

# DELI

# BUSINESS

MARKETING MERCHANDISING MANAGEMENT PROCUREMENT

JUNE/JULY 2012 \$14.95

8th Annual

## People's Awards



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## EMMI ROTH USA ANNOUNCES WINNER OF LE GRUYÈRE RECIPE CONTEST



Emmi Roth USA, Monroe, WI, has announced the winner of its recipe contest that challenged post-secondary culinary arts students to create a dish with Emmi Kaltbach Cave-aged Le Gruyère Switzerland AOC. Titus Edwards, 21, a student at Central Carolina Community College in Carrboro, NC, created the winning dish, a gluten-free, cayenne-spiced Le Gruyère waffle with quince syrup. The recipe, which perfectly blends the earthiness of Le Gruyère with the heat of cayenne and the sweetness of quince, is on-trend in the culinary world through its address of the increasing sensitivity to gluten among consumers, as well its versatility

— pairing well with fried chicken as breakfast-for-dinner, or with eggs and sausage for a sophisticated brunch meal.

The competition, which was promoted exclusively by the Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Education (CAFe), challenged students to create a dish that highlighted Le Gruyère in a center-of-the-plate application. As the first-prize winner, Edwards, who has been studying culinary arts for only four months, will receive \$1,000 and his referring instructor, Regina Minter, will receive free registration to a 2012 CAFe conference or workshop.

## COMING NEXT ISSUE IN AUG/SEPT 2012

**COVER STORY**  
Back To School

**FEATURE STORIES**  
Locally Grown  
Tailgating Profits  
Mexican Foods

**MERCHANDISING REVIEWS**  
Sushi Revolution  
Deli Fresh Imaging

**PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES**  
Holiday Buying

**PREPARED FOODS**  
Cold Weather Soups  
Breakfast

**DELI MEAT**  
Pork  
Salami Trends

**CHEESES**  
Building Cheese Plates  
Switzerland



### COMING IN OCT/NOV 2012

DELI BUSINESS will examine what it takes to create a "Green" deli department.

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## DELI WATCH

### Transition



**John Harrington** is the new director of marketing at La Terra Fina, Union City, CA. Charged with managing the portfolio of La Terra Fina branded products, he will develop, implement and manage annual strategic, financial and marketing brand plans as well as take an active role in new product launches. Most recently, he served as director of marketing at Safeway Inc. Harrington has directed the marketing efforts for a variety of small to large food companies since the 1990s.

[www.latterafina.com](http://www.latterafina.com)

### Announcements



#### BUDDIG JOINS WITH RIF BE A READER CAMPAIGN

Carl Buddig & Company, Homewood, IL, is partnering with Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) for a second year to support the *Be A Reader* campaign. The cause marketing campaign invites consumers to join the fun through purchases of Buddig products and by taking part in campaign activities throughout the year. Along with a \$100,000 donation, Buddig will sponsor fun promotions starting with the Eat, Win, Read \$100,000 Giveaway running through June 25th and a Fill Your Tank sweepstakes later this summer.

[www.buddig.com](http://www.buddig.com)



#### US-GROWN PEPPADEW GOLDEW

Peppadew Fresh LLC, Morganville, NJ, will grow Peppadew Goldew fruit on its farm in Morganville. The fruit are part of the unique Peppadew family of pepper products. Discovered growing wild in South Africa about 15 years ago, Peppadew are known across the globe for their special flavor – sweet and tangy, with just a touch of heat. The peppers have been grown and processed in South Africa. This year, Peppadew Fresh LLC will grow the Peppadew Goldew fruit in New Jersey, and will process them under the *Jersey Grown* program.

[www.peppadewfresh.com](http://www.peppadewfresh.com)



#### FIRST-TIME-EVER EXPANDED AVAILABILITY

Grafton Village Cheese, Grafton, VT, is now offering full availability of its 4 Year Aged Cheddar. The cheese has a pronounced, mature flavor, smooth finish, and a drier, crumbly texture. A World Cheese Award winner, the product is available in the Grafton Village and Tavern Select lines, and will be showcased at the Fancy Food Show this summer. The Grafton Village line is the cornerstone of Grafton Cheese, featuring traditional waxed and vacuum-sealed blocks, bars and wheels. Grafton Tavern Select features classic 7- and 10-ounce wedges.

[www.graftonvillagecheese.com](http://www.graftonvillagecheese.com)

### New Products



#### SUMMER PROMOTION

Tyson Foods, Inc., Springdale, AR, has launched a summer promotion featuring Tyson Chicken Tenders from the grocer's deli, Knorr Sides and Bounty Napkins, plus a \$5 gas mail-in rebate. The promotion will be available online and in stores through Aug. 24, 2012. Consumers can redeem in-store coupons good for \$1 on 1 pound or more of Tyson Chicken Tenders from the grocer's deli; \$1 on any three (3) Knorr Sides; and \$1 on any size package of Bounty Napkins. And they can earn a \$5 gas rebate with proof of purchase of chicken tenders plus gas from any gas station and a completed mail-in rebate form.

[www.tyson.com](http://www.tyson.com)



#### POPPED SORGHUM

Mini Pops, Inc., Stoughton, MA, introduces popped sorghum. Sorghum is the fifth most harvested cereal grain on the globe. The sorghum used for Mini Pops is grown to be of the highest quality and free of pesticide or genetic modification. Compared to corn, sorghum has fewer calories, less fat and less sodium. It has more protein, more calcium, more iron and comparable fiber. Flavors include Petite Plain, Subatomic Sea Salt, Baby White Cheddar, Itsy Bitsy Chili Cheese, Nano Pepper & Herb, Hot n' Chilly Chili, Itty Bitty Butter and Cutie Caramel Clusters. Available in individual grab-and-go packages.

[www.myminipops.com](http://www.myminipops.com)



#### SPREADABLE CHEDDAR

Alouette Cheese USA, LLC, New Holland, PA, has introduced the new Cheddar Soft Spreadable Cheese line, which offers a full body and fine robust flavor, in two new spreadable flavors — Sharp Cheddar Cheese and Bacon Cheddar Cheese. Available in a convenient, ready-to-serve 6-ounce container, they can be served with crackers or pretzels, spread on a sandwich or slice of bread, or used to add great flavor to a traditional mac 'n cheese dish. All are made with Grade A Milk and 12-month aged Cheddar, and are kosher Certified (OUD) and gluten-free.

[www.alouettecheese.com](http://www.alouettecheese.com)



#### TAMPER-EVIDENT DELI CONTAINERS

Placon Corp., Madison, WI, offers Evolutions, a new line of environmentally responsible deli containers that feature tamper-evident lids with tight-fitting, high performance seals assuring maximum product freshness. The line features easy open/easy close recyclable containers, made from 100 percent EcoStar recycled PETE, a material derived from curbside collected PETE bottles. To open an Evolutions container, a tab at the corner of the lid must be bent upward. Once the tab is in the open position, it remains upright, alerting customers that the seal has been compromised.

[www.placon.com](http://www.placon.com)

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Located in the Netherlands, in the city of Woerden, the van den Wijngaard Family has been aging cheese for generations. The process for making the



exceptional Gouda called Reypenaer takes place in a century-old warehouse, still without refrigeration. Inside, cheeses are turned and wiped down everyday by hand as the fluctuations in temperature and humidity assist in improving the aroma, taste, texture and complexity of flavors. In order for this cheese to be awarded the designation of "Reypenaer", it must be aged for at least 1 year. In 2005, 2007, 2009 & 2011 Reypenaer was awarded with the Gold Medal for Best Dutch Cheese at the International Cheese Show held in Nantwich, England.



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Gourmet Foods International  
Denver, CO (720) 274-2888

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## New Products



### SNACK CUP CONTAINERS

Inline Plastics Corp., Shelton, CT, introduces its new grab-and-go 12-ounce snack cups. They lock in freshness, extend shelf life, and are available with flat or dome lids. These new clamshell containers are designed to fit most automobile cup holders. The perimeter seal closure provides increased product shelf life, improved leak resistance, and better protection of its contents. All Safe-T-Fresh containers incorporate a tamper-resistant locking mechanism and an exclusive patented tear-strip hinge the consumer removes to gain access to the contents. This design eliminates the need for shrink-bands or wrap-around labels to prevent product tampering.

[www.inlineplastics.com](http://www.inlineplastics.com)



### EXACT WEIGHT PACKAGING

Mifroma USA, Bonita Springs, FL, has added 7-ounce portions to its Cavern, Gruyère and Emmentaler lines. The company now offers both random-weight and fixed-weight portions of the cheeses. The 7-ounce, exact-weight portions are available for the company's Cavern cheese, Regular Gruyère AOC, Cavern Cave-Aged Gruyère and Emmentaler varieties. The exact-weight cheeses are presented in gourmet-style opaque parchment paper packaging. The portions are cut straight from traditional Switzerland cheese wheels, including a 200-pound Emmentaler wheel and a 70-pound Gruyère wheel.

[www.mifroma.com](http://www.mifroma.com)



### RANCH POTATO SALAD

Reser's, Beaverton, OR, has introduced a new potato salad flavor that combines two family favorites — potatoes and Ranch dressing. Reser's American Classics Ranch Potato Salad, with the distinct flavor of Hidden Valley Original Ranch Seasoning Mix, provides delis with a breakthrough product idea sure to grow category sales and customer traffic. According to the Association for Dressing and Sauces, Ranch dressing has been the best-selling salad dressing in the United States since 1992. The potato salad is available in 16-ounce and 3-pound containers ranging from \$2.99 to \$7.99 suggested retail price.

[www.resers.com](http://www.resers.com)



### FOODSERVICE BURRITOS

Ruiz Foods, Dinuba, CA, introduces El Monterey HD Burritos (Hearty & Delicious) — healthier AM and PM Burrito options for institutional and commercial foodservice. The four 5-ounce varieties, bursting with flavor, offer preferred nutritionals, whole grain tortillas, 15-17 grams of protein each, and are high in fiber, low in calories and feature reduced sodium. The four El Monterey HD Burritos flavors include: Huevos Rancheros Burrito, Egg, Turkey Sausage and Cheese Burrito, Chicken with Fire Roasted Veggies Burrito, and Steak with Fire Roasted Veggies Burrito.

[www.elmonterey.com](http://www.elmonterey.com)



### BISTRO-SIZE COMBITHERM OVEN

Alto-Shaam is introducing the sleek new 4.10ESi CT Express Combitherm oven with all the performance benefits associated with Alto-Shaam's larger Combitherm ovens. The new "bistro size" oven measures just over 20 inches wide, 36 inches deep and slightly over 30 inches high. Its Eco-Smart design uses less electricity and water than other compact models. It has a controller with basic LED inputs, the standard ExpressTouch controller with 200 program capacity, the standard six (6) "Golden Brown" roasting levels and options for automatic cleaning and a ventless hood.

[www.alto-shaam.com](http://www.alto-shaam.com)



### COLD PET TAKEOUT CONTAINERS

Anchor Packaging, St. Louis, MO, introduces its new Gourmet Classics (GC) Series. Crystal clear lids with integral anti-fog technology in cold temperatures eliminate condensation and black bowls provide excellent merchandising. Anchor has added a consumer-friendly, perforated hinged tear-away lid. The lid design provides one-hand lid closure and easy opening. The single-piece bowl and hinged lid simplifies ordering, inventory and handling. The 6 new GCs are available in 6- 7- and 9-inch footprints, with deep and shallow versions in capacities ranging from 14 to 40 ounces.

[www.anchorpac.com](http://www.anchorpac.com)



### BELLYBAND WRAP PACKAGING

Rising Sun Farms, Phoenix, OR, debuted its new packaging, redesigned with colorful bellyband wraps. Created to maximize visual appeal and product convenience, the new design incorporates traditional food colors and simplified packaging in an updated style that coordinates the entire Rising Sun Farms' perishables line. The new look eliminates the outer cardboard sleeve for a more eco-friendly and durable bellyband wrap. The specially designed laminated wrap holds up to freezer temperatures and any rough handling on the store shelf.

[www.risingsunfarms.com](http://www.risingsunfarms.com)



### ALL-NATURAL QUICHE

La Terra Fina, Union City, CA, has expanded its quiche lineup with a traditional Quiche Lorraine. The rich and savory tart made with egg whites, real bacon and Swiss cheese originates from Lorraine, a region of Northeastern France. Today, Quiche Lorraine has expanded well beyond its European beginning and is a crowd pleaser at any time of day. The original quiches, Spinach & Artichoke and Cheddar & Broccoli, are made with the same all natural egg whites, cheeses and milk.

[www.latterrafin.com](http://www.latterrafin.com)

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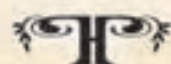
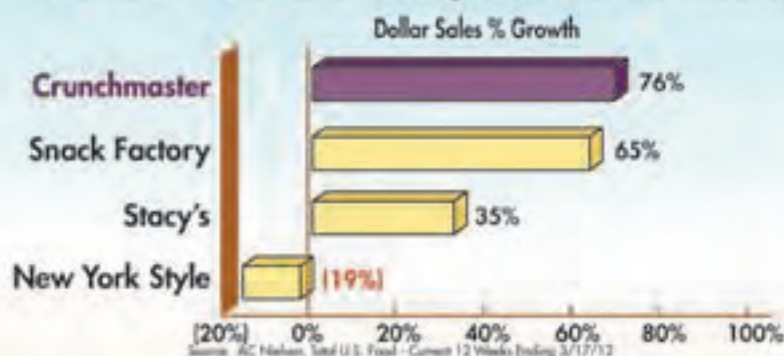
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by Jim Prevora, Editor-in-Chief

# Have We Given Up On Procurement?

As the deli industry gathers in New Orleans for the International Dairy Deli Bakery Association Seminar & Expo, a relevant question is whether the notion of a unified deli industry really makes any sense.

For a long time, the deli trade has been difficult to see as an industry. Many of the manufacturers don't actually focus on the deli. They're subsidiaries or divisions of massive food companies whose priority is elsewhere — say the meat case or restaurants.

It's not uncommon to see producers restructure their deli operation in a predictable way — for a few years they put in the retail division focusing on the customer, a supermarket. When results fall short, they move the product to the foodservice division — focusing on the product. When this fails to produce optimal results, they realize this is a bird unto itself, and establish a separate deli division. This typically produces the best sales results — but often such small divisions have trouble gaining the heft internally to justify investment, and they tend to suffer from overhead that restructuring experts see as a target of opportunity. So often the cycle begins again.

There has been a retail bifurcation of the deli trade. In my other life, I facilitate a series of industry share groups. These consist of executives at non-competing organizations who meet to share knowledge, data and best practices. Many of the groups are retail-oriented and include groups in produce, meat, etc. A new bakery group is forming now. Of all these groups, the deli group is perhaps most problematic. More than in meat or produce, deli operations at retail are different from each other, not just in degree, but in kind. One deli sells sliced meat and cheese while another has a sushi bar, a wok station, an olive bar, a barbecue bar, 12 hot soups, etc. No continuum connects selling three slices of salami and operating a Chinese food program — it's a similarly named department in a radically different business.

Not every store has the volume or clientele to justify dozens of food bars and cooking stations. Yet the alternative need not be a bland assortment of meats and cheeses ready for slicing. What would boost business and thus benefit lots of retailers while energizing the supply base is a new focus on product. The focus on service is fine for those operators with the volume and clientele, but open a store with lots of service in the wrong location and one may get oohs and aahs on opening day, but six months later, when the shrink overwhelms and the sales don't justify the labor, one often finds endless displays of peanuts.

A focus on product is different. It may require more buying staff, but the cost can be spread among

many stores. It may require new out-of-the-box thinking in marketing, but that's what those guys get paid for and, mostly, love to do.

It's astonishing, if one looks at core deli meat and cheese operations, how little is done to differentiate and create excitement. Recently I did a tour of 20 different mid-range supermarkets. Not one of the deli operations had any marketing related to the "local" phenomenon. All these operations could have promoted local specialty cheeses, and many were in areas where local meat products could be procured.

