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NEWS RELEASE

NRA Show 2010 - International Overview

(Chicago) - Both attendee and exhibitor numbers showed positive growth at the 91st annual NRA Show and IWSB event. The increases highlight the NRA Show's position as the restaurant and hospitality industry. The Show is the biggest and more complete international forum for the equipment, products, services and information that operators need to grow their business. NRA Show 2010 was held at Chicago's McCormick Place May 22-25, and IWSB was held in conjunction with the Show on May 23-24.

Asia - Power House of Offerings

In the last few years Korea has made efforts to globalize its cuisine. Having been called "The New Hot Cuisine" by Wall Street Journal, the flavors of Korean Cuisine were also present at NRA Show 2010. The Korean Pavilion at the Show brought top-notch Korean companies to exhibit and showcased a Kimchi Museum in order to introduce Korean cuisine to possible buyers. Besides exhibitors and the Museum, the Korean Pavilion also presented culinary demonstrations by international known Korean American Chefs highlighting their professional culinary knowledge, skills and mastery of cooking techniques. Among the invited Chefs were Debbie Lee (Food Network's The Next Food Network Star), Bill Kim (Executive Chef at Urbanbelly & Belly Shack), Edward Lee (Executive Chef at 610 Magnolia), Jeehyun Lee (Author, Korean Cuisine) and Bibimbap Taco Tasting (Korean's take on taco).

In terms of Wine, Spirits and Beer, there were three different types of Korean drinks that made a splash at the NRA Show 2010. These were Makgeolli, Andong Soju and Bokbunja. Makgeolli is liquor made with fermented sweet rice. Makgeolli's rise in popularity can be attributed to the recent economy since the drink is affordable and also provides health benefits as it contains lots of lactobacilli and fiber. The second drink that attracted the curiosity of many attendees that visited the Korean Pavilion was Andong Soju, which has a subtle aroma and remarkable flavor, despite its 45% alcoholic content. Lastly but not less important and/or appealing is the Bokbunja, which is a Korean fruity wine, made from wild and/or cultivated Korean black raspberries.

In the Japanese Pavilion participants could visit and taste the products of companies such as Nisshin Seifun Group, Otafuku Foods, Hikari Miso, Kabosu Factory, Kozen Honten, Sysco & Icrest and Ujinotsuyu Seicha. These and other companies that exhibited at NRA Show 2010 represented the rich and diverse food culture of Japan and its cooking techniques, furnishing, tableware, architecture and the spirituality and aesthetic sense that reflect Japan's overall culture. Among the key highlights of the Japanese pavilion was the presence of Ajinomoto, a company with more than 3,700 employees and great reputation all over the world. Among many products, Ajinomoto brought to the Show the "Hon Dashi", the number one brand soup stock. This product is the most effective seasoning to bring Dashi taste to any dish. Mizkan, the leading company in the rice vinegar market worldwide, was also another key exhibitor bringing its Citrus seasoning and Unagi sauce.

New Zealand had significant representation in the Show with various food and equipment companies being showcased in its country's Pavilion. In addition, New Zealand also brought to the Show its VnC Cocktails. This new company was launched in 2007 and quickly started the sales of its ready-to-pour cocktails in 6 delicious flavors. In the company's manufacturing facilities, award mixologists have combined 100% pure New Zealand Vodka with the finest natural juices in an easy to pour 1 liter bottle. With international success in China, Thailand, India, Hong Kong, Canada, Russia and other countries, the company showed that it is ready for more global expansion. In 2009 the company got three gold medals and 1 silver medal at the Drinks International competition in London. Shortly after followed more gold and silver medals in competitions in the US and a "Best Bar Mix" and the "Superior Service" awards in China. "It is all very well telling everyone how great our cocktails are – but it is great to be validated by a third party endorsement," says Shane McKillen, founder-director of VnC Cocktails.

In addition, China and Malaysia were also represented by various exhibiting companies. The Chinese Pavilion almost tripled its exhibiting area when compared to 2009. This increase in interested exhibiting companies clearly shows the great opportunity of commerce between Chinese exhibitors and NRA attendees. Also, Chinese buyers continued to represent one of the biggest groups of international buyers for the Show with increasing buying power and great hunger for efficient and high-quality products and services.

Europe – Tradition & Quality

The influence of French gastronomy in Europe and around the world remains strong. Chefs all around the world trust French products for their quality, taste and design. Celebrating French tradition, the French Pavilion at NRA Show welcomed the best in French technology and recipes for the foodservice industry. In 2009, US \$21 million worth of commercial equipment for making hot drinks and food were imported from France to the United States. Also, in the same year, the American foodservice industry bought US \$40 million worth of breads and pastries from French suppliers. French exhibiting companies at NRA Show included Bridor (leading French company for frozen pastries made with genuine butters), Eurofours (company specialized in bakery and pastry ovens for convenience store and in-store bakeries), Gourmet Attitude (importer/distributor of fresh truffles and truffle products), Unic (manufacturer of professional grade espresso equipment for restaurants, cafes and Hotels), Verrerie de La Marne (manufacturer of high-quality glass and wine accessories) and Etiq-Etal (French manufacturer of sign and display for any kind of business related with food, supermarkets to catering and hospitality industry).

