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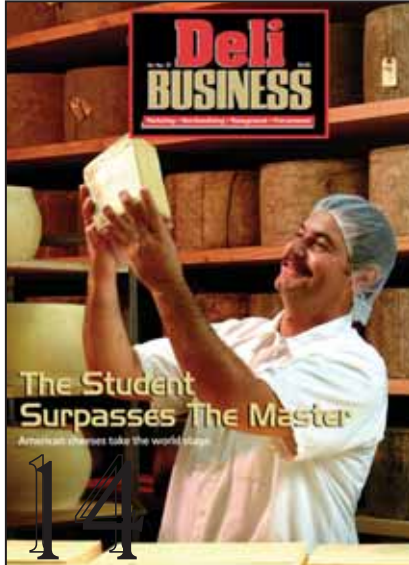
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Deli BUSINESS QUIZ



CARMEN GUIDRY

Deli Manager
Brookshire Grocery Company
Tyler, TX

Serving customers, meeting new people and building relationships with her regulars is what deli manager Carmen Guidry finds most fulfilling about working in the deli industry. "I enjoy meeting their needs and giving superior, excellent customer service," says Carmen, who has worked 14 years for Super 1 Foods in Alexandria, LA, which is owned by Tyler, TX-based Brookshire Grocery Company.

Carmen adds that while she likes the leadership aspect involved in managing her deli, she admits it can be challenging at times. "Maintaining people with good work ethics is difficult," she notes. "Unfortunately, the workforce seems to be getting more limited."

Carmen has read DELI BUSINESS for more than 10 years for tips and pointers on running a successful department. "The articles are very informative," she says. "And I like looking at all the various vendors and reading personal experiences from other deli managers."

As the winner of the DELI BUSINESS quiz, Carmen will receive a portable hammock.

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To win the DELI BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page and send your answers, along with a business card or company letterhead, to the address listed below. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of the Feb./Mar. 2008 issue of DELI BUSINESS. **The winner must agree to submit a photo to be published in that issue.**

Quiz Questions

- 1) Redondo Iglesias' Serrano Ham is imported from what country? _____
- 2) Tillamook has been "farmer-owned" since what year? _____
- 3) What is the slogan for Sandridge Food Corporation? _____
- 4) What is the 800-number for Nuovo's Director of Retail Sales? _____
- 5) Stefano's Thin Crust Specialty Pizzas are available in how many "tempting" flavors? _____
- 6) InnovAsian Cuisine is based in what city? _____

This issue was: ☐ Personally addressed to me ☐ Addressed to someone else

Name: _____

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Position: _____

Street: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

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DELI BUSINESS QUIZ: Oct./Nov. 2007 Issue

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DELI WATCH

Transitions



New President

David Parks is the new president at Master-Bilt, New Albany, MS, manufacturer of a full line of commercial refrigeration systems for almost 70 years. He has over 20 years of domestic and international managerial and marketing experience in the foodservice industry. Prior to joining Master-Bilt, he was senior vice president and COO for Haier America.

www.master-bilt.com



New CEO

Gregory Jehlik is the new president and CEO at Wilkinson Industries, Inc., Fort Calhoun, NE, a manufacturer of aluminum and plastic packaging for the food industry. "Greg comes to us with CEO experience from prior companies, which will bring substantial value and leadership to Wilkinson," said Wayne Kocourek, chairman of Mid Oaks Investment LLC, the investment firm that owns Wilkinson.

www.WilkinsonIndustries.com

Announcements



Milk Seal

The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), Modesto, CA, is introducing the Real California Milk seal that certifies dairy products bearing the seal are made exclusively with California milk. Starting this fall, the popular icons for the California dairy industry are also going to promote nationally

the full range of dairy products made with California milk including butter, ice cream and yogurt.

www.calif-dairy.com

Reader Service No. 401



Lifetime Achievement Award

Dan Carter was named the 2007 recipient of the American Cheese Society (ACS) Lifetime Achievement Award presented at 24th annual ACS conference in Burlington, VT. Fellow team members at the Dairy Business Innovation Center (a WI-based non-profit he founded after retiring from his own specialty cheese marketing business in 2003) nominated him. He has served as a staunch advocate of the American cheese business community for more than 50 years.

www.cheesesociety.org

Reader Service No. 402



World Cuisines DVD

The Culinary Institute of America and Unilever Foodsolutions, Lisle, IL, have releases *Savoring the Best of World Flavors* DVD set, volume two. One disc features the "gold standards" of the cuisines of Southern Spain, Turkey, Malaysia and Singapore, prepared by the top chefs in each region. The second disc, featuring the Unilever Foodsolutions culinary team, shows how to use the flavors of these cuisines to make patron-pleasing, authentically inspired dishes easily and profitably.

www.unileverfoodsolutions.us/dvd_offer

Reader Service No. 403



50th Anniversary

Norseland, Inc. Stamford, CT, in conjunction with ongoing 50th anniversary celebrating the Boursin French Gournay cheese, is launching a marketing/merchandising/instant sweepstakes program. At retail, there is an exciting instant sweepstakes promotion. The front panel of Boursin packaging will display a bright-bold red and yellow (with black graphics illustration of Eiffel tower) teaser touting *Grand Prize — A Trip For Two To Paris*.

www.norseland.com

Reader Service No. 404



Chocolate and Cheese

Lillie Belle Farms, Central Point, OR, announced plans to open a new facility on property owned by Rogue Creamery in November 2007. Lillie Belle Farms and Rogue Creamery created a unique culinary marriage earlier this year when they paired handmade chocolate truffles with the Creamery's award winning Smokey Blue cheese. "Rogue Creamery saw this as an opportunity to bring like-minded agricultural-based manufacturers together," says David Gremmels, Rogue Creamery co-owner.

www.lilliebellefarms.com

Reader Service No. 405



Chain Retailer of the Year

The USA Rice Federation, Arlington, VA, has awarded its Chain Retailer of the Year Award to H-E-B Grocery of San Antonio, TX. The award recognizes outstanding promotional efforts on behalf of the U.S. rice industry. USA Rice Federation Domestic Promotion Committee Chairman Charles Trahan presented the award at the Rice Millers Association Convention in Nassau, Bahamas. The award honors retailers that display, merchandise and promote rice in creative and profitable ways.

www.heb.com

Reader Service No. 406

New Products



Mediterranean Table

G.L. Mezzetta, Napa Valley, CA, introduces The Mediterranean Table — a serve-yourself, freestanding antipasto and olive bar. Its new deli merchandising program is capitalizing on the exploding interest in specialty foods and convenient healthful eating.

Mezzetta wants to turn deli customers into connoisseurs — and help operators garner more profits.

www.mezzetta.com

Reader Service No. 407



Peppadew Sweet Piquanté Pepper

Roth Käse USA, Monroe, WI, has combined its award-winning creamy Havarti with Peppadew Sweet Piquanté Pepper. Peppadew Havarti fuses the mellowness of traditional Havarti with the sweet and savory taste of this unique and trendy South African fruit. This new addition to the Ostenborg range of Havartis can be cubed and sliced.

www.rothkase.com

Reader Service No. 408



DELI WATCH is a regular feature of DELI BUSINESS. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: **Editor, DELI BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810217 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0217 • Phone: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610 • E-mail: DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com**

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- ❸ Willingness to help others succeed.
- ❹ Industry involvement that goes beyond the quotidian requirements of their jobs.
- ❺ Individuals that are currently working in the industry.

Please note that nominees must be willing to be interviewed and supply Deli Business a picture.

How to nominate:

Send an e-mail to DeliBusiness@Phoenixmedianet.com explaining why your nominee should be one of the annual People's Award winners using the above criteria.

Go to www.delibusiness.com and fill out the nomination form online.

All entries must be received by **May 7th, 2008**



DELI WATCH

New Products



Sheep & Goats Milk Cheese

Mt Vikos, Inc., Marshfield, MA, introduces Kefalotiri,

an artisanal hard mountain cheese, made in Thessaly, Greece from a blend of fresh sheep (75 percent) and goat (25 percent) milk. Slightly sweet and salty with a hint of caramel, it is perfect for Saganaki — fried Greek cheese. There are no hormones or antibiotics given the animals, nor is there any calcium chloride in the milk.

www.mtvikos.com

Reader Service No. 409



Sweet Corn Nuggets

Lamb Weston, Eagle, ID, introduces Battered Sweet Corn

Nuggets, snacks popular in the South. A crisp, golden batter surrounds whole sweet corn kernels and sauce to create a fun finger food and appetizer, to pair with a Cajun or blackened seafood entrée or to serve with a signature dipping sauce. Easily prepared in an oven or fryer.

www.lambweston.com

Reader Service No. 411



Peel & Eat Cups

Chicken of the Sea International, San Diego, CA, introduces Peel & Eat Tuna and Salmon

Cups and Lunch Solutions. Both are available in Honey BBQ Salmon, Mandarin Orange Salmon, Cajun Tuna and Teriyaki Tuna. Cups also come in Chunk Light Tuna, Chunk White Tuna and Skinless Boneless Pink Salmon. Available in 2.8 oz. cups and 4.0 oz. packages.

www.chickenofthesea.com

Reader Service No. 413



Easy Seal Packaging

Wilkinson Industries, Inc., Fort Calhoun, NE,

introduces easy-seal deli entrée packaging — FreshServe round and rectangular bowls and lids that offer processors, supermarkets and foodservice new options for deli items. FreshServe is a step toward simplifying serving methods. Perfect for deli salads, to-go entrées, cut fruits or vegetables, prepared foods and more.

www.WilkinsonIndustries.com

Reader Service No. 415



Probiotic Cheeses

DCI Cheese Company, Richfield, WI, launched its first probiotic cheese line under the County Line brand, available in four 8-ounce varieties — Pepper Jack, Colby Jack, Monterey Jack and Mild Cheddar. The new cheeses will contain probiotic cultures, which help maintain a healthy digestive system and levels of internal bacteria, as well as aid in the activation of the natural immune system.

www.dcicheeseco.com

Reader Service No. 410



Casserole On The Go

Poppi Al's, Harrisburg, PA, introduces Deli Buttons. The edges of the

Deli Buttons contain semi-liquid foods, akin to a sourdough bread bowl of clam chowder. These open-faced, circular dough bowls are stuffed (50 percent filling-to-dough ratio) from edge to edge with a more solid, stick-to-your ribs, casserole filling. Available in small (1.25 oz.) and large (4.7 oz.).

www.poppials.com

Reader Service No. 412



Fruit Parfaits

Dole Food Co., Westlake Village, CA, presents individually portioned 4-

ounce Fruit bowls and 4.3-ounce Fruit Parfaits and Fruit Bowls in gel cups. Fruit Parfaits in three flavors — Pineapple, Peach and Apples & Caramel Crème. A tasty alternative to yogurt and pudding cups, Fruit Parfaits and Bowls are shelf-stable and offer fruit goodness with ready-to-enjoy convenience.

www.dolefoodservice.com

Reader Service No. 414



Decorative Heat Lamps

Hatco Corporation, Milwaukee, WI, adds radiant red, brilliant blue and clear brushed metal gloss finish (lamp shade only) to its line of decorative heat lamps. These warmers hold food safely and enhance any décor. Mix and

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www.hatcocorp.com

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Tesco's Prepared Foods Challenge



By
Jim Prevor
Editor-in-Chief of
DELI BUSINESS

As Tesco unveils its new Fresh & Easy concept, it begins an effort to boldly go where no British supermarket operator has ever gone and succeeded before. Marks & Spencer gave up on Kings, Sainsbury's gave up on Shaw's — is Tesco likely to succeed?

By the time you read this, initial reports will be in, but it would be wise to disregard them. The hype is intense and many will check out the concept; besides,

Tesco officials will announce they are “exceeding expectations,” regardless of any actual budgets or initial sales.

The centerpiece of the offer — a focus on fresh prepared foods — is unlikely to fail because of any flaw obvious by looking at the products. We can assume Tesco has done its consumer research and, in all probability, won't do something ridiculous.

Yet fresh prepared foods are always problematic for supermarkets. Whole Foods or H.E.B.'s Central Market can make prepared foods work — but only at high price points allowing for plenty of shrink — and even then only in neighborhoods with upscale demographics. Tesco has promised to come in as a bargain, beating discounters such as Trader Joe's on price.

Fresh prepared foods work very well in urban milieus; the upscale professional in Manhattan or San Francisco picks up dinner on the way home from the office — but Tesco has not targeted this geography.

Instead Tesco has targeted automobile-based cities and suburbs, and this is likely to make the offer problematic.

First, it is not in line with the way Americans shop. By international standards, Americans have large homes and refrigerators. They stock up. An American shopper confronted with attractive fresh prepared foods will not want to buy a single dinner for tonight; she will want to buy five.

Then, when the neighbors suggest an impromptu barbeque, the boss buys pizza to compensate for a late night or a friend wants to go to dinner to discuss her divorce, the food goes uneaten and the quality becomes questionable. This is why frozen foods are so popular in America!

Second, large arrays of fresh prepared foods that attract customers are complicated to produce and expensive to distribute. Typically only a few of the items — usually the most perishable — generate high demand. Still, the other items contribute mightily to the image of a place to look for dinner.

As the high shrink numbers come in, some clever analyst will note 20 percent of the fresh prepared food items are generating 80 percent of the sales. Eliminate 80 percent of the items, allow for some substitution to other products and sales may drop by only 10 percent — yet think of the production efficiencies! Imagine the savings on shrink!

Of course, without all that assortment, the prepared foods offer no longer beckons as a place for “dinner.” It is

now just a store that sells a few prepared food items, so sales wind up dropping much more than anticipated.

Third, fresh prepared foods require frequent delivery. We can extend shelf life on fresh prepared foods by preparing them in “clean rooms” and utilizing modern packaging technologies, but doing so is problematic. These efforts are not equally successful on all types of food. Spaghetti and tomato sauce can last a long time — but it's more difficult to extend

the shelf life of dishes with cream sauce. And extended shelf life is the kiss of death on prepared foods — regardless of quality.

Let consumers, even once, see an expiration date 28 days from the day they are shopping and they will never want to

shop there again. They will start to assume something with a 2-day expiration date has been sitting for 26 days.

Tesco will have to deliver fresh prepared food more frequently than anything else in the store. But the cost of that drop-off is substantial, especially in southern California traffic. Sales have to be extraordinarily good to sell enough pieces to sufficiently amortize the cost of that drop-off.

In all likelihood, Tesco will struggle with its fresh prepared food offering as it tries to find a mix that works and come to a compromise with American tastes, production and transport efficiencies.

Ironically, Tesco may be in more trouble if it has an instant success than if it struggles. A struggle will not encourage imitation and, in time, competitors' attention may wander. Tesco in the United States could grow slowly, under the radar screen, while others doubt its profitability.

But a win out of the gate could stop Tesco in its tracks. When Wal-Mart rolled out its super center concept, supermarkets felt powerless to respond to the competitive threat. They didn't have the ability or knowledge to handle general merchandise. Wal-Mart, virtually unchallenged by supermarkets, seized the bulk of the nation's super center market.

It won't happen that way again. The Fresh & Easy concept is just a small grocery store. There is scarcely a product sold in the store that Kroger, Safeway or Supervalu doesn't sell in one banner or another. It would be relatively easy for any supermarket chain to roll out small footprint stores.

And the real estate is available. The Tesco concept depends on space in strip malls. One suspects Tesco selected the format precisely because it doesn't depend on building super centers or finding prime suburban corner centers.

Yet the very ease of getting real estate that attracted Tesco to the concept may be its Achilles' heel.

The concept will be duplicated in Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, Houston and Miami before Tesco can think of going to any of them. Plus an assault of new small-scale banners will keep Tesco pinned down fighting for its turf.

So a big challenge to succeed awaits Tesco with a strong likelihood it will be preempted if it does succeed. Not a pretty picture for Tesco.

DB

Ironically, Tesco may be in more trouble if it has an instant success than if it struggles.

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Do We Really Want To Win The Obesity Battle?



By
Lee Smith
*Publisher of
DELI BUSINESS*

Obesity is a national epidemic, a national problem for which we know the cause and the solution but which we're unable to stop from happening. Other countries have not found a solution either. Even the French are getting fatter.

During the 1969 House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, obesity was first noted as a serious national health risk. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) enacted the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) in 1990 to help educate people about their food choices.

The *5-A-Day* program, which encouraged Americans to eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day, has met with only moderate success, but it has raised awareness about the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables. The goal was to encourage more healthful eating, less meat and dairy and more high-fiber and lower-calorie foods.

Fast-food chains began offering salads that were consumed in addition to a hamburger, fries and shake. *5-A-Day* never envisioned consumers eating their extra produce in addition to everything else.

Maybe it is time to ask if we really want people to eat less. Do we want people to eliminate — or even reduce — consumption of foods such as cookies, candy, baked goods, breakfast sweets, butter and cheese spreads? This is a country of cheap calories, so reducing individual caloric intake means less food, especially with a stable population and an aging demographic.

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is no, even if we refuse to admit it.

Consumers are up against a giant marketing machine offering new foods, sexier foods, nutritional foods and life-lengthening foods. It is unrealistic to think some a manufacturer will announce, "Cookies foster obesity and should be consumed in moderation." No matter how we talk about obesity, the cure is about deprivation — not satisfaction.

There was a time when food was for sustenance and expensive. Oatmeal for breakfast was normal but sugar and cream were treats. My father recalled tomato soup, tomato sandwiches, egg-and-tomato dinners and stewed tomatoes all year long. They were easy to grow and available for most of the summer. He also hated tomatoes until he was about 60 and my mother still can't stand the smell of oatmeal. They were also thin because there were few choices and not much variety — a scenario no one wants to return to.

Another factor in rising obesity rates is lack of exercise.

Encouraging adults and kids to take part in physically active sports and hobbies is inevitable, but how realistic is it?

When I was a child, every kid in the neighborhood was outside first thing in the morning. We were either walking to school or thrown out by parents who thought kids in the house all day was a nightmare. We ran, fought, got scrapes and black eyes. We played. We negotiated and learned how to handle conflict. Rainy days were boring and snowsuits well used.

Video games wouldn't have mattered because our parents didn't want us in the house all day. Then again,

our parents weren't afraid of abductions, sexual abuse, drugs or violent crimes. Times have changed and children are not allowed out unsupervised; a few hours of supervised play is not the same as running (never walking) all day.

Our jobs have changed, too. Manufacturing and agricultural jobs are diminishing. We commute long distances and work long hours. It is simplistic to think someone who spends 10 to 12 hours at or going to work before sitting down to a late dinner will think it's a great idea to ride his or her bike in endless loops around the neighborhood.

Reducing calories is the name of the game, but industry survival is going to require more spending on food to permit sustainable industry growth.

A sizable portion of the population will continue to pursue the cheapest source of calories they can find. It may not reflect all food purchasing decisions, but many people are going to continue to hunt for low prices so it is important for retailers to continue to aggressively promote prepared foods, especially when consumers are looking to consume less.

There is also opportunity for marketing better quality (more expensive) and smaller packages (higher unit cost). Consumers will expect more environmentally friendly products that cost more to produce and high flavor foods that deliver a satisfying experience will continue to grow.

Retailers and manufacturers can encourage smaller quantities, higher quality and environmentally friendly food and packages with accompanying higher costs but added satisfaction.

Exercise will require change. Tax credits and interest-free loans for health-club facilities, public transportation, town squares where residences and businesses coincide, walking and biking paths, and communities where one can walk to restaurants and shops can promote a more healthful lifestyle. There are many ideas, but it is vital the food industry promotes responsible food consumption and supports opportunities for people to begin to get physically active, once again, as part of their normal routines.

DB

It is vital the food industry promotes responsible food consumption and supports opportunities for people to begin to get physically active.

Its sales potential
is as rich as its taste.




ROSTELLOTM
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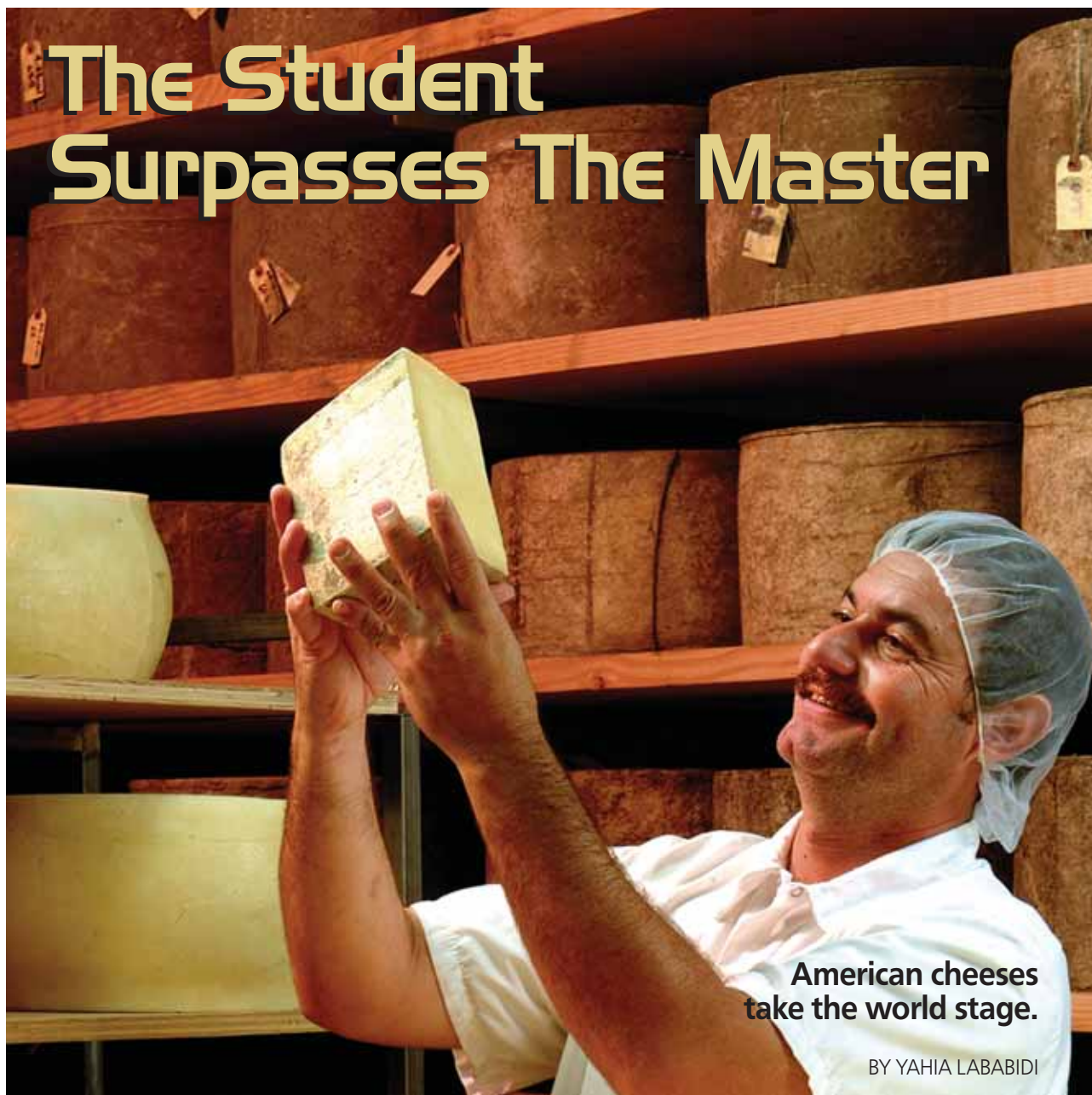
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Reader Service No. 125

The Student Surpasses The Master



American cheeses take the world stage.

BY YAHIA LABABIDI

PHOTO COURTESY OF FISCALINI FARMSTEAD CHEESE COMPANY

There is a perception that, when it comes to wine and cheese, Old Europe represents unassailable sophistication while young America remains hopelessly clumsy. Or, to put it bluntly, what does America, the practical, know about luxury and the finer things in life? After all, these are matters of discerning taste and cumulative culture, of which America is essentially innocent. While that might have been true some decades ago, it is not necessarily the case today.

