



# MATTSON

WE MAKE FOOD HAPPEN



NATURAL  
PRODUCTS  
EXPO  
EAST

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXPO EAST 2015 Recap & Overview

### CONTACT

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# Natural Expo East 2015

Overview

While the Natural Channel is so much more than it was 10 years ago, it's first and foremost a community of like-minded values. It's a fun community, a loving community, and certainly a sharing community.

As the Sharing Economy grows, many of the smaller start-up companies with their "We" consciousness are winning the hearts and minds of the consumer and taking share away from large corporations and their legacy brands.

As we literally hold the future in our hands, the Natural Channel once again is taking us on a journey of awakening and co-creation, one in which we forge a new pattern of human civilization.



# Conventional Wisdom Watch



**PASSION**

◀ Millennial excitement abounds in the quest to discover nutrient dense foods that will improve the health of the normal American citizen.

Pulling way out in front of other food tribes.  
CW: A lot can happen by November 2016 ▶



**CLEAN FOOD**

◀ Worldwide our food systems are being hijacked by a handful of corporations wanting to push GMO, patent seeds, force farmers to use more chemicals, destroy the earth, uproot people who live on the land, give us bad food and harvest subsidies from taxes.

“It's all about that gut.” ▶



**SUGAR LOVE**

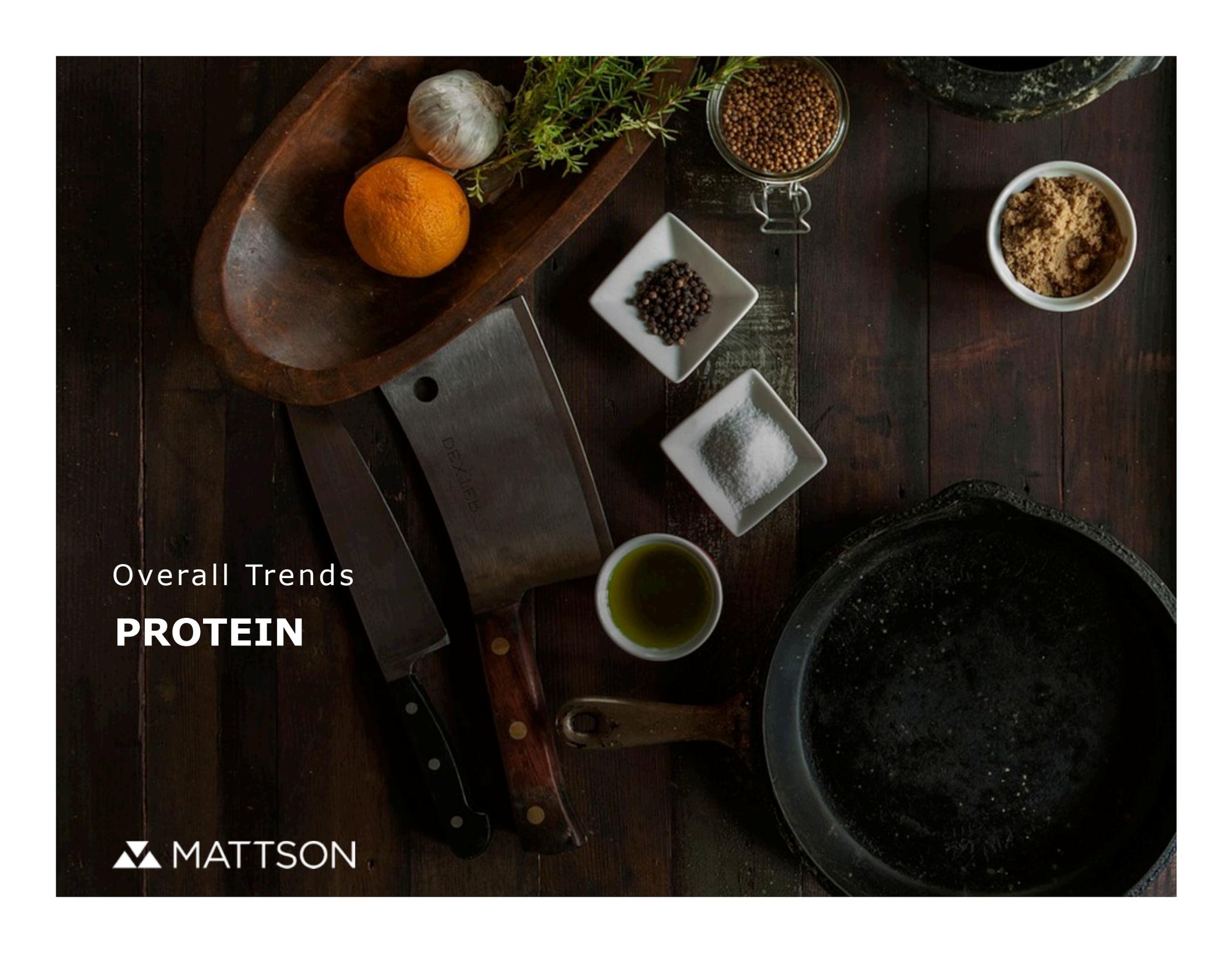
◀ After reaching 77 lbs. per capita, the spell has finally been broken and American consumers are falling out of love with sugar.