At NRA Show, France also made its mark with the presence of two of its Chefs at the World Culinary Showcase. Nils Noren, vice president of culinary education, and David Arnold, director of culinary technology, both from the French Culinary Institute participated of the World Culinary Showcase. These two Chefs demonstrated that enzymatic and vacuum manipulation may sound difficult but are user friendly ways to enhance the great natural flavors of fruits and vegetables if you have the correct equipment and know-how. In addition, the FREE education section 'New technologies Used in France to produce Breakthrough New products', one of the 70+ FREE education sections available at the Show, also offered Show attendees new key contacts in France and knowledge about the new technologies and processes of the French culinary market.

French companies also launched on NRA Show new products for the restaurant and hospitality industry. Garnier-Thiebaut, for example, launched its summer collection of fashion fabrics for restaurant table. The company promoted the expansion of its product line offering a bigger selection of styles, designs, fabrics/textures and a variety of coordinated accessories. Following a global trend to promote eco-friendly initiatives, the company also used organic cotton to create its: "Jardin Royal" collection for indoors and outdoors dining services.

In terms of Wine, Spirits & beer, France had great representation. The key highlight was the presence of Chamarré Wines – An association of 13,000 vine growers in France. Chamarré selects each year only the highest quality grapes from each grower in order to represent and sell them. Routin, a syrup and alcohol manufacturer was also at NRA Show 2010 offering a range of premium products including ‘1883 de Philibert Routin’ gourmet syrups, made with water from the French Alps. Routin also offers a wide range of alcohols, liquors, French wines from Saviy and specialty beers. Also, Jenlain & Pietra are two French breweries that were present at NRA Show 2010. Both breweries offer high-quality beers using the best raw materials possible. In terms of equipment for the beverage industry, there was much to be seen. The French company Foundis, a stylish and effective cooling unit for wine cellars was at the Show together with many other technological manufacturers that address the needs of the food service industry.

Traditional Belgium beers were also present. The Gertrude Triple is brewed in the Belgium tradition with 4 different kinds of barley and wheat malts and 3 different hops, giving the beer its unique character and its unusual taste. Among others, the Belgoo Brewery was also attracting much attention, presenting 4 different types of beer, the dry hopped amber ale, dry hopped blond ale, 4 grains craft beer and organic amber ale. In terms of Spirits, The Owl Distillery presented the Belgian Owl Belgian Single Malt Whisky, the first whisky ever made in Belgium with barley grown in the country. This magnificent whisky has a pleasant fruity softness and aromas of Mirabelle, ripe pear, butter candy, ending with a pleasant floral touch. The Belgian Owl has received the Grand Gold Quality Award 2010 by Monde Selection, the International Institute for Quality Selection.

Since the NRA Show is recognized for helping companies launching numerous products and concepts, making its debut in the United States at NRA Show was the Belgian Beer Café. The Belgian Café concept comes out of that heritage of great beer and the Belgian tradition of pairing beers with wonderful food and serving them in a warm, inviting atmosphere. Today there are 60 venues outside of the United States, including Kiev, Tokyo, Shanghai, Netherlands and Prague. This was a hot concept launch at the Show.

Since food is also one of the core exports of Italy, at NRA Show participants could also find great Italian brands while walking on the Show floor. Among the many brands present were Barilla, Carpigiani, ElectroFreeze and Smeraldina. Smeraldina, a water company from Sardina, was actually launching its global expansion at NRA Show.

Integrating innovation and tradition, for 13 years Spaniard companies have constantly exhibit at NRA Show. In 2010 the organization that represents the interests of the main Spanish exporters related to Hotel and Restaurant equipment brought to the Show various companies including Durplastics, Fagor, Gruppo Pizza, ITV, Samic, Zumex and Zummo. These companies presented Spanish solutions for various needs of the foodservice industry from kitchen utensils to ice cube makers and crush ice makers to vacuum packaging machines and blast chillers. Noticing the value of the Show to its buyers, Fargo returns annually to the Show with its cooking, laundry, dishwashing and refrigeration equipment. Also returning to the Show for many years is Zumex and its revolutionary automatic juicing system.

Among the German companies present at NRA Show, Arzberg made a splash. The high-quality porcelain products made for those who want nothing less than the very best from five-star restaurants to bustling hotels is well known for the quality and durability of its products. “Over the past two years, we have been increasingly approached by chefs and proprietors who are looking for quality and style for their tables. Therefore, trying out NRA seemed like a logical step”, explains Patti Kiesel Sutherlin, founder of EU Design Distributors, the company that distribute Arzberg in the US. Arzberg porcelain can be found from Berlin to San Francisco, Vancouver to Milan to Santa Monica, not to mentioned Chicago and New York.