In Europe, appreciation of food and drink is part of a general culture and matters of taste tend to run more vertically throughout society, while in the United States, they remain more horizontal. Still, in today's America, the civilizing influence of cheese and wine is trickling down through a coterie of tastemakers to a larger segment of the population. While perhaps still noted more for their enthusiasm than their discernment, American consumers are a curious lot, and their collective palate is slowly awakening to a new world of homemade taste sensations.

Perceptions formed over time are obstinate mental habits and difficult hurdles to clear overnight. Sometimes, the only way to change people's minds is simply to trick them into the truth. A true story, as good as any thriller and replete with intrigue, masquerade, mistaken identity and scandalous revelations, illustrates this point to considerable dramatic effect.

JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Steven Spurrier, a British wine writer and founder of a noted Parisian wine school, L'Academie du Vin, was keenly

The Judgment of London



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aware of the power of preconceived notions when he organized the notorious wine tasting of May 24, 1976. In the hopes of drawing attention to little-known California wines he believed in, Spurrier staged a competitive "blind" tasting in Paris of both American and French wines. He was astonished, along with the rest of the world, when the upstart Americans won.

The Paris tasting of 1976 remains one of the most talked about wine tastings of the past century. Nine French judges sat down for a tasting of 20 wines. The tasting pitted four top French white Burgundies against six California chardonnays and four of the best red French Bordeaux against six California cabernets. When the scores were tabulated, the unsuspecting judges declared the California wines to be the winners; the 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay from vintner Bo Barrett bested the white Burgundies and the 1972 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon from vintner Warren Winiarski was declared the superior red wine.

Time magazine's international edition dubbed it "The Judgment of Paris." This landmark event thrust American wines, particularly California wines, into international prominence and marked a major turning point in consumers' attitudes.

Almost overnight, the California wine industry gained respectability and American consumers started to look for small wines grown on native soils. Napa Valley became a Mecca for French vignerons looking to learn what was happening elsewhere.

A media frenzy ensued, with cries of foul play on one end and patriotic chest thumping on the other. Nonetheless, ethics of the competition itself aside, perceptions had begrudgingly shifted; the California winners were wise enough, and modest enough, to admit they did not feel they beat the French.

"We felt as though we were joining in a group," Winiarski later said. "It gave us confidence that the soil, climate and skills we possessed were adequate to produce wines that could compete with the great wines of the world."

Or, as Barrett reiterated, "We were simply carrying on, writing another chapter in the ongoing story in the book of wine."

This sense of inclusion, or carrying on a tradition, was central to American confidence. Moreover, according to Spurrier, the man behind this perceptual shift, "interfacing between Europe and America, or French and Californian winemakers was the most important result of the tasting."

Nearly three decades later, what happened in London, England, did for American cheese what this stealthy success had done for wine.

JUDGMENT OF LONDON

An oft-repeated wisdom within American food circles says cheese is 25 years behind wine. In 2005, a California cheese won top honors as the world's best Brie at the World Cheese Awards (WCA) in London. The prestigious cheese competition is the premier international cheese event with more cheeses from more countries than any other competition; more than 120 specialists judiciously sniff and sift their way through thousands of entries. It was the first time an American company, Marin French Cheese Company, Petaluma, CA, won in a category traditionally taken by France, earning a Gold Award for best-pasteurized Brie cheese.

Marin French, America's oldest continuously operating cheese manufacturer, was founded in 1864; Jim Boyce purchased the company in 1998. The Gold Award winning Rouge et Noir Brie broke all the rules of traditional French Brie. Weighing in at a slight eight ounces — compared to the classic wheels of French Brie, which are a foot across and weigh about five pounds — Rouge et Noir was pasteurized, unlike French Bries. It also had more butterfat than French Brie — which made the American entry distinctive.

Two years later, in March 2007, another historic moment for American cheese occurred, lending further credence to the rise of high-end U.S. cheesemakers. This time, Fiscalini Farmstead Cheese Company, Modesto, CA, took the World Title Award for Best Extra-Mature Traditional Cheddar at the WCA. The company also received the Wyke Farms Trophy for its Bandaged Cheddar, marking the first time the trophy in that category was awarded outside of Great Britain.

The producers of one of the few American types of Cheddar that could compete with the famed Cheddars of Neal's Yard Dairy in England, Fiscalini reports talk about selling its cheese in Britain. Its Bandaged Cheddar, showcasing a balance of buttery, grassy and savory flavors, is the product of master craftsman Mariano Gonzalez, who makes his world-class raw milk Cheddars using traditional methods and ages them for at least 16 months before releasing them in limited quantities.

Marin French and Fiscalini are vastly different in scale and background. Fiscalini "hit the ground running" just over six years ago, while Marin French recently celebrat-

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American Winners At The World Cheese Awards 2007

The list of exceptional cheeses by world-class American producers is long and growing. As this chart demonstrates, American cheesemakers returned home laden with accolades from this year's World Cheese Awards in London, England. Many of these distinguished cheeses were already winners of the Louisville, KY-based American Cheese Society (ACS) Awards and on the national level. The list of promising newcomers suggests sustainability of the cheese movement is quite possible. Naturally, such a catalogue omits many venerable names and offers a cursory glance at the latest honor roll.

CATEGORY/ENTRY	CHEESEMAKER/CO.
GOLD Brie made from pasteurized milk — Marin French Gold Cheese made with the milk of more than one animal — Bessies Blend Extra Mature traditional Cheddar made after 31/10/05 — Bandage Wrapped Extra Fresh Mozzarella, Cultured Fresh Mozzarella Hard ewes' milk cheese plain — Cave aged Marisa Hard pressed or repressed Cheddar with savory additives — Marco Polo Medium block Cheddar made on a farm after 31/09/06 — Cheddar Block Soft goats' milk cheese plain, mould-ripened — Humboldt Fog Soft Ripened Goats Milk Cheese Smoked Cheddar	Marin French Cheese Co. Carr Valley Cheese Fiscalini Cheese Co. Mozzarella Fresca Inc. Mozzarella Fresca Inc. Carr Valley Cheese Beecher's Handmade Cheese Fiscalini Cheese Co. Cypress Grove Chevre Inc. Carr Valley Cheese
SILVER Blue vein cheese made outside the UK, any variety, uncut, foil wrapped — Oregon Blue, Unpast Blue Cheese Blue vein cheese made outside the UK, any variety, uncut, foil wrapped — Crater Lake, Unpast Blue Cheese Blue vein cheese made outside the UK, any variety, uncut, foil wrapped Salemville Gorgonzola produced by Salemville Co-Op Cheese made with the milk of more than one animal — Echo Mountain, Unpast Goat & Cows Milk Blue Fresh Mozzarella, 3-ounce Food Service Fresh Mozzarella Ouline Other smoked cheese, hard — Applewood Smoked Goat Cheddar Rind washed — Caldwell Crik Chevrete Semi-hard — Gran Queso Semi-hard goat's milk cheese plain — Aged Cardona, goats milk cheese Semi-hard goat's milk cheese plain — Grisdale Goat Soft goats' milk cheese plain — mould-ripened — Pee Wee Pyramid — Soft Ripened Goats Milk Cheese Vintage Cheddar made in a creamery before 31/10/05 — Cabot Vintage Choice Cheddar Vintage Cheddar made in a creamery before 31/10/05 — Cabot Old School Cheddar, 5 years Vintage farmhouse Cheddar made before 31/10/05 — Bandage Wrapped Reserve	Rogue Creamery Rogue Creamery DCI Cheese Co. Rogue Creamery Sorrento Lactalis Cantaré Foods Inc. Carr Valley Cheese Estrella Family Creamery Roth Kase USA Ltd Carr Valley Cheese Estrella Family Creamery Cypress Grove Chevre Inc. Cabot Creamery Cooperative Cabot Creamery Cooperative Fiscalini Cheese Co.
BRONZE Brie made from pasteurized milk — Triple Cream Brie Blue vein cheese made outside the UK, any variety, uncut, foil wrapped Aderkase German Style Blue Cheese produced by Robert Richter Seymour Dairy Products Fresh Mozzarella, Bocconcini Goats' milk cheese with additives — Rosey Goat Selected by Solera Hard pressed or repressed Cheddar with savory additives Cheddar with Jalapenos Mozzarella Block, whole milk Mould ripened soft or unpressed cows' milk cheese with savory additives — Pesto Brie Other smoked cheese — soft/semi soft — Smoked Rofumo Reduced fat cheese unpressed — Lace Kase Rind Washed Soft goats' milk cheese plain — mould-ripened — Merry Goat Round Soft or unpressed cows' milk cheese with dessert style additives — Mocha Espresso Cream Cheese Torta with Chocolate Vintage Cheddar made in a creamery before 31/10/05 — Mammoth Cheddar	Marin French Cheese Co. Seymour Dairy Products Inc. Cantaré Foods Inc. Fromartharie Widmers Cheese Cellars Saputo Reedsburg Marin French Cheese Co. Roth Kase USA Ltd. Roth Kase USA Ltd. Crave Brothers Farmstead Firefly Farms Rising Sun Farms Inc. Carr Valley Cheese

ed its 142nd anniversary. However, both are world-class cheese producers that have competed successfully at national and international levels and are committed to elevating the quality of cheese.

EAT, THINK, SPEAK CHEESE

At the 24th Annual competition of the Louisville, KY-based American Cheese Society (ACS), held in August 2007 in Burlington, VT, enthusiasm was palpable and talk of a cheese renaissance filled the air. As philosopher Nietzsche boldly pronounced over a century ago, a student repays his master poorly if he remains a student. After years of apprenticeship, it appears American specialty cheese has found its footing and is now able to keep pace.

Founded in 1982, ACS is the premiere platform for cheese industry research and education in America. With more than 1,200 competing entries from the Americas and Canada, "The number of cheeses in this year's competition represents a 27 percent increase over last year, making it the largest cheese competition in American history," according to David Grotenstein, chairman of the judging and competition committee and general manager of Union Market, Brooklyn, NY.

Every year for the past 2½ decades, the competition has brought together people who take pleasure in eating, creating, describing and selling cheese, including producers, theorists, retailers, writers and enthusiasts. Aside from being a congregation for those sensitive to every cheese nuance, ACS features emerging trends and industry leaders as well as enlightening seminars on subjects ranging from the science of cheesemaking to the art of savoring. Showcasing entries from a record 200 cheese companies this year, ACS is as good an indication as any that something is afoot in the world of American artisan cheese.

FREEDOM TO EXPERIMENT

At ACS, I sat down with Jim Boyce and John and Heather Fiscallini to discuss the larger implications of their world-class cheeses. While Boyce recognizes it was "emblematic for American cheese to have challenged Britain's supremacy in Cheddar and France's supremacy in Brie," he cautiously adds, "Whether we're able to continue to prevail over time is another test."

As their world-class wine predecessors of May 1976, Boyce and Fiscallini also concede they are merely writing another chapter in the book of cheese. They are careful to embrace their French/British competitors

and emphasize their indebtedness and respect to Old World European standards. "With hundreds of years of experience, they are the artisans of the world and it is a tremendous honor for American cheesemakers," Heather Fiscallini acknowledges.

On the flip side, there is also the shrewd appreciation of being unencumbered by history or the bonds of tradition and thus free to experiment. As John Fiscallini candidly puts it: "In America anything goes. Without too many rules, we can even discover a winning cheese by accident."

This raises the interesting point: While experience grants authority, it might also stunt creativity. In this sense, America's relative inexperience, or innocence, can be seen as a blessing since it permits more freedom to innovate, explore or play.

In fact, because of the particular geography that gives certain cheeses their distinctive characteristics, it is sometimes incorrect, or downright unfair, to compare certain American cheeses with their European relatives. This explains the slew of unique American names for the hundreds of new varieties available — local, seasonal cheeses — that are virtually unrecognizable from their original inspirations abroad.

Having stood on the shoulders of European giants, it seems American cheesemakers are self-assured enough to take a leap and forge their own identity, breaking and making their own rules along the way. "American cheese has now arrived," John Fiscallini sums up.

PERFORMER AND AUDIENCE

I shared with Boyce and the Fiscallinis the idea that a performer is only as good as his or her audience and wondered if the cheese renaissance is not shaped by the desire of the American public, craving locally produced variety and complexity, or, more prosaically, if consumer curiosity is not behind the prevalence of specialty cheeses.

My audience of three politely indicates that in the case of American cheese, at least, the show is well underway. All that remains is for the audience to be guided to their seats. "It's

my personal opinion that as cheesemakers, we have already achieved a critical mass," John Fiscallini explains, "while at this point, the audience is still slightly behind."

It appears then, the inverse of this formula is true. The audience is only as good as the performer, and it falls upon the cheesemakers to lead the way and continue to instruct the audience — or consumers — on what is taking place at this stage. Boyce points to a rise in awareness in specialty cheese, noting, "While the audience may be trailing behind, they are being pulled through by marketing initiatives."

However, the sheer size of cheese tourism attests to the idea that there is a genuinely raw curiosity on the part of consumers. Marin French, for example, receives more than 150,000 visitors, explains Boyce. These cheese pilgrims are not there just to taste the cheese, either, but to take in the whole experience of cheesemaking. In other words, to indulge a mounting fascination for Old World practices that epitomize a time prior to the annihilating anonymity of mechanization — or, what John Fiscallini tersely refers to as "mass-produced, plasticized food."

"People don't make things the way they did in Europe," adds Heather Fiscallini, "so they flock to find out where the cheese comes from." Those who make the effort to visit may find they walk away with an expanded cheese vocabulary and deeper understanding of its manifold distinctions.

Those interested may learn farmstead cheese is made from milk on the farm where the animals were raised. Such exposure could also assist the novice in identifying different kinds of milk and their flavors and how taste can change to reflect what



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIN FRENCH CHEESE COMPANY

the animals are eating throughout the different seasons.

ARTISANAL CHEESE MOVEMENT

In just the past decade, the American cheese landscape has changed significantly, witnessing a sizeable increase in cheeses of a certain rarified caliber and driving what is now known as the artisanal cheese movement.

Beyond California and Wisconsin, hundreds of artisanal cheeses have appeared across the nation.

With quality offerings from American cheesemakers at the deli and beyond, retailers and consumers alike are expanding their repertoire of what is considered specialty cheese. Meanwhile, choosy cheese lovers are now able to consider the proliferation of fine American cheeses often displayed side-by-side with the best imported ones.

The idea that this relatively newfound American appreciation of cheese enjoys a broader-based public support suggests the artisanal cheese movement is also value driven. As with other food movements, an emotional connection is actively being sought as is a return to old-fashioned virtues such as small-scale, handmade, natural and traditional.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION

Retailers wishing to capitalize on the American specialty cheese phenomenon of the past decade may take their cue from the wine world, where marketing strategies bring both connoisseurs and the unassuming to the fold. Carrying award-winning cheeses is a start; selling them is another story.

Marketing plays a supporting role in



helping sustain the cheese renaissance and in assisting consumers to pursue their gastronomic education. The more informed and aware staff members are of their products, the more credibility they carry. In the case of cheese, this translates into being conversant in terms, or families, of cheese.

For example, chain-store deli departments may pique the consumer's curiosity by illustrating the unique aspects of each specialty cheese and the special care that goes into its preparation: how it is made, by whom it is made, where it is made and whether it is aged in cellars or made one vat a time. Or, to put it more generally, how cheeses become more dry and complex as they age.

Staff education extends to handling the cheeses as well, namely recognizing they are living products that mishandling can destroy. There are programs for producers to improve cheesemaking quality and encourage education, and there are also instructional workshops on the handling and merchandising of cheese for the enterprising cheesemonger.

Retailers should also be aware of different styles of cutting — when and how much — as well as be able to advise consumers on how best to take care of their cheese. For example, wrapping a cheese and rewrapping it at home are key procedures to maintaining peak flavor and moisture content.

Allowing consumers to sample specialty cheeses helps the cheese speak for itself. And since not everyone has an experimental spirit, gentle guidance in the form of pairing suggestions might help, too. Staff may point out the general principle of successful pairing is to try to arrive at a balance, seeking complementary flavors. Purists, and years of bias, might dictate wine as the perfect complement while others will argue for beer and point to a myri-

ad of flavor combinations offered by American craft beer, for example.

Moreover, harmonious cheese matches and pleasant surprises exist beyond beverages, in the form of breads and condiments. Here, too, the aim is to enhance the cheese, not to overwhelm it. In this regard, some savory and sweet pairing suggestions could include olives, nuts, charcuterie, vegetables, dried fruit, honey, etc. Ultimately, of course, there are no rules set in stone and the idea is to urge consumers to take the time to taste, enjoy and figure out what works for them through observant experimentation.

Keep in mind that just because American cheese has arrived does not necessarily mean it will stay. Certainly, there is no guarantee that the next decade will usher in a nation of gourmands versed in the intricacies of cheese. To maintain its edge and sustain its growth, the U.S. specialty cheese movement — and its future — hinges upon ongoing education on the part of cheesemakers, consumers and retailers as they continue testing the parameters of their discernment and curiosity.

Paradoxically, whereas cheese and wine are the fruits of country life and may be produced on farms, they have come to represent symbols of culture and urbanity. Savoring remains a relatively young art stateside, in need of nurturing; but with more adventurous palates and sophisticated cheesemakers, this art is maturing, too.

Perceptions regarding what America can and cannot achieve in the world of food and drink are gradually metamorphosing based on the strength of a few good names.

This transformation will be complete when future awards in wine and cheese are no longer seen as surprises, or worse as trespassing, but rather as further proof that American taste has finally graduated. **DB**

Useful Resources

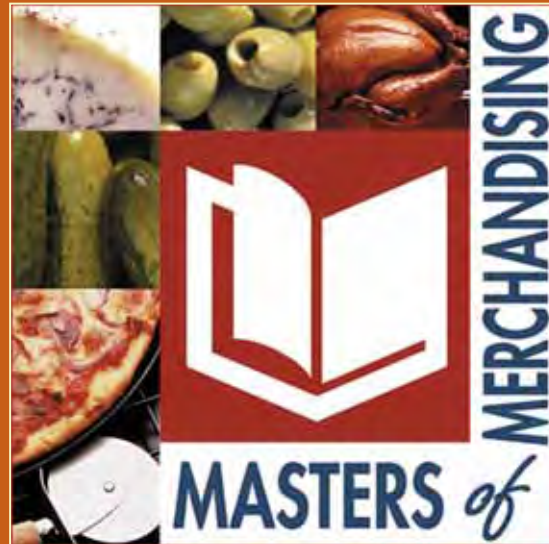
The American Cheese Society
www.cheesesociety.org

California Milk Advisory Board
www.calif-dairy.com

Vermont Cheese Council
www.vtcheese.com

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
www.producer.wisdairy.com

World Cheese Awards
www.finefoodworld.co.uk



You can be a buyer or a seller — these words of wisdom are from a deli director now long retired. But, the truth is, while almost anyone can buy products at a good price, only the masters know how to sell them. There is not a huge gap between the products offered from one store to the next — the critical difference is how effective retailers are in generating sales.

The *Masters of Merchandising* guide provides the missing link that brings products through the retailer and into the hands, or mouths, of consumers.

Each category has been sponsored by a merchandising master that has shared its expertise with the editors of DELI BUSINESS in order to bring retailers a comprehensive guide full of merchandising ideas for selling the products they purchase. Each section contains information on how to display products, cross-merchandise products with other items in the deli department or the produce, meat and grocery departments.

There is information on point-of-sale materials, advertising, innovative promotions and creative ideas about building sales; backroom preparation and storage information also is shared. Manufacturers explain what information, products and point-of-sale materials they will make available to retailers.

While some stores may not be able to use all the ideas, each category has information, provided by our Masters of Merchandising, that was garnered through years of experience dealing with the most successful retailers as well as their own internal research.

The deli industry has grown by leaps and bounds over the past 20 years, and the merchandising strides retailers are currently making are certain to make delis a continuing focal point in the battle for the share of stomach.

DB

There is not a huge gap between the products offered from one store to the next — the critical difference is how effective retailers are in generating sales.



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Recommended Display Ideas

Asian prepared foods are a popular impulse purchase and incremental profit driver. Take advantage of shopper familiarity with Asian by merchandising in hot service and behind-the-glass, or assemble grab-and-go meals for carry-out.

Set the display cases about an hour prior to the lunch rush and re-set in time for dinner. Most meal preparation decisions are made about 15 minutes prior to purchasing. Cross-merchandise with an assortment of egg rolls, fried rice and an entrée. Set the case as if shoppers were ordering off of a restaurant menu. Maintain freshness; assign a key person from each shift to maintain an orderly flow of products; create a destination for Asian foods.

All our components are fully cooked and require minimum culinary experience. Execution and preparation is simple and direct. Minimum equipment is required: microwave, combitherm, oven, and/or deep fryer. No heat preparation required for behind-the-glass and cold take out meal assembly. Ask about our sampling program.

- Self-serve by the LB hot bar
- Hot foods service case – Sell Asian combo plate or by the LB
- Cold display case behind the glass – Sell by the LB or by the each
- Cold grab-and-go – Preprice by the each
- Hot grab-and-go – Preprice by the each

Suggested Signage/POS

We provide customized POS materials, such as

Quick Tips

- Wherever possible assign a shift leader to prepare food and monitor the Asian program.
- Be mindful of what entrées sell best, e.g. seniors prefer less bold and spicy flavors, so promote what is appealing to shoppers' demographics.
- Rotate flavors, but always maintain one pan for rice, and one pan for side items, to promote the complete meal concept.
- Decorate the behind-the-glass display by using our Asian wok display bowls, use bamboo place mats, and riser to create an Asian dimension.
- When merchandising hot with a 3-hour shelf life, target peak lunch/dinner hours (11 am to 2 p.m. and 4 pm to 7 pm) to have displays full and fresh.
- If hot case space is limited, create an Asian Day to promote a special lunch or dinner offering (1 to 2 days/week). Stick to same days so customers will know when to come in. Hot specials will drive cold sales up on non-featured days.
- Merchandise cold displays close to hot displays for full impact or offer free sampling

countertop menu easels, display bowls, pan tags, serving utensils, shelf strips, wobblers, window banners, floor stands, re-pack labels and training manuals. Key merchandising periods such as the lunar New Year and catering events such as Super Bowl, graduation, holidays, present opportunities for incremental sales and profits. Asian foods are associated with group dining so capitalize by including Asian in your catering brochures and party planners.

Variety

We offer breadth and depth of menu; over 50 SKUs are available to maintain fresh and vibrant menu offerings. General Tso's, Orange, Sweet & Sour and Mongolian sauces are some of the more popular and preferred sauce profiles. Entrées are complemented with a variety of fried rices, Japanese white rice and chow mein and lo mein noodles. Sides such as potstickers, egg rolls and dumplings round out every meal, and are considered a centerpiece of every Asian meal. Innovasian Cuisine® Sauces offer unique menu applications; for example, give your wing bars an Asian lift by marinating and saucing your wings after cooking with General Tso's, Honey Garlic or one of our unique proprietary ready-to-use sauce; use one 2-pound pouch of sauce to four to five pounds of wings. Also, your ribs, salmon and chicken breasts take on a new dimension with our Asian sauces.

- Over 50 Asian offerings
- Hot foods sell best in cooler months
- Cold service case opportunity for retailers looking to cut back summer salads for fall, winter and spring time frames

Promotional/Advertising Ideas

Traditionally, Chinese New Year has been the primary promotion period. Every department within the store can participate in this gala event. It usually lasts two weeks, so you can create a store-wide theme. Notwithstanding, everyday is an Asian day. Our product line enables you to merchandise Asian entrées everyday of the week in any one of the sections within the deli case, cold, hot or take-out meals.

