a similar set-up in conventional dairy farming, and proved to me that it was possible to go from that to creating a farm-based artisan dairy product everybody wanted."

Help for modernisation on the farm came in the form of grant aid to upgrade the dairy hygiene, farm improvement and farm waste management systems. The milking parlour was also improved, and the herd increased to produce 80,000 gallons of milk per annum. Impressed with the Knockanore Farmhouse Cheese operation, Thomas felt the way forward was also in concentrating on a farmhouse-based artisan production of some sort. Cheese and yoghurt were looked at, along with a few other ideas. Then fate took a hand. In 2006, Thomas spotted an ad for ice-cream-making equipment from a Dutch company. "I was travelling to Holland anyway, on a scholarship for winning the Young Farmer of the Year, so I made it my business to go and see the company. They gave me a demo of the production and after that I bought the equipment. It all came together so quickly – it was just synchronicity I think!"

Since 2007, Baldwin's Ice cream has been produced in small batches on the farm, and uses around 15 per cent of the milk from the dairy herd, with the remainder going to Glanbia. Flavours were developed by Thomas, based on some of his own personal favourites. Fresh fruit comes from local growers in Waterford, and more exotic ingredients are sourced abroad. Care is taken to find the best, like the aromatic Madagascan vanilla pods used for the vanilla ice-cream.

Thomas looks after distribution himself, delivering to a number of retail outlets and a few restaurants in the Waterford and Cork area. This way, he feels he has built up a good relationship with his stockists, and particularly chefs, who often want something that little bit unusual. In fact, he has been asked to make ice-creams specially for certain chefs, something he is happy to do because his small-scale operation allows for it. Thomas currently spends time equally between the farm management side, assisted by his father, and hands-on production of the ice-creams and deliveries. He says this helps him stay involved with all areas of production, from milk to finished ice-creams and supply. To say he is happy to have made the change from straightforward farming to becoming one of Ireland's latest wave of artisan producers is to say the very least: "It's certainly been a great leap forward for me, allowing me to take control of my business in a way you never can when you are just producing for milk. I feel I'm now in charge of my own destiny."

Find a list of stockists on [baldwinsicecream.com](http://baldwinsicecream.com)