

In the End, the Best of The Specialty Food Industry

Louis Coluccio (July 19, 2010)



In the end, the Fancy Food Show really showed the best of the industry, to those who needed it the most.

Every June gourmands descend upon the Jacob Javits Center in anticipation for one of the largest specialty food shows in the country. The [Summer Fancy Food Show](#) [2] showcases all that is new in the specialty food industry. According to NASFT some 24,000 buyers, importers, retailers, press, and enthusiast walked the crowded isles of the [Javits Center](#) [3]. There were a few dominating categories at the international festival including; gluten free, fiber enriched, zero calorie, and the always reliable organic and local products.

At the Italian pavilion I tasted a panettone from the boutique producer [Fiasconaro](#) [4](in the case of full disclosure [D. Coluccio and Sons](#) [5]imports and distributes this brand). I have tasted this panettone many times before, but the product they were sampling at the Show was one of the best I have ever had. It was impossible soft, but with body. The representative from the company smeared a pistachio cream, made with the famous Sicilian Bronte pistachios, over the cake that proved to be a perfect compliment.

The panettone will be sold with a jar of this delicate cream in a special gift box that he showed us in their Christmas 2010 catalog. It was hard to imagine Christmas in June, especially with the sweltering New York weather, but one bite of this cake transported me to the snow and sleet of December in New York.

[Parmacotto](#) [6], a famous Italian brand was on

hand slicing genuine Italian salumi for eager onlookers to taste. I happen to be a fan of this company not only for their superior products, but also for the heritage they represent. It is a family owned and operated company, and I was fortunate enough to meet the young siblings who were ushering the company into the next generation. Alessandro and his sister Stefania are wonderful and grounded individuals with Italian roots, but such an obvious appreciation for American culture and especially New York City.

Equally impressive was the [Berkel](#) [7]prosciutto slicer they were using to carve thin strips of perfectly pink prosciutto. The Berkel is considered the Rolls Royce of prosciutto slicing machines, and worth its hefty price tag. In perfect succession, I discover beauty and the beverage at the [Rocchetta](#) [8]booth, as Italy's number one brand of sparkling water had Miss Italia on hand meeting and greeting thirsty fans. I wasn't sure if it was the several slices of salumi I had tasted, or Miss Italia, but the Rochetta booth was a welcomed sight.

The [Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium](#) [9] made its grand return to Fancy Food, with three massive wheels of cheese perched on stands open for tasting. The representative handed out frisbees which read "Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano-Reggiano, Beyond Grate!" a witty play with words. Inside the frisbee was a disk that broke down the different aromas, looks, and textures of



their 18, 22, and 30 month aging. Delicious and informative, this was certainly a triumphant return for the king of Italian cheese.

I tasted a simple Sicilian cookie that had no added fiber, was hardly gluten free, but nevertheless was delicious. It was a dry biscotti made with lard, a pigs fat, locale almonds, and a healthy dose of coarsely ground black pepper. This is a Sicilian specialty which made for the perfect balance between savory and sweet.

At the American pavilion there were plenty of gluten free products, even in the form of a pizza crust, an interesting alternative if only one had no option. Prepared products were also plentiful. I tasted a meatball made with a premeasured dry mixture, which tasted fine, but I couldn't help but wonder if [4C](#) [10] had been doing this for years? There were also plenty of jarred tomato sauces to taste, made for those of us who have the hopes of eating gourmet, when time is nowhere to be found.

After hours of tasting, hand shaking, and offering encouraging words to eager producers, who spent so much of their time and money with the hopes of securing distribution or sales, my senses were overwhelmed. The producers all shared a passion and enthusiasm for their products; this was evident in their presentations and knowledge of the products they represented. After all there were 2,500 exhibitors from 81 countries, so face time with industry and consumers was limited to a few quick words.

Days later I thought of all the interesting people I had met as I searched through my pile of business cards, pamphlets and brouchers, and with my frisbee aside I went to the NASFT website in search for something I may have missed. I discovered that attendance was up 4% from last year, a sign of renewed enthusiasm for the food industry one can only hope.

In the end, the industry provided the greatest showmanship to its most important audience. According to the NASFT website, some 150,000 lbs of delicacies were donated to City Harvest. They estimated that this would be enough food to fill eight tracker trailers. At an event built on so many grand gestures and distinguished guest it was this alone that reassured me that sometimes the simplest of acts can yield the greatest of results.



Source URL: <http://iitaly.org/magazine/dining-in-out/articles-reviews/article/in-end-best-specialty-food-industry>

Links

- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/15142parmigiano1279551109jpg>
- [2] <http://www.specialtyfood.com/fancy-food-show>
- [3] <http://www.javitscenter.com>
- [4] <http://www.fiasconaro.com>
- [5] <http://dcoluccioandsons.com>
- [6] <http://www.parmacotto.com>
- [7] <http://www.berkelequipment.com>
- [8] <http://www.rocchetta.it>
- [9] <http://www.parmigiano-reggiano.it/>
- [10] <http://ww.4c.com>