- In-store easels with \$'s off tear-away coupon or buy-a-meal-and-get-an-egg-roll-free
- Newspaper ads for \$ off or free appetizer with entrée or meal purchase
- Frequent shopper card deals same as above

Shelf-Life Recommendations

Training is a major success factor of our program. Our sales force provides consistent in-store training. Training manuals and laminated production cards are customized and provided to each store. A supermarket deli is the equivalent of a

quick-service restaurant (QSR). Operations and management must have the same dedication to freshness and quality of food preparation.

- 3 hours in the hot case stirring every ½ hour
- 2 hours in hot grab-and-go case
- 3 days in cold display or cold grab-and-go case

Packaging Recommendations

- Utilize labels provided in the case for cold grab-and-go application
- Use labels for appetizer grab-and-go merchandising in cold case
- Merchandise hot or cold combo meals with entrée, rice or noodles and side; sell a la carte or as rice bowls

Preparation Procedures

- All products ship frozen (entrée in kits)
- Hot-food preparation utilizes retailers existing equipment (fryers, combitherm, oven, microwave or stove top). Display in 2" deep half pans or ½ pans in hot service or self-serve applications

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

For high volume operations, we offer a cooperative equipment program to fabricate and install a freestanding, floor or table-top self-service hot Asian food bar. Offer complete meals in the form of rice bowls, or offer multiple components including sides, and tie-in with a beverage.

- Tie in cold grab-and-go Asian entrées, appetizers and rices/noodles in or just adjacent to sushi bar area
- Build Asian dry-good display near grab-and-go area for additional impulse sales, i.e. soy sauce, hot mustard, sweet and sour sauce, fortune cookies, chopsticks, etc.

Creative/Unconventional Merchandising Ideas

Sample all store employees, including management and owners. They are not only customers but also word-of-mouth advertising vehicles.

Use PA system to announce availability of Asian in the deli; especially right after the new set is prepared and in the display.

Establish a tie-in merchandising program with as many local catering event opportunities as possible: homecoming, graduation, etc.

- Chinese New Year – Feb. 7, 2008, Year of the Rat. Great opportunity to kick off a new Asian program with aggressive advertising or bring more attention to current program
- Create a month-long special on one Asian entrée with a special incentive such as a free appetizer and rotate all year long.



CARRY OUT CUISINE

Offering A Complete Case Program For Asian Deli



Hot Case



Innovasian Cuisine® signature entrees can be prepared using either our complete entrée kits (protein, sauce and vegetables all in 1 case) or using our separate components. Either way one bag of sauce, one bag of protein and one bag of either fresh or frozen vegetables are heated, mixed and displayed. Rice, noodles and appetizers can also be heated using either a combitherm, fryer, microwave, oven or stovetop.



Cold Service Case



Fully cooked Innovasian Cuisine® Asian entrée and Asian noodle kits can be merchandised behind the glass in your cold service case. Mix 1 bag of sauce, 1 bag of protein or noodles and 1 bag of vegetables into a large mixing bowl, toss until completely coated, empty into a display bowl and merchandise in your cold case. Our rices and appetizers are simply removed from the master case, thawed and displayed on a platter or in a bowl.



Cold Grab & Go



Innovasian Cuisine® offers you 2 separate programs designed specifically for your refrigerated grab & go cases. Our newest line of Carry-Out™ Cuisine Asian meals and appetizers are fully cooked, flash frozen and packed in attractive case-ready microwaveable packaging. We also offer complete Asian entrées and rice bowl kits. Simply thaw, mix and portion in your own microwaveable containers or the ones provided in our rice bowl kits. Most items include colorful repack labels with product name, description, heating instructions and ingredient listing.

Along with a comprehensive product offering, we provide customized training manuals and effective promotional and marketing tools that will help you create and maintain a successful Asian Foods program in your deli. Contact your local Innovasian Cuisine® representative today to schedule an appointment. Your successful Asian Foods program is only a phone call away!



A Proven Record Of Success In Asian Deli!

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CONROY FOODS

906 Old Freeport Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238

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Recommended Display Ideas

Condiment sales increase with multiple displays in different areas of the deli department. Condiments are high impulse-purchase products; increase the number of locations consumers can find the product, and you will increase sales.

Encourage impulse purchases by building displays on top of the deli case, near the sandwich station and near the grab-and-go area. If you have the room available, build a pyramid-type display that is sure to increase sales. The cheese island is also a prime location.

Beano's Original Submarine Dressing is a great impulse item that will turn into a repeat purchase item. Beano's carries countertop displays as well as an attractive new stand that is very space-efficient and can display all of Beano's products very nicely.

Suggested Signage/POS

Impulse sales increase when products are signed to attract customers' attention. Your customers are always looking for easy ways to prepare tasty foods. Signage should include menu suggestions. For instance, signage suggesting sandwich ideas will create interest and generate sales.

A selection of mustards on top of the specialty cheese island will appeal to interested customers. A simple handwritten sign letting customers know which cheeses go with each mustard will encourage your customers to try something new. Rotate different cheeses with different mustards and condiments to keep customers interested all year long.

Employee suggestions incorporated into signage will also help increase the interest level. For instance, a sign such as "Our deli manager's favorite roast beef sandwich is made with Beano's Heavenly Horseradish Sauce."

Variety

At least one variety of sandwich dressing should be offered, along with condiments for cheeses, wings and other products. Sales of condiments are incremental sales, meaning they add to the total purchase and don't "steal" sales from other products.

Include a full line of Beano's condiments.

- Beano's Original Submarine Dressing
- Heavenly Horseradish Sauce
- Bold & Tangy Deli Mustard
- All American Sandwich Spread
- Honey Mustard
- When Buffaloes Fly Chicken Wing Sauce (hot sauce)
- Pepper Relish
- Southwest Sauce
- Wasabi Sauce

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

Condiments are the ideal products for cross-merchandising with:

- Specialty cheese
- Sandwich stations
- Meat and cheese deli counters
- Wing bars
- Grab-and-go locations
- Sushi bars

Shelf-Life Recommendations

Shelf life is not something the deli needs to be concerned about. Shelf-stable condiments have a 1-year shelf life. Just make sure to rotate product when filling displays.

Packaging Recommendations

POS countertop displays are highly recommended. Beano's Original Submarine Dressing comes pre-packed with 12 8-ounce bottles in a countertop display. Just pop the header up and place it on your deli counter.

Also consider permanent floor displays, party packs, self-feeding black steel counter racks and ½-ounce portion packs. All these also are available from Beano's.

Promotional/Advertising Ideas

- Promote a sandwich of the week using one of Beano's special condiments.
- Silent demos. Slice a few loaves of Italian bread and have an open bottle for customers to taste using pieces of bread. Surround the demo with bottles for sale.
- Buy two bottles of Beano's and receive a ½ pound of — fill in the blank — free. Beano's is happy to work with other companies to promote sales.
- Feature condiments in your weekly circular

along with other products. For instance, feature a wing sauce when your store has wings on sale.

Creative And Unconventional Merchandising Ideas

- November to January — include a bottle of Beano's in gift baskets, in the center of sandwich rings or party platters
- September to November — create a tail-gate promotion display next to 6-foot subs
- May to November — place a few bottles in a picnic basket display alongside a few prepared sandwiches and subs
- January to May — include a bottle of Beano's for Super Bowl catering options as well as rib and wing promos featuring Beano's wing sauce



Quick Tips

1. The more the better — multiple placements will increase sales!
2. Use Beano's Original Submarine Dressing to create a signature made-to-order sub or sandwich.
3. Sign products to increase interest.
4. Use floor and counter displays to increase sales.

Now Serving #1.



When you concentrate on
doing one thing well, it's no

surprise when you become #1 in the category.

Beano's deli condiments have been number one
on deli menus since 1986. Ever since then,

we've gained a faithful following of satisfied

customers. Adding Beano's deli condiments to

your product offering is your best opportunity

to increase add-on sales. When you offer Beano's,

your customers will be lining up for servings

of the #1-selling deli condiments.

Now *that's* the ticket!



Genuine original.
Genuine opportunity.

Counter Top Rack
Height 5 1/2"
Depth 15"
Width 20 5/8
& Holds 4 cases



Height 60" Depth 16"
Width 15 1/4"
& Holds 7 to 8 cases





HORMEL DELI FOODS

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Recommended Display Ideas

Natural foods are on a growth pattern that simply doesn't appear to be slowing down. According to the International Dairy/Deli/Bakery Association's 2007 edition of *What's In Store*, natural meats, along with their close sibling, organic meats, are "two categories projected for a noteworthy long-term growth trend." *What's In Store* also points out both of these deli meats are "taking their rightful spot in the mainstream supermarket service department product mix."

Thus, natural still remains a hot button in the retail world, and one that's profitable. According to ACNielsen, consumers are still willing to pay up to 20 percent more for natural foods.

That button could get even hotter in the near term. *What's In Store* reminds readers growth in organic deli meat has been "hampered by the lack of organic feed." The result may be natural foods will pull way out in front and never look back.

Deli retailers, then, would do well to prominently label the natural items on their shelves and then take it a step further to highlight what that means. Adding the words "no artificial flavors or colors" or "preservative-free" can go a long way toward capturing consumers' attention.

HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats are perfect examples of natural products because they contain no preservatives, artificial colors or flavors, added MSG and gluten. But because they are behind the glass, they may not be immediately recognized as a natural product. Signage, a small handwritten "flag" on the packaging or a note on the glass next to the product can help spotlight these items for consumers.

Use signage to help deli customers make intelligent choices. While governmental officials may know the differences between organic, natural, cage-free and free range by heart, consumers don't.

Diversity

Natural products appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds, so natural and deli really go together well.

With such a broad market, it's no wonder,

according to Hormel Foods' Deli Division, \$1 out of every \$10 is spent on natural or organic foods.

The fact is, natural has already far surpassed organic in acceptance, garnering 95 percent household penetration (compared to organic at just 46 percent, according to ACNielsen).

HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats give retailers the diversity their customer demand. The line features four varieties of ham (Brown Sugar, Virginia, Honey and Black Forest), two types of roast beef (regular and rare), as well as pastrami and corned beef. The line is further complemented by a variety of turkey SKUs from Jennie-O Turkey Store. All told, it's a mix that was specifically created to appeal to a diverse audience.

By adding the NATURAL CHOICE® line to their deli, retailers have the ability to offer allergen-free products to customers. The line contains no gluten, no nitrites or nitrates, and no lactose. It's a choice a growing number of consumers will truly welcome.

Suggested Signage/POS

Education is paramount in this arena. The 2006 edition of *What's In Store* suggested retailers "promote the nutritious aspects of deli foods... [and] tell customers how deli products can be part of a healthful diet." The need today is the same.

With such a high household penetration, the bulk of education about natural foods has already been done. The next step is educating customers on how natural products fit easily into their lifestyle.

Menu suggestions, recipe cards and sampling are perfect to start this new education process. However these are passive activities. Having informed employees who can really sell natural products, suggest natural alternatives and give their customers new ways to use these products, is just as important, and perhaps even more so.

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

This fast-growing area of the deli just may be the perfect place where retailers can help their customers make smart lifestyle choices.

They can develop a "Natural Noon" program using their own signature sandwiches made with natural ingredients such as HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats, gluten-free bread, preservative-free condiments and organic vegetables. They can then add logical go-togethers such as natural chips and natural drinks.

Smart retailers will also use this opportunity to educate consumers on how to use the natural products in their day-to-day meals. Easily created flyers or brochures filled with enticing recipe ideas made entirely with natural ingredients found in the store can do wonders for incremental sales.



Packaging Recommendations

Freshness is a hallmark of the deli. So it's important packaging of freshly sliced meats and cheeses maintain that image.

Resealable deli bags, used exclusively for freshly sliced natural deli products, are a great way to show customers you think these products are special or different. Plus, they help reinforce the products' no-preservatives attribute.

Distinctive "I'm all natural" stickers, added to the outside wrapping of freshly sliced natural products, help further an above-the-norm perception.

Promotional/Advertising Ideas

Demand for natural products is high, so it pays to be loud and proud with any natural items you add to your deli. Promote new additions in your store's weekly ads. Add signage to your deli highlighting the products. Not only will your customers appreciate that your deli stocks the products they're looking for but they'll also see your deli as being more health conscious.

Sample any new products, proving to customers that natural products taste great and can easily fit into their lifestyle. When you sample products such as HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats, explain the flavor benefits of a meat that has no additional flavor notes added by chemical preservatives. The fresh, delicious flavor will bring them back for more.

Creative/Unconventional/ Merchandising Ideas

- Collect several traditional, classic recipes, enlarge them to poster size and show customers how easily many of the ingredients can be substituted with natural ingredients found in your store. Display the products beneath the recipe posters. Customers will see how the traditional becomes "traditional with a healthy twist."

- Enlarge the ingredient statements from several natural products to display on a deli wall. This will help emphasize how preservative- and chemical-free they really are.

Quick Tips

1. Add signs to highlight natural items and educate customers.
2. Show customers how they can use natural products in their everyday meals by providing recipes and serving suggestions.
3. Put natural products into promotions with "everyday" products to further the idea they fit easily into any lifestyle.



Good for everyone.

All-natural, wholesome deli meat for your customers. Hormel Foods' comprehensive support plan for you.

You get it all with HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats. The opportunity to offer natural options is yours with a deli meat that has no preservatives, no artificial colors or flavors, no added MSG, no nitrates or nitrites and is gluten-free. You'll also benefit from the strong brand recognition of HORMEL® and unique marketing support that makes your deli stand out from the competition.

It's good for business. See how this all-natural product line can do good things for your bottom line.

Call 1-800-523-4635 or contact your Hormel Foods representative.



[your customer]



[you]



Great taste. Naturally.

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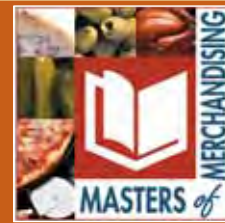
Pasta

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Recommended Display Ideas

Nuovo Pasta's specialty products are most successful when merchandised in the gourmet cheese case or specialty meats/olive section. Since Nuovo has a 19-year history of supplying superior quality pasta and sauce products to fine dining establishments across the country, we have found consumers best associate our products with other high-end gourmet meal ingredients, such as unique cheeses and meats.

Suggested Signage/POS

The key message about our product is that it is all natural with no additives or preservatives. We use only the freshest and highest quality ingredients. All our fillings are handmade by our in-house chefs, and each package contains two restaurant-size portions. We deliver the true restaurant meal experience since, unlike many pasta manufacturers, we supply primarily restaurants. Any signage will get more attention and be more successful by including some or most of these key points.

Variety

We have over 20 different varieties of stuffed pasta in all different colors, shapes, and sizes. This does not include a number of seasonal items we release every fall, which have driven incremental sales and created excitement in the category, year after year. This year's releases include a Pumpkin & Sage square ravioli in a tapestry of fall colors, a Whole-Wheat Butternut Squash & Grana Padano ravioli and an Applewood-Smoked Gouda and Pear sacchette, also in whole wheat pasta. In addition, we have a line of seven gourmet sauces and tapenades that include flavors such as Gorgonzola & Herb, Artichoke & Olive, Roasted Portabella & Truffle, and Cilantro, Tequila & Lime.



Promotional/Advertising Ideas

This brand can be promoted or cross-merchandised with other gourmet foods or cheeses but it also creates a strong sales bump when promoted on its own, with or without a price decline. Focusing on the restaurant experience at home capitalizes on the growing trend of dual-income households that have developed a high quality expectation for meals. This growing demographic can afford to go out to eat every night but, due to time constraints, would prefer to stay in and enjoy a gourmet meal in the comfort of their own home. Advertising and promotion of this concept will help fill a need and possibly spark the purchase of not just Nuovo Pasta but other gourmet items to complete the meal.

Shelf-Life Recommendations

Nuovo Pasta is packaged in 10-ounce atmosphere-controlled containers and is stored frozen to maximize shelf life. Once merchandised refrigerated (which is the recommended way to promote this product), the package has a 30-day optimal shelf life. Nuovo achieves this through pasteurization and packaging innovations not through preservatives, which are never in any of our products. (All Nuovo products are all-natural with no additives or preservatives, ever.)

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Backroom Receiving And Preparation Procedures

Once received in store, product should be stored frozen to maximize flexibility for the retailer and to insure customers get the freshest product possible.

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

Nuovo Pasta can be cross-merchandised with Nuovo's gourmet sauces, unique and specialty cheeses, olives or specialty meats, such as prosciutto or sopresata, adding to the complete gourmet meal aspect of our product line.

Quick Tips

One quick tip would be to merchandise as many value-added types of products together in a section as possible. Once consumers get to a gourmet cheese section, for example, they have already made a conscious decision as to how much money they are willing to spend for a quality product.

Also, many retailers have been very successful creating "All Natural" sections, grouping together a number of all-natural products (not necessarily organic because organic may or may not be more powerful than all-natural) and catering to the health-conscious consumer, clearly a growing demographic.

YOU'LL UPSCALE YOUR PROFITS, TOO.



ADD CHEF-CRAFTED NUOVO SPECIALTY PASTA TO YOUR REFRIGERATED CASE, AND DISCOVER THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL MERCHANDISERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. CALL OUR DIRECTOR OF RETAIL SALES AT 800-803-0033 TO FIND OUT MORE.

RESTAURANT-QUALITY PASTA — RAVIOLI, TORTELLONI, AGNOLOTTI AND GNOCCHI IN IRRESISTIBLE FLAVOR COMBINATIONS:

CRAB & LOBSTER
PORTABELLA & FONTINA
SUNDRIED TOMATO & GORGONZOLA
GOAT CHEESE & ROASTED TOMATO
SPINACH & ASIAGO
ROASTED PEPPER & MOZZARELLA
PORCINI MUSHROOM
SMOKED GOUDA & PEAR
AND MUCH MORE

ALL NATURAL



AWARD-WINNING



FIVE-TIME WINNER OF NASFT FANCY FOOD FINALIST AWARDS. WWW.NUOVOPASTA.COM SERVED IN THE FINEST RESTAURANTS SINCE 1989.



VINCENT GIORDANO

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Website: www.vgiordano.com



Recommended Display Ideas

Roast beef should be displayed in the service deli case with the other sliced-to-order deli meats. Ideally, roast beef should be faced so the customer can see the quality and rareness of the meat. Displaying your top-selling premium roast beef, ham and turkey together in the center of the deli meat section will generate customer attention.

In high-volume stores, think about taking your top-quality roast beef products and building a center-of-the-case display with each variety displayed out of the wrapper on its own garnished platter. Recommendations include a top-of-the-line, Choice-grade top round with the cap off, an eye round and either a corned beef, pastрами or flavored beef, depending on the area.

- Always make sure the case is neat, clean and well signed.
- Always ask the customers how they want their roast beef sliced.
- Always show the customer a slice before you continue slicing his or her order.
- Offer samples.

Suggested Signage/POS

Shelf tags in the service deli case should be clean and include the brand name, the type of roast beef and an easy-to-read price.

Variety

There are four main characteristics of roast beef to consider when deciding what varieties to carry. They are the grade of the meat, the cut of the meat, the flavor profile of the meat and the amount of "cook" your customers desire.

The main grades of meat are Prime, Choice, Select and Utility. Other names such as "Black Angus" depict a level of quality as good or better than choice. Most roast beefs are Select quality meats. Consider a premium grade for your stores' top-of-the-line product.

The most popular cuts of roast beef are top rounds (cap on or off), bottom rounds and eye rounds. These are all whole muscle products. It is recommended that stores wishing to carry a premium product look at a top round with the cap off. Roast beefs that are made by using different cuts of beef and compressing them are called "re-structured" and are excellent, less-expensive products for price-sensitive markets.

Flavored roast beefs, the most popular of which is the Italian-style roast beef, are gaining popularity in some areas.

Another consideration is the degree of wellness or "cook" your customers desire. Many areas of the country, such as the Northeast, prefer a rare product, while other areas prefer a well-done product. In many locations, it is important to give customers a choice.

A basic lineup for most stores is a top-of-the-line product, a less expensive whole-muscle product, an eye round and at least one variety of flavored roast beef. Stores may also want to consider a re-structured product that can be sold for less money.

Vincent Giordano has a long tradition of working with individual clients to develop the appropriate products for individual markets and chains.



Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

- Use roast beef in sandwiches, wraps and salads.
- Cross-merchandise with bread and rolls.
- Cross-merchandise with condiments, such as sandwich spreads and mustards.

Shelf-Life Recommendations

Do not sell product past the manufacturer's recommended sell-by date. Opened product should be used quickly, within five days, and product that is displayed without its wrapper should be sold in two days for optimum freshness and eye-appeal.

Packaging Recommendations

Sliced roast beef should be neatly layered and not folded or crushed, even if the customer wants it sliced very thin. Place the product carefully in the deli bag. The best deli bag is one that shows the store logo as well as care and handling directions for deli meats and that has a reclosable seal.

Promotional/Advertising Ideas

Roast beef should be featured at least one time per month in your stores' weekly ads and/or circulars. Roast beef is a sandwich favorite, and a featured sandwich of the month using roast beef will help build incremental business. Try suggesting different cheeses to accompany roast beef in sandwiches and wraps.

Creative And Unconventional Merchandising Ideas

Develop a hot roast beef sandwich program that will complement your hot food and sandwich programs.

Quick Tips

1. Ask the customers how they want to have their roast beef sliced.
2. Offer customers different cuts, flavors and degrees of "cook" in order to satisfy everyone.
3. Use roast beef in a featured sandwich.



BRING YOUR BEEF SALES TO NEW HEIGHTS



Vincent Giordano

TENDER. TASTY. TEMPTING.

215-467-6629
www.vgiordano.com

Reader Service No. 101



CONROY FOODS

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Recommended Display Ideas

Prominent displays or the merchandising of Beano's Deli Bistro Condiments should be in close proximity to premium deli meats to allow for incremental sales as other items are purchased. As examples, Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces should be merchandised in the following locations in ranking of best practices first.

1. Countertop racks should be placed as close to the meat/cheese slicer as possible. Deli personnel should be trained to engage the consumers with suggestive selling of go-along-with products. An example would be to ask the consumer to try Beano's Sweet Chili Pepper Sauce with a roast beef purchase.

2. Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces should be merchandised with grab-and-go sandwiches or gourmet custom sandwich programs (i.e. panini sandwiches, ciabatta and baguette sandwiches). Consumers who make purchases in grab-and-go sections are looking for convenience and a fast shopping experience. Making go-along-with products readily available will lead to incremental impulse purchases.

3. Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces are available in shippers that contain an assortment of each flavor (12 Cilantro & Lime, 12 Roasted Chipotle and 6 each of Mesquite Smoked, Sweet Chili Pepper, Oriental Mustard and Hot Ginger) as another tool to capture more sales. These attractive 48-pack shippers can be configured according to the retailer's specifications.

4. Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces are shipped with an attractive inner display tray that can be used to merchandise specific flavors in key areas. An example would be to merchandise Beano's Oriental Mustard and Hot Ginger with spring rolls or sushi.

5. Take merchandising a step further and incorporate Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces into your custom gourmet sandwich program. Beano's can provide easy to create bistro sandwich recipes to help you create your own bistro sandwiches.

Suggested Signage/POS

Making sure your consumer reacts to your merchandising is important to stimulating additional purchases. Signage reminding them of recipes or upcoming events, such as football games, holidays or local events, will create a new need for products.

Variety

One of the main advantages to merchandising Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces in the deli is the uniqueness of many of our products. Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces are available in:

Cilantro & Lime – freshness, zest and flavor of a Southern California bistro

Roasted Chipotle – rich, smoky, sauce made with roasted and blended jalapeño peppers

Sweet Chili Pepper – oriental style sauce with a sneaky heat and sweet zesty flavor

Mesquite Smoked – authentic, creamy sauce made of cracked pepper and mesquite smoke

Hot Ginger – savory pan-Asian deli sauce with heat and spice

Oriental Mustard – very hot and sharp, made from oriental mustard seed

These flavor profiles were specifically designed to capture the excitement and popularity of both Asian and Hispanic flavors. Asian and Hispanic populations are the two fastest growing communities in the United States. These unique flavors are also popular on menus in restaurants ranging from sandwich shops to white tablecloth establishments. Our flavor profiles are not available off the dry grocery shelf making your deli the place to find new and exciting products. In addition, our flavors entice the consumer to recreate the sandwiches offered at many of the national and local specialty sandwich restaurants.

