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My Best Food Show of the Year: SIAL Paris

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This year it was my first time attending SIAL Paris, the largest food trade show on the planet. It takes place every other year at the Parc des Expositions in Paris. More than 150,000 buyers and 6,000 exhibitors from 105 countries exhibited in more than 20 different sectors from pastry and confectionery to diet and frozen products and fresh meat. As you can imagine, five days are not enough to see everything and to explore the newest and the most impressive. The venue was organized in eight large halls, each featuring products from different sectors or countries. For example, halls 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 hosted the International Pavilions. The Pavilion of the USA was located in hall 4, United Kingdom in hall 2, Turkey in hall 3, etc.



SIAL Paris was impressive but overwhelming. I decided to visit some of the countries -- those not found in American trade shows. I talked to Costa Rica representatives happy with the show and tasted their signature coffee. I went to the stand of the Fiji islands and tried the Raisins of the Sea, a local seaweed product and the Pavilion of Martinique with their organic agave syrup with hibiscus flavor. I skipped the giants of China and Italy, regulars in the USA.



The Trends

XTC is a global player in identifying trends in the food sector. XTC created the trend tree with five groups responding to consumer demands. Those are as follows: **Pleasure, Health, Physical, Convenience and Ethics** with many subgroups reflecting the uniqueness of each product. XTC examined the product innovations by the exhibitors in SIAL together with a group of experts. This year, they received 1,757 products. 675 were selected as Innovative in four different categories by the expert juries and 15 won the Grand Prix SIAL Innovation Award.

Some of my favorite discoveries of the Innovative Products



I discovered the Body Warming Fruit Tea with adaptogenic herbs from South Korea. This functional tea falls under the trend of *Sophistication and Medical* for its unique functional ingredients based on traditional Asian medicine. The canned Cannelloni à

Cuisiner - Cannelloni to Cook from France can be grilled or prepared as the consumer wants. It represents the trend of *Time Saving* and it is unique for its ready-to-cook features. I found the Chicki-Chunk canned chicken from United Arab Emirates. The GMO-free and certified halal product represents the *Easy to Handle* trend. Another French product representing the *Sophistication and Time Saving* trend is the Chips de Crevette à Frire from Sibell - the Fry it Yourself Shrimp Chips, offering the convenience of a restaurant-style meal at home. From Greece, the Fresh Avocado Paste with Flavors like olive paste and even chocolate was selected for its whole range of avocado-based spread with elaborate recipes. It shows the *Variety of Senses* trend.

Beverages

Many were the impressive and innovative beverages like Zider from Austria, a sweet herb cider in green color expressing the *Variety of Senses* trend. The Voda Collagen from Poland, a flavored spring water enriched with collagen and vitamin C and sold in a frosted colored glass bottle chosen for its expression of *Cosmetic and Sophistication* trends. From Malaysia, the Nata de Coco, a jelly drink with pieces of nata de coco in a cup to go with a spoon or straw included in the pack featuring the *Nomadism and Variety of Senses* trends.



The Grand Prix winner in the Cheese & Dairy Products was the Yologur from Ametller, a skimmed-milk yogurt with fruits and olives. It was made by replacing animal fats with olive oil. The product represents the *Variety of Senses and Slimness* trend.



The SIAL Innovation award for beverages went to Springwave, a replenishing drink enriched with spirulina, blue colored and rich in antioxidants and low in sugar.

Trend: *Energy; Slimness and Well-Being*

What to do for an effective show

1. Focus on the countries or sectors you want to see. Otherwise it is impossible to visit everything and everybody. If you want to see frozen foods, visit that hall.
2. Organize each day. Decide to spend half a day in one hall and the second somewhere else. That will help you see as many stands as possible.
3. Be prepared. Study the exhibitors, the show floors and the products beforehand or the very first day. This way you won't be lost.



Overall, SIAL Paris is a show not to be missed for trendspotters, off-the-beaten path media, food buyers and brokers and food producers. I am sure that I will be back again in 2016.

For more information, visit: <http://www.sialparis.com/> and <http://imexmanagement.com/>.

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