

Trend/Wire™

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IDEA ALERT

Here's more of the items and ideas that impressed me most at this week's San Francisco show:

✓ **Kimberly Wine Vinegars**, from Daly City, Cal., are among the most flavorful and distinctive I've tasted anywhere. They're varietal vinegars based on Cabernet Sauvignon, Sherry, Chardonnay and Champagne (made from Pinot Noir grapes).

✓ Among the newest twists on the pasta front (and I'm not speaking of some clever variation on fusilli) are the uniquely flavored **Thai Chef** noodles from Worldwide Thai of New York City. The four flavors, all sold in 8-ounce packages, are Red Chili & Peanut; Ginger, Garlic & Cilantro; Black Bean & Red Chili; and Lemongrass Garlic Basil. And as if that global concept is not brazen enough, the company also markets Thai Tortilla Chips that combine white corn with red chili, coriander and lime.

✓ **Via Ventresca Bouillabaisse** is the first in a One Step Kitchen Masterpiece series created by Patrice Ventresca. The base mixture comes frozen in one- and two-pound bowls, to be combined with the seafoods of your choice in a total amount of equal weight.

Brief simmering to cook the fish and/or shellfish produces a fresh-tasting, stunningly sophisticated dish to serve as either a first or main course. A touch of Pernod and "the finest Spanish saffron" help capture true South of France taste.

The chef/owner uses only natural ingredients, including Roma tomatoes, fennel root and other vegetables. The only added fat is "a bit of olive oil to sauté the onion and celery," she says.

Via Ventresca's newest addition is a Punjabi Curry Sauce, packaged similarly. Patrice plans to expand the line "every six months or so" while pushing distribution into Texas and points east.

GLOBAL VIEW

Indian ingredients and flavor profiles are edging ever closer to the American mainstream. The varied fruit chutneys we encounter so routinely in restaurants nowadays are reflected in product lines such as **Cinnabar**, whose chutneys go beyond mango to include tomato, tomato-mint, pear-cardamom and peach versions.

And smart marketing is playing a major role. Capitalizing on its slogan, "Interesting Food for Busy People," the **Instant India** line of all-natural, American-made curry pastes is proving popular among consumers and chefs alike. The newest product from its producer, East India Spice Co. of Cambridge, Mass., is Bombay Spice & Sour. This paste is flavored with "sweet, sour, smoky" tamarind fruit, plus sesame, coconut, "a touch of exotic asafetida" and seven other spices. (Asafetida is a truffle-flavored brown resin native to Kashmir.)

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