Promotional/Advertising Ideas

Include Beano's with catering orders. Many catering orders are for business lunches where little or no condiments may be available. Include Beano's, chips and fruit to offer the full complement to a meal while taking the guess work out of the equation for consumers. Everything they need can be bundled into one price point.

Shelf-Life Recommendations

Beano's products are all shelf stable and have a 1-year shelf life. While the deli meat category is considered to have little growth potential, industry experts are suggesting that delis use specialty condiments to provide additional sales.

Because of the year-long shelf life offered by Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces, you will not experience the shrink that is inherent with deli meats,

cheeses and breads.

Packaging Recommendations

Small packaging, such as the 8-ounce bottle we use for Beano's, has many benefits to both the consumer and the retailer. For the consumer, small bottles are great for trial, travel to picnics or ball games, and for one-time usage, such as at a tailgate party. For the retailer, small bottles mean the consumer may try more than one flavor. It also means better turns and a fresher product on shelf for the consumer.

Include several flavors in a pre-arranged tailgate kit.

Backroom Receiving And Preparation Procedures

We all know how important it is to rotate product. It is equally important to reduce back stock. Product in the back is money tied up and not creating revenue. Beano's countertop racks and inner display tracks offer the retailer a home for the product. Merchandise with a plan not just placed randomly in the department.

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

Cross-merchandising Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces is another opportunity to drive incremental sales. During key selling periods, make sure Beano's is near the gourmet meats in the service deli case and the grab-and-go section. In addition to Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces, include chips, snacks, bread and cheese. Place secondary locations of Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces by the sushi, gourmet cheese case, fresh baked breads and the custom sandwich station.

Creative And Unconventional Merchandising Ideas

Line up a variety of Beano's Deli Bistro products in front of the custom sandwich station.

Passive sampling of Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces allows consumers to taste before they buy.

Pick key selling periods when sandwich making is at a peak. Promote the following to capture new business:

Promote the use of Beano's Deli Bistro on turkey and ham during the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas holiday period.

Include Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces with tailgate promotions during the fall football season.

Create a Super Bowl basket with great tailgate snacks with Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces and the accompanying dips.

Create a sandwich of the month to keep your custom sandwich program fresh and to keep those customers coming back for more with the great flavors of Beano's Deli Bistro Sauces.

Quick Tips

1. Keep Beano's visible and available for purchase by using racks and shippers.
2. Teach product knowledge to the deli personnel so they can cross-sell.
3. Be creative — bundle products together to make the purchase easy for the consumer.
4. Walk the department daily to face out, fill out-of-stocks and look for new cross-merchandising opportunities.

DELI BISTRO'S USE A SIMPLE ELEGANT COOKING METHOD. THE EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON THE USE OF FLAVOR, QUALITY AND FRESH, RUSTIC, AUTHENTIC INGREDIENTS. BEANO'S ETHNIC-INSPIRED DELI BISTRO SAUCES WILL NOW ALLOW YOUR CUSTOMERS TO PREPARE BISTRO STYLE SANDWICHES AT HOME.

Introducing
Beano's
— EST. 1986 —

Deli Bistro™

Sandwich Sauces



*Flank Steak Pork Loin
Roasted Turkey Roast
Chicken Chorizo Ham
Roast Beef Prosciutto
Beef Bok Choy Baby
Beef Muffa Sprouts
Brazil Radish Shredded
Cabbage Crab Lobster
Salmon Shrimp Logos
Scallops Chianti Focaccia
Ciabatta Crusty Tuna
an Sand Dough Bagel
Bolillo Swiss Mustard
Smoked Gouda Fennel
Fresh Mozzarella Quinoa*



Beano's
— EST. 1986 —

**CONROY
FOODS**

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ALEXIAN™
PÂTÉ & SPECIALTY MEATS

ALEXIAN

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Variety

- All-natural pâtés and mousses
- Country-style pâtés
- Creamy mousses surrounded in aspic
- Vegetarian and seafood terrines
- Vegan terrines

Alexian has made the commitment to preparing its pâtés and mousses in a completely natural manner, using only the freshest, safest, most wholesome quality products, such as real eggs, fresh vegetables and fresh dairy.

In keeping with its business philosophy, Alexian has as its policy to make sure all the game, meat and poultry ingredients used are certified to be free of growth hormones and free of antibiotics. This includes dairy as well. Alexian requires certification from all vendors used for production purposes.

There are no substitute ingredients, no preservatives, additives, artificial colorings or flavorings, nor are there fillers of any kind — no rice, wheat, corn or soy glutens of any kind, no soy protein isolates and no corn by-products.

Alexian produces distinctive pâtés and

mousses in many varieties that use pork liver, chicken liver, turkey liver, as well as duck and goose liver. None of the meat or the liver used for production is from any animal that has been force fed. New package labeling indicates that Alexian's pâtés do not contain foie gras.

European Culinary Heritage

Alexian's reputation for creating outstanding meat products was started by the Groezinger family in the Black Forest of Germany in the 16th century.

Ewald Groezinger brought Alexian to America, and his distinctive, time-tested methods quickly became well known within the industry. He introduced unique specialties that are now nationally distributed under the Alexian brand. Today, celebrating 25 years, the tradition is continued by Laurie Cummins.

Promotional/Advertising/POS Ideas

- In-store sampling
- Point-of-sale display and literature
- Sales incentives and promotion programs

- Press relations in our main markets
- Display advertising targeting the trade.

To celebrate 25 years in business, Alexian published the *25 Years — 25 Ways to Enjoy Pâté* recipe collection, which was warmly received by both consumers and the trade.

The company's *Pâté Digest* newsletter informs the industry of the latest trends and happenings at Alexian.

Packaging Recommendations

Alexian's "first class" products are presented with upscale, modern packaging and graphics to convey their rarified quality. Abundant ingredient and product information reinforces the freshness and quality of the brand at point of purchase. The unique 7-ounce sliced packaging has 56 days of shelf life.

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Six Options For Profitable Grab-And-Go

Opportunities to effectively merchandise for consumers on the go.

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

Grab. Go. Gobble. Consumers today live in the fast lane — and while they want food that's fast, they don't want traditional fast food.

"The grab-and-go category is growing, but I see it continuing to grow to a much larger business," says Rick Schaffer, president of Tribe Mediterranean Foods Company, LLC, Taunton, MA. "The key driver for this continued growth is consumers' need for convenience.

"Products are just tasting better," continues Schaffer, who says this contributes to growth. Technology is producing better tasting products that have enough shelf life to work in grab-and-go sections.

According to Lee York, vice president of the deli division for Nonni's Food Company, Inc., Tulsa, OK, which makes New York Style brand baked goods, "Grab-and-go is really a process that's moving supermarket delis into becoming destination centers. It's a major growth area for the deli."

Other drivers include more healthful selections, food sampling and new products.

Angela Chan, director of marketing for Corbin Kitchens, Santa Ana, CA, observes trends in taste that translate into "gourmet, non-processed, bold or unique flavor profiles and ethnic flavors. We also see a trend in demand for mini meals or, in other words, snack-size entrées that are fun, shareable, interactive and portion controlled."

Here are six ideas for profitably merchandising grab-and-go foods:

1. Offer Breakfast-To-Go

It's no surprise breakfast is the most missed meal of the day. One reason consumers fail to "break their fast" is a lack of time. That's why it's important for retailers to consider the profit potential in making breakfast a convenient option for consumers.

Kathy Lenkov, communications manager for Nestlé FoodServices, Glendale, CA,



notes, "Breakfast is proving to be a big opportunity for the deli. It's a day part that operators are looking to build up. It's also a meal in which operators can capture some of the business away from fast-food and the QSR [quick serve restaurant] sector."

This summer, Nestlé introduced Croustade. Unlike its Hot Pocket and Lean Pocket line of sandwiches, which include breakfast offerings, Croustade has an upscale open-face look. It is available in spicy sausage, egg and cheese as well as bacon, egg and cheese in a maple syrup flavored crust.

"Ideally, deli operators serve these breakfast sandwiches hot and bundle them with a selection from the coffee bar or juice bar for one price," Lenkov adds. "These sandwiches are ideal for stores with restaurant seating, even if it's just a small breakfast nook area."

2. Set Out Trendy Snacks

Appetizers are hot, whether they're merchandised on a hot bar or in a refrigerated case. According to *What's In Store 2008* from the International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI, appetizers rank as the fourth largest prepared-foods category in dollar sales — after entrées, salads and sandwiches — contributing \$638.7 million in sales from July 2006 through the end of June 2007, up 2 percent from the same time period a year prior.

Tom Noel, East Coast regional sales

manager for the deli division, Heinz Frozen Food Company, Pittsburgh, PA, relates, "Poppers brand stuffed jalapeño peppers and T.G.I. Friday's brand mozzarella sticks are our two most popular grab-and-go items. That's because these items are so prevalent on restaurant menus across the nation. For the deli, it's best to stick with what sells and what's familiar. This helps avoid problems with shrink."

Many delis include these items on their hot bar for lunch and dinner service. Others also merchandise poppers and mozzarella sticks, packed into single-serve containers along with a sauce or dip in the refrigerated grab-and-go case next to pre-packed sandwiches and pizzas. The latter allows operators to merchandise the products 24/7, rather than just at mealtime.

"We have seen some operators sell popcorn chicken in a 12- or 16-ounce cup with a vented dome lid in order to keep the product hot and crisp," Noel says. "They sell these cups in a self-serve area with a hot plate underneath. I think this concept could work with poppers and mozzarella sticks as well."

3. Drive Sales With Dips

Hummus, a popular chip dip and bread spread, could be the next salsa, generating substantial sales, especially when merchandised to customers looking for a healthful, bold-flavored snack or mini meal.

Airport sales have already proved hummus will fly off the shelf, says John McGuckin, executive vice president of sales for Sabra Foods, Norwood, MA. "However, household penetration for hummus is 8 percent and per capita consumption is only 2 ounces annually. In contrast, annual consumption is between 15 to 18 pounds per person in the Middle East. If Americans boosted their hummus intake to one pound per year, this would grow the category from its current \$250 million to \$2 billion annually."

"Position it next to yogurt in the morning for breakfast and also next to yogurt in the afternoon as an afternoon snack," he continues. "The classic style is customers' entry point into the category, but customers who know what hummus is look for that 'something different' and seek out additional flavors. In general, though, the key is to educate customers about hummus — how it tastes, how healthful it is and how best to enjoy it."

Market research commissioned by Sabra shows consumers in New England, New York City, the Mid-Atlantic, Florida and Michigan are familiar with hummus, while markets in the Midwest, Southwest, Texas and Mississippi are least familiar with it.

"Grab-and-go hummus pre-packed snacks are a retail derivative of the foodservice industry, especially universities and commissaries, where it has been a tremendous success for a while now," explains Tribes' Schaffer.

"Many products start at retail and then move into foodservice, but when it comes to hummus, the trend started the other way around," he adds. Schools have been big drivers, replacing green beans on school lunches with hummus in single-serve cups. Retailers need to take advantage and have a space dedicated to these types of products that are great for school lunches and mobile consumers.

4. Feature Sandwiches As Healthful Meal Deals

Ever since 1762 when the fourth Earl of Sandwich asked for an easy way to eat meat during a 24-hour betting marathon, sandwiches have been one of the most popular grab-and-go foods.

Ken Burke, vice president of sales and marketing for Costanzo's Bakery, Inc., Cheektowaga, NY, advises, "Keep pre-made sandwich varieties simple — an Italian sub, turkey and ham — three varieties."

The trend today encompasses a less-expensive form of packaging, he notes. "Deli operators are moving towards clear wraps or clear bags that allow consumers to see the sandwich better while at the same time preventing the bread from drying out and meat

Seasonal Grab-And-Go Items

Fall "is the peak season for tailgating and holiday parties and it lasts right into Super Bowl in January," notes Tom Noel, East Coast regional sales manager for the deli division of Heinz Frozen Food Company, Pittsburgh, PA. "Combine poppers and mozzarella sticks with chicken wings and merchandise all three on a platter. Merchandise the platter in the refrigerated grab-and-go case along with other party foods such as sliced meat and cheese trays."

Ken Burke, vice president of sales and marketing for Costanzo's Bakery, Inc., Cheektowaga, NY recommends, "Create a super sub for customers to take to football games. We sell a 2-foot sub roll. Some operators use our 12-inch sub roll and use this to build a 2- or 3-foot sub. Pre-make the subs and merchandise them in the cold case on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays to take advantage of high school, college and pro football games."

"You can extend the party theme by cross-merchandising the subs with salsa and chips or other snack foods," he adds.

For parties, Angela Chan, director of marketing for Corbin Kitchens, Santa Ana, CA, recommends, "Our Small Bites are ideally served as appetizers or hors d'oeuvres, either hot from the deli or ready to heat-and-eat at home." Launched in June, Small Bites are miniature-sized comfort foods. Offerings include mini cheeseburgers, mini patty melts, mini grilled cheese sandwiches and two versions of mini tamales — roasted corn with chipotle and cremini mushroom with chipotle chili. The items are fully cooked and packed in ovenable/microwavable trays. They are ready to re-heat or repack in grab-and-go containers for takeout. **DB**

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from discoloring. This is something plastic clamshells don't do as well."

Some operators are pre-making sandwiches with meat or cheese fillings only.

"There's a convenience store in Wisconsin that offers a topping or fixings bar where consumers can choose what and how much they want of, say, lettuce, tomato and onions, along with other condiments," Costanzo's Burke continues.

Meal deals are a common method for merchandising sandwiches. "Typically, operators will offer a sandwich with a salad or dessert and drink," he explains. "In the fall, a slice of pie often serves as the dessert. Some operators offer a healthful option and may pair turkey on wheat with a bran muffin. Either way, signage by the case that lists the meal components and price pulls the concept together for customers."

Costanzo's just started marketing a fiber-rich whole-grain roll. "We've had tremendous calls from colleges and universities. Now, the roll is working its way into sub shops and delis."

Whole grains, which are the entire grain and not just a portion of it, are hot. Interestingly, though, Burke says, wheat rolls — made with a mixture of wheat and white flours — traditionally garner only 20 percent of sales in affluent areas, while this percentage soars to 35 to 40 percent in middle income markets. It's too soon to tell if the company's whole-grain roll will follow this trend.

5. Sell That "Something Different" Go-With.

Nonni's York says bagel crisps and pita chips, along with July-released Pretzel Flatz — flat triangular pretzels in original and 'everything' flavor with poppy seeds, sesame seeds, garlic, onion and salt — are favorite snack foods. "In addition, they're also value-added carriers that are ideal to use in cross-merchandising."

Earlier this year, Nonni's began marketing these premium baked goods in 1¼- and 1½-ounce single-serve packages. York believes operators can build a bigger ring by bundling these items with spreads, sandwiches and salads. This technique also lets delis set themselves apart from competitors by selling something that differs from the customary cracker, potato chip or crouton.

"Set the single-serve packs on counter tops or use clip-strip displays so customers can readily see them when ordering their

sandwiches or salads," he suggests. "In addition to countertop racks, we have freestanding solid oak racks with a branded awning on top that can help save on shelf space. Shelves on the racks hold the larger units, while the wire baskets are ideal for the sin-

"TYPICALLY, OPERATORS WILL OFFER A SANDWICH WITH A SALAD OR DESSERT AND DRINK. IN THE FALL, A SLICE OF PIE OFTEN SERVES AS THE DESSERT."

— Ken Burke
Costanzo's Bakery, Inc.

gle-serve packages. In addition to the deli counter, place these racks by the wall deli for cross-merchandising with pre-sliced meats and cheeses or by the refrigerated case, where cheese spreads, hummus and other dips are sold."

"A McDonald's chain outside the United States is test marketing our single-serve garlic pita chips in place of croutons on the salad bar," York adds.

6. Serve Sushi And More.

According to the IDDBA's What's In Store 2008, 55.4 percent of retailers have sushi stations. This is a great foundation to grow into an entire Asian-theme.

Mark Phelps, vice president and owner of InnovAsian Cuisine Enterprises, LLC, Kent, WA, notes, "We think adding other Asian grab-and-go choices to this same space or space adjacent to the sushi area can create more visibility and, in turn, more sales. More choices and an increased commitment to the category will attract more trial and stimulate multiple add-on purchases." InnovAsian's lucrative grab-and-go items include Rice Bowl Kits and appetizer-items such as pot stickers and egg rolls.

"Try cross-merchandising shelf-stable Asian grocery items near the Asian grab-and-go area for a bigger ring," Phelps recommends. "Suggestions include soy sauce, sweet and sour sauce, Chinese hot mustard and fortune cookies."

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Hispanic Food Holds Ground In Deli Department

The growing Hispanic segment offers opportunities for deli retailers to expand offerings.

BY LISA WHITE

The buying power of Hispanic and Latino consumers is growing by leaps and bounds. The demographic is estimated to increase 126.4 percent from 1990 to 2011, according to Mediamark Research, Inc., New York City, NY. This segment's growth rate continues to surge nearly 58 percent or four times the growth of the U.S. population.

Hispanic/Latino purchasing is estimated to have reached \$798 billion in 2006 and is expected to grow to \$1.2 trillion by 2011, Mediamark reports. Compared with 1990 spending, this is a 457 percent increase.

There are some 44.8 million Hispanics/Latinos in the United States. "There are basically four generations of Hispanics," explains Denis Oratowski, president of Los Angeles, CA-based Crown Bakery, Inc., a supplier of Hispanic baked goods. "The first generation is comprised of grandmas and grandpas cooking from scratch. The second generation is their children who know how to make this food but prefer prepared and fast food. The third generation is not familiar with cooking these foods, and the upcoming generation has never been to Mexico but may recall these foods from their childhood. It is the second and third generations that are purchasing Hispanic foods in the deli."

In the last two years, Publix Super Markets, Inc., Lakeland, FL, has opened four Hispanic-themed stores, including its first Publix Sabor in Buenaventura Lakes, FL. The 40,000-square-foot store features mainly Hispanic ethnic products and a cafe in the deli/bakery area serves Hispanic food.

"In Los Angeles, we have had at least five different Hispanic chains emerge that are competing with large American supermarket chains," Oratowski says.

Hispanic deli foods are a big departure from traditional American items. "When you go into a Hispanic deli, it is based more around prepared foods in a fast-food format, like beans and rice or burritos," he notes.



Mainstream retailers also have ample opportunity to appeal to ethnic consumers and those who want to eat cross culturally.

"There is a great opportunity for mainstream supermarkets to offer appealing foods to second and third generation Hispanic consumers," says Gabriel Robles, president of Queso Campesino, Denver, CO. "Many Hispanic consumers like traditional foods made by American companies with American labels, which convey better quality-control standards and more consistent product quality."

Today's Hispanic deli mirrors the American deli of 20 years ago. "Hispanic delis are buying frozen foods and heating them up," Oratowski says.

Helen Chavez Hansen, president, La Tapatia Tortilleria, Fresno, CA, sees little Hispanic deli food growth in traditional supermarkets. "The growth is in Hispanic supermarkets, especially in Southern California."

On the other hand, Robles believes there is no real reason to assign Mexican-style cheeses their own area. Many non-Hispanic consumers enjoy Hispanic foods and seek out restaurants that serve traditional fare. As the Hispanic population grows, so will the acceptance and enjoyment of traditional foods by non-traditional consumers.

"There is no need for most supermarkets to segregate Hispanic cheeses. They should be offered along with other cheeses in the deli department and included in sandwich

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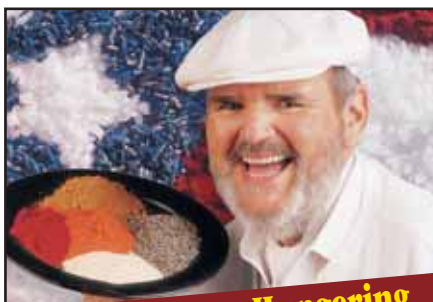
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programs," Queso Campesino's Robles says.

Trends

According to Edgar Soto, vice president of sales and marketing, Cibao Meat Products, Bronx, NY, trends are dependent on each region and the product availability in different areas.

Rather than burritos, tacos and other typical foods in this category, Hansen sees more Hispanic ingredients being incorporated into fusion foods. "Tortillas have been Americanized to create wraps, for example. We also are seeing a move toward more home-style Hispanic products." La Tapatia recently introduced a home-style corn tortilla that has been well received.

According to Gil De Cardenas, president, Reynaldo's Mexican Food, Downey, CA, the biggest selling items in the Hispanic segment are cheese, chorizos, gelatins and desserts. "Lunch meat also is being introduced in modified flavor profiles geared for the Hispanic segment. Mexican cheeses, like Cotija and Queso Fresco, also are becoming more common," he says.

U.S.-made cheeses have the best quality control, emphasizes Robles. U.S. milk is much better, the controls are better and American-made Mexican cheeses are a fast growing market, he contends.

He notes two exceptions, however: Cotija, a dry grana-style cheese that is a little salty and doesn't melt, similar to Parmesan; and Menonita, a mild melting semi-soft cheese. In Hispanic markets, many consumers prefer to buy imported because the quality is better from Mexico.

Cotija and Menonita are exceptions because these two cheeses are aged; in Mexico they age naturally. The U.S. emphasis has been to reduce costs, so enzymes are used to give the cheese an aged flavor without the actual aging; the true connoisseur can tell the difference. For this reason, Mexican labels can be tough competitors.

But, Robles notes, manufacturers in both the United States and Mexico are starting to realize there is an opportunity for higher quality cheeses, including naturally aged.

Much of this growth is attributed to better education. "Consumers are learning more about our cheeses and how to use them. They tend to want to experiment more," says Rostom Baghdassarian, general manager, Karoun Dairies, Center Valley, CA. Top three sellers include Cotija, Queso Fresco, (similar to Mozzarella and used in cooking and baking) and Oaxaca (similar to Mozzarella and often used in quesadillas).

The influence of Hispanic foods on non-Hispanic palates is evident, says Craig Jaunzemis, national sales manager, La Mexicana, Los Angeles, CA. "People are eating more of

this food type and the influence is increasing."

In addition, Hispanic foods are a good fit for the increasing number of Americans who are seeking stronger and varied flavor profiles.

Using cheese as an example, Robles points out, "Hispanic cheeses are also qualified to be in the specialty cheese department alongside high-end domestic and imported cheeses. A good example of an integrated department can be found at Denver, CO-

Future Growth

Many predict the Hispanic food segment in supermarket delis will grow as the Hispanic population continues to increase. "Because this demographic is growing, other ethnic groups are becoming more familiar with Hispanic foods," explains Rostom Baghdassarian, general manager, Karoun Dairies, Center Valley, CA.

Craig Jaunzemis, national sales manager, La Mexicana, Los Angeles, CA, agrees, saying the influence of Hispanic people in the United States is increasing. "We will see more non-Hispanic foods being influenced by Hispanic flavors. For instance, salsa will become a part of non-Hispanic dishes."

With an increasing number of Mexican and Spanish restaurants, more Americans are looking for ingredients and products they try there, notes Edgar Soto, vice president of sales and marketing, Cibao Meat Products, Bronx, NY. "People are looking for the same flavor profiles in their meals at home."

Alfredo Lardizabal, vice president, MIC Food, Miami, FL, predicts huge growth in the Hispanic deli segment, with a high level of acceptance in newer markets. "People will become comfortable with these foods, so it's a good time for delis to take a look at adding Hispanic products to their lineup. This will not only offer good sales potential but also draw a larger customer base. Hispanics are very loyal to their foods and brands. That's why many independent Hispanic markets do very well. They bring the nostalgia of their native country to the United States. If mainstream supermarkets do this, they will get more people walking in their doors."