Half the industry has simply abandoned procurement. In the short run, it's probably a big advantage to sign up and banner one's deli "Boar's Head" as it enables the retailer to gain from the brand equity. But long term, such a banner precludes the supermarket deli from building its own brand equity. The long-run play is for the retailer to have buyers selecting not one good or even great line but rather great products on an item-by-item basis.

The consumer should have the sense that the retailer is out there finding opportunities. This week it's product from a local meat smoker that offers brisket and ribs, next week a specialty cheese from Oregon, and after that some smoked fish.

The marketing needs to tie the deli into the world. How many supermarket delis featured photos of massive cheese wheels crashing to the ground following the earthquake in northern Italy? How many tried to raise money to assist?

It's 2012 and the most common deli promotion in those retailers not heavy into foodservice is to discount the product. That's a race to the bottom nobody can win. Manufacturers can't make money, retailers can't build a reputation, and consumers don't get to try new product or appreciate the best quality.

Too many retail delis are procurement-driven, doing what's easy on procurement staff rather than driven by marketing to brand-build, reputation-enhance and enrich the consumer experience. What better opportunity — when in New Orleans to walk the show not with an eye on what can be procured and scaled easily, but with an eye to what can be difficult — to remember value often comes through doing what's hard, not what's easy?

We have to make delighting consumers our focus — even in delis that can't have a Korean barbecue station in store. **DB**



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Mission® Foodservice can help you turn your deli into something delicious. Our consistently fresh, high quality, versatile products allow you to expand your menu and wow your customers with easy to prepare eye-catching culinary creations. To find out how you can make Mission Tortillas a part of your operation visit us at **IDDBA Show Booth #1346** or go to [Missionfoodservice.com](http://Missionfoodservice.com).



by Lee Smith, Publisher

# The Internship Equation

Internships are often wasted opportunities, sometimes little more than summer jobs. It's absurd how many times I've heard that the purpose of internships is to teach students what it's like to work in a "real" company or "try out" a profession. Learn the meaning of real work by shoveling snow, running a cash register, delivering newspapers or working in a factory.

Students, who are used to sitting in classes and being "taught" information, are often not ready to be interns. They expect companies to pay them, granted at reduced wages, to learn the job — to *give* them experience. Emphasis intended.

Unless one had a parent who practiced a particular occupation, apprenticeships were once the only way to learn and perfect a trade. There were no formal schools to teach craft skills, such as cheesemaking, carpentry, painting or masonry. Instead, parents tried to find the best person they knew who was willing to take in their child for room and board and free labor. In addition, skilled craftsmen often became apprentices for a master craftsman they respected, even if only to clean a painter's brushes or sweep a woodworker's floor.

Internships — or *stages* — as they're referred to in France — were often highly competitive and coveted. They still are today. I know of a few programs that require the intern to pay for the privilege of working like a mule. Traditionally, *stagiaires* — a word commonly used for culinary students and those in food programs, especially in cheese — were themselves skilled craftsmen. It was a learning experience with no guarantees — the value of the experience was the responsibility of the stagiaire, not the master.

Today's higher education often requires an internship as a way to gain practical experience. Interns complain of low pay and uninteresting work, often beneath their levels of perceived ability. Companies wonder about the value of bringing on board people who are interested only in fulfilling a college requirement and often unwilling to do the hard and boring "real" work. Since interns generally lack experience, they're most suitable for lower echelon work, and companies are loath to train someone who will leave in a few weeks or months. Unfortunately, internships are usually a waste of time for all parties.

Truthfully, the responsibility for a successful internship should rest on the shoulders of the intern. Interns should have clear goals and objectives and

should thoroughly research the company or the individual they want to intern under. Most importantly, internships should not be limited to young adults; they should be awarded to students of all ages — to anyone who wants to incorporate learning as part of life's adventure.

I say this from firsthand experience. As a stagiaire at Fromage Mons in France, I worked side-by-side with other interns. In preparation for my internship, I made it very clear that I didn't want to be treated in any special way and, for the privilege of working there, I was willing to do whatever needed to be done — including sweeping floors and cleaning bathrooms. I went with the understanding that learning was my responsibility.

As I said, it was a privilege. I learned by observing, asking questions and working hard. I had the opportunity to do far more than I had expected.

This year — right after the summer Fancy Food Show — I will be leaving for Italy for another stage. I will be working with the famed cheesemaker and affineur Carlo Piccoli at Latteria Perenzin in the small town of San Pietro di Feletto in Veneto, Italy.

The journey to interning with Latteria Perenzin didn't come easily. I've been looking for the right company — an artisanal company that makes hand-crafted, small format cheeses and, most of all, is run by a true master of his craft. Since my time is so limited, I wanted to be exposed to a number of cheeses.

By chance, I found Carlo Piccoli and his wife Emanuela Perenzin at the Bra Cheese Festival in Italy. The craftsmanship of their cheeses was awe-inspiring. These are people who are creative, passionate and demanding of perfection. If all I can do is help milk the goats, ladle curds, turn cheese and clean up, I will have grown my knowledge immensely.

I initially thought most people would think I was a little crazy for pursuing a stage, but the response was not what I expected. Many, including presidents of companies, have asked if I could help them find intern opportunities for themselves. If there is a lesson to learn, it is that experienced professionals need to continually reinvent themselves. To be in the company of greatness fosters passion, and passion is the seed of success. **DB**



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lee Smith'.

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d'Affinois



**MICHAEL COPPOLA**  
 VP DMM Perishables  
 BJ's Wholesale Club  
 Westborough, MA

## 8th Annual People's Awards

### 1. How did you get started in the industry?

I started bagging groceries when I was 15 years old for a small independent family run supermarket in Stoneham, MA.

### 2. How has your career evolved over the years?

My career has spanned over 33 years in the retail food industry. I started in operations as perishable department manager for produce and deli, then I became a store manager. I held a position as field merchandiser in perishables, responsible for in-store perishable execution. From there, I moved on to category manager for multiple perishable categories including meat, deli, and bakery.

I started my career at BJ's Wholesale Club in November 2003 as a buyer. My current position is vice president, divisional merchandise manager for perishables.

### 3. What positions have you held in industry organizations?

I'm a member of the Organic Trade Association

### 4. What is your leadership philosophy?

- Nurture a culture of creativity

Develop, coach, and support a culture of creative, strategic thinkers

- Set and communicate clear expectations

"Never back down from what you expect." Challenge business partners and your team to meet or exceed your expectations

- Leadership is dialogue, not monologue

I enjoy having dialogue with my team listening to their ideas, opportunities, or issues and I challenge them while providing guidance and encouragement.

My favorite leadership quote is "Success is where preparation and opportunity meet."

### 5. What hobbies do you enjoy outside work?

Outside of work, it's all about spending quality time with my family.

### 6. What inspires you to make a difference in today's world?

Mentoring someone and watching them develop over time personally and professionally. Making an impact on developing a team member and providing paths and opportunities for them to succeed is extremely inspiring.

### 7. What charity is your personal favorite?

Jimmy Fund – Boston's Dana Farber Cancer institute that fights cancer in children and adults.



### 8. What is your advice to people starting out in this industry?

Learn every day and set goals for yourself. Develop your own style of creative thinking and never be risk adverse.

### 9. What do you predict will be the next hottest deli trend?

Healthier offerings focusing on lower sodium, organic, and all natural. Innovation in packaging for sliced deli meats and cheeses that will deliver on quality, convenience, and the deli experience. For specialty deli — tapas inspirations, fresh olives, European cured meats, specialty cheese in convenient packaging formats.

### 10. What's your favorite read?

Books on leadership and history.

*Developing the Leader Within You* by John C. Maxwell and *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly are some examples.



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## BEN GALLEGOS

Director of Bakery/Deli  
C&K Markets  
Brookings, OR

# 8th Annual People's Awards

### 1. How did you get started in the industry?

I became immersed in the food industry from the ground floor on up, beginning with my first big break in purchasing at a grocery distributor in Oregon. From there I moved into the specialty arena with companies such as Bristol Farms and HEB Central Market. I also have had the chance to travel the world with Lufthansa Holdings and LSG Skycheffs airline catering.

### 2. How has your career evolved over the years?

All of my experiences have helped me to become well versed on the culinary and wrap side of the food industry and have led me to sustain positive relations with food manufacturers, distributors and retailers throughout the U.S., as well as internationally.

### 3. What positions have you held in industry organizations?

I've actively participated in such organizations as the International Travel Catering Association, a representative body for all companies involved in the in-flight service industry.

### 4. What is your leadership philosophy?

That's simple: Never ask anyone to do something that you wouldn't be willing to do yourself and always strive to be a dependable, loyal, decisive person who shows initiative. By embracing this hands-on approach and developing these vital characteristics and behaviors, I've learned to use my best judgment in every situation, guided by the highest of ethical standards and the desire to always satisfy my customers, vendors and industry associates.

### 5. What hobbies do you enjoy outside work?

My weekends are like a mini vacation. I make the most of all the time I have to spend with my family. When I'm at work, I focus on what is going on in my professional life, but when I'm at home, it's all about my family. I can't say that I have a hobby, per se, but I enjoy going for hikes along the beach, sporting events, and I plan on getting back into running marathons.

### 6. What inspires you to make a difference in today's world?

A potential source of positive energy in the work that we do is the difference that we all can make. All work is inherently about making a difference and when we show up with respect and compassion for others, it often has an effect on how they show up, too. The more we incorporate this into our careers, the more energy it will give us, energy that we can then put right back into making a positive impact in the world.

### 7. What charity is your personal favorite?

It's always nice to donate to local charities. Recently I've focused my attention on the Oregon Food Bank. The OFB distributes food to more than 340 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters



and other programs helping low-income individuals. They also work to eliminate the root causes of hunger through advocacy, nutrition education, learning gardens and public education.

### 8. What is your advice to people starting out in this industry?

Be a lifelong learner and always actively seek out new opportunities to improve yourself and develop new skills, even if this means you have to leave your comfort zone. If you have the desire and motivation then the knowledge and expertise in the field will soon follow.

### 9. What do you predict will be the next hottest deli trend?

Due to people being exposed and educated through media outlets, consumers have higher expectations and wish to experience various cultures through prepared ethnic street foods. The next big deli trend will be to accommodate these expectations at a value.

### 10. What's your favorite read?

Why, DELI BUSINESS, of course.



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**DAVID GROTENSTEIN**  
 Merchandising Manager/Union Market  
 Consultant/Food and Image  
 Brooklyn, NY

## 8th Annual People's Awards

### 1. How did you get started in the industry?

My wife and I were filmmakers in New York. In 1980, at the peak of the recession, a huge chunk of all the work that supported us dried up — commercials, industrial and medical films mostly. Everybody's budget was cut to nothing. So I just had to get a job. In December that year I started at Pasta & Cheese as a \$4/hour counter man. My first job in food. I was managing the store in five months.

### 2. How has your career evolved over the years?

I've stayed in specialty retail throughout the years, for the most part, with a few diversions. I've always liked the dynamic of being in the stores and still enjoy working with customers and staff. After P&C, I was at Mangia for three years, then moved on to Fairway Market in Manhattan. At that time they had just the one store. There's no question that Fairway put me on the map in the food business. I started as the deli manager, then cheese, then both departments and all the specialty. I was there for 8 years.

I co-owned a shop for a while, worked with Gourmet Garage, then started consulting to new retailers in 1997. I helped open a number of shops, including Fox & Obel in Chicago and Fallon & Byrne in Dublin, and have been working steadily for a couple of years with Union Market in Brooklyn. Last year I helped open Cheese Culture in Ft. Lauderdale.

### 3. What positions have you held in industry organizations?

I've served twice on the board of directors of The American Cheese Society, and as ACS judging chair and co-chair for 6 years with John Greeley and Todd Druhot. Last year I was honored as *Prud'Homme* by the *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers*.

### 4. What is your leadership philosophy?

If you're lucky enough to find yourself in a leadership role, and even luckier to be someone who enjoys that responsibility and accepts the challenge, presume the respect of your staff, and return it. Every day.

### 5. What hobbies do you enjoy outside work?

I've been running a lot. And I love to cook, which I do most days. I suppose I think the more I run the more I can cook and eat. We'll see how that works out.

### 6. What inspires you to make a difference in today's world?

A moment where you truly believed you could make a difference would be inspirational all by itself. Too often peoples' feelings are dominated by bad experiences. Sometimes a good interaction with a customer or a colleague will change my whole week. A close colleague of mine once said there's no better feeling than really helping someone. That always stuck with me.



### 7. What is your advice to people starting out in this industry?

Love the food. Have a good time with the customers. If you don't know the answer, find someone who does. Always tell the truth.

### 8. What do you predict will be the next hottest deli trend?

I don't flatter myself by thinking I possess such mystical powers, but I do believe the current trend is positive and will continue. The consumer has never had more information at their fingertips. Food is all over the media. The specialty world finds itself exploding with farmstead cheeses and old world charcuterie, much of it produced in the U.S. As this savvy, new customer seeks out these exciting new foods, the best 21st century delis are incorporating more and more of them into their mix, along with naturally produced traditional meats and cheeses. Local and regionally produced products are almost any department's new calling cards.

### 9. What's your favorite read?

Still the *New York Times*. Real news and lots of it.



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## NANCY RADKE

President  
Ciao Ltd./Good Food Creative, Inc.  
Syracuse, NY

# 8th Annual People's Awards

### 1. How did you get started in the industry?

After living in Italy for four years and learning Italian in the late '70s and early '80s, I spent 10 years publishing a culinary newsletter. I needed a change and the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano-Reggiano needed someone who could help represent them and educate Americans about the history, craftsmanship, characteristics, and uses of their members' cheese. My work with them began in November 1990. I've continued to work for that Consorzio as well as for other cheese and prosciutto making consorzi. I've also had the opportunity to work on numerous Italian government- and EU-sponsored programs promoting products with Protected Geographical Indications (PDOs).

### 2. How has your career evolved over the years?

My career evolved based on what the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano-Reggiano needed me to do for them. My first step was to advise them to protect the name Parmigiano Reggiano and the marks for their prestigious cheese. I coordinate advertising campaigns, develop recipes, staff trade and consumer food shows, write recipes and newsletters, collaborate in legal infringement law suits, and manage marketing programs for the Consorzio. Most recently I developed and launched Parmesan.com, a consumer website in English. Mastering social media marketing is my new frontier.

### 3. What positions have you held in industry organizations?

I've been a long-time member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) and have achieved Certified Culinary Professional (CCP) status in that organization. I'm also a member of the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) and the American Cheese Society (ACS). I provided content questions for the new Certified Cheese Professional exam to be administered for the first time at the ACS conference in August.

### 4. What is your leadership philosophy?

I'm a big proponent of leading by example — rolling up my sleeves and helping the team accomplish the task at hand. The art to this is mentoring so they're in charge of the tasks and I'm there for support. In this way everyone becomes a stakeholder in the success of the operation.

### 5. What hobbies do you enjoy outside work?

Ballroom dancing with my husband — it's one of the few places where we can forget work concerns. I also enjoy walking daily, hiking in the Adirondacks and in Italy and sitting on the beach at Tybee Island, GA.

### 6. What inspires you to make a difference in today's world?

I feel compelled to be involved in social justice issues that help feed people in need. Whether it's supporting the food pantry at our church or teaching inner city children to select and prepare nutritious foods, I'm grateful to be able to give people the skills to find healthy and economical ways to feed themselves and their families.

### 7. What charity is your personal favorite?

Grace Church Episcopal in Syracuse, a tiny diverse congregation doing big things in our community. It's in the forefront of ministries of



peace and is a crusader for minority, women's and gay rights.

### 8. What is your advice to people starting out in this industry?

Learn a second language, preferably one spoken in a place you'd like to visit. Study and read everything you can get your hands on about the unique foods and cuisine of that place. Then go and experience it first hand for as long as your schedule and budget will allow. Identify what inspires you and make it the centerpiece of how you market yourself. No experience or study is wasted as long as you learn to bring the sum of all your talents and knowledge to every task you encounter, no matter how mundane. And when you don't have all the skills and preparation for a given task, find people who do and learn from them.