**PALEO DIET**



**FERMENTATION**



Overall Trends  
**PROTEIN**

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Consumers are moving away from sugar, increasingly associated with a wide variety of health risks, and this is impacting the protein trend. Consumers see protein as a healthy, guilt-free alternative to sugary carbohydrate food. Hershey acquired Krave Jerky earlier this year, possibly as a defense move to the growing movement against sugar. Whatever the reason, protein is the primary reason consumers are eating more meat snacks.

While meat snacks are enjoying their day in the sun, plant protein is soaring, dairy protein is holding its own, algae is outpacing kale sales, and insect protein is driving curiosity. According to a recent GMI/QQ Survey, 26% of American consumers are interested in trying insect sourced protein. Call me crazy, but the same survey indicated that 40% of American consumers are interested in trying lab-cultured meat protein. What?! Could “shmeat” be more intriguing than insect protein? Appears so.

Impossible Foods, a relatively young tech start up in the bay area focused on creating meat and dairy foods directly from simple plant ingredients, scored over \$100 million in financing recently. I spoke with someone who had tasted the plant-based “burger” and said it tasted remarkably like real hamburger. Whatever the protein du jour, each of these proteins is helping to pave the way for the diverse, sustainable and ethical bio-economy of the future.

The following are a few of my favorite protein products.

As their website says, "These aren't your father's super salty, teriyaki-like sticks made with who-knows what!"

Indeed not! I love these products and Vermont has done a great job among existing meat snack brands in converting "bro" packaging to have a more universal appeal.

Meat snacks of all types are riding high and rank fourth in snack sales behind potato chips, tortilla chips and nut/trail mix snacks. I attribute Krave Jerky, the fastest growing meat snack brand, for changing the image of meat snacks and making it cool to eat meat.

[www.vtsmokeandcure.com](http://www.vtsmokeandcure.com)

# VERMONT

SMOKE & CURE™

## MEAT STICKS

70-90  
Calories

6-10g  
Protein

0-1g  
Sugars

- ✓ Raised Without Antibiotics
- ✓ No Added Hormones
- ✓ Vegetarian Fed
- ✓ No Sodium Nitrite
- ✓ Free from Nuts, Dairy, MSG



Epic's latest product line, Epic Hunter & Gatherer Trail Mix, is not your average trail mix. With a base of 100% grass-fed, free-to-roam organic beef turned jerky, these mixes throw in a separate component of fruits & nuts that you mix together with the jerky.

Just like all Epic's other "clean" products, they tick off all the boxes: Paleo-friendly, low glycemic index, no soy/gluten/dairy/nitrites, and are solid sources of omega 3 fatty acids, antioxidants and a handful of vitamins to boot. The trail mixes are available in four varieties.

As they say, "Eat like you live "WILD & FREE."

[www.epicbar.com/hunter-gatherer-overview](http://www.epicbar.com/hunter-gatherer-overview)



Pasta has a problem. It is one of the worst offenders when it comes to fueling the obesity crisis. Not simply because the average serving of pasta is nearly five times what it should be, but additionally the refined flours used to make pasta provoke a rapid rise in blood sugar. The global growing epidemic of obesity, heart disease and diabetes is being linked to increased and sustained intake of refined carbs – starches and sugars – in a variety of forms.