In contrast, Helen Chavez Hansen, president, La Tapatia Tortilleria, Fresno, CA, anticipates slower growth, saying Hispanic food will make its way into delis little by little. "Retailers need to be careful about what items they put in there. It's all about the timing." **DB**

based Kings Soopers. Of course, if Hispanic cheeses are to be included in the specialty cheese section, the cheeses selected should also be very high quality."

The deli is a good vehicle for fresh Hispanic items, including guacamole and salsa, as well. "When we look at the Hispanic food segment as a whole, it is growing in the service deli," La Mexicana's Jaunzemis says.

"Hispanic consumers are becoming more widespread," notes Cibao's Soto. "I am getting more phone calls from the Southeast and other areas that typically were not significant Hispanic markets."

Alfredo Lardizabal, vice president, MIC Food, Miami, FL, contends exposure to many types of food makes Americans more open to different flavors and varieties. "If delis can facilitate this, it provides more sales opportunities and a chance to expand their customer base."

Marketing

While some recommend merchandising and marketing Hispanic foods with other deli products, others say creating a separate area provides added visibility. "We recommend our products be merchandised together in an Hispanic section, much like Hispanic spices, oils and canned goods in the grocery aisle," notes Reynaldo's De Cardenas.

Stores that recognize the potential set up Hispanic sections, grouping items together in the deli case. "For example, instead of incorporating Hispanic cheese with traditional cheese, some stores will tie it in with tortillas [creating a quesadilla display]," Soto notes.

Cross-merchandising Hispanic items with mainstream foods helps widen the demographic, according to Crown's Oratowski says. "This is a growing segment, not only with Hispanics but also with non-Hispanics. There are a number of mom-and-pop Mexican markets competing with American supermarkets and these U.S. chains are not positioned to compete with them. They are not incorporating Hispanic foods or Spanish signage in the deli."

Lardizabal believes there is huge potential for cross-merchandising Hispanic foods. "Our predominant items are plantain and yuca, which is like a Latin American potato. Both are typically eaten as sides. These can be cross-merchandised with American entrées, as can many Hispanic food items. This is a subtle way to show Americans how these products are used." MIC will work with delis to help market its lines and provide menu ideas.

Although presenting Hispanic food in a consolidated display makes it easy for customers to locate and identify these items, Jaunzemis says retailers should not limit

themselves to Hispanic-only audiences or they will lose sales. "The majority of our customers are not Hispanic," he relates.

Within the Hispanic demographic, there are different segments and products. "Retailers should know the types of Hispanics in their marketing area and tailor their product mix to this segment. For example, are the majority of customers Mexican, Caribbean or Latin American?" Soto asks.

The most popular Hispanic foods are not necessarily traditional deli items, La Tapatia's Hansen adds. "You don't see a lot of salsa, guacamole and home-style tortilla chips in traditional supermarket delis. It's different in a Hispanic supermarket."

Prominent placement is key. "We look at product placement with our products," Jaunzemis explains. "If people can see it, they'll try it. Sometimes we do in-store demos with tortilla chip manufacturers, but even in those cases, the sampling doesn't pay for itself."

Karoun puts secondary labels that better describe the products on Hispanic items. "On our labels' fronts, we're putting a secondary label comparing the cheese to its American counterpart, For example, we cross reference Cotija with Parmesan," Baghdassarian says. "That way, consumers can compare it with cheese they're familiar with."

The company also recommends cross-merchandising its product lines with chips, tortillas and other Hispanic breads. "If retailers are trying to attract the Hispanic population, they should know this segment is quality oriented rather than price oriented. Once customers like the taste, they will keep purchasing the product," Baghdassarian adds.

Hispanic consumers tend to shop weekly and cook at home. "They pay a lot of attention to ingredients and don't buy as much prepared foods as Americans," he says.

For deli retailers seeking to penetrate the Hispanic market, Lardizabal recommends starting with a few small items. "The best way to penetrate the market is with appetizers and side dishes. The commitment is less and there is a comfort level there. It is an easy way to test the waters and provides a smoother transition for consumers who want to try something different but aren't ready to commit to a Hispanic meal."

At minimum, delis should provide displays with table tents describing new Hispanic items to help draw people in, he recommends. "Retailers need to make their customers aware they are carrying Hispanic items. It is not enough just to have these foods available. Posters and circulars also let people know what is available in the deli." **DB**

The advertisement for Cibao Meat Products is divided into two main sections. The top section shows a family—a man, a woman, and two children—sitting around a dining table, enjoying a meal. The table is set with plates of food, glasses of orange juice, and a white teapot. The family is smiling and engaged in conversation. The bottom section displays a variety of Cibao Meat Products, including several large packages of sliced meats (like ham and salami) and smaller packages of sausages and deli items. The products are arranged neatly on a white surface. The Cibao Meat Products logo, featuring a stylized 'M' and 'C' inside a circle, is prominently displayed at the top center of the advertisement. Below the logo, the text "CIBAO MEAT PRODUCTS" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the advertisement, the website "www.cibaomeat.com" is listed, along with the phone number "1-800-368-3683" and the text "MADE IN USA".

Prosciutto di Parma

America's love affair with this Italian delicacy has only just begun.

BY JACQUELINE ROSS LIEBERMAN

It seems America is smitten with prosciutto di Parma. Despite the high price of this premium dry-cured ham, sales are steadily increasing, according to David Biltchik, chairman of Consultants International Group, Washington, D.C., and advisor to the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, Parma, Italy. "More and more Americans from coast to coast are buying it," he says. In fact, the United States is the No. 2 importer of prosciutto di Parma in the world, just behind France.

Some believe this is part of a larger trend toward the enjoyment of European dry-cured hams, as more Americans are introduced to prosciutto at restaurants, through sandwich programs at delis and through media such as magazines, cookbooks and television programs.

"Prosciutto in general has become a lot more popular as an expansion of the popularity of Italian food products in general," notes John Jack, vice president of sales and marketing, Colonial Heights, VA-based Fiorucci Foods, Inc., producers of dry-cured hams in the United States and Italy, including prosciutto di Parma.

"A trend we've seen in the last 10 years or so is the ability to offer sliced and packaged meats, which has helped prosciutto," Jack adds. "There are a lot of places that don't have the ability to handle — or the volume required to provide — the sliced-in-store product. It used to be you had to make a special trip to buy prosciutto. Now you can get it in a lot of retail stores in just about any market."

Although 80 percent of prosciutto di Parma is sold in Italy, the rest is now available in over 50 countries, including Japan, China, Australia and the United States. "Overall, prosciutto is becoming a more well-known product," says Alberto Minardi, general manager, Principe Foods Inc., Los Angeles, CA, a subsidiary company of the largest manufacturer of prosciutto di San Daniele and also a producer of prosciutto di Parma.

Americans are looking for products that are more healthful and more natural, and nothing is more natural than prosciutto di



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Reader Service No. 119

Parma, says Cesare Gallo, president of Savello Foods, a Wilkes-Barre, PA-based importer fine Italian products, including prosciutto di Parma from Leoncini.

Leoncini has been a family-owned company since 1918, when Aristodemo Leoncini, a renowned master of the art of making salted meats, started a small family business in the province of Reggio Emilia. The Leoncini Group was, and still is, in Verona where it

**“EVERYTHING FROM
THE BREED OF PIG,
THE FOOD IT EATS,
THE AGE AT WHICH IT
IS SLAUGHTERED, THE
QUALITY OF THE LEG
— EVERYTHING — IS
CONTROLLED AND
SUBJECT TO STRICT
CONTROLS.”**

— Cesare Gallo
Savello Foods

produces oven-roasted ham with herbs, cooked ham, porchetta, mortadella and other meats. Leoncini's second plant in Langhirano, Parma, dedicated to making prosciutto di Parma, produces over 100,000 hams a year.

“Prosciutto is a whole muscle leg of pork and salt — nothing else,” Gallo explains. “Everything from the breed of pig, the food it eats, the age at which it is slaughtered, the quality of the leg — everything — is controlled and subject to strict regulations.”

Certainly, prosciutto di Parma is one of the world's most famous hams. Perhaps this is because, in 1996, prosciutto di Parma became one of the first Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products in Europe. It was also the first Italian dry-cured ham to be exported to the United States, which may help explain why it is probably the most recognized of the dry-cured hams available in this country. In addition, the Consorzio has worked hard and spent a good deal of money promoting the product.

But this ham's fame is rooted much deeper in the world's memory. Records show Parma ham was a well-known delicacy as

The Right Way To Slice

According to the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, Parma, Italy, prosciutto di Parma should always be sliced to order and never in advance, unless it is sliced and packaged under the strict control of the Consorzio. Unlike the vacuum-sealed packages imported from Italy, prosciutto sliced by hand in the store should be eaten as soon as possible.

Start by removing the skin that covers the portion to be sliced, leaving about ½ inch of the outer layer of fat in place. Next, trim away the outer first slice as well as any oxidized area. The color of the unoxidized ham ranges from pale- to deep-rose. The fat should be white or rosy, not yellow.

Set the slicer to cut ⅛-inch slices. As you cut, layer the slices side by side on deli paper, covering each layer with paper to prevent the slices from sticking together. Cover with a top layer of deli paper. Loosely fold or roll the layers, then wrap in plastic and tape closed.

For more tips on handling and to view an instructional video, visit the Consorzio's Web site at www.prosciutodiparma.com. **DB**

long ago as 100 B.C. “It has a famous name that goes back in history,” says Consultants’ Biltchik. “It goes back over a thousand years. It’s still made the same way — even better in many ways, because it is so regulated now.”

Traditional production methods have certainly not gone unnoticed. As more Americans look for natural products, many are reading the labels and discovering the only ingredients used in prosciutto di Parma are pork and sea salt. “The all-natural aspect is something people really appreciate more and more,” Biltchik notes.

For those who care about traditional, sustainable farming methods, the news gets even better. The pigs, which must be at least nine months old before slaughter to ensure the meat is mature and solid, are raised on a traditional diet of grains, cereal and whey. “One of the secrets is the pigs are fed with the whey from the production of Parmigiano-Reggiano,” explains Davide Calderone of the office of scientific affairs for the Consorzio.

The breed of pigs and where they are raised is also under strict control — only Large White, Duroc and Landrace breeds may be used. They must be born and bred in one of 11 designated regions of Central-Northern Italy. Compared to many other hams, the legs used for prosciutto di Parma are unusually large. In order to qualify, a leg must start out at no less than 10 kilos, with the average leg weighing 12 to 13 kilos.

A Great Ham In The Making

Because it is a PDO product, all producers of prosciutto di Parma must be located within specific geographical boundaries in the hills around Parma. At the plant, a maestro salatore, or salt master, rubs just enough sea salt over the bone-in legs to preserve them without making the meat too salty.

Experts say the less salt used, the sweeter the end product. The legs are stored for one week at 80 percent humidity. The residual salt is then removed and the ham is rubbed with a second thin coating of salt. Depending on the weight of the leg, the ham is aged 15 to 18 days at 80 percent humidity.

Once this is done, the hams hang in a room at 65 percent humidity for 70 days. This part of the process is called “resting.” Following the resting process, the hams are washed with warm water, brushed to remove excess salt and hung to dry.

Once dry, the hams are hung in a well-ventilated room for the initial curing process, which lasts about three months. Some say the dry, sweet, aromatic breezes from the Apennine Mountains lend a special flavor to the hams during this time. Afterward, the exposed surfaces of the ham, which have dried and hardened, are rubbed with a paste of minced lard and salt. The hams are then hung in a dark, cellar-like room for the final phase of the curing process. When all is said and done, the hams will have lost about 30 percent of their water content, resulting in their distinct and intense flavor.

The Consorzio watches over every step of the process from farm to factory and, often, to the stores where the hams are sold. Along the way, imperfect hams are rejected for labeling as prosciutto di Parma and must be sold as ordinary Italian prosciutto, instead. At the end of the curing process, a final inspection is made. During this time, an inspector pierces each ham at five critical points, sniffing after each puncture in order to ensure the ham gives off the correct aroma. About 5 percent of the finished product is rejected for one reason or another. Those that make the cut are fire-branded with the official mark of the Consorzio, a 5-point ducal crown.

Since the formation of the Consorzio in 1963, the production of prosciutto di Parma has been closely scrutinized. In 1970, Italy passed its first law regulating the production of prosciutto di Parma. Today, it is one of Europe's best-known PDO products. All of these regulations, "plus the skill of the people in the prosciutto di Parma plants who have been doing this for generation after generation," amount to a superior product, says Consultants' Biltchik. "People really are passionate about producing a first-quality ham. They're very, very proud of it."

It is important to understand every ham is a little different and it takes great skill and passion to produce this product, explains Savello's Gallo. "Each ham is aged to the degree of perfection. While same size hams are treated very similarly, each ham is unique because each animal is unique. Each individual ham is checked throughout the aging process."

Although Italy produces about 8.5 million prosciutto di Parma hams each year, 171 companies are currently producing them. "It's possible to stay on top of them and make sure they do it the right way," Biltchik says.

Because the process is so carefully watched over, "The consumer has confidence that it will be of the highest quality," he continues. "The consumer looks for our black triangle and crown on the package because they know that means something."

"The awareness and appreciation for higher quality product in this category has grown," says Fiorucci's Jack. "The standard is Parma. People continue to strive to produce another product like this. On the best day, it's getting close, but it's still not as good as Parma."

Biltchik believes sales of prosciutto di Parma will continue to see "a steady but not dramatic growth." He believes this is in part because the price will always remain relatively high compared to other hams and in part because the Consorzio is not willing to sacrifice quality in favor of quantity.

Whole Or Pre-sliced?

Prosciutto di Parma is available as whole, boneless hams to be sliced to order and in pre-sliced packages. While each has its advantages, neither is necessarily better or worse. "We suggest both," Biltchik says. "There's no denying that if you have a store that properly handles the whole ham, it's great. But because even in Italy it's not always possible to have these ideal conditions in the store, a lot of people are turning to pre-sliced prosciutto di Parma."

Both whole hams and pre-sliced will continue to grow, according to Savello's Gallo. "Pre-sliced is very appealing because it is

convenient, ready-to-go and a consumer doesn't have to worry about the skill of the store employee. The whole ham is better for a different customer and retailer. Typically, the customer is high end, and slicing the whole ham means more attention to the individual, allowing more time to talk and giving the customer the ability to customize his or her order. However, this is very difficult for many markets and requires a lot of training. Simply following a guide isn't enough because each ham needs to be worked out differently to keep shrink under control and satisfy the customer. Also, a store needs to have high sales to keep the prosciutto fresh."

Under ideal conditions, a store has highly trained employees, but because of the high turnover rate of deli personnel, most stores must constantly train new employees in the correct handling of whole legs of prosciutto di Parma. Sliced, packaged prosciutto, on the other hand, requires no training at all. And, provided it is properly rotated, pre-

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sliced packages of prosciutto are less subject to shrink.

Whole prosciutto di Parma hams have an advantage because they can be stored in their vacuum pack for up to six months in refrigeration. After the package is opened, the ham should be sold or discarded within 40 days. Once the ham is sliced, consumers should eat it as soon as possible.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CONSORZIO

In comparison, the shelf life of pre-sliced prosciutto di Parma is just 90 days. By the time the package reaches the store, it could leave as little as 40 days before the ham should be consumed. But the advantage for consumers is that the package can be left unopened in their home refrigerator for several weeks, making it an extremely handy ingredient and snack to have on-hand.

"One of the things we've heard in our research from consumers is they like that they can keep pre-packaged slices in the refrigerator for weeks," notes Jack.

In addition, pre-sliced packages of prosciutto make it a grab-and-go item — perfect for today's busy shoppers who do not want to wait in line at the deli counter.

While some argue sliced-to-order prosciutto is of higher quality than pre-sliced prosciutto, technology is making the pre-sliced product better and better. "The quality gap, even to the most discerning person, is closing somewhat," Jack contends.

For all of these reasons, pre-sliced packages of prosciutto di Parma are out-selling sliced-to-order in the United States. As demand for pre-sliced prosciutto rises, producers are constantly adding more slicing facilities to keep up. But to reach every customer, experts agree a store should carry both pre-sliced and slice-to-order hams. "There is a certain type of consumer who will only buy product that is sliced at the moment," maintains Principe's Minardi. "And you will have a certain type of consumer who will only buy pre-sliced."

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Deli Poultry: Opportunities For Traffic And Profits

Poultry is the strongest protein offering in the deli — and it continues to grow!

BY TRISHA J. WOOLDRIDGE

There are many reasons Americans love poultry. It is low in fat and trans fats, available just about everywhere, palatable to even picky eaters and usually not expensive. Turkey is now the most popular sandwich meat, while rotisserie and fried chicken lead the way in prepared food sales. In short, poultry offers an excellent opportunity for delis to meet and exceed the needs and desires of their customers.

"There are a variety of poultry options available today through the deli," explains Michael Dentico, executive vice-president for La Nova Wings, Inc., Buffalo, NY. "Many are fully cooked, making them quick and easy to reheat."

"There are certain product segments in the deli category that retailers must have in order to compete, such as oven-roasted poultry products, prepared foods, rotisserie chickens and more," claims Chris Bekermeier, deli division brand manager, Butterball LLC, Mt. Olive, NC. "Once retailers have those necessary products in place, they need to differentiate by adding unique offerings to set the deli apart. This can be done through flavor, branding and working with manufacturers, like Butterball, to create account-specific items. Branding is done very well in the lunchmeat section, but there is a lot of opportunity to leverage that in the prepared foods section."

The National Turkey Federation, based in Washington, D.C., claims turkey is both the most nutritionally dense protein and very popular with consumers. "According to the IDDBA [International Dairy, Deli, Bakery Association, Madison, WI] statistics, the combination of turkey breast and turkey is the most consumed protein in the deli," says Sherrie Rosenblatt, spokesperson and vice-president of marketing and communications.

Jen Ehresmann, senior product manager for deli, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Wilmer, MN, notes, "Turkey is the No. 1 protein in



Sandwich Convenience And Excitement

Prepared sandwiches are a sure-fire way to draw in consumers and to differentiate the deli department from the competition.

"First and foremost, on-site sandwich preparation is a great point of differentiation for delis," says Chris Bekermeier, deli division brand manager, Butterball LLC, Mt. Olive, NC. "Consumers are adopting the sandwich as a dominant meal choice. It is no longer just a quick fix for lunch but a healthful alternative that can satisfy hunger morning, noon or night."

"If delis aren't creating their own sandwich programs," he continues, "they need to be encouraging consumer use of sandwiches by continually offering recipes and samples. Also, delis should be encouraging different types and varieties of sandwiches, hot or cold, for breakfast or dinner in addition to lunch."

Jen Ehresmann, senior product manager for deli, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Wilmer, MN, says, "Even though made-to-order sandwich programs are gaining popularity, pre-made sandwiches from the deli still win out." The Counter Intelligence Deli Consumer Study, an independent research survey conducted in 2006-07 by Jennie-O, shows 67 percent of consumers who have bought a sandwich from the deli chose a pre-made and 35.2 percent of those were turkey.

"The trend in sandwiches is 'upscale.' Consumers want high-quality ingredients on their sandwiches," says Stephen McDonnell, founder and CEO, Applegate Farms, Bridgewater, NJ. "This translates into organic and natural deli meat, artisanal bread and more unusual types of condiments. Pesto, chutney and herb-infused oils and mayonnaise are all popular sandwich accompaniments. Paninis are another sandwich trend — they serve as the perfect medium for high-quality and artisanal ingredients." **DB**

the full-service case, topping both ham and roast beef."

Turkey may claim the top spot but that does not mean there are no growth opportunities. "In lunchmeat, turkey is much more dominant than chicken. In prepared foods, chicken is dominant, but there is a lot of opportunity to bring turkey into this category as an alternative to traditional items. Turkey is an opportunity to add a spark to the prepared food category," explains Bekermeier.

"One of the largest growing categories for Jennie-O Turkey Store is rotisserie turkey," Ehresmann shares. Citing the Counter Intelligence Deli Consumer Study, an independent research survey conducted in 2006-07 by Jennie-O, she says, "Currently, one in 10 deli shoppers have purchased a rotisserie turkey breast in the past 30 days — double the number from just a year ago."

Turkey is definitely growing, but chicken still rules the prepared category. Dan Emery, vice president of marketing, Pilgrim's Pride, Pittsburg, TX, notes, "The biggest movers are rotisserie chickens, breaded tenders, wing products, nuggets and filets."

"Items such as chicken wings, chicken tenders and popcorn chicken are favorites in the deli," states LaNova's Denticio. "In addition to the traditional fried chicken offerings, we are seeing more and more pre-cooked proteins. Baked items are of growing interest to the deli operator. These items can be prepared in advance with an extended hold time in the steam table, making it more attractive to offer for the grab-and-go customer."

"A nicely arranged wing or tender platter is great for parties, catering, graduations, birthdays, sporting events, etc. This is a good option to have to offer your customers," he continues.

Chicken products can be used to create a variety of meal options. "Chicken tenders are not only a favorite with children but can also make a tremendous hoagie when placed in a fresh section of French bread," suggests Denticio. "Simply add lettuce, tomato and mayonnaise or a honey mustard spread. Create a masterpiece with grilled veggies and Asiago cheese. The combination of flavors is endless and allows operators to change menu offerings while using ingredients readily available to them within their department or store."

More Options Equal More Sales

The options for poultry in the deli are limited only by the imagination of deli personnel. In general, consumers want variety and are willing to try something new. On the other hand, there are still some clear favorites.

"In deli turkey, consumers continue to choose mainstream flavors, such as oven roasted, hickory smoked and honey roasted. Flavor preference beyond the three primary flavors varies by region," says Ehresmann.

"At Applegate Farms, classic flavors continue to outsell other varieties," relates Stephen McDonnell, founder and CEO, Applegate Farms, Bridgewater, NJ. "For example, roasted and smoked turkey and chicken remain the most popular selling

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items. However, consumers now expect higher quality versions of these classics.”

“Because of globalization, people are starting to seek out flavors from different regions of the world, and with the Baby Boomer sector growing, they are demanding those more intense flavors,” according to Butterball’s Bekermeier.

Pilgrim’s Pride’s Emery notes, “The consumer taste profile is getting more and more into bold flavors, such as buffalo in wings. Asian fusion is also huge. Try sauces with

tenders and wings, such as orange chicken chunk. Fry and sauce at the deli. Try tempura batter or a glaze.”

Consumers also want a variety of sizes, from a single-serve lunch to a family dinner to a platter they can bring to a party.

“Our rotisserie turkey breasts are sized to feed a family of four,” says Ehresmann of Jennie-O. “In our research, in-home studies confirm the turkey breast is ‘right-sized.’ But when available, leftovers are still desirable, with consumers using the turkey on salads

or in soups.”

La Nova’s Dentico observes, “Hot and cold bars are becoming much more popular. This way the shrink is minimal as products can easily move from the cold case to the hot foods case if needed. Selling by the pound as well as selling by the piece count are still options.”

Emery says the clamshell package for rotisserie chicken is still popular but notes some delis substitute to-go bags for clamshells. He suggests making sure there are pre-packaged products in front of the case. “A line can be intimidating, so try to make things more self-service. Consumers with no time want to be able to cruise into the deli, purchase, bring home and dress it up.”

Expanding meat choices to offer more poultry options can increase sales. Rosenblatt of the National Turkey Federation suggests turkey salami and bologna in the case. For prepared foods, there are rotisserie turkey breasts, sliced turkey meals, turkey salad, pulled turkey (similar to pulled chicken or pulled pork) and turkey meat loaf. Ground turkey can be offered as an alternative to any recipe calling for ground beef or pork. Because they are lower in fat, ground turkey offerings appeal to the growing consumer base that wants convenience, healthful options and great taste.

Applegate’s McDonnell agrees, saying, “Salami, ham and pastrami can all be made with poultry. Peppered and herbed versions of these items also work well with poultry.”

Promotional Opportunities

“Delis should consider rolling types of promotions, such as sandwich of the month, flavor of the month or a meal deal that works with turkey and appeals to a broad range of tastes. Whether the promotions are weekly or monthly, it adds excitement to the deli,” Butterball’s Bekermeier suggests.