### 9. What do you predict will be the next hottest deli trend?

Serving people with special dietary needs — vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free — will increasingly become a part of the prepared-food offerings. If done creatively and with an abundance of taste, these environmentally friendly and healthy offerings can benefit the larger population as a whole. And on the meatatarian side, I predict an increased interest in rotisserie preparations of other meats — brisket, pork, and lamb. Chicken will remain a favorite.

### 10. What's your favorite read?

I must confess to being an escapist reader with a penchant for murder mysteries. Currently I can't get enough of the Commissario Brunetti mysteries set in the beautiful, decadent city of Venice by author Donna Leon. They're great travel companions.



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## GEOFFREY WEXLER

Director of Deli & Prepared Foods  
Weis Markets  
Sunbury, PA

# 8th Annual People's Awards

### 1. How did you get started in the industry?

I'm a third generation restaurateur who had the great fortune of becoming involved with eatZis Market and Bakery. I loved the passion of the associates and the excitement of our customers. In 2006 I had an opportunity to work with Publix Supermarkets as a category manager for prepared foods, I was hooked!

### 2. How has your career evolved over the years?

I spent over 20 years in the hospitality industry and the last nine in the retail world, and it's been a great ride. I've been fortunate to become aligned with great opportunities and mentors. My career has wound through a lot of stops: dishwasher, kitchen manager, general manager, regional manager, consulting, category management and now director.

I have been blessed and challenged.

### 3. What positions have you held in industry organizations?

As I'm relatively new in the retail industry, I have not yet networked with the available organizations. I look forward to the opportunity.

### 4. What is your leadership philosophy?

It's my role to be the standard bearer of my business's quality, environment and service. I need to remove barriers for our teams and help them develop the skills and confidence to offer a standout customer experience that will help us drive sales and profits. The style I incorporate is a hybrid of my mentor's style, which is to be involved at all times — to both challenge and support the people I work with.

### 5. What hobbies do you enjoy outside work?

My time is limited so when I'm free I like to unwind and recharge my batteries. I enjoy spinning, working out, golf, travel, great food, great wine and most importantly family.

### 6. What inspires you to make a difference in today's world?

I love what I do. I work with a lot of great people here at Weis Markets where we're focused on constant improvement and finding ways to deliver a market-best combination of value, quality and service.

### 7. What charity is your personal favorite?

There are so many worthy causes today and with people on hard times, charities are hurting. I try to make a difference with donations to Pan-Can. Pancreatic Cancer is becoming more and more prevalent and striking people far younger than ever before. Having lost my brother-in-law to this disease, I see the need for continued research and awareness.



### 8. What is your advice to people starting out in this industry?

Some times you see a focus on instant gratification — for many it's all about NOW! But there's a lot to be said for continuously learning on the job — for maturing and developing in a position while taking on new challenges. It's my personal experience that regardless of education or intellect — experience matters. Be humble, be the best you can be, be open to guidance and direction from your peers, supervisors and our customers.

### 9. What do you predict will be the next hottest deli trend?

The biggest trends will continue to be in prepared foods. However, our customers are seeking more than hoagies, rotisserie and fried chickens. They want more exciting and flavorful restaurant quality alternatives.

I am also hopeful there is a rededication to quality and service.

We need to embrace our customers now more than ever and tell the story.

### 10. What's your favorite read?

*Time, Fortune*



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# CREATIVE CROSS-MERCHANDISING

Add-ons make selling cheese a potential margin generator

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

Selling cheese with a variety of go-withs makes good dollars and sense. Consumers like the convenience of inspired suggestions and ingredients all in one location. Retailers find it an excellent way to build a higher ring per basket. However, successful cross-merchandising takes more effort than simply putting two items next to each other.

John Stueland, deli category manager at Lund Food Holdings, Inc., an Edina, MN-based retailer that operates 10 Lunds and 11 Byerly's supermarkets, says, "We're thoughtful, solution-driven, in our cross-merchandising. For example, there's a theme behind a particular pairing. This might be foods from a certain region, or two or more items that complement each other or are enjoyed side by side or something that makes an inspired ingredient in a recipe."



PHOTO COURTESY OF VENUS WAFERS



Cheese and crackers are one of the all-time most popular combinations. According to Hillary Woodyatt, marketing associate for Venus Wafers, in Hingham, MA, "There are nuances in the flavor and texture of crackers that can really bring out the flavor of a cheese. Therefore, think beyond a cracker as simply a carrier." The company's rosemary and sea salt-flavored 8-grain flatbread and saffron and black pepper Haute Cuisine crackers pair well with Brie while its sesame seed-flavored deli-style Nejaime's Lavasch pairs well with Sharp Cheddar.

"We're working on a cheese and cracker pairing chart that offers suggestions of what flavors go best together," Woodyatt notes,

Antonio Galati, director of business development for La Panzanella, LLC, in Tukwila, WA, says, "In Italy, breads and crackers are accompaniments, not the star of the meal. You don't want a strong cracker that will mask the flavor of a cheese. For example, our rosemary or sesame Croccantini pair well with a mild Goat Cheese."

Partners, a gourmet cracker, cookie and snack manufacturer in Kent, WA, offers deli operators a rack program to make cross-merchandising imaginative cheese and cracker combinations easier. "Our new rack is only five feet tall, 20 inches wide and 11 inches deep, which means it can fit in a small place as well as be easily moved," explains Cara Figgins, vice president. The racks are pre-filled with one or a mix of the company's best-selling flavors of its just under 5-ounce overwrapped tray packs of artisan flatbread crackers. The Roasted Garlic & Rosemary or Everything & More flavors pair well next to a display of Chèvre or other creamy Goat Cheese.

Keep customers coming back by promoting a new cheese and cracker combination once or twice per month, Figgins recommends. "People like the regularity, they like the simple suggestions and they like the fact that you've specially suggested it like a personal recommendation. Some supermarket delis do this as part of a Friday and Saturday night wine tasting in the deli."

Don't just sample a plain piece of cheese,

advises Woodyatt. "Hand a customer a piece of cheese on a cracker. By doing so, you teach them what pairs well together and hopefully they purchase both products."

An active and ongoing sampling program is in place at Lunds and Byerly's stores, says Stueland. "We offer self-sampling if it's just two items, such as cheese paired with a fruit spread, and active, manned demos if we sample more than two items at once. If something we're sampling has three or more

ingredients and requires two or more steps to make, then we'll also hand out a recipe card at the same time."

### Sweet and Savory Combinations

Sweet and savory, says Stueland, "is a big trend now."

Indeed, Americans are projected to increase their consumption of sweet snacks and desserts three times more than their savory-loving Canadian counterparts over

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the next decade, according to the Port Washington, NY-based NPD Group's May 25, 2011-released report *A Look into the Future of Eating — United States Marketplace*. Capitalize on this by offering deli customers a sweet and savory combination of cheese and cheese accompaniments.

Maria Walley, president of Daelia's Food Company, Cincinnati, OH, says, "There's a long tradition of cheese and sweets. For example, think of cheese platters served with fresh fruit." Four-ounce bags of Daelia's Almond Biscuits pair well with aged Cheddars and Blue Cheese, Hazelnut Biscuits with soft sheep's milk cheeses, and new Pumpkin Seed with Rye Biscuits with Gruyère or Camembert.

Cross-merchandise cheeses with wine jellies, suggests Anna Gallo, director of marketing for Savello USA, Inc., Wilkes-Barre, PA. "Shoppers are often unsure how a goat's milk cheese will taste, so we like to sample this along with a cow's milk and half-and-half cow's milk and goat's milk cheese. Each of these cheeses pairs well with a wine jelly." Well-received pairings include Savello di Roma (100 percent sheep's milk) with moscato wine jelly, Podda Classico (cow and sheep's milk) with balsamic vinegar wine jelly and Crucolo



PHOTO COURTESY OF LA PANZANELLA

(cow's milk) with dolcetto wine jelly.

Restaurateurs will often make up a three-cheese platter with wine jellies and offer it as an appetizer, says Savello's Gallo. "This con-

cept could work at retail, too."

Haley Bowers, marketing representative at the Savannah Bee Company, Savannah, GA, sees pairing cheese with honey as an opportunity to increase register ring. She recommends "cross-merchandising cheese with honey and honeycomb. We bottle a honey specifically for pairing with cheese. It's called Cheese Honey and comes with a pump top. In-store, we offer a sampler honey and cheese platter. The sampler is displayed on a cherry-wood serving tray that's also for sale. Apples for the honeycomb platter are merchandised in the same cooler as the cheese. It's a one-stop shop from start to finish — tray, apples, cheese, crackers, honey and serving knife."

### Strategic Pricing

Price discounts will help move product, but high-end accompaniments can be a good category for building margins.

Customers often feel experimental when they come into the specialty cheese department, says Walley. "They're willing to spend \$25 on a bottle of wine and \$12 on a hunk of cheese, so \$6 for a box of crackers doesn't seem like so much. Deli operators should capitalize on and capture this."

Still, a cents-off promotion can be a purchase driver. Partners' Figgins says, "We'll put an IRC [instant redeemable coupon] on our crackers. Customers like it because they get the discount right away. Retailers like it because it reduces the risk of purchasing something new and hopefully entices trials."

Consider your customer and sales objective when deciding whether or not to dis-

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count. "If you know most people are going to buy two products together, then there's no point in discounting," explains Savannah's Bowers." However, if it's a product that may not always initiate an immediate I-can't-get-this-product-without-the-other reaction,

then I think a great incentive is to discount the more expensive product."

#### Expanding Opportunities

The distinguishing characteristic of cross-merchandising at Lunds and Byerly's,

according to Stueland "is that we take two good things and put them together for one great combination."

The forward-thinking deli category manager does this in a number of creative ways that take cross-merchandising beyond a one-bite appetizer to full snack or mini-meal solution.

For example, says Stueland, "We cross-merchandise internally in the department with everything from cheese and crackers to ingredient-driven items such as cheese and pasta or pizza dough along with meats, olives and other toppings. Then interdepartmentally, we'll cross-merchandise Blue Cheese, for example, with steaks in the meat department, Mozzarella with tomatoes in the summer or apples and pears with Cheddar in the fall in the produce department, and cheeses with artisan breads and olive oil in the bakery."

Partners' Figgins believes that the bigger the solution you offer the consumer, the bigger the ring will be. "For example, cross-merchandising fig jam with crackers and Brie or cheese, crackers and a tapenade fancies it up. It's more than just a snack bite — it's an appetizer ready for entertaining." **DB**

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# A TASTE OF *Italy*

Delis seek to offer their customers both authentic and Americanized Italian fare

BY JULIE COOK RAMIREZ

America's love affair with Italian food can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th century when Southern Italian immigrants flooded U.S. shores, bringing with them their traditions of home. Following their arrival at Ellis Island, they settled in large American cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, Boston, New York City, and San Francisco. Needing a way to support their families in this new land, many ambitious Italian-Americans opened their own markets and restaurants. At first, they served mostly fellow Italian immigrants seeking to maintain the traditions of their homeland. As time wore on, however, other ethnic groups began frequenting such establishments and a true love of Italian cuisine was born.

Over the last half century, the commercialization of Italian cuisine has led to what many have dubbed the Americanization of Italian food. From Chef Boyardee and Franco-American canned kid-friendly pasta dishes to restaurants such as Pizza Hut, Fazoli's, and The Olive Garden, critics argue that some of what passes for Italian cuisine isn't authentically Italian.

"There are some chain restaurants that say, 'We're Italian' when they're really not," says Anna Gallo, director of marketing,

Savello USA Inc., Wilkes-Barre, PA. "You go to the kitchen and they don't know anything about Italian food."

That's not altogether a bad thing, according to Alberto Minardi, general manager and general partner, Principe Foods, Long Beach, CA. He believes there's room under the Italian cuisine umbrella for both authentic and Americanized offerings. While a couple may be likely to seek out an authentic Italian meal when looking to enjoy a romantic evening — either at home or dining out — an Americanized, kid-friendly "Italian style" meal may better serve a family affair, he reasons.

A need for both options is widespread throughout the industry. "There's plenty of room for both concepts to co-exist," says Tom Quinn, vice president of operations, Nuovo Pasta Productions Ltd., Stratford, CT. "People are always looking for something new to serve, so they want to mix and match and try to create variety. They don't want to have the same meal over and over again."

When it comes to explaining the enduring popularity of Italian food — both authentic and Americanized — Quinn says that's relatively simple. Italian food is typically viewed as comfort food, and people tend to seek out comfort food during good and bad times.

"When times are tough, people want food they know and Italian food always fits

that bill," he explains. "Likewise, when times are good and people want to celebrate, they go to food they know. It's that consistency of demand that has helped the category grow."

As with so many food trends of the past decade, many in the industry credit TV cooking shows for driving increased interest in Italian cuisine — and for exposing consumers to more authentic ingredients and dishes they may not otherwise have discovered if left to their own devices.

"The emergence of celebrity chefs and reality shows has generated mass interest in the Italian cuisine and made specialty foods more mainstream," says George Christodoulou, director of retail sales, Castella Imports Inc., Hauppauge, NY. "It's educated the public on Italian food, its origins, and why and how certain ingredients are used."

The unique combinations of ingredients popularized by celebrity chefs have inspired consumers to experiment in their own kitchens to come up with creative uses for traditional Italian products, says Lorenza Passetti, president, Volpi Foods Inc., St. Louis, MO.

"The growth of the celebrity chef trend and the expansion of the media around that have really affected people's purchasing," says Quinn. "It's nearly impossible to pick up a magazine and not see a celebrity chef talk-



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ing about a great Italian dish. That's really broadened consumers' viewpoint."

One high-profile proponents of Italian cuisine is Giada De Laurentiis, star of The Food Network's *Everyday Italian* and a number of best-selling cookbooks. But De Laurentiis is far from the only TV cook promoting the tastes of Italy. Even actress Debi Mazar has gotten in on the act, starring in *Extra Virgin*, a quirky half-hour cooking show starring Mazar and her Tuscan-born husband Gabriele Corcos. Each week, the couple — who have been dubbed the "Lucy and Ricky of the kitchen" — cooks up a number of authentic Tuscan dishes for family and friends.

Such high-profile shows have not only bolstered the trendy factor of the already immensely popular cuisine, but they've also inspired American consumers to engage in the classic Italian tradition of hosting at-home gourmet cook-ins. Guests each bring an ingredient, side dish, or bottle of vino, and join the host in preparing the meal.

This trend represents a "dramatic change" in how Americans consume Italian cuisine, according to Principe's Minardi. No longer in the financial position to dine out at the frequency they did during the booming '90s, a growing number of consumers have taken to entertaining and cooking gourmet meals at home. "Rather than going out, they invite a bunch of friends, choose some particular recipes, and then cook at home. It's nothing new for Italians because we have the tendency of standing around a kitchen, chitchatting and cooking. It's a different type of social environment."

### Make It Easy

The trend toward cooking Italian cuisine at home has led many delis to provide kits and/or cross-merchandise complementary products, giving consumers everything they need to whip up an Italian feast with minimal effort. While the majority of consumers don't have hours to spend in the kitchen every night, they still want to feel they've played a role in preparing the evening meal. And they want that meal to be the same restaurant quality they grew accustomed to having during better economic times. That's where the deli — and the basic components that go into an Italian meal — comes into play.

"Typically, both spouses work all day, so one of them stops at the local market at six o'clock at night, picks up a package of pasta, a container of good sauce, a loaf of bread, and some salad, and in 15 minutes, 'Look, I made you a gourmet meal,'" says Nuovo's Quinn. "It's not hours in the kitchen, but it is participation food. It's taking the components and combining them."

For delis, this presents an opportunity to



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEFANO FOODS

provide consumers with all the components they need to serve a restaurant-quality Italian meal at home. Not surprisingly, Italian meats are a popular item, with pancetta leading the pack, according to Savello's Gallo. Slightly smoked and completely flat, Savello's pancetta is easy to handle, making it ideal for many applications. Delis can slice the product for inclusion in a sandwich or even wrap it around a scallop, says Gallo.

