

The Italian Pavilion @ the Summer Fancy Food Show

Natasha Lardera (July 13, 2011)



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The 57th Summer Fancy Food Show, the nation's premiere specialty food and beverage marketplace, held in Washington DC from July 10th to the 12th has just ended. The annual event showcased 180,000 specialty products, welcomed 2,400 exhibitors from over 80 countries and 25,000 participants and visitors in the food and beverage industry.

As it has been for the past 30 years, the Italian Pavilion was the largest. Showcasing the best of Italian gastronomy and wine, the Pavilion featured 202 exhibitors, including manufacturers of a vast array of Italian gourmet products, as well as producers, the country's regions, export consortia, and



chambers of commerce.

Ann G. Daw, President of the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT), which owns and operates the Summer and Winter Fancy Food Shows, said "We are delighted the Italian Trade Commission once again has brought together an impressive line up of Italian specialty food and wine companies, all ready to offer samples and information on the best of Italy."

Visitors to the Italian Pavilion were able to see and taste Italy's finest offerings of cheese, freshly pressed fruit juices, extra virgin olive oil, freshly-cooked pasta, wine, gelato and other desserts. There were also a few new products introduced this year for the first time: frozen pizza and focaccia, individual quick-frozen and organic quick-frozen desserts and dairy products, gluten-free specialty foods, including pasta, flavored vinegars and salts, artisanal beer and ready to eat dishes.

At the kick off of the show on July 10th, Aniello Musella, Trade Commissioner and Executive Director for the United States of ITC (Italian Trade Commission) welcomed all with an open invitation: "Italy is the land of naturally nutritious food from sunup to moonrise, with fields and farms full of vegetables, herbs and grains, cheeses in volume of number, taste and type, voluptuous grapes for numerous great wines, trees with myriad olive offerings as well as pastas and breads, nuts, and a wealth of fishes, sea urchins, clams and mussels. You name a top quality food, and Italy most likely produces a bounty of it - from our mountains in the north to the tip of the boot in the south and from the beautiful seas that lap our shores.

Ours is a country that is blessed with fields and mountains and oceans that are legendary for the plethora of good foods they have produced over the centuries and still provide in a rich bounty today both for dinner tables at home and worldwide. Today Italy's rich store of products - natural, organic, and kosher as well as our vast offerings of sauces, marinades, tapenades, preserved and prepared meats and seafoods, fruits, figs and antipastos and other products - are in high demand by increasing numbers of knowledgeable, health-conscious cooks and diners worldwide. Whether you want to prepare a quick dish, or a grand, multi course dinner, the foods and wines from Italy will brighten your fare. Throughout the 2011 Summer Fancy Food, I invite you to visit, tour and taste the sunny cornucopia of products offered at the official Italia Pavilion in more than 200 exhibitor booths - the largest number in the show, all featuring top quality, authentic Italian products."

Along with Mr. Musella was Lorenzo Galanti, Counselor at the Italian Embassy in Washington DC. He stressed the importance of Italy in such a major trade show as the Fancy Food, "10% of the show is indeed Italian," the increase of Italian exports, "18% in the first quarter," and the "authenticity of the 70 Italian restaurants in Washington DC, a city that is a growing culinary power."

Ann Daw added that bringing the show to Washington was indeed a great opportunity as "There is an unprecedented interest in artisanal food and innovative products and this creates wonderful opportunities for buyers and suppliers." Washington is indeed a new gastronomic capital that caters to embassies and international trade organizations.

And Italy set to conquer Metropolitan Washington and the Middle Atlantic region as they are strong markets for specialty foods. "We want to bring our traditional products and our new, innovative products, like gluten-free and kosher," Mr. Musella added, "the kosher segment, for example, has great potential, that is why we organized a special event with important speakers like food writer Fred Plotkin and rabbi Umberto Piperno to educate producers who are curious to enter this small but fast growing market. We also wanted to highlight the quality and uniqueness of our olive oils through an event organized by Unaprol, the largest organization of Italian olive oil producers, and the continuous struggle between tradition and innovation at a special breakfast where we held a thought-provoking conversation led by award-winning food journalist Corby Kummer of The Atlantic with leading chefs on the Washington, DC scene - Mike Isabella of Graffiato and Luigi Diotaiuti of Al Tiramisu -- and author John Mariani (How Italian Food Conquered the World).

There are plenty of chefs who come to Italy to learn certain skills and traditional recipes then they return here and create something new, something inspired by what they have learned. I think it is good to have new ideas but it is very important to use authentic Italian products. We also had the opportunity to introduce a new program, Club EATalian, an education program presented in



collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Economic Development to showcase healthy alternatives to highly processed food-based meals for American kids and their parents.”

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The food and wine sector of the Italian Trade Commission in New York provides industry information, produces trade publications, ad organizes tastings, food demonstrations, events, seminars, press trips and trade show pavilions across the United States.

For more information please visit www.ItalianMade.com [2], the official site dedicated to the foods and wines of Italy, or contact The Italian Trade Commission by telephone 212.980.1500; by fax 212.758.1050; or via email: newyork@ice.it [3]

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