Americans LOVE pasta, so what's the solution? Banza believes they have the answer in their high protein pasta made from chickpeas. Similar to all great inventions that start in a kitchen or garage, Banza was the brainchild of Brian, a young millennial, who refused to give up pasta while wanting more nutrition. Banza makes all the popular pasta forms and each serving delivers 14g protein, 8 g fiber and is low sugar. Plus, it tastes pretty good.

[www.eatbanza.com/collections/store](http://www.eatbanza.com/collections/store)

# Banza



Blue Hill – which includes two James Beard Foundation Award-winning restaurants, a working dairy farm, an online market, and a line of yogurt – is a family affair.

Blue Hill’s line of savory vegetable yogurts was their first nationally distributed product. Chef Dan Barber had been making grass-fed milk yogurt from his Blue Hill Farm cows in vegetable flavors for his restaurants long before he decided to dip his toe in retail.

These vegetable yogurts offer a subtly sweet flavor reminiscent of traditional yogurt but without the candy-level sugar calories. Their newest vegetable flavor is parsnip and my favorite. “Big Yogurt” is watching Blue Hill closely. It will be interesting to see if one of them will finally jump in the pool.

<http://www.bluehillyogurt.com/yogurt/parsnip>



# The Chaat Co.

Protein

Start-up Chaat Co. launched a line of savory yogurt snacks in appealing Indian flavors – cucumber mint, mango chili, tamarind date and ginger – with a crispy lentil puff companion stir-in. Frankly, I wish the flavors had been bolder, but I really liked the product and packaging (see what you started Blue Hill).

The protein is respectable at 6 grams per 5 oz. serving, but they have the right idea. The whole milk yogurt is creamy and delicious and the crispy plant-based lentil puff is right on trend. The Greek yogurt phenomenon is slowing down a bit while whole milk yogurt is leading category growth. It seems that consumers are willing to trade off a few grams of protein for a few more grams of luscious fat.

[www.thechaat.co](http://www.thechaat.co)



This company is so new that they don't even have their website up and running. Their line of Green Chickpea Legume Bowls features a distinctive green chickpea produced in the U.S. that claims even more protein and fiber than blonde chickpeas, and is packaged in a built-in bowl for everyday.

The product was tasty and had 11 g protein per serving, but the stand up package "bowl" did not appeal to me – I like a real bowl. I can envision this packaging appealing to hard working Soylent consuming Millennials who are accustomed to eating at their desk. Packaging aside, I think a lot of people will like the product.

It goes without saying that a company whose mission is "Real Foods for Real Life" would not only use a chickpea, but a chickpea that was good for you, but good for the earth too.

<http://vanalifefoods.strikingly.com>





Overall Themes

**PLANT-BASED EATING**

Perhaps you've seen *Forks Over Knives*, or read Jonathan Safran Foer's, *Eating Animals* (Warning: don't read this book just before the holidays) or Mark Bittman's, *VB6 (Vegan Before 6)*. There are a number of books, movies and videos that have contributed to the recent "flexitarian" paradigm and soaring interest in plant-based foods & beverages. The main message across all of these – eating less meat is better for the planet and is one of the best things you can do for your health and environment – is getting heard loud and clear by this channel. The movement doesn't condemn meat but encourages replacing meat a few days a week with healthy meat alternatives and limiting meat consumption to grass-fed, wild meats.

While consumers are shifting their attention to plant-based products, there's another movement under foot. Nicholas Kristof wrote in the NYTs a few weeks ago about *The (Fake) Meat Revolution*. I get it – there are lots of societal and health issues surrounding meat and few have access and can afford quality meat. But as Kristof points out in his article, for those of us who are weak-willed, there's nothing like a juicy burger. Enter companies like Beyond Meats, a start-up that has lead the field recently in meat alternatives that are designed to taste like meat. Their chicken products are pretty good, but their Beast Burger would not convince your everyday meat eater or destroy the livestock industry. It's clear that more and more people are joining this revolution and the next few years are going to be interesting. Could it be that a more logical approach is not to make plants taste like meat, but vegetables to taste better?

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/05/15/impossible-burger-our-test-tube-meat-tastes-great.html>

The following are some of my favorite plant-based lifestyle products.

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Inquiring minds want to know, "Will Jackfruit be the next big food craze?" I say yes, if the buzz is any indicator of success. Two companies showcased jackfruit products at the show:

- Upton's Naturals
- The Jackfruit Company

Why jackfruit? Well, it has a meaty texture that resembles pulled pork, an attractive nutrition profile and appears to be remarkably versatile in the kitchen.