The desire to provide fast service has led many delis to request pre-sliced meats. From first quarter 2011 to first quarter 2012, sales of pre-sliced Italian meats have surged 15 percent, Gallo reports. "They say, 'I sell this product all the time, people wait in line for it, so let's just get it pre-sliced and have it already done,'" she says. "They feel it doesn't change the quality much, just makes it faster and more convenient for the public."

The availability of upscale product is also bringing consumers to the deli in search of authentic Italian fare. Principe, an importer and distributor of Italian specialty meats, brings in prosciutto that has been cured for up to 20 months, for example. While several years ago, such meats were often viewed as unhealthy, Minardi says the American mindset has come around to recognize that such delicacies can be part of a healthful diet, if eaten properly and in moderation.

In general, the belief that Italian food is innately fattening has gone by the wayside, says Gallo. She points out that residents of Italy tend to eat pasta everyday for lunch and most of them are slim. Consequently, she says most Americans now view pasta and other Italian dishes as healthy, recogniz-

ing it's more about when you eat and how much you consume in one sitting.

### Replicating the Restaurant

While the trend toward preparing Italian dishes at home is certainly strong, it doesn't mean consumers have stopped turning to the deli for prepared, heat-and-serve products. As Americans seek to replicate the restaurant experience at home, they're increasingly looking to their local deli to give them restaurant-quality fare that can easily be reheated and placed on the table. Italian foods represent one of the most popular cuisines for which consumers desire such easy-to-serve offerings.

"Deli managers look to companies like Castella to create products that incorporate familiar Italian ingredients that their consumers demand, as well as innovative specialty items with a nouveau flair that pique culinary interest," says Christodoulou.

Volpe's Passetti cites the trend toward using traditional Italian ingredients in new and unique ways. She points to prosciutto and arugula pizza as an example.

Nuovo's Quinn notes a "huge uptick" in the use of specialty cheeses in Italian dishes. "If you look at the specialty sections, they've really raised the bar in regard to specialty cheeses, so consumers make a connection between the specialty cheese they see in the case and the finished product meals they can get that use those cheeses," he explains. Nuovo makes such gourmet pastas as portabella and Fontina ravioli, Gorgonzola sundried tomato ravioli, and the award-winning spinach mushroom Gruyère ravioli.



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Quinn believes the popular TV chefs have raised the standard by which all deli offerings are judged, as consumers increasingly visit the deli department looking for dishes they've seen prepared on their favorite show. "If a chef on the Food Network does osso buco, you want to go find osso buco," he notes. "They may not have time to prepare it, but they're going to find an osso buco ravioli or something of that nature in the deli section."

While gourmet consumers may be looking for a specialty dish they might find in a white tablecloth establishment, a fair number of consumers are looking for something they can feed the entire family. To satisfy that segment of the population, Nuovo Pasta came up with Mac & Cheez Gol' Fish Ravioli, fish-shaped ravioli with a mac-and-cheese flavored filling.

### The Right Mix

When it comes to the proper assortment of Italian prepared dishes to offer, Alan Hamer, vice president of sales and marketing, Stefano Foods, Charlotte, NC, says the most successful deli programs feature a "robust assortment of items that signal an Italian foods commitment to the shopper."

While pizza remains the cornerstone, Hamer says calzones, strombolis, and other authentic Italian items are necessary to complete the selection.

"Delis need to keep a pulse on the latest trends within their customer base to ensure they can continue providing creative offerings with both ingredients and prepared foods by utilizing Old World flavors for New World palates," says Christodoulou. He points to Castella's Mediterranean Tapas platter. Developed in response to "overwhelming consumer demand for easy entertaining at home," it features specialty olives and antipasto items.

Delis would be well served to offer regional favorites as well. According to Savello's Gallo, this trend is spilling over from the foodservice segment where restaurants are increasingly specializing in food from a specific region. "Instead of just touting themselves as Italian, restaurants will say, 'I'm Tuscan' or 'I'm Sardinian,'" she says. "They're carving out more of a niche to make it known that they're true Italian, that it's not just a generalized chicken marsala or eggplant Parmesan kind of restaurant."

Gallo is a strong proponent of educating consumers about the origins of specific prod-

ucts. She believes sampling events can be extremely helpful, particularly when accompanied by a free recipe book. She has also seen delis attract attention to their Italian offerings by utilizing visual tactics such as hanging a fake prosciutto from the ceiling.

When it comes to promoting Italian offerings, Volpi's Passetti recommends delis create an "Italian section" or celebrate an Italian Month featuring all Italian items, including vegetables, fruits, breads, and wines. She suggests playing Italian music during the celebration and bringing in local restaurant chefs to instruct consumers.

Above all else, delis should seek to position themselves as a place where consumers can go to get a delicious, reasonably priced Italian dinner that doesn't require much additional effort once they get it home. Only then will they receive the kind of repeat business every deli strives for.

"The U.S. is one of those places where people tend to overwork and are usually not geared to go home and prepare food," says Principe's Minardi. "The best scenario would be to create an ambience where a person can chill and relax in front of an easy, affordable meal that has the upper-end in terms of quality."

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# THE LATEST PACKAGING TRENDS

State-of-the-art technology keeps food fresher longer and provides convenience, eye appeal and easy transport

BY LISA WHITE

PHOTO COURTESY OF D&W FINE PACK



PHOTO COURTESY OF PLACON CORP.



The deli is constantly evolving with new products, innovative ingredients and unique offerings; fortunately, deli packaging has kept pace with these changes, adapting along with the food segments. With the help of technology and innovative materials, today's deli packaging provides consumers with improved tamper resistance, sustainable alternatives, enhanced convenience and eye-appealing options. And packaging manufacturers have not lost sight of the important aspects retailers require, such as shelf life and affordability.

Tamper-evident packaging is a part of a 'smart packaging' revolution that accomplishes a task while communicating safety to consumers. "In the plastics industry, there's a lot of conversation about what defines a smart package," says Dave Fosse, director of marketing, Lindar Corp., Baxter, MN. Smart packaging is about more than labeling or the packaging itself. Rather than merely containing product, smart packaging containers serve a function. Examples can be as simple as a vented bag for chicken or a seal that changes color if the package has been breached.

At a more complex level, smart packaging is about new technology. "Nano technology brings deli packaging to a whole new level," Fosse says. Nanoscience and nanotechnology are a completely new way of looking at and studying extremely small things. This method is used across all science fields, including materials and engineering. Lindar has developed the ability to change the way product is presented using this new technology but has not yet implemented it into packaging lines.

"Many aspects of smart packaging make it cost prohibitive for in-store delis, but this isn't the case for tamper-evident packaging," Fosse

says. "This has been a huge focus on the plastics side, because it's important from a food-safety perspective. Consumers need that extra level of confidence."

The importance of tamper resistance cannot be overstated, especially in the deli, so many packaging manufacturers, well aware of the consequences of breaches, have been focusing on it.

D&W Fine Pack, Fountain Inn, SC, is currently building its packaging presence in the supermarket deli arena. Its recent purchase of CM Packaging Group, Lake Zurich, IL, has presented new opportunity in the category. "Tamper evidence continues to be in the forefront of new deli packaging when it comes to meals to go," says Karen Roman, director of product management. One of the D&W's top-selling items is its chicken roaster packaging. The company is looking to expand its lines to include not only stock products but also customized packaging for delis.

According to Herb Knutson, director of marketing, Inline Plastics Corp., Shelton, CT, one of the company's most recent product introductions for deli applications is a tamper-resistant, rigid plastic sandwich-wedge container. Made from recyclable PET plastic, it incorporates Safe-T-Guard technology that makes it resistant to attempts to open the container without removing the tear strip. "Another trend is rigid containers utilizing perimeter seal designs that increase shelf life for many foods," he says.

## Convenience

Convenience — in terms of merchandising, transport and storage — is another important aspect of deli packaging. Packaging has moved toward single-serve kits in addition to compartmentalized multi-serv-

ing kits for the family.

With the country's focus on healthful eating, single-portion sizes, in particular, have become more prevalent. Packaging geared for grab-and-go meals sized for one provide consumers with added convenience. "Health and wellness is affecting the packaging segment," D&W's Roman says. "There was always a trend of sizing for family meals, but now there is an added focus on single-serve portions." In response to this development, the company recently launched its Land Cruiser line of 5- and 6-ounce bowls.

Microwavability also is driving packaging technology, as an increasing number of consumers look for this feature. D&W plans to roll out more microwavable packaging lines that address the focus on convenience.

Leak resistance speaks to the convenience side in terms of transporting food. "This is at the top of consumers' list," Roman says. "Lids need to be tight and secure."

Easy transport is key, especially with the growth of grab-and-go items, such as sandwiches, fresh-cut fruit and salads. "Packaging has had to adapt to properly transport and display these items, especially in the areas of product protection and the extension of shelf life," Inline's Knutson says.

### Sustainability

Although it may seem like a contradiction with some of the newer packaging materials, sustainability has been another priority for those in the industry.

Early in 2011, Placon Corp., Madison, WI, introduced a line of PET bakery packaging with plans to extend this line to the deli in 2012. Strong, lightweight, non-reactive, economical and shatterproof PET "can include post-consumer recycled content up to 100 percent," according to Jeff Lucash, national sales manager. "Supermarkets as well as consumers are interested in sustainable materials that can be recycled and kept out of landfills."

In June 2011, the top five Canadian grocery chains announced they will require their suppliers to shift to PET for clamshell thermofoms. "PET is a widely recycled material, and they are doing this to increase recycling and simplify the product stream," Lucash says. "This very likely could expand to the U.S., especially since one of the five Canadian grocery chains is Wal-Mart."

"With sustainable packaging, much of the time the weight can be reduced, which saves money, and the fibers used make it more durable," says Justin Faerman, director of media and marketing, Be Green Packaging, Santa Barbara, CA. Depending on the type of package, there can be a reduction of petroleum usage, which lowers the contain-

ers' carbon footprint.

Be Green's packaging line is compostable and recyclable, so it's not only diverted from landfills but also can be reused. "From a cost standpoint, we don't use petrochemicals at all in our manufacturing process," Faerman adds. "These are plant-based products, which aren't affected by the volatility of oil prices."

Advanced sustainable packaging technology has provided enhanced features. For example, Be Green has created a method to

dye the pulp used in its lines so it provides a more consistent, vibrant color. "We're currently working with other companies on tray coatings, which have not yet been pioneered with sustainable packaging," Faerman notes.

In all aspects of the industry, the goal is to reduce the amount of packaging, which helps decrease costs overall. "The question is, how can we use less packaging for more applications?" D&W's Roman asks. "Part of it is about sustainability, which is the obvious



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driver of this, but everyone is looking at it from a cost, rationalization or category management perspective, as well. Having fewer SKUs streamlines the process from purchasing to applications.”

### Eye Appeal

Part of packaging's function is merchandising, so eye appeal remains an important factor. In-store deli packaging designs have evolved from film overwraps to containers, trays and printed pouches. During this evolution, branding has become increasingly top of mind, with the goal of creating visually appealing signature items.

Technology, such as digital printing, has allowed manufacturers to change the material on a label — ingredient lists, for example — without substantial additional costs. With digital capabilities, if a new ingredient is not well received, the cost to add and then remove an item from the list is minimal.

The newest packaging concept Aladdin Label, Waukesha, WI, has brought to market includes a digital press with laser die cutter, replacing pricier print plates and cutting dies. “Our laser die cutter can allow for intricate and fancy shapes that otherwise might have cost a customer of ours well over \$500 in tooling just to get started,” says Samantha Forster, a sales rep at Aladdin. “Plus, if the customer brings a new product to market and needs to change some ingredients, it's no problem. No print plates makes changing labels easier and less costly than ever.

“Digital printing will continue to find a solid home in the print world, with increased speed it will eventually overtake flexo printing,” Forster continues. “With the lack of tooling and plate costs investment, how could it not?”

Lindar has introduced a different packaging slant, changing the label and making the product inside more visible, while eliminating plastic closures that impact packaging aesthetics. “This new packaging gives us advantages for shipping product,” Fosse says. “For those that have commissary applications, this packaging reduces the space needed for the same amount of containers, significantly in some cases.”

One trend gaining traction is the use of rigid packaging as an alternative to flexible pouches; these can still be hung from racks and pegboards. Inline's Hangables allow deli operators to merchandise dried fruit, candy and other snacks on racks. “When the clamshell container is closed, the hang-tab pops up out of the hinge area and the container is ready for hanging,” Knutson explains. “Its upscale design promotes more attractive merchandising that enhances the quality of the contents.” The containers' perimeter leak-

## New Menu Labeling

BY JAN FIALKOW

In April 2011, the FDA released its proposed rules for nutrition labeling on “standard menu items in restaurants and similar retail food establishments,” requiring chains with 20 or more locations to provide calorie counts and other nutritional information. Calories in standard items as they are usually prepared will have to be posted on menus and menu boards, as will a short statement about suggested daily total calorie intake. This latter could be something similar to: A 2,000-calorie diet is the basis for general nutrition advice; individual needs may vary. The menu and menu board must also state that additional nutrition information is available upon request; this may include total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars and proteins — in other words the same information contained on the labels for packaged foods.

The details, final rules and implementation dates have not yet been finalized, but make no mistake, they are coming.

And once they do, the rules will affect supermarkets. Those with in-house restaurants in 20 or more outlets will most likely be required to comply. But even if supermarkets are exempt, once consumers get used to seeing this information, they'll expect it everywhere they buy prepared foods. And that means deli departments — with or without in-house dining — will need to provide the information. It will become part of standard operating procedure.

Most consumers fall into one of three categories: those who don't care about the nutritional value of what they eat and never will; those who try

to eat healthfully and check the menu information, at least some of the time; and those who want to eat healthfully but don't know how the information fits in.

Those in the first category will continue to eat as they always have and no amount of information will change them. That fettuccine Alfredo has a zillion calories? Who cares? A fried chicken dinner adds another zillion calories plus a bazillion grams of sodium and a truckload of cholesterol? Bring it on.

Consumers in the last two categories are the ones who can be influenced by the new information — and they're the ones the industry should key in on. Perhaps the easiest way to reach — and keep — these customers is through recipe modification. Can you maintain flavor but reduce sodium content by switching from table salt to kosher salt? Can you reduce calories by using skinless thighs rather than skin-on thighs? Can you maintain flavor and lower calories even further by using skinless chicken breast?

A product new to the American market carries some interesting possibilities. QimiQ, which originated in Austria, is an Ultra Heat Treated (UHT) dairy product made from 99 percent cream (15 percent fat content) and 1 percent gelatin. It has 50 percent less fat than traditional cream products and can be used in recipes to completely or partially replace gelatin, heavy cream, butter, egg and starch. This makes QimiQ well suited for use in such deli staples as mayonnaise, dips, sauces, soups and sandwich spreads. For additional information, please go to [www.qimiq.com](http://www.qimiq.com). **DB**

resistant seal design helps increase product shelf life and protect the contents.

Looking ahead, technology and innovation are expected to result in additional smart packaging concepts. “Packaging will follow new deli food trends, such as an increase in morning day-part items such as breakfast sandwiches, etc., sales of smaller portion sizes and grab-and-go items,” Knutson says.

The biggest challenge in this segment will be price point. “Due to financial constraints, consumers are willing to pay only so much for products,” Forster says. “The same holds true for food manufacturers. Cheese and meat processors have a limited amount they can spend on packaging before they have to raise their price to the store, which in turn will raise the price for the consumer.” **DB**

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# Breads On The Rise

Deli breads can provide artisan and upscale options

BY KRISTINE HANSEN

Bread has had its ups and downs in this country. It's been the proverbial staff of life and it's been fluffy, white and devoid of character. Fortunately, bread today is reclaiming its exalted position, morphing into such diverse offerings as cracker-thin wafers, versatile flatbreads, crusty baguettes and ethnic staples. As with many categories, consumers are looking for upscale and artisan bread options.

