

Challengers to Watch 2023: Delli

By [Jude Bliss](#), issued by [eatbigfish](#)

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The world remains uncertain, and businesses must adapt to new and unpredictable economic, geopolitical and environmental realities. Against this backdrop, it's important to pay attention to the new (and renewed) challengers emerging and primed to disrupt categories in 2023. These companies are finding opportunities in the uncertainty, breaking with expectations, and not just meeting the needs of a fast-changing world but shaping its future.

In the 10th instalment of our annual 'Challengers to Watch' feature, we identify 20 rising companies from around the world and explore the broader trends, opportunities and threats to the status quo they represent.

Our roundup covers an expansive range of categories, markets and geographies, but all these companies share a firm rejection of 'best practice' and an understanding of the imperative to make their own rules.

Delli – for showing a hyper-local future for food

Delli could open the window to an entirely new way to buy groceries online - not from the big supermarkets or via on-demand delivery, but directly from producers in your neighbourhood.



Founded by Simon Beckerman, a serial entrepreneur with a passion for fashion, technology and the avant-garde, Delli connects independent food makers directly with customers via an app that's intuitive, engaging and fun to use.

Before Delli, Simon Beckerman founded the fashion marketplace Depop, so he has experience in bringing together fashion, design and technology to create communities that didn't exist before - or at least had no digital 'home'. Depop's community became extremely valuable, and with its 30 million users, the company [sold to Etsy for \\$1.6bn in 2021](#).

Beckerman now intends to repeat the trick in food.

'The supermarket apps out there are really bad. I'm talking about the traditional ones like Tesco, Sainsbury's, and even the Ocado app. I wanted to build a mobile supermarket [that] stood against the standard incumbents in the same way that Monzo stood against traditional banks - create an incredible user experience; a nice, curated community,' [Beckerman told Courier](#).



Despite initially targeting a niche audience of food entrepreneurs and culinary enthusiasts, Delli's arrival could significantly impact the grocery market and how we shop for food. Before Airbnb, people staying with strangers in their homes seemed like a crazy idea. Yet within a few years, this type of stay became the default for an entire generation.

Consumers could get over the discomfort of eating food made by their neighbours as they did staying in strangers' homes - and Delli's platform could be just what's needed to normalise this behaviour.

'I thought, if this small subset of people are a representation of a [bigger market] then, by building a 'wrapper' around them, it can attract others to want to become home-based food entrepreneurs,' said Beckerman.

While currently, the platform lends itself more to speciality items such as caramel brownies, kimchi ferments and coconut kefir, in the near future it's possible to imagine essentials like bread, cheese, eggs and beer sold in the same way – and within a 5-10 km radius where the buyers know and have a connection to the people who made the product.



‘As we all know, Big Food is broken, processes and sourcing are becoming more and more opaque, and quality and health are being sacrificed more and more for the sake of profit,’ Beckerman [told It's Nice That](#). ‘I think the next twenty years is going to be a very particular moment for the world in a different way, more sustainable, more healthy, and therefore, more local.’

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Delli also stands out by breaking with the conventions of how food products are usually presented. Unlike grocery apps like Ocado that display products clinically and devoid of environment or context, Delli’s product photography leans into the messiness and rawness of food and homemade cooking, often showing the makers themselves in the product images as well as the production process.

Another key aspect of Delli as a challenger is its ability to look at other categories for ideas and inspiration. Borrowing from the fashion and music industry, Delli has appropriated the ‘drop’ model, where brands build excitement in the run-up to each new product launch, and limited quantities are released to consumers to manufacture drama and enthusiasm around each new product.

Since launching in early 2022, Delli has seen over 200 makers sign up, and a funding round raising \$7.2m led by Balderton Capital will see expansion beyond London and further ignite growth with makers and consumers alike.

Beckerman and his investors are once again hoping if he builds it, they will come.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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