

San Francisco Chronicle

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WHAT'S NEW

Food show takes pulse of the palate

More than 1,300 companies from 32 countries showcased their specialty food and beverage products at the for-trade-only 35th Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco last week.

Past years' emphasis on bottled waters, salts and chocolates has given way to foods claiming enhanced nutritional value and those incorporating honey, flowers, spices and exotic flavors.

During the three-day event, nearly 17,000 attendees sampled their way through 80,000 products. The Chronicle Food & Wine staff attempted to do likewise.

Here are some highlights:

B.R. Cohn's California Unfiltered Golden Balsamic Vinegar made with California grapes and aged at least two years balances acidity with a slight honey-like sweetness, (\$10 at Farm Fresh to You, Sonoma Market and Lunardi's).

A more potent condiment in the love-at-first-sight category is **Inglehoffer's Wasabi Horseradish Mustard**, which combines several sinus-clearing ingredients for an addictive, in-your-face spread (\$3.29 at many supermarkets).

Favorites from **J&D's** products include **bacon popcorn** and **bacon ranch dressing**.

Vegetarians can go with **SoYeat Vegetarian Soy Bites** from Kawan Food. The bite-size chunks come in different flavors, but the Pandan-Style variety is individually wrapped in pandan leaves, an exotic plant found in Southeast Asia. (Look for these soon in the frozen food section of specialty stores.)

Clif Bar has just released **Gary & Kit's Gourmet Mountain Mixes** with four organic blends of "sun-kissed" fruits and nuts, each made to match with a Clif Family wine. Check out the the savory rosemary pistachio and almonds, and the fruity, sweet cherries, strawberries and almonds mixes. (\$7 at the Clif Family Winery tasting room and The Pasta Shop in Berkeley).

We've grown addicted to **Castelvetrano olives** because of their mild flesh and brilliant green color. But the hard-to-find orbs have only been available in bulk olive bars, and they're hard to keep from oxidizing. Now, thanks to **Partanna** brand, the olives will be sold in airtight jars, packed in salty brine. They should be available in stores soon.

Cowgirl Creamery Devil's Gulch is the company's new winter cheese (available until early March). Its paste - similar to also-seasonal St. Pat - is dusted in blend of sweet and slightly spicy red pepper flakes that are grown and dried just down the road at Allstar Organics (\$25 per pound at Cowgirl Creamery stores).



Siggi's Icelandic-Style skyr generated some healthy debate over the yogurt's thick texture and mouth-puckering feel. Think of Siggi's as super-charged uniquely-flavored Greek yogurt lightly sweetened with agave syrup (\$2.69 per 6-ounce container at Whole Foods and other stores).

Environmentally responsible shoppers can keep fruits and vegetables separated without using those plastic bags with **Veggie Bed** - a compartmentalized, reusable produce bag kit. Each kit comes with one large two-compartment bag and two smaller bags or "Pods" that nestle inside for additional separation. Bar codes will soon help zero the weight of the bags at checkout (\$5.99 at Mollie Stone's).

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