For some bread companies, artisan means retaining original recipes that have a strong customer following. Valley Lahvosh Baking Co., a third-generation business based in Fresno, CA, began baking and selling its signature cracker breads as 15-inch loafs in 1922. The offerings have expanded into hors d'oeuvres crackers in 2-inch, 3-inch and 5-inch sizes, and heart-shaped and star-shaped crackers, but the flavor profile remains the same. "It's truly artisan bread in its origins," says Jenni Bonsignore, marketing manager.

Bread manufacturers are constantly reinventing and updating their products because food trends are developing at a faster pace than ever before. Entertaining ideas and food recipes are presented on websites and television cooking shows. "Food Network shows have really helped," says Bonsignore.

The company has created cinnamon-flavored, heart-shaped Sweetheart Snacks in order to reach those consumers looking for a sweet alternative. "More people are foodies and want to lean about alternatives in bread and gourmet products," she adds.

According to Bonsignore, the flatbread-pizza trend has dovetailed nicely with the company's cracker-thin breads which, when baked, work as a healthier pizza crust. "Flatbread pizzas have popped up on a lot of menus and I think we'll see more of that."

La Panzanella, Tukwila, WA, added a sweet touch to its line-up last year when it introduced Sweet Crisps, a departure from the savory breads baked in the Italian tradition for which La Panzanella is known. "It's



topped with cinnamon and sugar and we recommend eating it as a snack, or with coffee, even with ice cream and mascarpone cheese," says Antonio Galati, director of business development.

La Panzanella debuted in 1990, introducing rustic, artisanal breads in the Seattle area. "Even in 1994 it was very difficult to find good bread in Seattle. Most of what you found was white bread, not European style or baguettes," he says. Its flagship product — Croccantini, gourmet Italian flatbread —

debuted in 1997 when the founder's mother, visiting from Italy, developed this recipe. That same year the company branched out into crackers and flatbreads. "At that time, you mostly saw flatbreads and crackers from mass-production companies," Galati says, noting the timing was right to introduce an artisan choice. Croccantini are available in nine flavors. Mini Croccantini are the latest incarnation.

Increasing upscale options in other food categories — such as meat, cheese, fruits



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and vegetables — shine a bright spotlight on bread, with consumers considering which grains and types of flour will pair best with other foods. Galati believes the higher-quality meats and cheeses now available to U.S. consumers have helped elevate breads to specialty status.

Torrance, CA-based King's Hawaiian began as a small family-style bakery (based on a recipe the owner developed in Hilo, HI, during the 1950s) and grew into a 150,000-square-foot state-of-the-art baking facility. Initially, the Original Recipe King's Hawaiian Sweet Bread was available only as a round loaf. Today three flavors of dinner rolls are sold — Original Hawaiian Sweet, Honey Wheat and Savory Butter. Original and Honey Wheat are also available as round loafs. Recently the company rolled out Snackers, mini sub rolls.

"More and more people are finding out how versatile King's Hawaiian products are," says Gary Cogan, senior brand manager. "They're gaining national popularity and used in a variety of recipes — from French toast to spinach-dip bowls, deli sandwiches, sliders and even dessert." He cites the recent slider trend as a boon to the company. King's Hawaiian rolls adapt easily to this use.

## Merchandising

Cross-merchandising the breads with other deli products increases sales and has the potential to introduce them to a greater audience. "We created a brat pocket and did a tie-in with a national brat brand," says Salem Kashou, marketing manager, Kangaroo Brands, Milwaukee, WI. The company's products include pita pockets, flatbreads, salad pockets, sandwich pockets and hi-fiber pockets. Since its founding in 1979, matching the breads with Mediterranean foods — falafel, hummus and other spreads — has been a natural pairing. Branching out into brats garnered a whole new audience.

"We created the first pre-cut pita pocket to make it easier for consumers at home," adds Kashou. "Then, years later we developed a patented process to pre-cut and package the product to remain open and ready to fill directly from the bag. No knife needed. We were also the first to introduce an extended shelf-life to 14 days and to sell pocket breads in re-seal bags."

King's Hawaiian has long promoted its breads as the perfect add-on to many deli meals. "Our bread and rolls are a great complement to deli meats, cheeses, rotisserie and fried chicken," relates Cogan. "King's Hawai-



PHOTO COURTESY OF VALLEY LAHVOSH BAKING COMPANY

ian Original Sweet rolls in the 4-pack are also very popular as an add-on to deli rotisserie-chicken meal deals in many grocery delis throughout the U.S."

Valley Lahvosh has acquired a new marketing spin. The popularity of wine and cheese pairings has provided a reentry point for breads when matched with cheeses, charcuterie and preserves. "People love to entertain with them," says Bonsignore about the company's breads.

## Nutrition Trends

Consumers are increasingly conscious about nutrition claims for products. "Health is an evolving trend. Whole grains and seeds have found their way into Kangaroo breads to meet consumer demands. Also, we keep the bad stuff out. No corn syrups and never any hydrogenated oils," says Kashou.

"You'd have to be blind to not see that there's a heightened sense of awareness about nutrition," relates Michael Girkout, president of Alvarado Street Bakery in Petaluma, CA, which began in 1979. "We started here as the little hippie bakery in San Francisco. We're now the largest organic bakery in the country."

"The recipes we develop all start with a nutritional background," explains Girkout. All Alvarado Street Bakery products — including sliced loafs, hot dog buns and tortillas — are made with sprouted organic wheat rather than flour. Fundamental Fiber Bread contains 5 grams of fiber per slice. "In a sandwich you get 10 grams of fiber. That's almost half of your daily requirement for fiber." He adds. The Sprouted California Style Complete Protein Bread — containing a cornucopia of healthy ingredients that include honey, pure barley malt, organic oats, sea salt, sprouted organic corn and sprouted lentils — serves as an added source of protein.

DB

# Looking at DELI MEATS

The category still anchors the department BY BOB JOHNSON



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZARDA BAR-B-Q & SAUCE



PHOTO COURTESY OF CONSORZIO  
DEL PROSCIUTTO DI PARMA

**T**he deli has taken market share from higher priced restaurant competition, as most consumers look to save money in tough economic times. The next step may be to incorporate the competition by using superior deli meat products as the centerpiece for a restaurant right in the deli.

"One trend in supermarket delis is they're going to be destination places for restaurants. I think there's going to be a resurgence of restaurants of higher quality in the deli. We've seen this over the years, but they weren't done that well," says Charles Dickman, CEO, Charlie's Pride, Vernon, CA.

Dickman believes to be done well a deli restaurant program has to include on-trend ethnic dishes and a full range of sides, in addition to traditional deli favorites such as roast beef, ham and chicken products. "The idea is to make it a destination point. If they incorporate new dishes and have good chefs and décor, they'll eat into the restaurant trade," he says.

A more modest step in the same direction is to promote deli meats as the center of home-served meals rather than as just the most important ingredient in sandwiches. "Simple ways to promote sliced meats include providing recipes, samples and coupons that are issued to the patron when ordering a sandwich," says Jeff Hayman, marketing product manager turkey foodservice, Foster Farms, Livingston, CA. "By marketing to the sandwich buyer you're speaking to someone who already understands the benefits of the supermarket deli. In essence, it's asking them to return to the deli department at a later time and to try their favorite sandwich meat in a take-home package with the expectation of experiencing how easy it is to incorporate into their recipes at home."

A growing market of consumers wants put together meals at home using the high-quality ingredients found at the deli. "Home entertaining is becoming more prominent. With disposable income at lower levels than in the past, there are fewer restaurant occasions with friends and family—but people gather at their homes more. Also with the emergence of the Food Network and others and with chefs becoming more widely known and reaching celebrity status, people's hunger for food adventures is growing," says Dave Brandow, director of sales and marketing, corporate foodservice and export, Piller's Sausages, Ontario, Canada.

The deli can promote its meat as the center of a meal eaten at home by developing offers that tie meat purchases together with deals on other important parts of the meal. "You can promote tie-ins; for

example, if you buy a pound of roast beef you get a free half pound of salad. Or you can include condiments for free with a pound of roast beef, turkey or ham. It's like the fast-food value meals. People like us are forming partnerships so when the consumers leave, they have more than just a half pound of meat," Dickman says.

Deli meat has the advantage of being both familiar and cutting edge. According to Brandow, "What's old is new again. By that I mean bringing back traditional foods—such as charcuterie products that are 'crafted' with unique ingredients and time-honored methods—is providing new taste experiences. Chefs are using these products in main dishes to heighten the overall taste experience of pastas, stir fries, soups, casseroles etc."

Many delis are promoting the breadth and quality of their offerings. "More retailers have 7-day programs with rotating products they publicize so they can expand their offerings without increasing the shrink," says Eric Le Blanc, vice president for marketing, Tyson Foods, Springdale, AR. "We're seeing more all-natural items out there in sandwich meats. We're seeing meats without lactates that use natural inhibitors to inhibit the growth of pathogens."

The demand for healthier foods, and healthier meats in particular, has wide ranging implications for the category. "Familiar trusted ingredients and locally grown offerings are trends that have resonated with consumers year after year," says Hayman. "In the *Nation's Restaurant News*' 2012 *What's Hot* list, locally sourced meats, healthy nutrition and gluten free products are just a few of the top 20 trends. Consumers need to realize there are fresh options such as turkey at the deli department."

The deli has a natural advantage when it comes to offering fresh product. "The meat in the deli case is not frozen or under a heat lamp, Hayman continues. "This plays strongly with consumers who are trading down their food spends but still want high quality and fresh ingredients. The past few years have seen a migration throughout all foodservice segments as value-seeking consumers look for timesaving options. The deli is in a unique position to appeal to consumers who have traded out of prepackaged meats and frozen meals."

The consumer wants it all, and the deli is in good position to offer it. "The consumer has not changed. They still want delicious products, innovative products, safe and wholesome products, and they want it all at an affordable price," adds Dickman.

DB



# Bring It on Home with BARBECUE

No hard-sell needed for this popular category BY BOB JOHNSON

**B**arbecue has a special place as the food that evokes feelings of outdoor get-togethers with family and friends. It is not, however, the food that comes to mind first when most consumers think about the deli.

According to Terry Hyer, COO, Zarda Bar-B-Q & Sauce, Blue Springs, MO, "Fried chicken, rotisserie chicken, sliced cheese and sliced meat are the items that exist in the consumers' mind when they think about the grocery deli. People have a firm concept of what the deli is and is not. Barbecue tends to bring up thoughts of picnics and family events. Those feelings don't come up with sliced cheese, sliced meat and rotisserie chicken."

He believes promoting barbecue effectively involves evoking a down-home feeling rather than a slick and professional feeling. "The signage is important. We're visual people; we need to have our attention drawn to the barbecue. But the deli doesn't need slick national product signage that blends in with the other national product signage. The graphic artists need to think in terms of the old-school fonts, phrases and graphics. Think in terms of the mom-and-pop barbecue shacks, 1970s signage, an old-school country shack feeling," Hyer explains.

Once the display, signage and general look and feel of the section are right, a deli can put together an effective barbecue program with relatively few dishes. "I wouldn't be worried about what's trendy. You can take ribs, shredded brisket, pulled pork, pulled chicken and baked beans and really have a barbecue presence," Hyer says.

"There's a ready demand — you're not going to have to create demand. You're not going to have to go into an extensive sampling campaign. Barbecue is not really regional anymore, the demand is out there," he adds.

Because barbecue has gone mainstream in most of the country, John Muldowney, vice president of marketing, Alto-Shaam, Menomonee Falls, WI, says some producers are spicing up the category with new and interesting flavor profiles. "We're finding many cutting-edge and upscale deli departments are using service deli cases to promote pork, beef, and chicken entrées with an expanded array of exotic barbecue flavors such as Caribbean or Jamaican jerk, Texas mop, or South Carolina mustard sauces. Cover your geographic favorites, and then go out of the box with other exotic flavors," he advises. Alto-Shaam makes foodservice and deli equipment.

Some suppliers are adding new barbecue flavors from the far corners of the earth. "We're looking to capitalize on new trends and flavor profiles, such as Korean barbecue or piri piri barbecue," says Joe DePippo, president for sales, marketing and operations, Hain Pure Protein, New Oxford, PA. "We've developed a marinade to be used on boneless meat and rotisserie chicken that's being very well received. People want basics, but there's a growing population that wants to taste new flavors. As we become more diverse, people are tasting new flavors from around the world at restaurants."

Hain has also introduced a new line of artisanal premium turkey



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZARDA BAR-B-Q & SAUCE

products off the bone. "People want to get back to off-the-bone roasted meats. It eliminates the bones and the ingredients that enhance margins instead of the flavor and quality of the products," De Pippo says.

Another new option is smaller sizes of ribs to bring down the cost per unit. "We started offering a half slab in both a dry and a sauced rib," says Steven Burger, president, Burger's Smokehouse, California, MO. "With the size of the ribs getting larger and the economic situation, it brings it in at a lower unit cost." Burger's is also working with new flavor profiles including Memphis style and Cajun rub.

## Presentation Innovation

One of the challenges with barbecue is finding ways to present the product well, and to keep it looking appetizing. Some innovations in cooking and heating equipment can help keep this inherently messy food look appealing.

According to Muldowney, Alto-Shaam "will introduce our new Automatic Grease Collection system available on all gas and electric Combi ovens. Finally, there's a hands-free grease collection and cleaning system for those departments with high-volume chicken roasting programs. It's safe and convenient, and has been awarded the National Restaurants Association's 2012 Kitchen Innovations Award.

"In addition to our supermarket deli & HMR offerings, and our Smoker-capable Cook & Hold and Combi ovens portfolio, we'll be introducing a small footprint Combi oven, the 4.10esi CT Express — the most compact Combi oven ever from Alto-Shaam. It holds four 12-inch by 20-inch by 2.5-inch full-size steam pans and is priced to provide deli departments with full-size Combi performance that fits your counter and your budget," Muldowney says.

To be effective, the consumer has to see the display. "Consumers need to be able to walk into the store and know with confidence where the barbecue is, just like they know where the sliced cheese, sliced meat and fried chicken are," Hyer notes.

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# Introduce PLATTERS ... Naturally

The growing interest in natural foods extends to entertaining BY BOB JOHNSON

Consumers seek deli platters because they're convenient when feeding a group at a social gathering. But if the platters are special, they can be the reason consumers come back to the deli on a regular basis.

According to Dave Brandow, director of sales & marketing, corporate foodservice and export, Piller's Sausages, Ontario, Canada, "Deli departments can capture sales by providing options for consumers, and if this can be achieved in grab-and-go formats — even better. One example would be a charcuterie plate. With the evolution of share plates/platters, delis can put a variety of sliced charcuterie products in a container with some olives or Asiago cheese



chunks and provide an all-in-one-package food adventure that can be proudly served and shared by the customers' guests."

Healthy breads and crackers have become a selling point for platters. "We have a 100 percent whole-grain, all-natural and baked cocktail bread that can be used instead of crackers. People are looking for healthier options — that trend still holds — and we're 100 percent whole grain," says Mike Di Cristo, national sales manager, Rubschlager Baking Corp., Chicago, IL. "One of the main items we produce is cocktail bread. It's been incorporated into deli platters. It's a great carrier for cheeses, meats or spreads. Smoked salmon with cream cheese is a great fourth quarter entertainment item." Di Cristo

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also sees a lot of demand for gluten-free products.

Demographics determine the specific products to emphasize in platters. "Retailers need to know the demographics in each of their marketing areas and provide the high-quality, value-added platters that meet the consumer demand," says Jim Pierson, head of retail and private label programs, Pocino Foods, City of Industry, CA.

The finest platter program imaginable must still be presented and sold effectively. "The first thing that needs to be addressed is the cleanliness of the department and quality of the product within the department. Customers buy with their eyes. Platters are much like holiday dinners in that consumers want to impress their family and guests. Quality platters equal loyal customers and new consumers, which equates to increased sales and profits for the department," Pierson adds.

### Presenting the Platter

Signage, brochures and promotions are essential ingredients to the platter program. "Use visual aids letting the consumer know that platters are offered in the department, and brochures featuring the platters that are offered," recommends Pierson. "Tie the platters into rewards programs, targeting loyal customers and potential new customers, and utilize in-store mailers to promote the platters offered."

