



GAZETTE

Monday, June 2, 2014

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TAKE TEA AND SEE, AGAIN

That decades old advertizing slogan is just as applicable today. The folks from Finlay's, a tea supplier, will speak to our section on leaf tea.

Ross McDonald, a tea trader, Scott Mild, a tea coordinator, and Tara Liles, an account executive from the tea extracts division, will talk about tea leaf processing and types. Finlay's also carries dry and liquid tea extracts and aromas. They also have a full spectrum of tea types from black and white and decaffeinated products, as well as organic tea products. Finlay's is one of the largest independent traders in the world.

Join us for our last meeting of the year, and find out about tea!

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From the Chair:

It was great to see all the new faces at our last meeting. Long Island IFT is still going strong. After the long, cold winter it's good to get out and meet with new people.

Long Island IFT will be launching a new website in the near future. Details to follow.

Our focus this month is on beverage, which is still one of the largest segments in the industry.

Hope you can make the meeting

Danny Massetti, chair

Upcoming meetings:

**June 22-24, 2014, National IFT meeting,
New Orleans, LA**

MEETING PLACE & DIRECTIONS

Date: Monday, June 2, 2014

Place: Westbury Manor

Directions: www.westburymanor.com

**Times: 6:00PM-7:00PM, cash bar, networking
7:00PM- 8:00PM, dinner
8:00PM- speaker**

**Price: \$40.00 per person with reservation
\$50.00 per person at the door**

**Reservations: Carol Zamojcin @ 516-352-5772,
anytime before May 30, 2014**

In Pursuit of the Exotic

What will be the sriracha of 2014? Sichuan peppers? Finger limes? Yuzu and lavender? America's pursuit of the exotic shows no signs of abating

by Marc Anthony, Ph.D. Contributing Editor
Food Processing, Feb. 2014

Every year, hundreds of new products hit the shelves and the following year, hundreds more arrive to fill in for the nine out of 10 that go belly up. Those failures can be attributed to any number of factors but, invariably, it usually comes down to flavor or taste that doesn't meet consumer expectations. They might not be bad flavored (although some certainly are) but they fail to capture the interest of their intended target.

Today's food development teams are taking more initiative with regard to flavor. They are able to avail themselves of analyses conducted by consumer research organizations and ingredient companies to stay ahead of trends in flavor preferences. They also have greater opportunity that ever before to synchronize the resultant information from such surveys with technology provided by the ingredient companies that helps them realize trending tastes.

One of the biggest trends these days in desired flavors are the exotic fruits, vegetables, spices and herbs that filter down through the ethnic medley of food-centered culture we now find ourselves living in. It's this exotic food culture that opened American palates to combinations such as ginger and cucumber; juniper and Mexican mint marigold; and yuzu and lavender. Even simple but once unusual combinations like salt and caramel, have become big hits with the average American consumer.

So, what has research determined to be the new exotic flavors of 2014? Following the rush of pundit predictions like the *Seattle Times'* tongue-in-cheek reference to aloe berries, sea buckthorn and the use of "good-quality hay with a high herbal content" in recipes, a number of ingredient makers made more sage predictions based on solid research.

For example, in its annual flavor trends report, Bell Flavors and Fragrances Inc. (www.bellff.com), Northbrook, Ill. pointed to growing interest in flavors associated with

Central and South America and India/Asia, while noting the influence of health, spices in general and more narrow channels driving flavor input—for example the allergen-free wave of interest.

Southeast and Southwest Asian-themed ingredients certainly are sources for both flavor and health. Lemongrass and ginger are supporting players for the Thai trend. Indian product makers continue to use cumin, mustard seed and cilantro, but are increasing applications of fenugreek, fennel, and its botanical relative, asafoetida. Also, turmeric—thanks to the boom in research on curcumin and its ability to help protect against a host of disease conditions from inflammation and diabetes to cancer and arthritis—will continue to find its way into foods in the coming year.

Sensient Flavors Inc. (www.sensient-tech.com), Hoffman Estates, Ill, is looking to a mix of common and not so common influences as balsamic-fig, ginger-plum, juniper, green coconut, rhubarb, tayberries and hops. Those can lead to acceptance of more intense components like gochujang (described as a sort of Korean version of the Vietnamese pepper and garlic condiment sriracha) and guasacaca, a Venezuelan parsley and avocado sauce. Or go all the way to such superexotics as the kumquat-mandarin hybrid called burnt Calamansi, which resembles sour orange and sweet lime, and the ultra-complex flavors typified by the Italian aromatic bitters fernet, which incorporate spices and herbs like chamomile, cardamom, aloe, saffron and myrrh.

