

# Forward Thinking: Enchanted By Vanilla

Consumers still have a sweet spot for this tried-and-true flavor and fragrance.

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Trendincite's "Forward Thinking: Sweet On Vanilla" article, which appeared in the November 2012 issue of *Perfumer & Flavorist* magazine, researched vanilla flavor and fragrance trends. Shy of a year later, vanilla continues to be a tried-and-true flavor and fragrance staple, which is repeatedly renewed and reinvented. Ice cream, yogurt, protein shakes, coffee beverages and flavored alcohol are the most popular applications for new vanilla flavors, while fine fragrance, personal care and air care categories are active for vanilla fragrance notes.

In fact, vanilla is such a valuable ingredient that flavor and fragrance suppliers and consumer packaged goods manufacturers are partnering with producers of vanilla to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. For example, at the end of 2012 Takasago International Corp. entered into an agreement with the largest vanilla producer in Madagascar, Ramanandraibe Export Co., to cultivate, harvest, process and extract its own vanilla locally. In March 2013, Firmenich announced the commercialization of its Bourbon vanilla sourced from Rainforest Alliance certified farms. According to Firmenich, the company's partnership with a local Madagascar vanilla bean cooperative shows its commitment to "long-term sustainability of [its] vanilla producers and supply chain; economically, socially and environmentally." In February 2013, General Mills and Haagen-Dazs announced their two year investment of \$125,000 for a "new sustainable vanilla sourcing program designed to foster greater economic vitality for smallholder vanilla farmers in Madagascar and ensure the availability of high-quality vanilla for future generations."

## Ice Ice Baby

It's reported that vanilla is the most popular ice cream flavor in the world; therefore, it's no surprise when manufacturers launch new products with vanilla as a core variant. Haagen-Dazs introduced a new gelato line in seven flavors, *Vanilla Bean* being one. *Vanilla Bean* gelato is described as rich and creamy vanilla with flecks of vanilla beans. Like Haagen-Dazs, Figo! Organic Gelato also launched a seven flavor line. Its *Vanilla Trio* gelato blends Tahitian, Madagascar and Bourbon vanillas. The gelato line is slow batch-churn style, USDA-certified organic, gluten free, egg free and GMO free. Unilever added *Magnum Gold* to its decadent ice cream collection with "silky vanilla bean ice cream swirled with sea salt caramel and covered in a golden coating made with Belgian milk chocolate." Meanwhile, Blue



Bell's newest flavor is *Italian Cream Cake*, made with creamy vanilla ice cream with pieces of Italian cream cake, shredded coconut, roasted pecans and a cream cheese icing swirl. Ben & Jerry's new *Vanilla Greek Frozen Yogurt with a Honey Caramel Swirl* is made with honey, fair-trade vanilla and caramel. Ohio-based Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream launched a line of four ice cream sandwiches with unique flavor combinations, and two feature fair-trade-certified vanillas sourced from Uganda's Ndali Estate. *Orchid Vanilla* uses Ndali Estate vanilla bean ice cream and black currant jam sandwiched between almond macaroons, while *Oatmeal Cream* uses the same Ndali Estate vanilla bean ice cream sandwiched between oatmeal cookies with molasses and cinnamon. Although not an ice cream, a notable new frozen product is Cool Whip Frosting, available in three flavors: *Vanilla*, *Cream Cheese* and *Chocolate*.

## Yogurt Cult

Yogurt, particularly Greek, is going strong. According to Packaged Facts' report, "The Yogurt Market and Yogurt Innovation: Greek Yogurt and Beyond," U.S. retail sales of yogurt were \$7.3 billion

in 2012 and are expected to reach \$9.3 billion by 2017. To that end, manufacturers are launching new yogurt lines, which offer a vanilla flavor as a primary variant.

In January, Chobani introduced Flip, which enables consumers to add mix-ins to six flavored yogurts. Two flavors feature vanilla: *Vanilla Golden Crunch*, made with vanilla non-fat yogurt, cornflakes, honey oats and pecans, and *Raspberry Choco Fix* with vanilla chocolate chip low-fat yogurt and raspberries. Yopal is a new line of six strained Greek yogurts by YoCrunch. Its name is derived from Yo (short for yogurt) and Opa! (the Greek cheer for joy), and all of its flavors are fruit-based except for the *Vanilla & Almonds* and *Vanilla & Dark Chocolate* varieties. Similarly, Yoplait's new Simplait yogurt offers four flavors, including *Vanilla* and three single fruits. All are crafted from a combination of six simple, all-natural ingredients.

## Shake It Up

The changes in generational lifestyles and family structures are pushing more consumers toward snacking and alternative meals. In response, meal replacements and ready-to-drink (RTD) shakes are on the rise, with a focus on protein. According to a March 28, 2013 Wall Street Journal article, "When the Box Says 'Protein,' Shoppers Say 'I'll Take It,'" protein is the buzzword that is helping sell many kinds of foods, and vanilla is a fundamental flavor in many of these new protein beverages.