With consumers looking for healthy, natural ingredients in all the items on a platters, promoting these aspects can increase sales. "Carry more organic, no-hormone deli meats and advertise the switch along with adding green packaging solutions to your to go cases," advises Megan Havrda, eco advisory board chairwoman and senior national accounts executive, Be Green Packaging, Santa Barbara, CA. "Signage and customer outreach go a long way in building customer loyalty, especially when customers are waiting on line in delis in metropolitan areas and have time to read signs and consider the content."

The growing consumer interest in natural foods extends to an interest in packaging that is easy on the environment. "Platters are very important in differentiating the deli. Consumers across the country are turning away from foam and requesting packaging alternatives at their local grocery stores and delis," says Havrda. "At an earth day event in Santa Barbara, I spoke with a gentleman who was outraged that Trader Joe's is packaging organic veggies on foam... This translates to deli settings as well. Why would you want to eat an organic chicken cutlet with farm fresh veggies off of a carcinogenic foam tray? It makes no sense, and more and more consumers are getting educated about not only the health

issues related to foam but also the disposal issues related to foam and other oil-based packaging."

Be Green emphasizes packaging that's safe for both the environment and the food. "Our fiber trays are freezer-, microwave-, and SGS Lab-tested-safe for the oven. We did this because food-to-go often ends up in one of those three places and we owe it to our customers' customers to make sure our packag-

ing will perform well. How many foam and petroleum-based packaging manufacturers are concerned about what happens to their packaging in the microwave and oven? Even if they emboss on the packaging not for oven or microwave use, people do it anyway and put themselves and/or their food at risk. Good health in this country is as much about consumer education as it is business ethics," Havrda says. **DB**

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DEL PROSCIUTTO DI PARMA

# A Category as Diverse as the Country

**Ethnic meats draw consumers from every demographic** BY BOB JOHNSON

**E**thnic meats are growing more popular and, like our population, more diverse. But even as consumers are drawn toward these items, producers and suppliers believe the most effective programs must also offer convenience.

"I see more sliced packages and more snacks to-go," says Alberto Minardi, general manager, Principe Foods, Long Beach, CA.

"There's been a shift to packages of sliced meats because it is easier for consumers," notes Richard Kessler, vice president, Frommarthie Specialties A.A., Hillington, NJ.

"The pre-sliced is really making a move. It's faster for people because they don't have to wait in line to have their meat sliced," relates Anna Gallo, director of marketing, Savello USA, Hanover Township, PA. "Sales have increased first quarter this year compared to a year ago."

A variety of cooked hams from around the globe are leading the parade of new ethnic meat products. "We just had our smoked, cooked ham come out," Gallo says. "It took us four or five years to get the recipe right. It's lightly smoked so the flavor still comes through. It also has no water, so if it starts at 16 pounds, after it's cooked it's still 16 pounds. The response has been good — delis like it because it's lightly smoked and you can use it many ways."

Alexian Pâté & Specialty Meats, Neptune, NJ, will present a new smoked ham at the upcoming International Dairy Deli Bakery show in New Orleans. "We're sampling our smoked and cured, hand-trimmed eye rounds of beef at IDDBA," says Laurie Cummins, president and CEO. "We're offering three different kinds — one with a traditional garlic and mixed spice rub, another rubbed with fresh cracked black peppercorns, and one rubbed with zesty paprika and coriander. These are specialty meats that are intended to be sold by the pound out of the service deli. These products are extensions to the line of single-muscle meats we currently sell such as Black Forest ham, smoked turkey breast and Canadian-style beef brisket."

Les Trois Petits Cochons, Brooklyn, NY, will be introducing a new smoked ham from France to U.S. consumers in the relatively near future. According to Camille Collins Black, marketing director, "Last year we launched jambon de Paris Fumé, a smoked ham that has hardly any water. It's all meat. We do see an increase in ethnic type meats. We're seeing an increase in French meat products that are similar to Italian meat products. We will soon be introducing jambon de Bayonne, which is similar to prosciutto di Parma but it's made in France.

"Just as Italian meats have a geographical origin, French meats are the same way," Black

continues. "The availability of French meats is increasing. We have saucisson sec, a dried sausage related to the Italian dried meats. We have four flavors, including herb de Provence."

Many of the new ethnic meats come from areas that have not been well represented at the deli. "It seems that deli products are clearly trending toward being more ethnic. It's no longer limited to Italian and German style products but also includes French l'ail [garlic sausage], Spanish Serrano hams, and also the Eastern European-style kielbasa that we make," Cummins says.

As our population grows more diverse, the new meat products are reflecting that diversity. According to Kate Whittum, director of sales & marketing, Redondo Iglesias USA, Long Island City, NY, "Traditional Spanish and various Central and South American embutidos — cured sausages — are starting to become mainstream, along the same trajectory Italian products took 20 to 25 years ago. It's not just chorizo in the marketplace anymore, but salsichon, fuet, morcilla, etc. These 'salami' type products are less expensive than whole-muscle-format cured meats, such as Serrano ham, paleta [shoulder], and lomo [loin] because they have a much shorter curing time and less expensive raw materials. Redondo Iglesias will

be bringing a traditional Spanish chorizo to market shortly, a little leaner for the U.S. palate, with other embutidos to follow. It supports our premium jamón Serrano to have an expanded range of pork products."

Meats from Spain are gaining ground. "I've noticed a shift to a lot of Spanish products. People want robust flavors. You need flavors that have the character of the place of origin. People want something different, something robust," adds Kessler.

As with many artisanal products, the story is important. "Each product that we bring in is a representative of new and exciting artisanry from that country," says Michele Buster, vice president, Sini Fulvi USA, Astoria, NY. "We're excited about products because of the flavor profile or because it represents the best artisanry from a particular area. With more travel and the Food Channel, people are exposed to more areas."

### Italian still reigns supreme

The emergence of ethnic meats from a diversity of regions has done nothing to dampen interest in favorite Italian deli meats.

According to a recent survey of U.S. adults conducted by a group of Italian producers of cured hams and aged cheeses, 80 percent of

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respondents believe the quality of cured ham imported from Europe is very good or excellent. The European ham most familiar to respondents is prosciutto di Parma.

"Already, 2012 is shaping up to be another record-breaking year for prosciutto di Parma sales in the U.S., the industry's No. 1 export market," says Paolo Tramelli, director of international marketing for the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma. "First quarter sales are up 27 percent over last year, the strongest start to a year ever. The Consorzio's increased investment in training and promotion has been a key driver in our success."

"A lot of prosciutto di Parma is being consumed in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles," says Ruth Lowenberg, senior vice president at New York, NY-based Lewis & Neale, which represents the Consorzio in the United States. "I think it's going more mainstream. There are many more distributors who are carrying prosciutto di Parma."

### Marketing the category

The growing interest in an expanding list of ethnic meat products is reflected in the development of high-end deli counters. "I have seen over the last two or three years a

trend toward the development of gourmet deli counters at higher end retailers," says Principe's Minardi.

But the demand for ethnic meats varies tremendously by neighborhood, so it's essential to have a handle on the demographics. "I think it's very important that each deli manager recognize there may be large ethnic preferences among the neighborhood's customers and offer products to reflect those preferences. At the same time, it's an opportunity to introduce these foods to other customers seeking to expand their culinary horizons," adds Alexian's Cummins.

Individual stores within a chain may have to market their ethnic meats in various ways. "You have to market differently to every store depending on the population in the neighborhood. You can't set one planogram for all your stores; it won't work," says Edgar Soto, vice president for sales and marketing, Cibao Meat Products, Bronx, NY.

In neighborhoods hit hardest by the recession, value is key to sales. "With the economic situation the last few years, the trend has been to look for a lower price. People are looking for value. Smaller quantity packs are moving better than larger quantity packs. Peo-



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ple are looking for a quality product at a value price. You can use salami for many meals. You can have it as a snack, in spaghetti, then again with your eggs at breakfast," Soto adds.

Delis can use the ethnic meat category to differentiate themselves from the competition. "Ethnic meat programs are key in setting apart a deli department, as they make that deli a destination for both the ethnic consumer and the crossover consumer," relates Redondo's Whittum. "The explosion of cooking and travel shows and on-line information has created demand for these authentic products."

The deli can nurture growing demand for ethnic meat products by offering additional information. "Consumers still have a lot to learn about the difference between imported and domestic, the different regions, and the different ways of curing. Keep that educational process strong," advises Minardi. "If you don't have knowledgeable people behind the counter, you won't get the sales. You need people behind the counter who can talk about the products."

The importance of education cannot be overstated. "Have a knowledgeable staff that can speak about the products. Have products that are not available everywhere," Frommartharrie's Kessler's suggests. "There are brands that have become so widespread they're like commodities."

DB

# Destination Shopping

## Olive bars are a draw for a growing number of consumers

BY LISA WHITE

When properly executed, olive bars can create a destination in the deli. In the past five years in particular, consumers have sought out these areas for healthy and innovative appetizers, ingredients for main dishes and snacks.

"As people have become more health-conscious, they see food with more flavor and pop," says George Christodoulou, director of retail sales, Castella Imports, Hauppauge, NY. "Olives and antipastos are alternatives that are low in calories or fat."

With fresh, vibrant colors and unique flavors from all over the Mediterranean, olive bars offer a vast line-up of gourmet options with the convenience of quick pick up. "Olives and antipasti boost a deli's grab-and-go selection of entertainment offerings, pairing beautifully with specialty cheeses, cured meats, gourmet crackers and crisps, store-made dips and more," says Giuliana Pozzuto, marketing manager, George E. DeLallo Co., Jeannette, PA. "So besides their radiant, eye-catching presence and ready-to-serve convenience, olives are an incredible way to merchandise in the deli. The self-service bar is great for both customers, who get to browse and select their own mixes, and retailers, because the bar entices multiple sales."

Olive bars do present challenges. The added attention necessary to keep these areas clean and well stocked can be difficult for departments with limited labor. Shrink also can be an issue to consider with these perishable items. "Some retailers are struggling with margins on olive bars," says Jeffrey Siegel, CEO, Commack, NY-based Farm Ridge Foods. "Plus, shrink problems can occur due to self-service and spillage."

However, for those departments making the commitment to time and labor and stocking the products geared to the store's demographic, olive bars can be not only a draw but also a profit center. "The convenience and selection of a well-stocked olive bar offer the customer the ability to pick and choose different flavor profiles and enable creativity when creating their signature



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOODMATCH

recipes," says Ann Dressler, manager service deli/food service division, at G.L. Mezzetta Inc., American Canyon, CA.

### The Proper Selection

It's imperative to gear the olive bar products to what consumers are looking for. Deli that are on trend with varieties and flavors will have an edge. "Consumers have migrated to olives they know and like, such as Kalamata," Christodoulou says. "But by offering an olive trio, we can get people to go out of their comfort zone in trying new products." For example, Castella works with retail accounts to mix olives that offer a similar taste profile with different characteristics, for

example combining Kalamatas and Greek black olives.

Retailers can add hospitality trios that include olives, cheese and antipasto selections. Marinated artichokes are a popular addition to the mix. "From there, it's all about creativity and encouraging customers to continue looking for new products on the bar," Christodoulou continues. "Many people look at olives as a stand-alone product, but there are so many ingredient possibilities."

In response to the increase in shoppers looking for convenience, DeLallo developed its Ready Pack Olives & Antipasti Collection. "We took our most popular olive bar items and packaged them in clear, resealable



containers to further extend the convenience of the olive bar but keep that same appeal,” Pozzuto says. “Each variety features its own UPC and individual QR codes that direct the consumer to recipes and pairing ideas on our website.”

“Although Kalamata olives are by far the largest selling bar item, the Castelvetrano variety has recently taken the category by storm, due to a mild, slightly sweet and nutty flavor, along with a meaty texture,” Mezzetta’s Dressler says. “Stuffed olives also continue to be popular in delis.” The company recently introduced a blend that includes imported Greek olives.

### Spotlight on Pickles

High-end pickles have become a popular addition to olive bars. Going beyond the usual half-sour or kosher dills, new flavored varieties can expand the bar offerings by appealing to a wide swath of consumers.

To help delis increase margin potential, Farm Ridge Foods has introduced flavored pickles geared to complement other products within the olive bar. “Some of our more upscale pickle flavors lend themselves to the olive bar experience,” Siegel says. “We’re using fresh ingredients, including garlic and



PHOTO COURTESY OF CASTELLA IMPORTS

dill sprigs.” The company recently rolled out a horseradish pickle, in addition to its Mexican pickles with fresh jalapeños and chiles. A wasabi ginger variety includes fresh-cut ginger and wasabi mustard.

Pickled vegetable mixes, such as New Orleans’ popular muffulata, are becoming

more widespread as an olive bar offering. Consumers can use these mixtures in a salad or as a pizza topping, or to create a tapenade appetizer on crackers or bread.

“There’s a growing interest in pickles and pickle-type items that are used in cooking or as stand-alone ingredients,” says Kevin

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O'Conner, senior vice president of sales at New York, NY-based FoodMatch. "These items can be time-consuming to prepare from scratch. People are seeking products that add value or flavor depth to dishes."

### Taking it to the Next Level

Cross-merchandising is key to an eye-catching and functional display. Including dips, tapenades, gourmet crackers, flavored olive oils and balsamic vinegars can create a

Mediterranean point of destination. Positioning olive salads for topping burgers or olive medleys for mixing into pasta dishes can increase sales. Recipe cards and suggestions can take the bar to a whole new level.

"As far as the bar itself, our merchandising team emphasizes that appearance is everything," notes Castella's Christodoulou. "Brine or liquids need to coat products, which should constantly be turned over. The bar should be clean to attract customers."

According to Mezzetta's Dressler, "Because gourmet cheese and olive bar customers tend to be one and the same, positioning the olive bar close to the cheese section or packing out products and integrating olives into the cheese section is a great way to gain interest. Creating recipes that include other sections of the deli and having them available at the olive bar is another great way to cross-merchandise both sections."

Expanding offerings can help grow interest and profitability for these products. For example, focusing on olives from different regions, incorporating stuffed varieties and providing flavored lines can broaden consumer appeal. "As popular as olive bars are, buyers and consumers aren't familiar with the variations," Farm Ridge's Siegel says. "We're encouraging retailers to do a trio of the month, featuring olives three at a time from Spain, Greece, Italy and other parts of the world. Also, varieties stuffed with Feta or jalapeño bring added attention to the category."

By educating consumers with flyers or origin information at the point of purchase, retailers can increase the probability buyers will remember the olive type and become a repeat buyer of these products. "With olives, you want to build up consumers' confidence that you're a legitimate source for the best products," Siegel adds. "Although there are limitless possibilities, not every type of cheese and product goes with olives."

Retailers that position olive bars as an everyday stop for simple meals, entrée ingredients, snacks and appetizers can leverage this section as a revenue generator. "Consumers can see that olive and Mediterranean bars offer many ingredients that can be used for meals, such as antipasti, olives and hummus on flatbread," FoodMatch's O'Conner says. "It should be pushed as a consumer bar, not just an area to visit when making entertaining purchases."

Suggested pairings, such as tapenade and fish, roasted tomatoes with Mozzarella cheese, and rotisserie chicken paired with olive salad can increase impulse purchases for shoppers looking for quick and easy meal ideas. "The draw of an olive bar is the product selection and wide range of colors, which help make it successful," O'Conner notes. "Simple communication that includes the variety name and origin, along with suggested pairings, provides consumers with ideas for add-ons and menu enhancements."

As consumers become more familiar with olive bars, opportunities and sales will inevitably increase. "The point of olive bars is to make customers more aware of these products and how to use them, which will help increase store sales and volume," O'Conner says.

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# Increasing Sales of Salads & Sides

## Catering to consumer demands generates dollars

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

Salads and sides are a potent profit generator in the deli. Combined they contributed 10.5 percent of total deli dollars during the 52-weeks ending Feb. 25, 2012, according to Chicago-based Nielsen Perishables Group data. Offering trendy flavors, mix and match options, and convenience snack and meal solutions are just a few of the ways to blacken the deli's bottom line.