And flavor providers are offering more and more botanicals, for example lavender, white tea and hibiscus. Wild Flavors Inc., (www.wildflavors.com), Erlanger, Ky., took note of the traditional South American flavors of mint, guarana and mate as well as the continually popular acai berry. The company also called out less common blends of common flavors, such as combining citrus with mint.

Fruits and nuts

"Exotic flavors continue to trend up in the food-service arena, and restaurant chefs continue to push the envelope on the plate," notes Robert Schueller, director at Melissa's World Variety Produce (www.melissas.com), Los Angeles. "But the most aggressive use of unusual flavorings has been in beverages with mixologists incorporating uncommon fruits, herb and other ingredients to add flavor as well as for essential garnishes."

Schueller adds that while the basic trendy fruits such as pomegranates and berries still see liberal use, stranger items are showing up increasingly. “Finger limes, also called citrus caviar, are new to the scene,” he explains, “and other seasonal citrus like blood oranges, Buddha’s hand lemons and Meyer lemons are showing up often.”

Other fruit flavors Schueller sees appearing with abundance include variety mangoes (such as Indian, Keitts and Ataulfo), red papaya, passionfruit, cactus pears, yuzu and Key limes. “Even jackfruit is now being used more often,” he adds.

There are opportunities for food manufacturers where flavors and nutritional benefits cross paths. The door is this opened for the exotic versions of the mundane in the form of unique and unusual peppers, such as Bhut jolokia and Trinidad Scorpion, two of the hottest peppers sold. But the fact can’t be ignored that the peppery rush is increased by pepper’s popularity through mounting research attesting to the health value of capsaicin for everything from protecting against cardiovascular disease and cancer to alleviating depression and stomach ulcers.

So, while peppers aren’t exotic by any stretch of the imagination, they remain a growing trend that ties into the fact that a lot of exotic cuisines streaming into American food culture from other cultures are spicier than our grandparents would dare, by far. Think of the explosive popularity of the sriracha craze and you’ll have a good idea.

And speaking of culture, kimchi, sauerkraut and other strong pickled and fermented vegetable flavors are moving from the big city melting pots to Middle America. Fast food venues are suddenly slapping Asiago cheese on everything, it seems. Greek yogurt, though slowing down (after all, there’s not much left for manufacturers to put it in or on), will remain popular for a while with yogurt being the primary component in the big probiotic movement with digestive health finally achieving proper recognition in the U.S.

Other healthful impacts on flavor trends include toasted grains, especially ancient grains, since gluten-free has become so main-

stream. The denser, more rustic flavors of grains such as millet, barley and rye are enhanced by toasting. Roasted brown rice, a traditional Japanese ingredient, especially as a tea, is catching on as are toasted seed flavors. Sensient included pepitas, toasted pumpkin seeds, in its forecast for hot flavors in the coming year.

Savor and smoke

Where there’s toasting, there’s fire, and smoke seems to have permeated many ingredients, from salts and spice rubs to beverages, especially spirits like whiskey. But smoke also continues to center around the grill. However, traditionally popular smoky flavors like mesquite are giving way to alder and fruitwood smoke flavors.

And where would smoke be without smoked chili peppers? Chipotle, smoked jalapenos, have stayed at the top of popularity, but crowding their space are a variety of smoked peppers like Hatch, Big Kims and Savina Ruby Hots. These all merge with the huge pepper popularity contest that promises to grow in 2014.

“Smoked, dried and fresh chili peppers have had an influential large trend appeal over the last few years for use and with that flair and flavor of the pepper without burning the mouths of the consumers,” says Melissa’s Schueller.

Schueller sees no slowing down of pepper’s popularity. “Hot flavors and trendy recipes include the habanero, Ghost (Bhut jolokia) and even the scorpion peppers in recipes. More seasonal in the summer is continued use of the New Mexico chili pepper, especially the premium Hatch variety and in both fresh and dried forms.” Other chili varieties Schueller sees coming into their own include de Arbol, Japonese and Guajillos.

In all the predictions for 2014 flavors, Sichuan peppers keeps popping up. These are an Asian spice not related to black pepper or chili peppers. They’re little seed pod shells used commonly in Chinese five-spice powder and have an aromatic, citrusy flavor (the plant is in the citrus family) and are described as being more tingly than hot. In McCormick & Co.’s (www.mccormick.com) annual Flavor Forecast, they appear as part of the nod toward less mainstream influences from Asian cuisine, such as Malaysian and Kashmir. But the 125 year old flavor company also mentions Brazil and other South American cuisines, such as Peruvian, as moving north.

Whichever of these flavor predictions sticks in the coming year or after, the fact remains that American palates are seeing out more exotic stimulation and doing so with the knowledge that the herbs, spices and fruits making their way to our food culture promise not only the excitement of exotic tastes but an element of health and wellbeing so often associated with them.