One downside, while the fruit tastes like meat, the protein content is low in comparison to meat and many other protein options. But hey, don't let that stop you from trying this curious fruit. Upton's offer two varieties – Bar-B-Que and Chili Lime Carnitas – but the clear crowd pleaser is the barbecue.

<http://www.uptonsnaturals.com/products/>



# The Jackfruit Company

Plant-Based Eating

In addition to their seasoned jackfruit, The Jackfruit Company offers naked jackfruit for both retail and food service.

<http://www.thejackfruitcompany.com>



# Treeline Treenut Cheese

Treeline produces artisanal vegan tree nut cheeses. They've been doing this a while and are getting pretty good at it. I am a cheese lover, but have started to use some of these vegan cheeses on party cheese platters for my growing number of vegan guests and have really started to enjoy these cheeses. While I don't believe Treeline lives up to the advertising claiming to "rival the best French and Italian cheeses," they do deliver a pleasing experience.

<http://www.treelinecheese.com>



# Two Moms In The Raw

Plant-Based Eating

New look, new recipe. This company has steadily grown since the introduction of their first raw bars back in 2006. Their nut & granola bars now with added chia & hemp seeds and coconut nectar have both improved nutrition and taste.

We're a snacking nation, with 94% of Americans snacking at least once per day and bars are still the most convenient snack format. It just goes to show that in a highly proliferated category there is room for products with a meaningful point of difference.

<http://www.twomomsintheraw.com>



Seaweed may not be the next kale, but it's on the upslope of the trend line. Mainstream consumers recognize it as the wrapper of a California Roll and creative chefs are adding it to everything for its punch of umami.

Ocean's Halo launched the first seaweed chip a few years ago and now sells a line of seaweed snacks in popular snack flavors. The founders of Halo are on a mission to get more people, including kids, to eat more of the stuff. Logically it makes sense when 70% of the earth's surface is oceans, but contributes only 2% of our food. *What's up with that?* That's what they said, and now we have "Four Dads™ on a Mission."



<http://oceanshalo.com/products/>



Maya Kaimal is an award-winning cookbook author and authority on Indian cooking. In my mind, the Natural Channel is a sort of patron of Indian foods as it seems like all successful Indian food business start here. The company previously launched a spicy Indian version of ketchup, a couple of Indian simmering sauces and Naan chips.

This year, their new Chickpea Chips, a combination of chickpeas, rice and sesame seeds, are very much like the South Indian snack murukku. Their unique savory taste comes from the Asian spice asafetida. Asafetida is bitter and acrid when uncooked, but adds a wonderful aroma and taste when lightly fried. As one of my former British clients used to say, they're MORE-ish!

<http://www.mayakaimal.com/chickpea-chips#.Vgxu5daiNek>

**Maya Kaimal**  
FINE INDIAN FOODS



# Perfect Bars

Here's a relative newcomer to the nutrition bar category. Inspired by a health food dad who worked with Jack LaLanne in the 1960's, eight siblings banded together to launch their father's "perfect" bar recipe.

The bar is fundamentally ground up fruits and vegetables mixed into peanut butter and honey (that actually sounds like a pretty good way to feed eight kids). It's also a "fresh" nutrition bar and sold in the refrigerated section.



<http://perfectbar.com/products/>





Overall Themes

**FERMENTATION**

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Fermentation (not quick-pickled) food is the leading trend in health & wellness and spawning all types of fermented products. Decades of eating too much processed food, has really played havoc with our microbiome. The microbiome is a very complex subject and there is no silver bullet or scientific consensus on what a healthy microbiome should look like. What we do know from the increasingly amount of data collection on the microbiome, is that more diversity is better. These are early days in understanding how to work with our 100 trillion microbes, however, there is a prevailing thought that eating naturally fermented foods leads to more biodiversity.

I often wonder how we strayed so far from traditional preservation methods. Fermentation is the oldest form of preservation known. The process uses salt and naturally forming fermented acids to encourage the growth of beneficial bacteria that we now refer to as probiotics.