When it comes to salads and sides, consumers are looking for traditional, trendy, and new twists on old favorites.

Mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, and macaroni and cheese are best-selling deli sides because they're versatile and pair well with a wide variety of foods, says John McCarthy, Jr., category manager, Reser's Fine Foods, Beaverton, OR. "Traditional salads with a twist are very popular. For example, our new ranch potato salad, red skin potato salad and deviled egg potato salad are our fastest growing salads."

Kings Super Markets, a 27-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ, catered to consumer desires for traditional and trendy offerings by updating and re-launching its green salad program. The single-serve six-item line of pre-packaged salads range from customary Caesar, Cobb and Greek to



PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNILEVER



more innovative balsamic grilled chicken, spring mix and Chèvre, and tri-color made with arugula, spring mix, radicchio and endive topped with pine nuts and shaved Parmesan.

According to Scott Zoeller, director of deli merchandising, "We've seen some of our regular sandwich customers look for something different and pick up a salad in place of, or in addition to, their sandwich. As a result, the salads have really taken off. Sales are up over 100 percent from a year ago. And when we price the salads at 2 for \$10 or \$12, we'll also pick up a nice increase in sales."

Distinctive, healthful and ethnic are three of today's hottest trends. In fact, 81 percent of consumers surveyed said they had eaten ethnic foods away from home during the previous month, according to Feb. 29, 2012-released report from Mintel Menu Insights. This demand for global flavors is evident in new deli salads and sides.

Lynnea Jodway, marketing coordinator, Sandridge Food Corporation, Medina, OH, notes, "Curried chickpea salad and chili lime corn salad, products that we introduced last spring, have experienced heightened popularity due to their amazing flavor and on-trend ingredients, such as Israeli couscous and fiber-rich beans."

Variety is crucial, she adds. "The best solution is to offer an array of more nutritious offerings, such as grains, as well as the traditional salads, such as a potato salad and macaroni salad."

Core items such as coleslaw, potato salad and macaroni salad sell best pre-packed in the grab-and-go case, says Judy McArthur, channel marketing manager for Unilever Food Solutions, the Lisle, IL-based maker of Hellman's brand mayonnaise. "This destination is all about convenience. It's where consumers come to find their favorites when they don't want to stand in line or wait for something to be weighed."

Uniquely flavored sides and salads belong behind the glass, adds Jeffrey Siegel, president of Farm Ridge Foods, LLC, in Commack, NY. "This is an area that screams freshness."

Once a specialty item becomes a signature offering, then it can also be merchandised in the grab-and-go case, McArthur recommends. "Or you can try a small serving or serving with a price point of something like \$1.50 or \$2 in this case to encourage trial."

### **Tempt Consumers To Try Something New**

Kings Super Markets has a creative way to keep consumers coming back and trying



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHICKEN OF THE SEA

something new: A risotto of the month. "Risotto Milanese was for May," says Zoeller. "It's very important to offer something new, fresh and seasonal and constantly re-set the case."

CORE ITEMS SUCH AS  
COLESLAW, POTATO SALAD  
AND MACARONI SALAD SELL  
BEST PRE-PACKED IN THE  
GRAB-AND-GO CASE...  
UNIQUELY FLAVORED SIDES  
AND SALADS BELONG  
BEHIND THE GLASS.

Another way to tempt consumers to buy out of their comfort zone is to make a favorite into something unique and advertise it so as to create an urgency to buy, such as a limited time offer, explains McArthur.

"This could be, for example, a jerk chicken salad or Korean BBQ chicken salad."

In addition, she says, "Romance the recipe. If it's salad or side with quinoa, explain what this grain is. If it's made with heirloom or locally grown fruits or vegetables, call this out. Or if it's your chef's special recipe, sign it with his name."

In-store samples give consumers a risk-free way to see if they like a new product, says Jodway. "Another way to help alleviate the consumers' hesitation is to offer a coupon. On-package coupons can work well because they can encourage repeat sales."

Price promotions tied to circular ads and in-store signs drive awareness and trial, adds Reser's McCarthy. "Try to avoid offering temporary price reductions on bulk and pre-pack like items at the same time — better to stagger them to maximize sales."

Connie Concon, director of sales for the deli, Litehouse Inc., Sandpoint, ID, recommends, "Point out the wholesome ingredients for consumers seeking healthy eating on-the-go. The nutritional benefits, too. For example, sign 50 calories of dressing per serving, or fresh, or no preservatives. Weight Watcher points are a huge bonus in behind-the-glass salads."



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## Make It Personal

Consumers are increasingly using their purchasing might to reinforce their personal tastes. The era of I'll-buy-what-you-put-together is giving way to I'll-buy-it-if-it's-what-I-want. Delis should learn from restaurants that deal with menu substitutions on a continual basis. Yes, there are still some no-substitutions-please items out there, but they're generally not the ones offering good margins.

"Consumers aren't buying into pre-plated meals," says Farm Ridge's Siegel. "It's the combination — for example, of having to take Brussels sprouts with their meat loaf — that they don't like. They want to be able to choose their own sides. That's what makes individual sides and salads a success." To keep up with demand for new and different, Farm Ridge recently introduced Brussels sprouts with coconut popped rice and butternut squash with caramelized red onions and toasted pecans.

"Consumers' desire for customization is big today," explains Erin Mrozek, consumer marketing manager for Chicken of the Sea International, San Diego, CA. "This offers an opportunity to mix ingredients in to create signature offerings. For example, ranch dressing, Italian vinaigrette, balsamic vinegar, lemon pepper or hot sauce to tuna or salmon salad, or stir-ins such as grapes, dried cranberries or large chunk celery. Add-ons can increase the ring. This might include a slice of avocado or cheese. These are all methods to keep consumers coming back to the deli."

Wheat-free noodles and pasta, black rice and quinoa are the top three side ingredients identified as 'hot' by nearly 1800 chefs nationwide in the National Restaurant Association's *What's Hot in 2012* chef survey.

Many consumers like to put their own special touch on deli items, says Sandridge's Jodway. "Delis can offer consumers simple recipe ideas using the deli product. This can include identifying fresh-cut, value-added ingredient suggestions that can be added at kitchen level to complete the salads. For example, you might market Grandma's Macaroni Salad with a simple ingredient card containing a plus-one recipe idea, such as adding roasted red peppers."

Kings Super Markets is capitalizing on this trend with a grain bar that offers a colorful array of six to 14 selections such as tabbouleh and curried rice with cauliflower in a patchwork of 6-, 7- or 12-inch wide full-tray pans. All salads are priced by the pound and well-signed with key ingredients highlighted. "Give consumers a container and they love to fill it up," says Zoeller.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SABRA DIPPING COMPANY

"They enjoy the choice and the mixing and matching."

According to Teresa Carter, category manager for salads at Reser's, there's a strong demand for individual sides and salads as well as complete meals. "Consumers come to the deli looking for meal ideas — different suggestions on ways to pair sides and salads with proteins for a full meal. For example, suggest this by creating a sandwich program that includes salads and sides as part of the meal plan. Or create a special dinner one day of the week to increase sales on the day with the slowest sales. Or offer a kids' meal program that pairs chicken nuggets with mashed potatoes and/or macaroni and cheese."

Combo deals or meal deals can appeal to consumers. However, Unilever's McArthur suggests not pairing an entrée with specific sides can be advantageous. "My supermarket deli offers a pick-any-two choice of sides. One evening I purchased four entrées — chicken, ribs, pork and fish

— along with eight different sides for the four of us. It was really a fun way to put dinner on the table."

Or take a cue from Boston Market's Side Item Sampler menu choice: Diners can choose three sides — such as creamed spinach, sweet potato casserole and fresh steamed vegetables — paired with cornbread to make a meal.

"Offer a combo meal of a choice of three different salads including tuna or salmon for a certain set price point," recommends Mrozek. "Or promote 'Tuna Tuesdays' where consumers can buy a tuna salad sandwich with chips or fruit and beverage for a set price."

## Don't Overlook Dips

Hummus is one of the top five 'trendy' ethnic items consumers said they would be interested in finding in their deli sandwich and prepared foods departments, according to IDDBA's Nov. 21, 2011-released *Innovation Trends, Attitudes and Opportunities* study.

The problem, says John McGuckin, executive vice president of sales for the Queens, NY-based Sabra Dipping Company, LLC, is "Supermarkets don't know where to merchandise hummus. It's gone in the deli, dairy, grocery and produce departments. Instead, delis can attract consumers by creating a premium dip destination."

McGuckin suggests building this display in a well case with multideck shelving. Hummus is ideally merchandised in the well because it has an attractive topping and because its household penetration is 12 percent or higher than other items merchandised in this area, such as fresh refrigerated salsa, guacamole and Greek yogurt dips, that are ideally displayed on successively higher racks in that order.

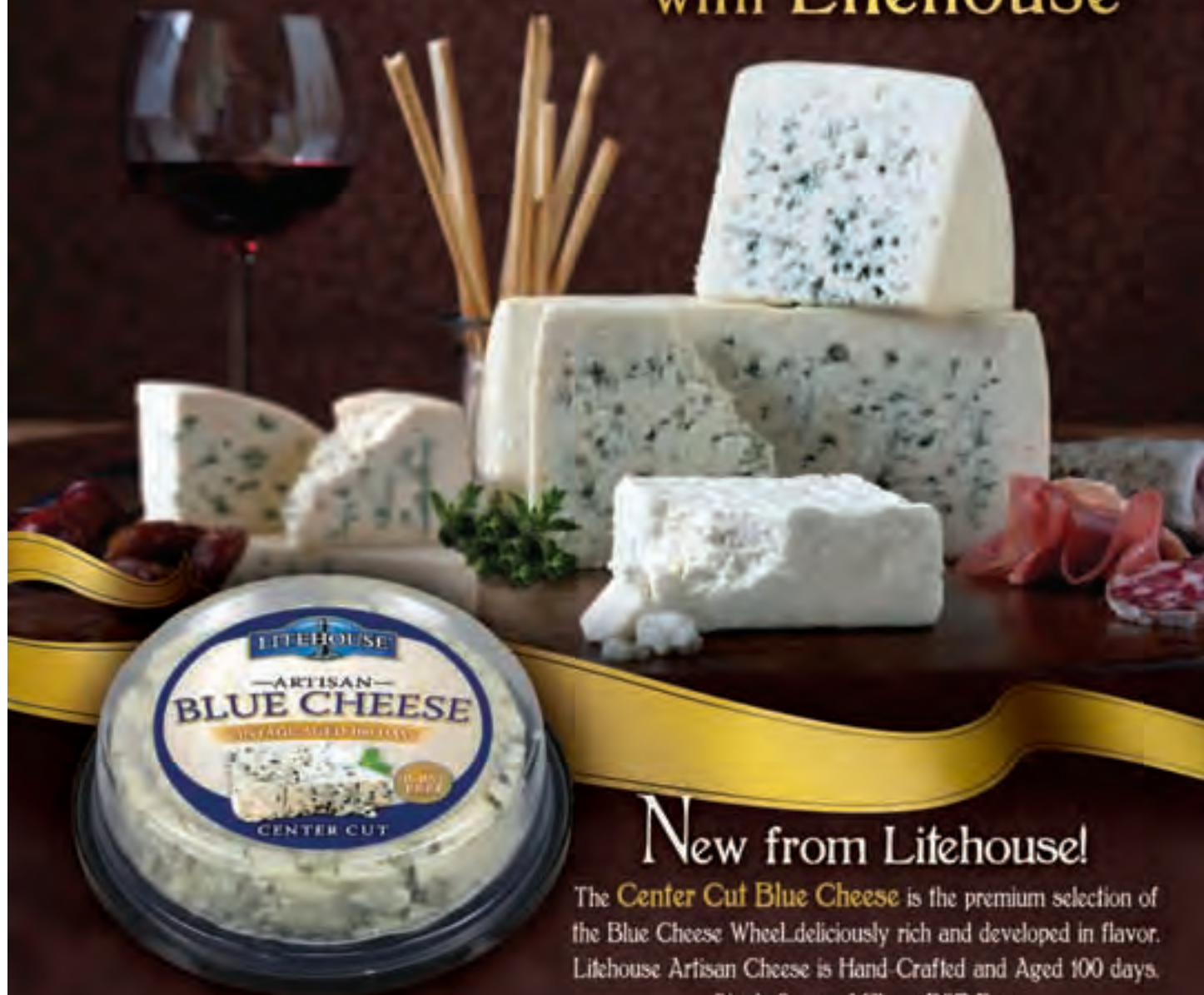
To fill this destination, Sabra offers its best-selling classic hummus as well as a 10-ounce line that includes new basil pesto and buffalo flavors. The company has just introduced a new line of 17-ounce garden variety hummus products with flavors such as Tuscan herb, Southwest and Asian garden. In addition to its current three flavors of refrigerated salsa that includes fast-selling mango and peach, and spicy and classic refrigerated guacamole, this summer Sabra will introduce a line of Greek yogurt-based dips that includes cucumber dill, onion and spinach flavors.

Think consumer-centric and bring solutions to the deli, says McGuckin. "Cross-merchandise with chips, crackers and pita bread. Add in tableware such as tablecloths and utensils to create an entertainment deli center. Update it seasonally."

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# Goat Cheese Sales Continue To Grow

American consumers expect to find goat cheese in deli

BY JAN FIALKOW

Fresh Chèvre is now so widely accepted that it's hard to imagine consumers were wary of the cheese just a few years ago. A common menu ingredient in many fast-casual dining chains, Chèvre is positively mainstream.

And that means it's a must-have for any serious deli cheese department. According to Jacquelyn Buchanan, director of culinary development, Laura Chenel Chevre, Sonoma, CA, "Fresh Chèvre will always be around. It's a great ingredient

that can be used in so many ways. The bulk of the market will continue to look for fresh Chèvre but with flavors that offer both sweet and savory notes. In our Chabis cheese — a pillow of mild, soft, spreadable fresh cheese — we stopped making dill and changed the black pepper to a 4-pepper mixture."

Chèvre's popularity has led to many flavor extensions. "Flavored chèvre is not really new," says Arnaud Solandt, co-owner, Montchevre-Betin, Rolling Estates,

CA. "We started experimenting with them in the '90s and introduced Cranberry Chèvre in 1992. The acidity of goat cheese matches well with both sweet and savory ingredients. We will be introducing Fig and Olive Chèvre at IDDBA and Fancy Foods. You get sweet and tangy in one bite, but all the flavors are distinguishable."

Flavored Chèvres allow cheesemakers to distinguish their products. "Fresh goat cheese, especially in reduced fat and flavored with spices, has been our flagship



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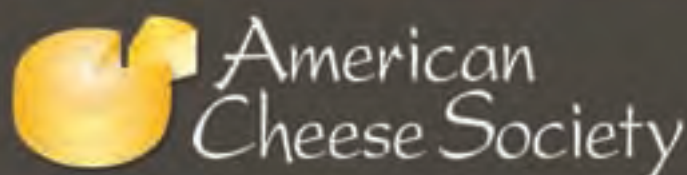
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cheese,” explains Tara Kirch, marketing manager, Best Cheese Company, Mt. Kisko, NY. “We’ve introduced two new flavors of fresh Chèvre — one with pear marmalade and one with fig marmalade. We’re filling the center, not mixing in the marmalade — like a Twinkie. This allows the cheese flavor to stand alone with the marmalade as a complement.

Offering different formats for the fresh cheese also expands the category. “We offer the fresh log rolled in herbs de Provence and red and green peppercorn,” says Allison Hooper, co-owner, Vermont Butter and Cheese Creamery (VBCC), Websterville, VT. “We also have a spreadable goat cheese called Creamy Goat Cheese that comes plain, with Divina Olives and with roasted red pepper.

“For the summer Fancy Food Show, we hope to offer crumbled goat cheese in three flavors: Italian made with basil and tomato, New England made with cranberry and tarragon, and Mediterranean made with apricot and thyme,” she continues. “These are really nice. We don’t use any anti-caking agent or wood cellulose on our crumble, which gives it a better texture. Adding good ingredients helps to keep it from caking. The

idea is that they’ll be re-packed at the store with a nice label as a salad topping.