According to McDonnell, “In regards to organic and natural poultry products, merchandising and marketing need to be educational and tell a story about the source of the food.”

“Think about marrying consumer lifestyles to the product,” suggests Rosenblatt. “Customers want a product that they can get on the table and eat with the family and that doesn’t cost a whole lot of money.”

“My recommendation is for delis not to lose sight of what is important to the deli shopper,” adds Jennie-O’s Ehresmann, “with the top three performance factors being cleanliness, freshness and quality.”

“Remember eye appeal is buy appeal. This can be accomplished in both the hot food as well as the cold food cases,” concludes Dentico.

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Who Ordered Pizza?

Make America's favorite food deliver in your deli.

BY TRISHA J. WOOLDRIDGE

With increasing frequency, delis are in direct competition with restaurants to provide quick and easy meal ideas. One of the most popular foods in America is pizza, from the traditional family-size cheese and pepperoni to single-serving gourmet varieties. By adding pizza offerings to the deli menu, retailers can increase their consumer base and their bottom line.

"Pizza continues to be America's favorite food and universally appeals to all ages and areas of the country," explains Eric Jacobson, commercial director of refrigerated-deli for Schwan's Consumer Brands North America, Inc., Bloomington, MN. "It is one of the most popular foods, and consumers will be drawn to a deli that offers pizza. There is a big void in the line when pizza is not available. Pizza rounds out a deli program and makes for a complete deli service."

A deli department can add pizza in a number of ways. The deli can choose to make its own signature pizza from scratch on location, sell and distribute prepared pizza as a grab-and-go or heated-menu item, or assemble pizza on-site from pre-made components, such as crust, cheese, sauce and toppings. The most appropriate implementation differs by deli.

Some delis will not have the staff or equipment, for example, to make their own pizza from scratch. Others may want full control of their end product from the most basic ingredients to the style of baking. Carrying pizza may be a great addition and profit to a deli, but it must be executed properly based on what a deli wants and is able to do.

Before committing to a pizza program, careful planning is important. In terms of pizza selections, retailers need to decide what they want to offer and to what extent. Keep in mind that analysis of capabilities, such as equipment, space and staff, is essential.

Space And Equipment

Bobby Lappas, owner of New York Deli and Pizza Restaurant, Williamsburg, VA, offers a full menu with pizza made from scratch. He points out the importance of evaluating whether or not a deli can control



the quality if it adds another component: "When you add more stuff, you need more help." He contends the most effective execution would be to coordinate the preparation stations and line so everything is within arm's length. "The fridge should be near where both the deli items and pizza are being made. You should split them up but have them close enough. The line needs to be really planned out in case there are a lot of people and you are short staffed so you

can push out both products."

If a deli wants to make its own pizza, it would need a proper mixer, big enough for the dough, he adds. He also suggests a brick oven because pizza-baking temperature should be at least 500° Fahrenheit.

"Regarding equipment or facilities needed, it depends on the type of pizza program a deli wants to offer," Jacobson relates. "A take-and-bake pizza program requires a refrigerated display case. There are several

Pizza Program Options

When a deli decides to include a pizza program, there are three main routes they can go. They can make their own pizza from scratch, assemble a pizza from pre-made components and bake in the store or use pre-packaged products. Here is a glance at some of the pros and cons of each:

MADE FROM SCRATCH	
PROS Full control of the ingredients and procedure Signature creations and menu options Fresh-made flavor and reputation Appeal to customers who desire a restaurant-like atmosphere Ability to produce made-to-order services as well as grab-and-go or a la carte services	CONS Potential problems in consistency with a small or untrained staff Potential need for more equipment or layout changes Time and effort for mixing and baking. Potential shrink of unpurchased, baked pizzas Limited to no opportunity for bake-at-home sales
ASSEMBLING WITH COMPONENTS	
PROS Consistency in component quality Limited need for new or extra equipment Faster and simpler than making from scratch Maintain the "fresh-baked" taste Ability to produce made-to-order services as well as grab-and-go or a la carte services	CONS Dependency on another companies quality Potential need for more equipment Potential shrink of unpurchased, baked pizzas Limited to no opportunity for bake-at-home sales
PREPACKAGED PRODUCTS	
PROS Consistent brand quality Appeal to brand loyalty and reputation Limited-to-no new equipment requirement Lowered shrink potential Opportunity for grab-and-go, a la carte and bake-at-home sales	CONS Complete dependency on outside company quality Limited-to-no made-to-order capabilities Limited-to-no signature product capabilities Menu limited to available packaged products

options with a hot pizza program, such as smaller pizza ovens that cook four or five 6- or 7-inch pizzas, large convection ovens that cook 12 to 15 pizzas at once, Impinger conveyor ovens used by pizzerias or brick ovens that cook the pizzas Italian style."

How the pizza will be served is another area of concern. Some delis just offer take-and-bake pizzas; however, if a deli will be serving hot pizza, there are additional considerations. Will the deli prepare pizzas to order? Will it serve individual pizzas or pizza by the slice?

"Hot programs that offer pizza by the slice are increasingly popular," according to Alan Hamer, vice-president of sales and

marketing for Stefano Foods, Charlotte, NC. "Given the hot-shelf life of pizza, quality and subsequent shrink are a concern."

"Some delis just keep their pizza in a sanitary area and cut the slices upon request, then warm the slices," notes John Khoury, president of Custom Foods, Inc., Desoto, KS. "Others keep pizza warm in a heat-and humidity-controlled warmer."

Consumer Considerations

Once it has analyzed its physical limitations and capabilities, a deli should consider its customer base. What types of pizza products will sell? What will it do to stand out from the competition?

"As pizza is an incredibly competitive category, given home delivery, frozen foods and restaurants, delis must offer a unique advantage," Hamer explains. "Depending on convenience or the impulse shopper is not enough. Success seems to have come at both ends of the value spectrum — with 16-inch products at low prices and with smaller products featuring gourmet formulations and ample toppings."

According to Schwan's Jacobson, "One size does not fit all. When developing a pizza program, deli operators should consider their consumer base. For example, there are families who prefer the traditional 16-inch deli pizza programs with cheese, pepperoni and deluxe varieties, and there are more culinary sophisticated consumers who want pizzas with exotic cheeses and toppings."

Some delis go further and offer a variety of pizza-related products and add-ons, such as stromboli, calzones and breadsticks.

Jon Newsom, national sales manager for Champion Foods, LLC, of New Boston, MI, describes his company's patented half-pizza, half-breadstick product: "People are used to buying them [pizza and breadsticks] together. We offer it in one package. Its size and unique nature has mass appeal."

Figuring out what a deli needs for a successful pizza program doesn't have to be tackled alone, either. "Deli operators should consider their product options and talk with suppliers because they have significant data, category expertise and can advise operators about a pizza program," Jacobson recommends. "They can benefit a great deal by partnering with a pizza supplier who has the product knowledge and understands how to match a pizza program with consumer demographics."

"When we work with a customer, we ask what they are looking for — thick crust, thin crust or a crispy pizza, for example," Khoury explains. "Then we work to formulate the dough to meet what they want. We're experienced in pizza dough, so we can formulate for pretty much everything. Everything we do is private label, so we can formulate a product specific to your deli."

Ingredients And Products For Success

Whether a deli is making its own pizzas, assembling them or using pre-packaged options, quality choices at all levels are important.

"Use grade-A products," advises Lappas of New York Deli and Pizza. The freshest ingredients and highest quality products go a long way and Lappas considers them one of the keys to the success of his business. Consistent quality is also essential, he stresses.

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Not all delis have the staff or ability to make pizzas from scratch and ensure consistent quality. Delis that still want a fresh-made product can assemble and bake a pizza in store.

Custom Foods manufactures frozen dough products for chain restaurants, supermarkets and wholesale distributors. "The deli is getting a pre-weighed dough ball, the same as if it were made from scratch," Khoury explains. "You thaw it overnight under refrigeration. Once it is thawed out, it's the same as if you were making your own scratch formula." This creates a number of benefits for delis. "Stores don't have to worry about storing and scaling raw ingredients, mixing the dough, weighing the dough pieces and maintaining consistency in every batch. Custom Foods has very tight controls on the scaling of ingredients, temperature controls in manufacturing and scaling weights. We quality-control everything and back samples from each batch. This ensures that when the customer breaks open a box of our product, it's always right."

For delis using prepackaged products, several options that require little to no equipment adjustments are available. Packaged products also offer the added convenience of lower shrink and the benefit of brand recog-

nition and loyalty.

"There are a variety of pizza options for delis, ranging from traditional, family-oriented 16-inch size to a smaller, more upscale pizza," explains Schwan's Jacobson. "Also, there are a variety of branded options such as the Red Baron Hot Pizza. It's very portable and convenient for consumers because the product is prepared by the deli, available in individual packaging and ready to grab-and-go. The product is designed to go from freezer to oven for operator ease.

"Inventory shrink is controllable because the retailer can prepare the individually packaged pizzas as they need them," he continues, "and quality control is increased due to the fact that Red Baron personal pizzas are better maintained under deli heat lamps than a whole pizza that sits there until all of the individual slices are sold."

Champion Foods' pizza products come "pre-garnished in an attractive package with a large window." The packaging also helps control shrink. A store can take out more pizzas for high-traffic times, such as week-ends, and fewer during quiet hours. The products also fulfill a dual purpose. They can be purchased by customers to be taken and cooked at home or, explains Newsom, "The store can bake it up and sell it by the slice. It's

designed for a home oven, so it works easily with existing deli equipment."

Tips For Managing An Effective Pizza Program

Once a deli pizza program is in place, there's always room to make it better. "Pizza in the deli is not a new concept," Jacobson says, "but frequently it's time for delis to refresh their pizza offering to increase traffic and help position their deli as a destination area for consumers."

Cross-merchandising can draw customer attention and add more sales to a pizza program. Newsom suggests offering a 2-liter bottle of soda, breadsticks or a salad with pizza. "Anytime you can bundle, it creates more interest."

"A deli pizza operation should resemble more of a foodservice operation and offer products that are unique from what is offered in the frozen section but with brands that consumers know and trust," Jacobson recommends.

"The greatest success we found was when stores created a specific section, one dedicated section for pizza," Newsom continues. "Create a destination in the deli so people are trained to go back to the deli for pizza."

DB

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Specialty Blue Cheese

By Karen Silverston

Growth of the blue cheese category is one of the most important trends in specialty cheese.

"In the search for more differentiated and intense flavors, blue cheese stands out as the most flavorful, piquant cheese variety. It's absolutely mandatory that a cheese section or a cheese course include blue cheese," according to Fermo Jaeckle, CEO, Roth Käse USA, Ltd., Monroe, WI, which produces Buttermilk Blue, Buttermilk Bleu Affinée and MezzaLuna Gorgonzola.

"After doubling in sales every year since 2001, we slowed our growth to 20 percent because we didn't want to grow faster than we could train our cheesemakers," says Jeff Jirik, cheesemaker and president of Faribault Dairy Company, Inc., a Faribault, MN-based maker of Amablu, St. Pete's Select and Amablu Gorgonzola.

Trade shows have propelled blue cheese into the limelight, drawing media and chef attention. A line of six artisan blue cheeses emerged as the Outstanding Product Line at the NASFT 2006 Fancy Food Show in New York, NY. Produced by Rogue Creamery, Central Point, OR, each blue is distinctive, differentiated by its flavor profile and connection to a place.

Rogue's Smokey Blue was featured in

the Trends and Innovations showcase of 100 innovative foodservice and catering products at SIAL 2006 held in Paris, France.

Growing consumer knowledge and sophistication bode well for specialty blues.

Retailers can increase sales by merchandising blue cheese well and educating consumers about trendy foodservice and restaurant uses that easily translate to home meals and entertaining.

Blues should be merchandised as a group because they require similar humidity and temperature.

"Merchandising blue-veined cheeses as a category also gives consumers all their options in one place," notes Jamie Wichlacz, marketing manager for BelGioioso Cheese, Denmark, WI, maker of CreamyGorg and Crumbly Gorgonzola.

"Within the blue cheese section, distinguish better-known and world-class blues, such as Roquefort and Stilton," advises

Emmanuelle Hofer Louis, marketing director for Anco Fine Foods, Fairfield, NJ. "Put what you want to focus on at eye level and the basics at the bottom in the well or shelf. Stress region of origin on signage and give basic information — the type of milk, taste profile and texture and usage or pairing information."

"We encourage retailers who can buy in bulk and cut and wrap the cheese themselves to capitalize on presentation by using vertical displays where cheeses are stacked and where the wedges of cheese point to the sky," Roth Käse's Jaeckle says. "So much buying is still impulse. It's the dramatic display of the product that usually captures the eye and then gets the sale."

According to Mikael Horsboll, vice president of marketing for Arla Foods, Inc., Basking Ridge, NJ, retailers need to think beyond the cheese department. "We see extremely successful dual merchandising of blue cheese next to steaks or burger patties and crumbles in refrigerated salad departments."

"Cross-merchandise blue cheese with pears," recommends Byron Hanson, director of deli and foodservice operations for Lunds and Byerly's, Lund Food Holdings, Inc., Edina, MN. "One enhances sales of the other. You have a nice solution for a salad and an opportunity for recipes and signage."

He reminds other retailers not to forget special occasions. "Holidays need a dominant 'Entertaining with Cheese' display — and should include blue cheese."

Trends

Convenience is essential, even for those customers interested in specialty cheeses. Crumbles are a key product and retailers need to offer them in a selection of brands and packaging options. "Over the last five years, we have seen a consistent increase in sales of pre-crumbled BelGioioso Crumbly Gorgonzola," Wichlacz says.

Slices are a unique Rosenborg format. "Blue is difficult to slice as it tends to crumble because of the nature of the cheese," Horsboll explains. "The main uses are on burgers, steaks and sandwiches."

"On the artisanal front, the trend seems to be differentiation among the blues," Jaeckle says. "At one point, it was primarily Danish



PHOTO COURTESY OF BELGIOIOSO CHEESE

Increasingly sophisticated cheese consumers are spurring growth in blue cheese sales.

style. Today, we're seeing dozens of different varieties from many parts of the world. Australia has a famous blue cheese and the United States is producing some of the best blue cheeses found anywhere."

RETAILERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECOMMEND WINE, BEER AND NON-ALCOHOL OPTIONS TO MATCH WITH ANY CHEESE. DESSERT WINES ARE GAINING IN POPULARITY, AND SWEET WINES OFTEN GO WELL WITH BLUE CHEESES.

American artisan blue cheese is acknowledged as world class. The 2007 World Cheese Awards in London, England, recognized Salemville Gorgonzola, marketed by DCI Cheese Co., Richfield, WI; Ader Käse, a German-style blue from Seymour, WI-based Seymour Dairy Products, Inc.; Rogue Creamery Oregon Blue Vein, produced for 50 years in Oregon and inspired by Roquefort; and Rogue Creamery Crater Lake Blue, a robust cheese with green blue veins made from a contemporary blend of molds.

Beverage Pairings

Retailers should be able to recommend wine, beer and non-alcohol options to match with any cheese. Dessert wines are gaining in popularity, and sweet wines often go well with blue cheeses.

"Port, classic with Stilton, is great with blue cheese," notes Katia Boulay, marketing manager for Lactalis USA, New York, NY, "but pairings are subjective and different for each person."

Classic sweet wine pairings include Sauternes with Roquefort and Bleu d'Auvergne, and Banyuls or Jurançon with Fourme d'Ambert. The fortified wines, Rivesaltes and Pineau des Charentes, also pair well with blues.

"Valdeón and Cabrales are intense and complex. Pair them with Pedro Ximénez, an intensely sweet, dark, dessert sherry," recommends Mercedes Lamamié, marketing director, Foods From Spain, New York, NY.

"A Moscato d'Asti such as Michele Chiarlo Nivole pairs beautifully with blue cheese because it is sweet, but not cloyingly sweet, with a little effervescence that balances the fat level of the cheese," according to Keith Ellis, culinary and cheese consultant and co-owner of Cooks, Pots & Tabletops,

Eugene, OR. "Crisp sauvignon blanc and drier Gewürztraminers are unusual pairings but work well because their acidity cuts through the full-fat mouthfeel of a blue. Dark beer's cocoa, chocolate and tobacco-y flavors balance well with blue cheese."

"Bold, robust red wines pair well with Gorgonzola," advises BelGioioso's Wichlacz.

"We recommend sparkling rouge, medium to full-bodied reds and dessert wines like Sauternes for Montagnolo, our soft-ripened, triple-cream blue from Bavaria. If you prefer

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Wine is a classic beverage pairing for blue cheese.

white wine, try one rich in bouquet such as Gewürztraminer," says Renata Martin, marketing manager for Champignon North America, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

"We refer people to Laura Werlin's and Max McCalman's books for pairing recommendations," Faribault's Jirik says. "Local beers go well, and we love to pair blue

cheese with pear juice and strawberry juice."

Half Sanbitter, half San Pellegrino is a sophisticated yet non-alcoholic pairing for robust blues.

**FOOD PAIRINGS
INCLUDE FRESH,
DRIED OR GRILLED
FRUIT, TOASTED
NUTS, FRESH OR
BITTER GREENS,
CELERY, RADISHES,
ROASTED ROOT
VEGETABLES AND
HONEY.**

Food Pairings

Chefs are using blue cheese in every course — from appetizer to dessert. They melt it on meat, chicken, fish and pizza and add it to pasta sauces, risottos and potato gratins. They tone down assertive blue by blending it with mascarpone, crème fraiche or unsalted butter.

Food pairings include fresh, dried or grilled fruit, toasted nuts, fresh or bitter greens, celery, radishes, roasted root vegetables and honey.

"An unusual pairing is blue cheese with honey," notes Byerly's Hanson. "The tang of the blue cheese and the sweetness of the honey are spectacular."

"As with wine, some honeys are more specific and some are versatile," says Brad Dubé, sales manager for Forever Cheese, Long Island City, NY. "Orange blossom honey from Spain is very flexible. You can use it with any blue cheese. It's great with Valdeón. Chestnut honey is more complex, deeper, and has a smokiness. Drizzle honey on a bigger piece and let people go at that with a knife, or use a small ramekin of honey alongside the cheese and let each guest or patron drizzle his or her own. A caterer would pre-plate it. Lemon honey is subtle and beautiful for presentation with whole walnuts. Hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds and caramelized nuts pair beautifully with blue. Fig almond and date walnut cakes are great with blue, too."

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BINGHAM HILL

Blue cheese pairs well with dried fruits and nuts.

Recipes That Sell

Demonstrate honey-drizzled blue cheese-stuffed dates or blue cheese and roasted butternut squash quesadillas to promote blue cheese. Manufacturers provide these five signature recipes:

1. BLT Salad with Maytag Blue Cheese
2. Pear and Walnut Pancakes with Rosenborg Extra Creamy Danish Blue Cheese
3. Rogue Creamery Smokey Blue Chicken Salad in Parmesan Cups
4. Smoked Turkey Cobb Sandwich with Black River Blue Cheese Mayo
5. Stilton Twists

Sell More Cheese

"Specialty blue cheese is not going to sell itself," according to Byerly's Hanson. "To create sales, you need knowledgeable staff to explain to the customer why these cheeses are special and may cost over \$15 a pound."

1. Educate staff. "Our retail store cheesemongers hold weekly educational sessions. Each talks about an assigned cheese, the cheesemaker, the style, pairings and the best use, whether it's as an ingredient for a recipe, topped on salad, or a blue butter on steak, as well as a standalone," explains David Gremmels, president, Rogue Creamery.

"Point out main differences between cheese types and the brands," advises Arla's Horsboll. "Danish blue is a Protected Geographical Indication [PGI]. Its quality is attributed to a certain recipe produced only in Denmark. Within the brand, our blues range from mild to sharply piquant on our taste strength scale. We make our crumbles from wheels of our prime Danish blue cheese."

2. Educate consumers. "Use blue cheese in cooking classes and give recipes. Help people preparing a cheese board choose a blue cheese to include," Anco's Hofer Louis recommends.

3. Use the types of blues, brands and regions as a marketing tool and guide consumers through the category.

4. Show consumers newly arrived cheeses and trendy accompaniments.

5. Offer tastes, with fresh pears, dried fruit or a drizzle of honey.

Demonstrate signature recipes and bundle the non-perishable ingredients for sale.

6. Invite cheesemakers into the store. "We come out and support our

retailers with demos," Faribault's Jirik relates. "I explain how we make our cheese and age it in our sandstone caves, emphasizing the development of complex flavors." **DB**

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French Cheese At Its Best

By Karen Silverston

Classic French cheeses are the world benchmark. They are the vocabulary through which we understand nearly all cheese. Although it is classic, the category is not only growing significantly but also continuously evolving.

Soft-bloomy and washed-rind cheeses epitomize Normandy. Rocky, drizzly seacoast, salty marshes and cider orchards border meadows and lush pastures. The famous milk of the Normande breed of cattle reflects the unique grasses.

Soft-ripened cheeses originated in gentle Ile de France, where rivers separate rolling, wooded hills from farms, and in Champagne Ardenne, which is known more for its vineyards and forests than its tidy farms.

Washed-rind techniques were used by seventh-century Benedictine monks in Alsace. Grapes were thriving in Alsace long before viticulture became serious under the Romans.

Pressed, cooked mountain cheeses — such as wheels of Comté made from 500 liters of milk — represent farmers cooperating since the 11th century in the Jura Mountains. The Montbéliarde milk, artisan process, spruce boards on which the cheese slowly ages, and the airflow in the aging

chamber are all contributors to the character of Comté.

Pressed uncooked cheeses originated in

Pasteurized and raw milk versions of classic French cheeses excite American palates.

Jura, Savoy, Auvergne and Pyrénées. Morbier was made hundreds of years ago when winter in Jura prevented milk delivery to Comté fruitières. Its thin black line of ash is imitated in many modern cheeses.

Auvergne's drum-shaped cheeses originated 2,000 years ago in the Cantal Mountains. Mountain ranges converge in green Auvergne, the heart of Europe's largest volcanic system. Hot springs, lakes, rivers, and forests abound, and the Châtaigneraie chestnut grove occupies 500,000 acres.

Blue-veined cheeses all benefit from Roquefort's place of honor. Each legendary sheep's milk blue, aged a minimum of three months, ripens for at least 14 days in cool, humid Combalou caves, first mentioned in

1070. Sheep prevail in Midi-Pyrénées, with its limestone plateaus, deep green gorges and cascades.

Goat cheeses come from the heart of France: Poitou and Center. Burgundy, Perigord, Provence, Savoy and Pyrénées produce adored classics, too.

Market Revolution

"We are among the largest foreign suppliers of specialty cheese to the United States, and the United States is our seventh largest market for cheese. It is so strategic we decided to launch a campaign in the U.S. market," says Eric Duchene, head of the New York, NY-based French Trade Office for French food and wine exports to the United States.

"Ten years ago, we sold less than 8,000 tons, and in 2006, we sold 22,000 tons. It's a revealing increase — the biggest in all of France's markets in the world. The increase in U.S. producers is good for us, too. We see the sophistication of the U.S. market increasing, and it is not concentrated only in Manhattan, Boston and San Francisco — it's a major trend. It's not only the small specialist shop or the intermediate market — Whole Foods [based in Austin, TX] has historically carried cheese. Supermarkets are entering this business. All the French producers have someone as close as possible to the market to help give buyers confidence," adds Duchene.

The Cheeses of France campaign is building awareness via *Parlez Vous Fromage?* sampling events. Participants include Shop Rite, Kings and Pathmark stores in New York and New Jersey, Kroger stores in Virginia and North Carolina, Harris Teeter stores in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, and A&P stores across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. "We're actively working with other chains on scheduling," says Sue Till, marketing director for Swardlick Marketing Group, Portland, ME.

Cheese Evolution

"Producing fresh and soft cheeses — Brie, goat cheeses, the ones you don't age — from raw milk has challenges that aged cheeses, in particular pressed cooked cheeses, don't have," notes Emmanuelle Hofer Louis, director of marketing for Anco



French cheeses set the standards by which all cheeses are judged.