BAO, New York City's only urban fermentation farm uses traditional fermentation processes to create all its products. At the helm is Mike Schwartz, BAO co-founder and instructor at the Institute of Culinary Education, and the Mr. Wizard of fermentation. A local manufacturer of kombucha, BAO also produces and sells, mainly on line to consumers outside of the Northeast, a line of fermented veggies, hot sauce, sour k'chup & BAO-B-Q sauce. All of these products are organic, raw, live, fermented, probiotic, vegan, gluten-free and unpasteurized. The word bao in Chinese means "treasure," in New York-eze, it stands for "bad ass organics," a salute to everyone with the Bad Ass attitude to reject a constant barrage of unhealthy food & drink and commit to living a healthy lifestyle.



<http://www.baofoodanddrink.com>





Overall Themes  
**TEA**

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Matcha is the “it” tea right now, widely celebrated for its superfood status. San Francisco consumes more matcha tea than Japan and New York boasts its first specialty matcha café, MatchaBar.

Tea sommeliers are popping up in restaurants and tea is being used across a wide range of food & beverage. I’ve heard it said that, “tea may be the next chile.” That’s a high bar, but whatever its future, it appears to be bright.

The following are some of my favorite tea products.



Little Miracles are a beautiful blend of organic tea and super fruit juice PLUS Panax ginseng in its purest form. Ginseng is considered an adaptogen and added to the tea to *put a little pep in your step*. Adaptogens are a considered nature's miracles anti-stress and fatigue fighters. Caffeine and sugar are what a lot of folks use to fight back on stress and fatigue.

Unfortunately, there's a crash waiting right around the corner. Adaptogens help strengthen the body's response to stress and enhance its ability to cope with anxiety and fight fatigue without the crash. The most common adaptogens are panax ginseng, ashwagandha, holy basil, maca and rhodiola rosea. Each adaptogen has a slightly different effect on body. Panax ginseng provides a non-specific protection against various mental, physical and environmental forms of stress. In this era of technology overload, it sounds pretty good to me

<http://www.drinklittlemiracles.com/about-us/>



I consider myself primarily a tea drinker, however, I do like my cup of coffee in the morning. Why? Well, like most Americans, it kick-starts my day and dusts the cobwebs off. Bigelow has introduced an American Breakfast Black Tea designed to provide the same stimulating effects of coffee. With 50% more caffeine than the average cup of tea, the combination of theanine, a naturally occurring compound unique to tea, and caffeine give a sustained boost of energy. And, because they work synergistically, you get the same level of “kick” without as much caffeine. I tried it, it worked – I bought the tee shirt.

<https://www.bigelowtea.com/americanbreakfast>

**BIGELOW®**  
FAMILY TEA BLENDERS SINCE 1945



It's high time Bigelow launched an RTD. When 90% of tea is used for iced tea, this is not a hard one to rationalize. They have all the popular varieties covered to include the outrageously popular Half & Half.

<http://bigelowhomeblend.com>

**BIGELOW®**  
FAMILY TEA BLENDERS SINCE 1945



Zone 8 is a new beverage company that makes organic RTD teas using premium organic super teas, spices and real ingredients that include fruit juice, honey and cane sugar. The company strives to address culturally relevant beverages and is leveraging history, heritage and family recipes to deliver authentic flavors.



For more than 300 years, Twining's has been in the tea business. Their House of Twining's was the first exclusive teashop in London. Twining's makes excellent teas but what caught my attention is their involvement in the Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP). ETP is a membership organization of tea companies with more than 15 years of experience of improving conditions in tea supply chains. ETP works with tea producers and tea companies to create a thriving tea industry that is socially just and environmentally sustainable. Making a difference, one tea farmer at a time.

<http://www.twiningusa.com/shop.aspx>



Pukka (pronounced pukka) re-launched their line of organic teas in a brilliant new package design. Its eye-catching flower power is full of chi and brimming with sensual enticement. I've never noticed this brand before so I took a look back at their old packaging. The old package design had a similar style, but fell short of delivering the message, "I want to get to know you better." Pukka is a perfect example of the power of design and in getting consumers to pick you up.



<http://www.pukkaherbs.com/pukka-products/pukka-teas/>



Teaonic is a new company started by a mother-daughter team who come from a long line of tea lovers and herbalists. Their RTD herbal tea supplements are brewed infusions of wholesome ingredients with unique and beneficial properties that address 21<sup>st</sup> century health needs.

Varieties come in, I Love My Skin, I Love My Liver, I Love My Gut, etc. Priced comparably to fresh pressed juices, these products could be a nice change of pace.