Middle East and Africa – Great Potential Ahead

At NRA Show visitors from all over the World could start understanding how they can tap into new markets all over the world and also new market segments in the United States. The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) was present at the Show in order to demonstrate how companies can profit from the 9 million American-Muslim population.

Dr. Muhammad Chaudry, president of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America was present at the Show and participated also of an education section available for interested parties. When recently interviewed for Sky radio Dr. Muhammad noted that “the burgeoning spending power of American Muslims is estimated at around US \$ 170 billion”. In the same interview, when asked about which companies are aboard with halal standards, Mr. Chaudry stated “pretty much everybody who is exporting products to South East Asia and Middle East, starting with Nestle, Kraft, Abbot Nutrition, ConAgra and all the mid and small size companies”.

Mr. Don Tymchuck, president of Med-Diet Laboratories, also participated in the education section above mentioned. In our conversation with him, he affirmed that “the recent migration of Muslims to the US is a relatively new phenomenon and for that a great opportunity for companies”. He also stated that “many other countries nowadays have a well developed halal meals industry”. He explained that “since there was a significant Muslim migration centuries ago to France and Spain, companies in these countries were relative quick to adapt and profit from that opportunity”. He added “now it is time for the American industry to adapt and profit as well”.

Bringing Israel’s vibrant and growing food industry to the US, the Israel Export & International Cooperation Institute was present at NRA Show. The key highlights were the Israeli wines, an industry that boasts more than 150 wineries, some 30 of which produce on a commercial scale. Israel’s Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and other wines win awards and recognition in tasting competitions around the world.

In addition to having Israel and key Islamic organizations on the Show Floor, NRA participants could also network and taste the products of various African countries. Visitors could certainly experience South Africa’s famous wines and network with the many delegations of buyers that came from all over Africa, including Nigeria.

Latin America & Canada – Close Neighbors

Canadians comprise the largest international group that attends the NRA Show. Canadian buyers come in large numbers in order to profit from education sections, networking and great deals on Show floor.

Key exhibiting Canadian companies can also be found at NRA Show. One of the key Canadian exhibitors at NRA Show 2010 was Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, which is the world's fourth largest agriculture and agri-food exporter. Canada exports approximately 45% of its domestic food and agricultural production, worth US \$41.6 billion, to over 180 countries worldwide. Another key exhibitor from Canada present at the Show was the Beef Information Center, which promotes the use of meat, fresh or frozen. In addition, Canadian company Halton Group was at the Show to market its indoor climate product and system solutions.

WaveSoft Technologies Corp, founded in Vancouver, took advantage of the coming widespread adoption of open wireless technologies in the vertical market showcasing its latest technology at NRA Show. Also from Canada, Honibe, a premium honey manufacturer, was also targeting international expansion of its line of products that include: Honey Drop, Honey Delights, Honey Sprinkles, Honey Sugar, and Specialty Honey Flavors

In what refers to Latin America, besides having a great number of buyers, regional exhibiting companies also represented the various Latin countries. Among the exhibitors from Mexico were Coifas the Mexico, Verfruco and Foodservice World Mexico. Verfruco presented its ethnic foods, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, kosher foods and organic products and The Foodservice World Mexico presented educational and training materials. Hass Avocados was also exhibiting at NRA Show. The company is specialized in fresh and processed avocado and sells refrigerated and frozen avocado pulp, halves, sauce and guacamole.

Representing Chile were Carnes Nuble, Agrosuper and many other companies that came with Pro Chile, the Trade Commission of Chile. Buyers that went to the booth of Carnes Nuble could sample and make deals with the executives responsible for the best natural grass-fed beef and grain-fed beef from Chile. In another booth, Agrosuper showed why the company is the major agro industrial company in Chile with more than 16,000 employees and a diverse portfolio of products: Chicken, Pork, Turkey, Salmon, processed meats and is also involved in the wine industry, with the Ventisquero brand. The Trade Commission of Chile also brought various companies that sell fats and oils, gourmet foods and many other types of food and beverages products.

At NRA Show 2010 Latin America was certainly represented by its exhibiting companies but even more so by large groups of buyers. In addition to various groups of Central and South Americans, Uruguayans and Brazilians, more than 200 in one single buying delegation, made many exhibitors very optimistic with their buying power and their structured approach to select what to buy at the Show.

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National Restaurant Association

Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which is comprised of 945,000 restaurant and foodservice outlets and a work force of 13 million employees. Together with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Association works to lead America's restaurant industry into a new era of prosperity, prominence, and participation, enhancing the quality of life for all we serve. For more information, visit our Web site at www.restaurant.org.