PHOTO COURTESY OF COMTE CHEESE ASSOCIATION

Fine Cheese, based in Fairfield, NJ.

"The production of raw milk fresh and soft cheeses in France is more limited nowadays than it used to be. Even some AOC [Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée] organizations have softened their rules by allowing pasteurized products to have the protected designation as long as they comply with all other characteristics," explains Hofer Louis. "That allows more people — in France and abroad — to have access to those traditional cheeses. Authenticity also comes with pasteurization — the careful respect of traditional animal feed, age-old cheesemaking recipes as well as traditional aging processes, along with advanced milk pasteurization techniques, make the cheese look and taste authentic with even more regularity."

"The trend of producing cheese from pasteurized milk isn't limited to French cheese for the U.S. market. It's happening for cheese destined for French, European Union and other markets. It is also being done with cheese produced in the United States and Canada," according to Tom Toto, president of Advantage International Foods Corporation, West Caldwell, NJ.

"There are AOCs where the type of milk is specified and others where it is not. Some think, 'It is AOC so it has to be raw milk,' but, not all AOCs require raw milk," explains Pascal Vaydie, import sales director for Lactalis USA, New York, NY.

"The way AOCs function is not top-down. The requirements come from the people producing the product," explains Jean-Louis Carbonnier, president of Carbonnier Communications, New York, NY, which represents the Comté Cheese Association based in Poligny, France. They have to agree and map out what they want to do. They submit a request to the minister of agriculture. The decision is ratified by the government and then becomes law."

Many cheeses are produced by only one farm or company. These recipes and AOC rules can change. While some AOCs are moving toward pasteurization, Morbier is moving toward raw milk.

"People are polarized about pasteurized and raw milk. I believe there is a middle ground. As far as flavor, on some types it makes a huge difference and on some types it doesn't. On the goat cheeses, it doesn't seem to have as much bearing. On the soft ripened, it makes a big difference," says François Kerautret, executive vice president, Auburn, WA-based Peterson Company, a specialty food importer and distributor.

Available Here: A Sampling

"People still want to buy the classics. They have history," says Toto.

Many classics made from raw milk and enjoyed in France have soul mates made from pasteurized milk that comply with

**"PEOPLE ARE
POLARIZED ABOUT
PASTEURIZED AND
RAW MILK. I BELIEVE
THERE IS A MIDDLE
GROUND."**

— *Francois Kerautret*
Peterson Company

United States regulations and are available here.

Fromage de Meaux is the pasteurized version of Brie de Meaux made by soft

ripened cheese specialist Robert Rouzaire. "It's the exception to the category. Where most Brie is mild, this is stronger, fruitier and much more like what a raw milk Brie would taste like," says David Grotenstein, general manager of Union Market, Brooklyn, NY.

Le Chatelain Brie was designed to have the same appeal as Le Chatelain Camembert, a pasteurized cheese with the greater aroma and more pronounced flavor associated with raw milk.

"France has two kinds of Camembert: the pasteurized one for everyday and the AOC raw milk one for entertaining. The pasteurized version is milder and more consistent in its taste profile than the AOC one, which makes it more suitable for daily consumption," says Anco's Hofer Louis.

Chaource AOC, known in Champagne since the 14th century, is so silky it is often mistaken for a double or triple cream, but its fat measure, 50 percent in dry matter, makes it single cream. "Chaource at its peak is a spectacular soft-ripened cheese," says Grotenstein.

"In Europe, single cream is more popular, and triple cream is more popular in the U.S.," says Kerautret.

Brillat Savarin was created in Normandy in the 1930's. "Henri Androuet named it for

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CHEESE FROM FRANCE

The French cheese category, though classic, is growing and evolving.

writer Jean Anthelme Brillat Savarin, who said, 'You are what you eat.' It was the first triple cream and it was created to go with Champagne — it's rich, and creamy and luscious, but almost fluffy on the palate," says Union Market's Grotenstein.

"Pont-l'Évêque is a classic example of AOC cheese authorized in pasteurized and raw milk, and is one of the most popular cheeses in France," notes Anco's Hofer Louis. It has a soft body, generous aroma, and whitish-orange washed or brushed rind. It was known in the 1200's in Normandy as Angelot Square.

"It's a quintessential washed rind that tells you all about the gooey, stinky, lovely, Brevibacterium linens-drenched, hearty washed-rind category," adds Grotenstein.

Epoisses AOC washed with Marc de Bourgogne, Soumaintrain washed with brine and Affidélité washed with Chablis are from Burgundy; Munster AOC and Kirsch-washed Grès des Vosges come from Alsace.

"Edel de Cléron, Fromage des Clarines and Ecorce de Sapin are made by Jean Perrin in response to consumer demand for Mont d'Or/Vacherin du Haut-Doubs," notes Peterson's Kerautret. Bois Blond aims at the same market. In France, people wait all year for Mont d'Or/Vacherin du Haut-Doubs AOC, a raw-milk winter cheese Franche Comté farmers invented centuries ago for themselves and named for the highest peak in Doubs. It is lightly pressed, not cooked but ripened, encircled in spruce bark for support and aged 21 days on spruce boards. While aging, it is turned and rubbed with salt water and fitted into its spruce box.

Timanoix is a cow's milk cheese washed with walnut liqueur from the Abbey of Timadeuc and based on a recipe from the Abbey of Echourgnac.

Vache de Chalais is a cow's milk cheese made in Rhone-Alps and resembling Banon. Banon AOC is made only from raw goat's milk, aged five to 10 days, then protected in raffia-tied chestnut leaves for 10 or more days' aging. It may be dipped in eau de vie before it is wrapped. Saint Marcellin from Rhone-Alps, slightly ripened, develops a thin, delicate rind and creamy interior.

Fleur de Maquis, a Corsican sheep milk cheese similar to Brin d'Amour, is herb encrusted. "Rosemary, juniper berry, a little dried pepper — you'll taste both the milk and the seasoning quite distinctly. Great when it's young but ages beautifully," according to Grotenstein.

Ossau-Iraty AOC from Pyrénées is a pressed, uncooked mountain cheese made from milk of Manech sheep in Pays Basque and from milk of Basco-Béarnaise sheep in Béarn.

Bleu d'Auvergne and Fourme d'Ambert, cow's milk blues from Auvergne, differ distinctly in texture, body and taste. "They're both beautifully balanced and amazingly well-priced," explains Grotenstein. Both of these cheeses are available in the United States in legally compliant raw-milk and pasteurized-milk versions.

"If you are going to have a world class cheese case, you need some classical aged goat cheese," says Advantage's Toto. Some manufacturers make raw milk and pasteurized versions. The originals are raw milk,

named for their towns. Producers name their pasteurized versions.

Rond Cendre is the pasteurized version

"IF YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE A WORLD CLASS CHEESE CASE, YOU NEED SOME CLASSICAL AGED GOAT CHEESES."

— Tom Toto
Advantage International Foods Corporation

of Selles-sur-Cher AOC, a round goat cheese coated with ash. "If people are unfamiliar with goat cheese, it's a good Loire valley chèvre to start with. When young, it's fresh and tangy, has a nice saltiness and is sometimes a little lemony. I love the ash and think the presentation is terrific," says Grotenstein.

Sainte Maure is a pasteurized version of Sainte-Maure de Touraine, a log with a wheat straw through the center.

Pointe de Bique (bique means goat) is a pasteurized version of Pouligny-Saint-Pierre, the tall pyramid, never ashed.

Pyramide and Tradition du Berry are pasteurized versions of Valençay, the truncated pyramid.

Chabichou du Poitou AOC is cylindrical, made in a mold inlaid with the initials "CdP." "As Chabichou and Crottin age, you can try to keep them moist or you can let them dry. They can be grated if you don't eat them in time," notes Kerautret.

"Cheeses have been around for centuries but the awareness here is relatively new. The consumer here may not know that an Edel de Cléron is modeled after Mont d'Or/Vacherin du Haut Doubs — they may not even know what Mont d'Or is. This is the job of the retailer — to inform — and to explain why you carry the cheese, and always in a celebratory way," says Grotenstein.

"As we cannot improve what the producer and affineur have done, the goal is to sell the cheeses as soon as possible. The best way to preserve a cheese is to eat it," adds Kerautret.

DB

Organic Growth In Deli

Although organics is still an emerging segment in the deli department, retailers are exploring the growing options in this promising category.

BY LISA WHITE

When it comes to its organic offerings, many would say Hannaford Brothers Company, a Portland, ME-based supermarket chain with approximately 155 stores in the Northeast, is on the cutting edge. It's one of the first operations of its kind to carry the U.S. government's Certified Organic Retailer designation, joining The Kroger Company, based in Cincinnati, OH, and Lund Food Holdings, Inc., based in Minneapolis, MN.

Organic foods require U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) certification that they are free of hormones and pesticides; Certified Organic Retailers need to comply with strict handling procedures. For example, in the delis, counters and equipment are set aside for handling unprocessed meats. In addition, organic meats and cheeses cannot use the same slicer or be in contact with non-organic deli products.

Stores also must document where food came from, how it was grown and the distribution path from the producer to the shelves. Additionally, certified retailers voluntarily participate in on-site inspections by a USDA-approved third party.

The Fox News Channel, based in New York City, NY, reports that, to comply with the certification requirements, Hannaford revamped all its stores and trained its staff for about four months. To maintain its Certified Organic Retailer designation, chains of this size pay approximately \$500,000 each year for annual inspections. The fee does not cover new equipment, employee training or store reorganizations.

Due to the growth in the organics segment, an increasing number of retailers are considering becoming certified, Fox News reports. Other supermarkets, including Shaw's Supermarkets, Inc., based in East Bridgewater, MA, and The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company, based in Quincy, MA, are closely watching Hannaford's move into organics.

According to the Organic Trade Association (OTA), Greenfield, MA, the U.S. organic industry grew 17 percent overall to reach



Pricing Issues

Experts say higher prices in the organics segment have not been a sales deterrent in deli departments because consumers will generally pay between 20 and 30 percent more for organic products, according to Rod Harris, founder and owner of Harry's Fresh Foods, Portland, OR. "Retailers have to bear in mind the value threshold of customers in terms of pricing. We're seeing higher-value stores looking for organic but not seeing interest in organic for lower-value retailers."

The most significant development relating to organic meat sales is the willingness of consumers to pay a premium price for it. "Consumers are becoming more educated about food and the impact of their food choices," says Stephen McDonnell, CEO of Applegate Farms, Bridgewater, NJ. "They understand that what they eat has an effect on more than just their health. They know that their food choices also have environmental, social and economic costs associated with them and that these hidden costs are not reflected in the price at the checkout counter."

Anthony DiPietro, vice president and import manager of George E. DeLallo Co., Inc., Jeannette, PA, says organic olives are not price sensitive. "When it comes to pricing, retailers need to make a fair markup but still be confident they can sell the item. Organic consumers will make the decision to buy an organic product and dedicate themselves to purchasing it as long as it is not outlandishly priced."

This higher pricing also should be a reflection on the quality. Phillip S. Meldrum, president of FoodMatch, Inc., New York City, NY, believes organic meat tastes better and is worth the premium price. "Yes, organics are priced higher, but if the quality and taste are palpable, consumers will be all over it. If not, then it's a different story." **DB**

\$14.6 billion in consumer sales in 2005. Organic foods, still by far the largest and most clearly defined part of the organic industry, grew 16.2 percent in 2005, and accounted for \$13.8 billion in consumer sales.

U.S. retail sales of organic meat totaled \$256 million in 2005, growing to \$330 million in 2006, according to OTA. Of these figures, sausages and deli meat accounted for \$30 million in 2005, and \$37.5 million in 2006, growing at a rate of 25 percent.

Trends in Deli

Stephen McDonnell, CEO of Bridgewater, NJ-based Applegate Farms, says health concerns, increased awareness of additives, preservatives, pesticides, antibiotics and hormones as well as quality are driving consumers to purchase organic products.

"The current interest in organic food is not a trend but an evolutionary stage in consumer buying habits," he explains. "Consumers are becoming more educated and interested in the source of their food and now have a better understanding about the implications of their food choices. They also are realizing that how food is grown has a direct impact on the environment and the economy. The raising of animals for food goes a step further by raising moral and ethical questions."

The Hartman Group, Inc., a Bellevue, WA-based market research firm, recently reported lifestyle, rather than demographics,

is now driving purchases by organic consumers. "In other words, the organic customer is one who has decided to adopt a healthful lifestyle, and that person can potentially be a member of any demographic group," McDonnell says.

Although organic deli products comprise a small part of the overall segment, the numbers are still impressive. Eric Newman, vice president of sales for Organic Valley Family of Farms, LaFarge, WI, says organic dairy products are experiencing 22 percent growth. "A lot of the work has been done to correct organic products, so they fit the needs of deli departments."

One recent innovation is the development of a new lactic acid culture — using celery juice — that naturally produces nitrates for curing meat. "This is a deli meat revolution," Newman proclaims. "Previously, organic ham was uncured. It didn't have a good color and tasted like a smoked product. This new, certified organic celery powder provides curing for organic meats and simultaneously enhances the product quality and color."

Even though organic food growth is more prevalent in the grocery aisle and produce department, there is strong interest in the deli section. Phillip S. Meldrum, president of FoodMatch, Inc., New York City, NY, observes increased interest in organics and more support from consumers. "For the organics segment to grow, consumers need



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRY'S FRESH FOODS

to know the idea of organic and what it stands for, but the quality also has to be there."

The main challenge for many organic food suppliers is the limited number of certified growers. Still, Meldrum says more growers are converting to organic farming, and this will broaden the selection of products. "In the end, we're limited to what farmers are doing," he explains.

Imports are a good example of this. Since Europe doesn't require certification for its organic products, many organic olive growers overseas are not bothering to go through the lengthy and costly certification process required for U.S. organic products. "When the new NOP [National Organic Program] regulations were instituted, we paid the farmers' costs or shared them. But in the end, European growers could sell what they grew in Europe without getting certified through the U.S. NOP process. They don't want to go through the extra steps. This has been a challenge," Meldrum says.

Rod Harris, founder and owner of Harry's Fresh Foods, Portland, OR, says the industry has a way to go in terms of supply and price on organic ingredients. Harry's, which has been organic certified for three years, offers a line of seven organic side dishes. "I'm seeing a lot of interest and suspicion in the same breath," Harris says. "Many retailers are concerned with the value difference, so there are some pricing hardships. Dairy got it right. That segment is very value-price oriented."

Merchandising Challenges

Merchandising issues come into play when retailers seek to intermingle organic items with traditional products.

"It's a particular challenge merchandising organics in the deli around the NOP legislation," according to Meldrum. "Retailers cannot put organic olives and regular olives in the same bar."

Working around this, many stores are allocating their efforts and resources to create separate organic sections. "The more successful stores are putting together large

amounts of organic products in their displays. Consequently, those that devote the space to these products are getting results," he continues.

Harry's Harris also is seeing the incorporation of organic products with traditional items. "This has been the biggest change in the last couple of years. Consumers are smart enough to find organics amongst other deli products."

For added visibility, retailers are relying on signage, advertising and promotions to drive their customers to these items. "If a store is going to get in the game, it needs a good selection and variety of organic items," recommends Harris. "It is important for value-minded retailers to offer these items because their consumers want it."

Organic suppliers have made more of an effort to address needs specific to the deli. For example, Organic Valley had its sliced cheeses in full-color packaging that was more suited for the dairy aisle. "Delis asked us to provide the line in clear film with a label to simulate other deli department cheese packaging. We redesigned this packaging to address these needs and merchandising requirements," Newman says. Because bulk organic cheese requires a dedicated slicer, Organic Valley now offers bulk-packed pre-sliced cheese that can simply be unwrapped and merchandised.

According to Anthony DiPietro, vice president and import manager of George E. DeLallo Co., Inc., Jeannette, PA, pairing organic products with complementary lines can provide added visibility in the deli case. "We've seen the most success with our organic olives when they're merchandised with a deli's organic chunk cheese program," he says, adding cross-merchandising is a profitable strategy for retailers. DeLallo recently launched a line of 13 organic certified olive varieties with both standard brine and oil coating with seasoning.

Organics is primarily a belief-driven category, so stores need to educate consumers about how these products differ from the conventional type. "Taking the time and energy to educate consumers about a topic using demos, classes and educational point-of-sale materials demonstrates a store's commitment to it," Applegate's McDonnell claims.

This is especially crucial in the deli with meat and cheese, where there are distinct differences in how animals are raised and treated. "Farm photos and materials that get the consumer in touch with the sustainable farming methods employed on organic farms are the most compelling," McDonnell continues. "Consumers are interested in products that are good for their own health and

that of the environment."

Looking ahead, Organic Valley's Newman says although the organic segment has a high percentage of growth, building this category will take time due to supply constraints and challenges.

The introduction and expansion of product lines also will give this category added visibility. "Entrées and ready meals are the next step for us," notes Harris. "We're getting a great response from consumers, in

addition to better source ingredients and pricing. It's still early, but retailers are catching on and finding a place for organics due to increased consumer demand. There will be more price benefits, as farmers can better predict crops. We're excited to be a part of this segment."

As organic consumers make food choices that are in line with their belief systems, their buying habits are more than a passing trend, McDonnell says. **DB**


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Reader Service No. 102

Beyond The Olive Bar

Olives come into their own as a category with cross-merchandising appeal.

BY JEANNE CARPENTER

Few foods rival the olive's cultural role in history. That role continues today, as olives rapidly become a major category and as modern olive bars boost deli traffic by becoming a destination point in the supermarket.

In many stores, olive bars have morphed into upscale Mediterranean bars, with hummus, stuffed grape leaves, feta cheese and roasted peppers often competing for space. But as different regions around the world export their olive varieties and consumers demand more organic varieties, the olive bar offers more opportunities to draw traffic to the deli department.

"We are beginning to see retailers offering a dedicated olive bar and a Mediterranean bar, if they have the space to offer both. It's a definite trend," according to Kevin O'Connor, vice president of sales for FoodMatch, Inc., New York, NY. "There is a lot of excitement in the olive category."

Organic Olives

Much of that excitement is coming from the promise of a growing organic olive line. As the consumer demand for all things organic steadily increases, olive producers are racing to fill the need. Anthony DiPietro, vice president of George DeLallo Company, Inc., a Jeannette, PA-based olive manufacturing and distributing company, expects the organic component of the olive industry to grow.

"People are becoming more aware of what they are eating and want more natural foods," DiPietro notes. "At the same time, there is a growing population that will pay more for organic — and we want to appeal to that segment. Growers are realizing we have a natural product and it doesn't take much more to become certified organic. We're doing it because we want to innovate in this category."

Jane Curtis, business development manager for G.L. Mezzetta, Inc., American Canyon, CA, agrees. As one of the leading producers of glass-packed peppers, olives and specialty foods in the United States, Mezzetta recently introduced a glass-packed



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organic product line that includes whole and pitted Kalamata olives from Greece. Its organic products and Napa Valley production facility are certified organic by Quality Assurance International Corp., an independent third-party organic-certifying agency based in Livonia, MI. "Walk into any major supermarket chain and you can see consumer demand for organics has gone mainstream," Curtis says. "We believe that includes specialty foods."

OLIVE PRODUCERS REALIZE NOT EVERY STORE HAS THE SPACE OR STAFF TO RUN BOTH AN OLIVE BAR AND A REFRIGERATED SECTION OF PRE-PACKED OLIVES.

Not all olive distributors agree, however. Annie Owens, marketing manager for A. Camacho, Inc., a Plant City, FL-based olive grower and importer, says organic olives are only a small niche in a broad category. "It's not something that will pay big dividends to the category as a whole."

O'Connor echoes that sentiment. "Organic does not equate to great taste in any category. The demand for organic is building, but until we see a greater selection of organic olives, we have to think about

perceived value. Right now, the future is in pre-packaged products."

Pre-Packaged Olives

While a full-scale olive and antipasto bar

can make a significant impact in sales by creating a destination within the deli section, if space is an issue, pre-packaged olives are a great alternative. For instance, the Deli Dish line from Mezzetta is packaged in grab-and-go plastic tubs for this specific purpose. "The tubs require no maintenance but are still perceived as very fresh," Curtis reports. Mezzetta offers seven pre-packaged olive varieties and is constantly looking at new flavor profiles.

Olive producers realize not every store has the space or staff to run both an olive bar and a refrigerated section of pre-packed olives. However, DiPietro says, even if a retailer offers an olive bar, store managers

Just How Price Sensitive Are Olives?

Price sensitivity depends on whom you ask. Anthony DiPietro, vice president, George DeLallo Company, Inc., Jeannette, PA, argues olives are not price sensitive at all. "Olives are sold on quality and how they are presented. You sell more olives by how sensitive you are to what the customer is seeking. Are customers willing to pay more for higher quality olives? Absolutely. Consumers of olives are extremely well traveled, care about quality and are willing to pay more for consistency."

Annie Owens, marketing manager, A. Camacho, Inc., Plant City, FL, disagrees, noting, "Olives are extremely price sensitive. It depends on what the market will handle. Customers will pay a premium for organic or high-quality specialty olives, but it again depends on the market."

Everything is price sensitive, according to Kevin O'Connor, vice president of sales, FoodMatch, Inc., New York. "Clearly, as you see in other categories, people are beginning to recognize the difference in quality and are willing to pay for a quality product."

There is always a market for premium variety and quality, according to Jane Curtis, business development manager, G.L. Mezzetta, Inc., American Canyon, CA. Mezzetta encourages consumers to view its specialty olives much as they would wine — as an everyday luxury that brings a little more taste and excitement to the table. "Like wine, there's a bit of a learning curve, and consumers appreciate friendly guidance to help them understand the unique qualities of each of the different varieties. Also like wine, Mediterranean ingredients have been the subject of a lot of renewed press attention about their healthful benefits."

Curtis notes the four keys to convincing customers to pay more for olives:

- **Provide great-looking, great tasting olives.** Specialty food lovers are discriminating and have quality standards set in their minds. The product must appeal to all the senses.
- **Enhance the experience.** An appetizing, dramatic spread of glossy olives and colorful antipasto items merchandised with complementary items such as bread and wine creates a premium atmosphere for sales.
- **Provide education.** Signage and point-of-sale information should clearly list product origins and flavor profiles.
- **Offer convenience.** Olives are a gourmet snack that is easy to serve and impresses family and guests. If consumers believe you are saving them time, they will gladly pay a premium.

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should also consider offering pre-packaged olives as an alternative. "It's a matter of convenience. If customers want to travel, they want to take a cup of olives with them." DeLallo has seen great success with its olive deli cups, containing oil-packed rather than

the door to cross merchandising the category throughout the store. So does offering an olive bar behind the counter, says Steve Ehlers, owner of Larry's Market in Brown Deer, WI. He does things a bit differently by offering 20 different varieties of olives in a cup-to-order format with staff behind the counter scooping olives for customers. "It goes along with our philosophy of taking care of the customer. We sample olives just as we do cheese, and we cross-merchandise olives with cheese. If we do trays, we place olives on the trays."

That's what olive manufacturers want to hear. Some companies that pre-package olives in deli cups are taking it one step further. Mezzetta prints wine and cheese pairings directly on its pre-packaged olive cups. "We've found many consumers like the convenience of deli dish tubs,

which are ideal to merchandise in the cheese case. Suggested wine and cheese pairings with the olives are printed right on the tub, increasing rings in those departments," Curtis says.

Olive Varieties And Country Of Origin

Olive manufacturers and distributors continue to market new olive varieties and find ways to market old favorites. While Spain continues its dominance as the world's largest exporter of table olives and Greek olives, such as the well-known Kalamata, are perennial best sellers, California's olive industry is coming into its own. California produces nearly all the olives in the United States, with more than 34,000 acres dedicated to olive production. Most of California's olives become black ripe olives.