<http://teaonic.com/products/>





Overall Themes

**WORKING WITH NATURE**

In all of my many years of walking this show, this is the first time that I have encountered a fertilizer company. Humanica® is an organic fertilizer company from Turkey that sells a line of organic fertilizers designed to build soil health and enhance seed contact and plant root growth. The regenerative agriculture movement in the U.S. is gaining strength and proving to be a sound strategy to address the looming problem of mounting greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The *Carbon Cycle Institute* is a San Francisco Bay Area organization seeking to reverse global warming by advancing the adoption of agricultural practices proven to sequester soil carbon and permanently remove atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. They work closely with groups like Marin Carbon Project who are working to achieve carbon sequestration in rangeland and agricultural soils through research and development of scalable, repeatable “carbon farming” techniques. It is estimated that 20-30% of all manmade green house gases in the atmosphere come from industrial agriculture.

Fifty percent of U.S. land is used for agricultural purposes and only 10% is used to grow organic crops. Industrial farming and bad land management has severely disrupted the balance in the “carbon triad” – three main carbon sinks: the atmosphere, the oceans and humus-sphere. Humus (not to be confused with the chickpea kind) is the organic component of soil, commonly known as compost. Two of these carbon sinks are maxed out, while the soil, where the humus-sphere resides, has lost most of its humus. That leaves the soil as the primary sink where excess carbon can be sequestered.

That said, the solution may be right under our feet.

<http://www.carboncycle.org>





Overall Themes

# URBAN HOMESTEADING REDUX

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There's another movement underfoot with consumers wanting to be less reliant on government and "Big Ag". What better way than to do it yourself. I put in a container garden a few years ago and I have to say it was empowering to go pick a few leaves of lettuce and serve them up to my guests for dinner.

The phrase Urban Homesteading, according to a University of California, Davis report, describes a household that produces a significant part of the food consumed by its residents. The people embracing the DIY food trend today are in my mind, the new American homesteader. While they may not produce a bundle of food, they are taking it upon themselves to master the long lost art of making food. This show was filled with DIY products. I'm not surprised to see this category growing.

The Pinterest 100 is a list of 100 Pin predictions for the year ahead that gives insight into the latest consumer behavior from identifying what people are pinning. And guess what, people are continuing to pin a lot of DIY stuff.