### Beyond Fresh

Consumers who have embraced fresh goat cheese are likely to look for aged goat cheeses, which offer more complexity and nuance than fresh Chèvre. Soft-ripened and aged goat cheeses are aimed at this segment of the audience.

“Fresh chèvre gave us a steppingstone into the aged goat cheese category,” explains Montchevre’s Solandt. “We aim for a mild, clean flavored Chèvre to bring consumers to the category. Once we have them, we can move them to aged cheeses. The demand for aged goat cheeses is growing. We have Brie and Bucheron, a soft-ripened lactic goat cheese. It’s a mini log with a penicillium rind. We also have Goat Cheddar and Goat Gouda; the Cheddar is five or six years old and the Gouda is fairly new. Our Chèvre is Blue was introduced in 1998. It’s a traditional blue cheese made from goat’s milk. And we’re working on new prototypes that should be ready early next year.”

According to Hooper, “The future of aged goat cheese is great. I can’t tell you



how much consumers love the geo-rinded cheeses once they try them. I think that as we see more in the market, people will reach for them. Our sales are doubling year over year. The tricky aspect of aged goat is getting the rind right whether it’s a geotrichum or penicillin rind. The fatty acids in goat’s milk can contribute to bitter flavors on the rind. Using only excellent quality milk is key. The aged goat cheeses in the U.S. are getting better and better.

“We don’t have any new aged cheeses but we will have a new package for the Bijou. It’s a plastic clamshell that was designed for our cheese. Retailers are really responding to it because it’s rigid and protects the cheese,” she adds.

Laura Chenel has “moved production of Melodie from France to this country,” says Buchanan. “It now tastes different because it’s made locally. It looks like Brie but is ash-rinded. It has a mild taste and has had a good reception. And we’re working on a rind for our Tome. The tradition in this country has been to make French types here, and this won’t go away, but goat cheese makers will be making more American originals.

“More aged goat cheeses are on the horizon because consumers are becoming more curious about them,” she adds. “Goat Goudas are becoming popular. Soft-ripened and Bries from many makers are now available.”

Even though consumers are seeking out aged goat cheese, many of them want to start with something within their comfort zone. “We offer a 3 1/2-pound triple cream wheel and 6-ounce round,” says Kirch. “People are gravitating toward triple cream because it’s familiar — they’re more

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inclined to buy it.”

Restaurants fill a real niche in introducing cheeses to consumers. “Our aged brick and pyramid are available with brined green peppercorns added in. The peppercorns hit the spicy flavor trend. We’re seeing more and more chefs use it so it’s filtering down to consumers,” adds Best’s Kirch. “An unusual cheese that’s taken off with chefs is our Grating Stick, a stick of goat cheese that’s been aged until it’s hard enough to grate. It was a first place category winner at the World Championship Cheese Contest in Wisconsin. The more people at restaurants try it, the more they want it at home.”

### Merchandising Ideas

The tried-and-true methods — cross-merchandising, eye-catching displays, promotions and educational material — can help increase retail sales.

According to Steve Margarites, president of Best Cheese, “The best way to merchandise goat cheese at retail is to cross-merchandise it. It goes very well with beer and with wines. Beer is trendier right now, so if state regulations allow, display them together. If you’re promoting it with wine, we can supply suggestions,

such as choosing a cabernet sauvignon from Napa because its acidity level works well with goat cheese.

“Goat cheese should also be paired with produce,” he continues. “At this time



of the year with grapes and melons. If you demo them together, you can get more people to try the cheese. We do sampling programs all over the country. You have to get consumers to try it. Our goat cheese is mild — it’s not goaty.”

And, he believes, it’s important for the retailers to educate consumers. “We try to let retailers know our story — that the cheese is made from fresh milk from our own farm. We know where the product

comes from — from start to finish.”

According to Montchevre’s Solandt, “It’s always a positive to educate the consumer. Keep presenting the cheeses’ attributes. Goat cheese is lower in fat, lower in cholesterol, lower in calories and easier to digest than other cheeses.

“Retailers would do well to offer a wide variety of goat cheeses,” he continues. “Many offer lots of goat cheeses, but with duplicate items. Offering five or six plain Chèvres is confusing. Consumers tend to go to price then. Retailers should merchandise flavors by season; for example, cranberry is a must for fall and winter.”

The importance of good display cannot be overlooked. “I think that anytime the retailer can put some beauty shots in the case when there is a promotion, it helps sell the cheese,” says VBCC’s Hooper. “We have some nice but small poster boards of ways to use the cheeses. Also, if a cheese is on promo, it’s important to order more than one case so there’s some mass and eye appeal in the case. A promotion is designed to stimulate trial purchase. If there’s a discount, chances are the consumer will give it a try. But they need to see a good display.”

**DB**



# Cheese from the Dairy Land

## Specialty and artisan varieties dominate the Wisconsin cheese segment

BY LISA WHITE

After being known as the country's leading cheesemaking state for 160 years, it's no surprise Wisconsin has been a trendsetter for specialty and artisan varieties. Of the more than 600 cheeses produced in the state, 16 percent are specialty cheeses, according to the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB), based in Madison, WI. This is a substantial number, considering the state produces more than 2.6 billion pounds of cheese annually.

"Specialty and artisan cheese is definitely growing in the state," says David Leonhardi, WMMB director of cheese education and

events. "This includes flavored Feta and mixed milk cheese. Consumers are more open to new things than ever before."

The focus on flavor trends and educating consumers via demos and sampling has kept Wisconsin cheeses at the forefront. "Everything is on track for consistent use and growth," Leonhardi says. "It may look modest percentage-wise, but because the category is so large, it can be a big number."

### Timely Trends

Cheese use in sandwiches and pizza are driving the cheese category as a whole and

the Wisconsin cheese segment in particular, but new flavors and innovative product launches are helping propel the state's specialty category.

"Along with blocks of Mozzarella and bags of shreds, in the artisan category we're seeing hand-rubbed olive oil and rosemary giving Asiago wheels a different spin," Leonhardi says. "While nothing old is going away, traditional products are blossoming in new directions."

Creative washes, finishes and even accidents during the cheesemaking process have resulted in exciting developments.



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Santori Food Corp., Plymouth, WI, has had success with its limited edition lines, including Cognac BellaVitano, Caprimenthe and Pastorale Blend. "Our goat cheese comes out June 1 and then we bring it out again when we can create new product, around December 1," says Sue Merckx, retail marketing manager.

The company's milk is produced locally and converted within 24 hours of delivery. "Consumers appreciate family-owned, local operations and tend to become more engaged in products that have an artisan look and feel," Merckx says.

BelGioioso Cheese, Monroe, WI, utilizes fresh cow's milk from local dairies to produce its Italian cheese lines, including Ricotta Salata. "It has a great flavor with a hint of salt," says Francis Wall, vice president of marketing. "We offer it in a precrumbled cup."

LaValle, WI-based Carr Valley Cheese Co., which produces smoked cheese among its many varieties, recently acquired a Blue Cheese plant to expand its offerings. The company has also created new flavors recently of Bread Cheese utilizing chipotle,

garlic and jalapeños. "Most of the farms we work with are small, with the largest having only 70 cows," says Sid Cook, master cheesemaker. "We offer about 80 different cheeses and half are artisan."

Klondike Cheese Co., Monroe, WI, specializes in Feta and recently launched a new fat-free Feta formulation. "Most domestic Feta in the U.S. is made in Wisconsin, and we see this as a growth category," says Luke Buhholzer, vice president of sales. "In the last couple of years, we've seen an increase in unique flavors with more traditional specialty cheese, such as Gouda. The variety is increasing and the quality is improving."

Emmi-Roth USA, Monroe, WI, a subsidiary of Lucerne, Switzerland-headquartered Emmi Group, is a producer of quality artisan cheeses and currently has new products in the pipeline. "We're seeing an increase in more flavorful varieties," says Kirsten Steinhauer, marketing manager.

### Effective Marketing

To bring more attention to Wisconsin cheese, manufacturers say it's important to

## Master Cheesemakers

Helping to set the bar for the industry is the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Program. Created in 1994, the three-year training program, which includes plant inspections and product evaluations, is administered by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Dairy Research. Only Wisconsin cheesemakers who have been licensed for 10 years and made a particular cheese variety for at least five years are eligible to take part in this program. There are currently 44 products that bear the Master's Mark, symbolizing the cheesemaker has completed the program.

"The Master Cheesemaker Program is alive and well," says David Leonhardi, director of cheese education and events, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Madison, WI. "We continually have interest and it's growing. We often get requests from people outside of the state to participate in it, but the primary requirement is being a licensed Wisconsin cheesemaker."

Luke Buhholzer, vice president of sales, Klondike Cheese Co., Monroe, WI, says his father and three uncles have completed the program and speak highly of it. "The knowledge and networking the program provides improve even the best cheesemakers. Even if someone was a great cheesemaker going in, they're a better one coming out. The program is gaining even more recognition in the industry." **DB**

educate consumers and give them a taste of what's available. Providing a story, communicating how the cheese is produced and why Wisconsin is synonymous with these products are all part of the message.

Santori focuses mainly on sampling programs and social media to get the word out about its product lines. "We do a lot of trials, because once people try the product, they're more apt to buy it," Merckx says. "We also have a Facebook page with the goal to engage with our consumers and develop relationships with them to help retailers pull product through."

Carr Valley runs promotions and recommends sampling as a marketing tool. "Discounting doesn't do it, and just decreases store margins," Cook says. "People won't buy [specialty cheese] by the pound anyway. If they try the cheese and like it, they'll buy it."

When showcasing Wisconsin cheese, displays should be large and visible to be the most effective. It's important that staff members have contact with consumers to educate them on the cheesemaking process and what makes these products unique. "Tasting is the best way to educate consumers about the category," says Emmi-Roth's Steinhauer. "The best way to reduce any barrier in the purchasing process is to have consumers try the product."

Secondary displays can work well to help draw consumers in. Focusing on seasonal product and limited-time offerings can create a sense of urgency that can increase impulse sales. "We're coming up on Mozzarella season, so retailers can have a display of fresh lines with tomatoes, basil and olive oil to promote Caprese salads," BelGioioso's Wall says. "Cross-merchandising and recipe suggestions help highlight these products."

The WMMB can be a good resource for

promotions and Wisconsin cheese educational information. Retailers can benefit because Wisconsin cheesemakers work together to better the industry. "One of the things that is really neat and is the unsung hero is the communication that goes on within the food industry," Leonhardi says. "This has improved immensely. The industry is more communicative than ever before, which has helped drive product innovation behind the scenes. This has many implications down the road for the cheese segment as a whole."

The hallmark of Wisconsin cheese is the use of fresh milk, production by artisans and the story behind the product. "The biggest change is the general recognition of artisan cheese," Klondike's Buhholzer says. "In Wisconsin, there have been many farmstead operations and small-batch cheesemakers. What's surprising is the quality coming out of these companies. It's a testament to all of Wisconsin."

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# Conference Watch



By  
**Sharon Olson**  
Executive Director  
CULINARY VISIONS  
PANEL  
CHICAGO, IL

**T**his year's food industry conferences have offered a captivating view of the trends. The year began with the Winter Fancy Food Show followed by Catersource, Natural Product Expo and the National Restaurant Association. To set the stage for the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association, here is a taste of the trends from the first quarter of this year.

## CUISINE SPOTLIGHT

Asian and Mediterranean flavors are taking center stage. As consumers are expanding their palates to include more exotic and interesting flavor profiles,

Korea has become the new culinary star of Asia. Korean flavors were in abundance including kimchi, Korean marinades and rubs and convenience grab-and-go.

Importers say Mediterranean is one the most influential emerging cuisines and consumers agree. Italian has become a familiar favorite in American homes and restaurants and other regions of the Mediterranean continue to grow in familiarity and popularity. Look for flavors from the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa to continue developing.

Also emerging are foods from the Philippines. The combination of Malaysian, Chinese, Indian and Spanish influences marry the familiar with the exotic. This tamer version of Asian food is gathering a following.

## THE FLAVOR BUZZ

**Balsamic:** This aged vinegar made its way far beyond the expected in product offerings including jelly, marinades and gelato.

**Spicy Ketchup:** This mainstream condiment has gone from old to new thanks to imported and artisan ketchup variations.

**The New Chip:** Hummus-based and bean-based chips are becoming appealing alternatives to the "traditional potato chip" in the salty snack category. Kale chips for kids are finding their way into the trendy kids' lunch bags for ultimate trading power at school lunch.

**Hummus:** This Mediterranean favorite branched out to include black bean, edamame, and soy-based hummus.

**Smoked:** Imaginative smoking techniques added flavor interest to meats, cheeses and even ice cream.

**Conscious Comfort Food:** New varieties of comfort food with a conscience were satisfying and delicious. Some examples are a mac-and-cheese with a secret jolt of squash to add nutrients or an edamame guacamole that packed a big flavor punch.

**The Hunt For Truffles:** Known by the French as "the diamond of the kitchen," truffles made their way into cheeses, deli meats, spreads and an unexpected jar of honey.

**A Pinch of Salt:** Although reducing sodium is still a high

priority for convenience-food manufacturers, salt is the "it" ingredient for specialty food consumers. In fact, in a recent Culinary Visions Panel survey, 67 percent of consumers identified themselves as self-described salt lovers.

More companies offered specialty salts than ever before, with many touting the provenance of their salt. New offerings included "dessert" salts such as citron, ginger and vanilla.

**Coveted Cheeses:** According to a recent U.K. study, cheese is No. 1 on the list of the world's most frequently stolen foods. Approximately 3 percent of the world's supply goes missing every year from theft, and it's clear there is no decline of interest in this hot commodity. Categories expected to be trendsetters in 2012 are American sheep's milk cheeses, Swiss cheese, Bavarian cheeses and Belgian cheeses.

**Ancient Grains:** The appeal of ancient grains continues to grow, fueled by market forces that have created a perfect storm for their growing popularity — the demand for whole grains, plant-based entrées and gluten-free options. Quinoa is the current star with amaranth, buckwheat, kamut, millet, and new to the line-up, freekeh, all competing for attention.

**The Allure of Umami:** The savory satisfying allure of umami was seen in a wide range of foods. In addition to appealing to the trained palates of chefs, umami is gaining an appeal with consumer foodies. In the new Culinary Visions Panel flavor study, 61 percent of consumer foodies listed it among their top three flavors.

**Food Democracy:** The idea of widely available, good healthful food at a reasonable price is becoming more of a reality as caterers and restaurateurs alike take their food to the street. Mobile catering has become a chic new segment of the food industry giving consumers a chance to try new foods that might not otherwise be available. Whole-some, quality ingredients are used in a way that is delicious for the consumer and cost effective for the operator.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Small Continues to be Big News** — Small batches, handcrafted foods and boutique flavors continue to captivate retailers and consumers looking for the secret find.

**The Everyday Gourmet** — Consumers enjoy treating themselves to a gourmet experience, and offering products that enable them to create the experience on demand is destined for success.

**Creating An Experience** — Capitalize on creating a memorable experience with food; whether it's a flavor that challenges, transports or comforts, specialty foods have a role in captivating today's consumer. Cookbooks packaged with music that fits the mood of the food are the classic example.

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# Blast From The Past

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## Marin French Cheese Company

tarted in 1865, Marin French Cheese Company, Petaluma, CA, is the oldest continuously operating cheese manufacturer in the country. It started as a dairy farm that made breakfast cheese for dockworkers at Yerba Buena, now San Francisco. The company is best known for its Rouge et Noir Triple Crème Brie, which beat out the French in the 2005 World Cheese Awards, the first time an American cheese beat the French in the Brie category.

The picture on the left, taken around 1920, shows Brie cheeses being stacked in the aging room. The contemporary picture on the right shows Triple Crème Bries in an aging room today.

The company was sold to Rians, a family-owned French cheese company also known as Laiteries H. Triballat, last year after the death of Jim Boyce, who bought the company in 1988 and turned it into a successful competitor in the world of international artisan cheeses.



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