

FLAVOR & THE MENU

10 top Trends 2019

industry events on both culinology and food product development.

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GERRY LUDWIG is a nationally recognized food writer, speaker and

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LOUIS MASKIN graduated from the University of Southern California,

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ADAM MOORE is the Founder of Flashpoint Innovation, a food and

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KARA NIELSEN is a food and beverage trend expert with over

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SHARON OLSON is Founder & Executive Director of Chicago-

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TONY PEREYRA

developed his expertise in every facet of the bar and

beverage industry, delivering innovations in mixology, developing structured bar programs, establishing strategic partnerships and creating positive training and educational experiences. His Los Angeles-based beverage consultancy, The Spirits In Motion, co-founded with business partner Phil Wills, has kept him involved with developing top-shelf beverage logistics since 2011. By attending and speaking at seminars and national conferences as an industry influencer, and applying countless hours of real-time research, Tony stays ahead of the game with industry trends to deliver top-notch bar and beverage solutions.

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RICK PEREZ is Chef/ Founder of R&D Culinary Consultants, a product

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INDULGENT VEGAN

Vegan fare is moving from functional to decadent, enticing a wider range of consumers

No Bones Beach Club is a modern vegan restaurant and bar geared toward younger consumers in Seattle and Portland, Ore., and now the Chicago market as well. Its vibe is hip, with a laid-back motto that brags: "Just cuz it's vegan doesn't mean it sucks!" Menu items tout fan-favorite formats, like wings and nachos. No Bones' Buffalo Cauliflower Wings are tossed in a coconut-Buffalo sauce, served with a side of ranch. Its Northwest Nachos star cashew-poblano queso, black bean and corn salsa, tomato, cilantro, grilled jalapeño and cilantro crema, with an add-on of spiced jackfruit carnitas. Meanwhile, in Atlanta, the newly opened plant-based burger joint The Slutty Vegan proudly brands itself as "vegan junk food," serving modern builds like the Heaux Boy, vegan shrimp made crispy in a New Orleans-style batter, served on a Hawaiian bun with pickles, lettuce and drizzled with secret sauce. And in New York, Cienfuegos is transforming from a rum bar and Latin American restaurant into Honeybee's, a vegan barbecue-style eatery with a focus on whiskey.





The house-smoked vegan hot dog at Anthem in Austin, Texas, is loaded with Korean kraut and spicy vegan aioli.

ANTHEM

foods. “Plant-centric proliferation has helped propel an appreciation for vegetarian and vegan options,” says Rob Corliss, chef/founder of the consulting firm All Things Epicurean (ATE). “While vegan, in and of itself, is more of a lifestyle choice as opposed to a cuisine, it has started to entice non-vegans with its ingredient combinations.”

Vegan dogs are in the game, too, unleashing the same level of decadence that we see in baseball parks and street carts across the country. At Anthem, a Tex-Asian restaurant in Austin, Texas, the Vdog is a house-smoked vegan curry hot dog topped with Korean kraut, scallion, sesame seeds and spicy vegan aioli on a pretzel bun. Blatt Beer & Table in Dallas and Omaha, Neb., menus a Vegan Currywurst with all of the traditional

currywurst flavors, like smoked paprika, cumin and curry, topped with caraway kraut and German rosemary mustard, served on a pretzel bun.

Flavor complexity, craveability and craftsmanship are the three factors that spell vegan menu development success. “The use of plant-based meat alternatives and healthy fats from produce, such as avocados, are giving plant-forward menu items the taste and texture of the foods that consumers grew up loving, without sacrificing enjoyment,” says CSSI’s Darling.

Butterleaf, a restaurant in Irvine, Calif., that invites guests to “indulge in plant-based cuisine,” menus a mix of healthy and indulgent. Its appetizer of Avocado Bombs plays off the nutrient-rich components of the avocado, then builds up their shareability and craveability by

“ The vegan lifestyle is gaining appreciation and admiration, especially among younger consumers. In a recent Culinary Visions study, 56 percent of consumers 18 to 34 years old said they admired the vegan lifestyle.

SHARON OLSON

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FUNCTIONAL SIPPING

Both nonalcoholic and boozy beverages are getting a winning dose of wellness-promoting ingredients

A number of years ago, terms like “gut health” and “functional foods” were limited to health food stores. But thanks to a few drivers, the idea of health benefits derived from wholesome ingredients in both food and beverage has powered its way into the consumer consciousness. Certainly, retail products have helped define and market the concept, with everything from yogurts touting the benefits of probiotics for digestive health, to cold-pressed juices promising boosts in mental clarity and immunity. The mainstreaming of retail products promoting all sorts of positive physiological effects helped move the idea of functionality from hippie culture to a broader consumer base. “The main drive comes from the perpetual innovation in retail,” says Rob Corliss, chef/founder of All Things Epicurean (ATE). “This retail explosion of cross-functional products has started to spark the same output in foodservice.”

Turn Up the Beet at Spuntino Wine Bar in New Jersey boasts colorful, wholesome beet powder.



SPUNTINO WINE BAR & ITALIAN TAPAS

Carrot, ginger and cilantro up the wellness factor in this brunch drink at Beaker & Gray in Miami.



CORTNEY CATES

“ In our health-obsessed, have-it-all culture, it is no surprise that alcoholic beverages are taking on a health halo. In a recent Culinary Visions study, 73 percent of consumers said they enjoy superfoods that serve specific functional purposes.

SHARON OLSON

This phenomenon—although impacting all aspects of the menu—holds the biggest opportunity on the beverage side. It's fueling tremendous innovation in the nonalcoholic beverage category, where nutrient-dense ingredients like turmeric, blueberries, beets, carrots and kale find a natural home. And although they've been making their mark in non-alc for a while now, beverage directors are delving deeper into both creative combinations and messaging around the health benefits of these ingredients. Eureka!, a 22-unit casual-dining chain based in Hawthorne, Calif., signals a good-for-you profile with its well-named TLC Nectar, a nonalcoholic beverage starring turmeric, lemon, carrot and honey. Spuntino Wine Bar & Italian Tapas, with two locations in New Jersey, borrows the name "Green Machine" from the healthy beverage section of retail for its mocktail that features matcha powder, vanilla simple syrup, pineapple juice, coconut milk, club soda and a frozen banana slice.

Spirulina and collagen bring modern functionality to this smoothie from Juice It Up!



JUICE IT UP!

The trend in functional builds is also making impressive headway on the cocktail side of the menu, balancing the sin of liquor with the redemption of wholesomeness. "It makes sense that functional ingredients are partnering with booze," says Tamra Scroggins, director of food culture at Sizzler USA. "So many diners like to drink alcohol, but if they can add a little function to their cocktail, they'll feel better about their choice. This is a huge growth opportunity for restaurants with bars." Honey Salt, a New American bistro in Las Vegas, goes all-in with the functional beverage trend in its cocktail called the Boo-Tox, which boasts fresh-pressed beet juice, ginger, coconut activated charcoal, local honey syrup and coarse sea salt—all spiked with lemon vodka.

In addition to a huge boost from retail presence, functional beverages are gaining traction thanks to all four significant generations. Yes, all four—this is a trend that holds broad appeal, a winning formula in the continuing effort to attract a wide swath of consumers. "This trend is driven by Millennials, but Generation Z, Gen X and Boomers have all shown significant interest," says Maeve Webster, president of Menu Matters consultancy. "What's most appealing for all of these groups is the intuitive or natural tie between 'whole'