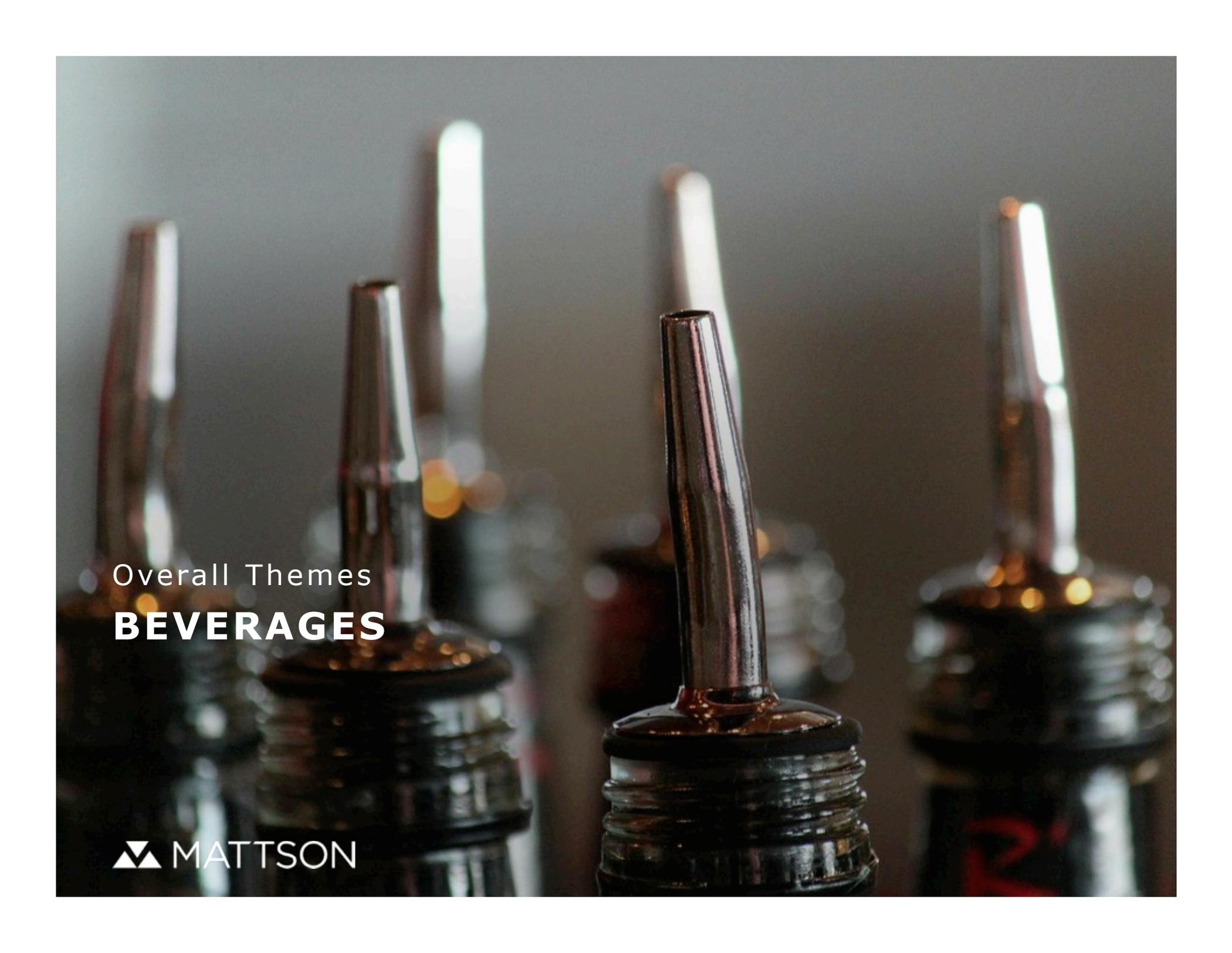


Want to learn to make yogurt? How about Kefir? Ok, pickles? What about learning to make cheese or kombucha or tofu or sourdough bread? Now you can with a wide variety of starter cultures & equipment from Cultures For Health.

Available online if you can't find them at your favorite store.

<http://www.culturesforhealth.com>





Overall Themes  
**BEVERAGES**

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I have seen the acronym, ABC, which stands for “anything but Cola” looming around the Internet lately.

Concerns about sugar and artificial sweeteners are driving consumers away from sodas to better-for-you beverages like water. Soda companies have been relying on higher prices and smaller packages to offset slumping sales but this strategy can’t work forever. Cold-pressed juice, plant and functional waters are taking center stage.

The hottest drink in America right now is water with bubbles. Sparkling water is making major inroads thanks in large part to Americans’ waning interest in soda.

I know, I know, the \$4 billion sparkling water sales are a fraction of the \$39 billion soda market, but America’s growing obsession with health could change that on a dime.

The following are a few beverages I liked.



The Calamansi is nicknamed “Philippine Lemon” or “Golden Lime” and used extensively in Filipino cooking. The founder of this start-up told me that the Calamansi is indigenous to the Philippines and has been regarded as the country’s best-kept secret. The fruit is tiny, but packs a nutritional punch with Vitamin C, antioxidants and electrolytes.

The drink is naturally sweetened with sugar and honey, but at 28g sugar per serving, seems high. Mansi ticks off all the boxes, and while the packaging looks generic, don’t let that keep you from trying this surprisingly refreshing citrus drink.

<https://www.drinkmansi.com/the-calamansi/>



Agua Brands, founded by two ex-Vitamin water execs, launched a line of spa waters with electrolytes. These waters fill a gap in the market for the healthy conscious consumer and target gym goers and active adults. U.S. bottled-water sales totaled a little more than \$13 billion last year, up roughly a billion \$ in the past decade while soda sales have dropped for the 10<sup>th</sup> straight year.

The line is available in five fruit and vegetable varieties:

- Lemon + Cucumber
- Lime + Mint Mojito
- Peach + Mango
- Grape + Watermelon
- Orange + Pineapple.

<http://www.aguaenerviva.com>





Natural Expo West Recap & Overview  
**FINAL COMMENTS**

## Final Comments

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Tech is by far the trend of the year, bar none.

No longer science fiction, tech is providing all of us with some pretty amazing tools and is changing the way we interact with everything and everyone.

Convenience and speed are obvious benefits but the real benefits are in our ability to customize products and services.

While I am a Boomer, I recognize that the Millennial and his younger brother are choosing a more discerning path when it comes to choice and are saying, "I choose this future."



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