"Consumers are recognizing California-grown olives as being artisanal," DiPietro notes. "There is a lot of integrity in that market." In addition to importing a vast variety of olives from Italy, Morocco, Spain, Portugal and Greece, DeLallo owns and maintains its own olive production plant in Oroville, CA, where fresh olives are processed, cured and packaged for distribution around the country. "We are completely vertically inte-

grated with the California olive," he says. "Country-of-origin labeling is of utmost importance for the integrity of the olive bar. American consumers are extremely savvy and intelligent. We should give them what they expect and ensure we are providing a product from the country it says it's from."

Country-of-origin labeling is also an important factor in food-safety perception, he notes. "Our company either cures olives ourselves in California or brings them from overseas and further processes them here according to all rules and regulations. Consumers want the peace of mind to know anything they purchase meets Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards. We want to make it a precise business."

Camacho owns, raises and harvests more than 80,000 olive trees within the fertile regions of Andalucía, Spain. Its company literature states the very best olives in the world are grown within a 50-mile radius of Andalucía. "Consumers are very concerned where their food comes from," says Owens. That being said, she does concede that if a product "sells by price," there is "no concern for origin."

FoodMatch's O'Connor sees a growing trend of consumers asking more questions in general about the origin of their food. "We firmly believe the best olives come from Greece and certain parts of France," he argues. "It's a matter of educating retailers and consumers on regional differences."

Mezzetta's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Napa Valley produces California olives. While country-of-origin labeling is an important piece of the quality story, education at point of sale is the real key in helping consumers connect with a product, Curtis contends. "Olives from Mediterranean countries such as France, Italy, Greece and Spain have a positive culinary association with the cuisines of those countries and a positive health association from all the good news about the Mediterranean diet."

The Future

With more than one billion olive trees growing in 20 countries on six of the seven continents, olives are here to stay. As a category, olives have nowhere to go but grow, according to O'Connor. "We're seeing quite a bit of growth in the antipasto segment in general — a typical olive and Mediterranean bar may have 14 to 18 items, but I've seen up to 80 items. Consumers are driving the demand."

Eric Lummis, Mezzetta vice president of sales and marketing, agrees. "Customers are migrating to quality ingredients and seek variety. They want convenience and more healthful snack choices."

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GROWING IN 20
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OF THE SEVEN
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brine-packed olives. "Oil preserves better than brine, and we're using that as another wave of innovation," he adds.

Offering pre-packaged olives also opens



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Developments In Packaging

Today's packaging innovations are extending shelf life and increasing impulse sales, while becoming friendlier to the environment.

BY LISA WHITE

Technology is advancing the possibilities of packaging. The future is likely to bring smart packaging options that prepare contents for consumption inside the container or warn the user of unsafe conditions, such as exposure to temperatures that breed bacteria.

Even without these potential innovations, today's deli packaging is more advanced than ever before. New materials are leading to increased product shelf life, which helps boost retailers' bottom lines. More emphasis is being placed on the development of recycled and environmentally friendly packaging. And this is all taking place with an eye on keeping costs affordable for retailers and consumers.

Food and beverage packaging is currently driven by consumer convenience with success determined by the needs of the category's key customers. While portability and durability are the most important qualities among young adult consumers and people with children respectively, seniors lean toward traditional packaging that is easy to open.

Behind the service counter, the most common packaging materials used today are tubs for salads and plastic bags for meats and cheeses. In the self-service area, tubs also are used for wet salads, while hinged rigid plastic containers contain prepared foods such as sandwiches, salads and sushi. Rotisserie items are contained in either rigid plastic domes or special bags.

New Innovations

There are a number of new packaging materials, enclosures and other features specifically designed for deli products.

In terms of materials, bioriented polystyrene or OPS is losing share, says Joe Selzer, vice president of marketing and sales for Wilkinson Industries, Inc., Fort Calhoun, NE. "Both PET [polyethylene terephthalate] and PLA [polylactic acid] are gaining popularity," he adds.



PET, a relatively new plastic resin used to make soft drink bottles, is engineered and more expensive to produce. This makes it a valuable plastic recyclable. PET has two main types, Amorphous PET, or APET, and Crystalline PET, also called CPET. Due to its partially crystalline structure, CPET is opaque, while APET's amorphous structure provides glass-quality clarity. CPET has dual ovenable qualities. APET is a tough material and an effective barrier against oxygen, water, carbon dioxide and nitrogen.

Environmentally friendly polylactide (PLA) is an annually renewable material used for fresh food packaging. Both materials perform well when shipping products long distances, according to Wilkinson's Selzer.

"These materials have become popular for packaging because more supermarkets are buying products from processors rather than making them in house [and this packaging travels well]. Recently, we are noticing PLA is the preferred material, since it is made from corn as opposed to petroleum," he explains.

Herb Knutson, director of marketing at Inline Plastics Corp., Shelton, CT, also is seeing a move toward materials other than the standard polystyrene and polypropylene. There is a shift to multi-layer packaging materials that offer better moisture and gas barriers.

"APET has become more popular because it is more sustainable than either polystyrene or polypropylene and easier to recycle," he says. "PLA is compostable and derived from corn, a renewable resource. The barrier materials can provide a longer shelf life and be tailored to specific food products."

Interest in tamper-resistant packaging also is on the rise. Inline has designed a thermoformed-hinged container that is both tamper evident and resistant.

"Tamper evidency is growing in importance, and the sophistication of this packaging feature is increasing," notes Colin Butts, marketing associate at Fabri-Kal Corporation, Kalamazoo, MI. He adds an increasing number of consumers are demanding recyclability in their packaging.

Retailers are looking for efficiencies in stacking, along with clarity for better product merchandising, he relates, adding, "By the same token, consumers want reusable packaging that can be easily sealed. They don't like to see it go to waste."

Rigid and flexible bulk packaging is also popular for party trays and platters.

Along with recyclability and durability, functionality and convenience are key in the deli-packaging segment. According to Ed Sussman, co-owner of Merit Paper Corpo-

ration, Melville, NY, a number of microwavable boxes and trays have hit the marketplace. "There are new bags out that are reusable, leak resistant and easier to handle. One newer bag can store product in the freezer, while protecting it from freezer burn," he explains.

Steamer bags also make it possible to prepare items without dirtying pans. "You can make an omelet right in the bag, with no scrambling or dirty pans," Sussman says. "It's all about convenience."

Bags for rotisserie items have been big for the last four to five years as an alternative to the traditional plastic domes. Recently, newer features have been added, including handles, slide zipper closures, anti-fog film and improved leak-proof materials.

Sussman says other benefits of these bags include the ability to print ingredients directly on the container without using a label. Space conservation is another plus. "A carton of 500 bags can be stored in small areas, conserving space in the warehouse



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The advertisement features a collection of clear, hinged plastic containers from Genpak. Some containers are filled with sushi rolls, others with fresh fruit like strawberries and blueberries, and one with a salad. The containers are arranged on a green surface, with some bamboo sushi mats and chopsticks visible in the foreground. The background is a solid green color.

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and deli." This packaging costs 23 to 35 percent less than rigid plastic domes, he adds.

Merit's bags now include a slider-zip closure designed with a secure seal and easy use. A new anti-fog feature provides a clearer view of the bags' products. "We have designed our rotisserie bag line to be more functional," Sussman explains. "It can be used for almost any hot deli item, including fried chicken, ribs, turkey breast, chicken pieces and even egg rolls."

Multi-purpose bags continue to grow in popularity, as delis seek to diversify their hot food offerings. According to Cheryl Miller, operations manager at Flair Packaging International, LLC, Menasha, WI, delis have evolved and now have the ability to carry more convenience items. "Packaging has had to adapt to this change," she says.

In order to keep costs down, packaging companies have created these multi-use bags and pouches suitable for long-term use in hot-warming cases. "We provide vapor-release bags that are self venting and a sealed, stand-up pouch that self vents in the microwave," Miller notes. "It's added convenience for today's consumers who are always on the go."

Another big trend is the increase in single-serve packaging, says John King, product

market manager at IPL, Inc., Saint-Damien, QC, Canada.

"Today's consumers want single servings and smaller packaging sizes," contends Michelle Quirk, marketing coordinator and product manager for Genpak, Glens Falls, NY. The company's newest line features textured polypropylene, a new and lighter microwavable material.

Shelf Life

Shelf life has always been hot button from a processor perspective. "This is dependent on low-oxygen transmission and a really good seal," Quirk explains. "We have always addressed this with our deli line."

Shelf-life improvements also are huge for consumers. "It would be great to develop new materials that keep food fresher longer," Merit's Sussman says. "This can improve deli margins."

The key is to design custom packaging around the product rather than vice versa. "For this reason, we choose films that have properties that products need," relates Miller. "Our vapor-release pouch can hold hot soup one day and be moved to the cold case the next."

Where shelf life is concerned, packaging material is generally not a factor. "The lid is

the culprit," says Butts of Fabri-Kal. "Barrier or film-sealing technology keeps oxygen out. The majority of today's packaging is either barrier or film sealed. If the lid is not even with the shrink wrap, oxygen will not be eliminated [and shelf life is compromised]."

Inline's Knutson says packaging that seals out air while sealing in moisture can help increase shelf life and preserve product quality for longer periods.

Going Green

Environmentally friendly packaging and recyclable materials are becoming increasingly popular in today's society. "Everyone is trying to get green," Sussman says. "That is the big focus now. Some materials and usages are applicable to being green and some are not." The big question is whether U.S. consumers will cover the increasing cost of products packaged in these materials.

Jon Sill, president of Inno-Pak, LLC, Delaware, OH, believes the green issue is at the top of the packaging industry's agenda. "We are heavily involved in looking at degradable or sustainable packaging. It is a big focus for us."

There is a definite move toward more recyclable materials, Butts says, adding people still want to see what's inside their pack-

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A Look At Labeling

Although no major developments have emerged in the labeling segment, new technologies are on the horizon. Many labels emphasize colorful and sophisticated graphics along with green features, such as biodegradable ink.

"Today's graphics are driven by in-mold labeling, a technology that started in Europe," says John King, product market manager at IPL, Inc., Saint-Damien, QC, Canada. This is where a piece of polypropylene film is printed and a label is inserted within the plastic. "It features extraordinary graphics that are picture perfect," he explains. "The idea behind it is to get the consumer to grab the product, because studies show 80 percent of people will buy a product they grab off the shelf."

The printing on today's deli containers is pronounced and labeling technology is almost photo quality, says Colin Butts, marketing associate at Fabri-Kal, Kalamazoo, MI. "In-mold labeling is provided during tub production and won't wear off. Because it is right on the mold and printed using professional machines, it is of a high quality."

In addition to new labeling options, tinting and coloring are other ways manufacturers are differentiating deli containers, Butts says.

With the creation of even more packaging materials, technology and innovative features, the appearance, quality and shelf life of deli items will be enhanced in the years to come. **DB**

aging. "APET clamshells and tubs are big. PLA or corn-based resin also is popular. People are looking at packaging that is lightweight, flexible and can be refrigerated."

Genpak's Quirk agrees more consumers are looking for environmentally friendly, biodegradable packaging, preferably made from recycled products. "Consumers are willing to pay more for this type of packaging," she says.

Others in the industry say a green design is not a big influence on deli packaging. "We are not seeing more environmentally friendly packaging," Selzer says, adding Wilkinson has developed containers similar to petroleum-type products. "Packaging equipment has to be modified in order to run PLA ver-

sus petroleum-type containers."

Functionality, too, continues to be a challenge in the area of recyclable packaging. "Unfortunately, right now, to create packaging that can withstand temperatures in deli warmer cases for long periods, we need a multi-laminate structure," Flair's Miller explains. "This encompasses several layers of film designed to support heat, and it is very functional. Currently, recycling facilities don't separate those into respective components, even though each layer could be recycled if it were separated. Unfortunately, there is currently no cost-effective way to do this."

Cost Concerns

The packaging industry struggles with cost issues. It is a matter of determining what up-charges retailers and consumers will tolerate.

Until recently, PLA could not compete with the petroleum-type products, Selzer contends, "but because of oil price increases over the last two years, PLA is now somewhat competitive with PET."

Barrier materials tend to be more costly. "APET and PLA cost a little more than polystyrene, but less than polypropylene," according to Inline's Knutson.

Many say consumers will pay more for

environmentally friendly packaging. "Proof in point is consumers who purchase the reusable cloth shopping bags," notes Inno-Pak's Sill. "Still, we have been successful at curbing the cost increases as far as sustainability."

Newer machinery and packaging technology also affect prices. "Containers with new hinges and tamper-resistant features are more difficult to form and this new machinery leads to higher packaging costs," Fabri-Kal Butts relates. "More functional plastics are more expensive. People who want more functionality will have to pay more."

Microwavable packaging also commands higher prices, but consumers tend to expect these increases and accept them in some cases, he continues. "They will pay more for convenience packaging overall but not just for microwavability on its own."

Whether for a packaged salad with a fork and dressing or a self-venting to-go container, deli customers typically pay more for convenience. "Our research shows that consumers will pay extra for better, safer or more environmentally friendly packaging," Knutson says.

Selzer adds consumers will pay 5 to 10 percent more for environmentally friendly packaging. "If it gets above 10 percent, I don't think they'll make the change." **DB**

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NEW JERSEY: Edible films with superpowers

29.aug.07

New York Times

Kim Severson

www.nytimes.com/2007/08/29/dining/29film.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&ref=dining&pagewanted=print

New Brunswick, NJ — In a handful of food science labs around the country, people who talk about food in terms of microbes and polymers have, according to this story, been turning the natural pathogen fighters found in everyday food into edible films and powders.

If their work pans out, thin films woven with a thyme derivative that can kill *E. coli* could line bags of fresh spinach. The same material in powder form might be sprinkled on packages of chicken to stop salmonella.

Strawberries could be dipped in a soup made from egg proteins and shrimp shells. The resulting film — invisible, edible and, ideally, flavorless — would fight mold, kill pathogens and keep the fruit ripe longer.

Michael Chikindas, a food scientist working with the team at Rutgers, was quoted as saying, "These natural films are really a very hot topic these days. The range of applications is endless, from very delicate foods to Army rations and space missions."

The story says that in the most basic level, the films are something like a plastic wrap made of edible components that dissolves in water. The films can be infused with molecules from cloves, thyme or other foods that can keep unhealthy bacteria from growing. They can even be manipulated to carry flavor.

The story adds that in any food processing innovation, the timing has to be right for both consumers and manufacturers, and this might be the moment. Reports of foodborne sickness outbreaks have become part of the daily news. Just last week, baby carrots infected with *shigella*, a bacterium, were recalled in 12 states. In July, 86 brands of canned chili sauce and other meat products were recalled in a botulism scare. In June consumers were advised to throw away bags of the snack called Veggie Booty after *salmonella* in it made people in 17 states sick.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS: Austria: A foodborne norovirus outbreak due to manually prepared salad, Austria 2006.

09.aug.07

Infection, Aug2007, Vol. 35 Issue 4, p232-239, 8p; : Schmid, D.; Stüger, H.; Lederer, I.; Pichler, A.-M.; Kainz-Arnfelder, G.; Schreier, E.; Allerberger, F

Abstract: Norovirus is increasingly being recognized as a leading cause of foodborne

disease. Nevertheless, well-documented foodborne outbreaks due to norovirus are rarely found in the literature. A retrospective cohort study was conducted for identifying the source of a gastroenteritis outbreak. A total of 325 persons were identified as the at-risk group. The overall attack rate was 56 percent (182/325). Of the four working days of possible foodborne exposure to norovirus (Monday till Thursday), Wednesday (risk ratio [RR]: 18.82; 95 percent CI 11.82-29.96) and Thursday (RR 2.14; 95 percent CI 1.65-2.79) turned out to be the most likely days on which infections with norovirus occurred. The day-by-day food specific cohort analyses yielded consumption of salad on Wednesday (adjusted RR 2.82; 95 percent CI 1.0-7.94) to be associated with highest risk of illness. The most likely source of food contamination is a kitchen assistant having prepared salad manually. She fell ill with symptoms of gastroenteritis on Wednesday during the early working hours and continued working. Human stool samples obtained from five out of six outbreak cases, including the sick kitchen assistant, were RT-PCR positive for norovirus genotype GGII.7 (Leeds-like). This foodborne norovirus outbreak underlines the drastic consequences of neglecting the rules of basic kitchen hygiene. Food handlers working despite manifest diarrhea or vomiting — often in fear of job loss — are a common cause of foodborne norovirus outbreaks.

CANADIAN NEWS: Canada gives industry two years to voluntarily drop trans fats

Canadian Health Minister Tony Clement says food manufacturers have two years to voluntarily remove trans fats from their products or face new regulations requiring them to do so.

The minister announced in late June that he was accepting the recommendations of a task force report that urged a trans fat limit of 2 percent of total fat in vegetable oils and margarines and 5 percent in all other foods.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS: China to launch new label on food exports

23.aug.07

Agence France Presse

Beijing — China will next month begin marking food exports that pass quality tests with a special label, following recent safety scandals that have hurt the industry's reputation, state media said Thursday.

Food exports that have passed inspections will carry the label "CIQ," which stands for China Inspection and Quarantine, the *China Daily* reported, citing a regulation from the nation's quality watchdog.

Martin Mitchell, technical director of the Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA) and managing director of Certified Laboratories compiles TechNews.



The information has been compiled from press releases, news articles and government announcements and policy clarifications. Additional information may be obtained by contacting RFA by phone at 770-452-0660 or online at www.refrigeratedfoods.org.

Packing must also carry information, such as the producer's name and address, batch number and production date, to keep the source of any potential quality problems on record and stem fake exports, the report said.

The new labeling system would begin on Sept 1.

NATIONAL NEWS: Upcoming IFT Web casts: Product Traceability and the Organics Debate

IFT will be holding two upcoming Web casts and is seeking participation in the form of presenters, content experts and moderators.

PRODUCT TRACEABILITY — HOW FAR IS ENOUGH IN TODAY'S MARKETPLACE?

Oct. 25, 2007, 12:00 — 1:30 PM CT

THE ORGANICS DEBATE: IS THE PREMIUM WORTH IT?

Nov. 29, 2007, 12:00 — 1:30 PM CT

Web casts are typically 90 minutes in length. They provide a balance of speakers (two to three) and one moderator to lead the discussion. Presenters should be prepared to present timely and salient insight and experience on the topic. Subject matter experts should be prepared to provide a current and deep insight into the topic. You may also check out www.ift.org/knowledge for more general Web cast information. Participation requires no travel for presenters or attendees, yet it allows a broad reach out into an audience of food science professionals and academicians. If interested in participating, please contact Jenifer C. Williams directly at IFT with any questions:

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Excellence Comes In Many Forms



By
Jeffrey Spear
President

Studio Spear, LLC
Baltimore, MD

We've all had our share of misadventures with retailers and heard enough stories of unfortunate shopping experiences to make it clear mediocrity in retailing is alive and well. I could easily talk about what's wrong in retailing, but I want to focus on some positives by highlighting and praising the retailers who appreciate their customers and go the extra mile to win their loyalty.

While many food retailers are embracing change, they are limiting their efforts to parody moves. Instead of pursuing excellence and category leadership, they play catch-up to the likes of Whole Foods, Wegmans and Central Market. The inevitable downside is that as soon as these so-called improvements are in place, the real innovators are already more than a couple steps ahead.

Fortunately, increasing numbers of retailers understand thinking for themselves and pioneering new ideas favorably impact the bottom line. Some of my examples are not deli operators, or even supermarkets, but you can still learn something to apply to your own day-to-day activities.

Consumers are interested in new and different food experiences, look for ways to "spice up" their lives and seek more meaningful and enjoyable shopping experiences.

At AJ's Fine Foods, these needs are more than adequately met. In fact, its goal is clearly stated as an "upscale gourmet market experience." It meets this objective with a broad range of high-quality, attractively presented, specialty foods — a selection that dwarfs the choices available at the majority of mainstream supermarkets. Soft lighting, richer interior color schemes and a comfortable approach to store design reinforce its overall appeal.

Everything about food is emotionally charged. From flavors that make us smile to the love emanating from a specially prepared meal, finding emotional context is simple. Shopping for food can be equally positive and satisfying.

When I think about the places that evoke such emotional responses, I immediately think of Wegmans. I have been known to compare this exceptional food retailer to its entertainment counterpart — Disneyland. If Disneyland is "the happiest place on earth," Wegmans is the tastiest.

From sheer variety of culinary options to attractive merchandising and knowledgeable staff, Wegmans offers culinary showmanship and makes a visit a pleasure.

Its deli, bakery and meat departments offer unending visual stimulation. There is always something delicious to marvel at or drool over. And you have the option of consuming on the spot at one of the many tables provided for on-premise meals or having it packed up to take home.

Product tasting also impacts favorably on purchasing decisions. Consumers who sample unknown products are more likely to purchase. If someone is available to explain

the product further, the likelihood of sales increases.

DiBruno Brothers, a Philadelphia-based "gourmet destination superstore," offers an impressive selection of deli meats and cheeses. Floor-to-ceiling products are displayed and plenty is set out for tasting. The impact of the merchandising visuals, rich aromatics and tasting options is amazing.

H-E-B Plus! opened in Texas a few years ago. Lots of retailers offer "snacks" every now and then, but H-E-B took this form of hospitality and product education to new heights. I found product samples and informed presenters throughout the store. Expressions of hospitality were made consistently from aisle to aisle, and opportunities for cross-merchandising were exploited to the fullest. A demonstration center featured specific products via specific recipes prepared on-site. This

was an opportunity to taste and learn more about cooking and food presentation.

I believe the most overlooked aspects in retailing are customer relationships and an appreciation of the human factor. I know some people just want to get in and out, but service staff should still show some degree of recognition and appreciation. Since many people frequent the same store week after week, I don't think this is too much to ask.

I have yet to encounter much in the way of enthusiastic customer appreciation in supermarkets, so I turn to another retailer — Nordstrom. Employees go out of their way to offer service. They understand the customer is always right — even when the customer is clearly wrong. It would be great to experience this same level of courtesy, friendliness and knowledgeable assistance at the deli counter.

You can do many things to achieve excellence, but a few operating "mainstays" are too frequently overlooked. As you plan improvements, don't forget the things that will make your department stand out from the rest:

1. Think outside the norm. While certain products will always be in high demand, offer something new and interesting. Add "spice" to the everyday act of shopping.

2. Make the experience inviting and entertaining. While you may not be able to overhaul fixtures and floor plans, you can find attractive and interesting ways to merchandise and present what you have. Make passers-by drool, and make them hungry.

3. Be hospitable. Treat everyone as a guest in your own house. Offer them something to eat (tastings). Show them around (demonstrate product knowledge).

4. Say thank you and invite them back. Offering thanks is routine, but when you say something such as, "I look forward to seeing you next time," you show appreciation and let them know you want them to return.

Many factors will influence how you choose to pursue excellence. You may not be able to implement everything, but a little something special goes a long way.

DB

I believe the most overlooked aspects in retailing are customer relationships and an appreciation of the human factor.

Blast From The Past

J

ohn Volpi, a salumiere trained in Milan, Italy, brought Volpi's authentic dry-curing process to the United States in 1902 and established the family business in St. Louis. Today, Lorenza Pasetti is the first female president of the company and the third generation in the family business.

Volpi has worked with many well-known chefs including Mario Batali and Michael Chiarello. Cookbook author and Food Network personality Michael Chiarello calls Volpi Foods the best domestic artisan salami producer. He has even produced a line of artisan salami with Volpi under his own brand, Napa Style.

Volpi was also recently featured on Food Network's *Road Tasted*, a series focusing on handcrafted foods across the country, hosted by Jamie and Bobby Deen, sons of celebrity chef, Paula Deen. *The Deen Bros. Cookbook: Recipes from the Road*, includes their visit with Volpi.



Blast From The Past is a regular feature of DELI BUSINESS. We welcome submissions of your old photos, labels or advertisements along with a brief description of the photo. Please send material to: Editor, DELI BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810217, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0217 or e-mail DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com. For more information contact us at (561)994-1118

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