Coco Libre Protein is a line extension to Coco Libre's Organic Coconut Water offered in four flavors. *Almond* (with almonds, Madagascar, Tahitian and Indonesian vanilla) and *Vanilla* (with Madagascar, Tahitian and Indonesian vanilla) are two of the four variants. Dean Foods launched a line of TruMoo Protein Milks in four varieties, including *Cookies n' Cream* and *Vanilla*, which are both formulated with 25 grams of protein and available on the West Coast in limited distribution. *Vanilla Crème* is one of five new flavors under the Evolve brand, a new protein beverage marketed to women by CytoSport Inc. Meanwhile, KateFarms Complete offers *Vanilla Bliss*, *Cocoa Fudge* and *Jav'a Latte* flavors in its new all-natural, vegan, soy-free, dairy-free and gluten-free line of RTD meal replacement shakes. Recognizing consumers' changing behaviors, PepsiCo announced that the company is developing a range of snack-based drinks. General Mills and Kellogg's are on board and both recently launched breakfast shakes in three flavors; both highlight vanilla in one variant. General Mills released *BFast* while Kellogg's introduced *Breakfast To Go* shakes.

## Vanilla Gets Perky

According to the National Coffee Association National Coffee Drinking Trends (NCDT) market research study released in March 2013, "83% of the U.S. adult population now drinks coffee. That figure represents a jump of five percentage points this year vs. last year." Flavored coffee is a growing segment and, according to the International Coffee Organization (ICO), there are more than 100 different flavors available. Coffee acts well as a flavor platform and manufacturers have capitalized on this by launching a variety of new flavor profiles, many of which include vanilla.

Coco Cafe expanded its line adding *Coco Cafe Vanilla*, which blends natural vanilla, natural coffee extract, reduced-fat milk and fresh coconut water, and *Coco Cafe Mocha* made with cocoa, natural coffee extract, reduced-fat milk and fresh

coconut water. Starbucks Coffee Co. launched a line of four RTD iced coffees made from 100% Arabica coffee beans and blended with 2% milk. *Starbucks Vanilla Iced Coffee* is one of the three flavors, while *Starbucks Caramel Iced Coffee* is the fourth flavor, but it's exclusive to the East coast. Green Mountain Coffee Roasters' *Barista Prima Coffeeshouse Vanilla Latte Café* beverage for the Keurig Vue brewing system was recently named New Product of the Year in the hot beverage category of Automatic Merchandiser Magazine's 2013 Readers' Choice Awards. For vegan and lactose intolerant consumers, White Wave Foods introduced its new non-dairy Silk Iced Latte beverages in *Mocha Soy Latte* and *Vanilla Soy Latte* flavors. *Vanilla Brown Sugar*, which is described as "delicately cooked brown sugar that is perfectly caramelized combined with luscious, creamy vanilla," is a new addition to Baileys Coffee Creamers. Although not a coffee, an interesting new test market product for caffeinated sodas is PepsiCo's "Touch Tower," a fountain soda machine, which will enable consumers to add a flavor shot to eight varieties of PepsiCo-owned beverages including Pepsi and Mountain Dew. *Vanilla* is one of four flavor shots being tested; other flavors include *Lemon*, *Cherry* and *Strawberry*.

On the fragrance side, Bath & Body Works feeds into the flavored coffee trend with the release of an *Espresso Bar* candle, which is described as follows: "Stop and savor the aromas of roasted espresso beans and sweet vanilla froth like the Italians, who never take their coffee 'to go.'"

## Vanilla Bears Fruit

Sweet flavored vodkas and even beer continue to enter the market in droves. Fruit and vanilla combinations are popular entries. For instance, Svedka Vodka introduced *Orange Cream Pop* and *Strawberry Colada* flavors. The *Orange Cream Pop* blends orange and vanilla cream flavors. Campari released Skyy Infusions *Wild Strawberry* vodka, which features ripe berry, tropical vanilla and white chocolate flavors. Sweden import *Rhuby Rhubarb Liqueur* launched in the United States and is crafted with juiced rhubarb stalks, wheat vodka and a touch of a Bourbon vanilla bean. Inspired by "the sweet, icy and light taste of sorbet," Smirnoff Sorbet Light rolled out flavors in *Lemon*, *Mango Passion Fruit* and *Raspberry Pomegranate*, with 78 calories per 1.5 oz serving. Beam Inc. has been active with a variety of recent sweet and fruity introductions, including *Skinnygirl White Cherry Vodka* that "contains a sassy cherry aroma balanced with a kiss of vanilla," as well as *Cruzan Passion Fruit Rum*, which "features the fresh flavor of passion fruit with peachy undertones and tropical hints of caramelized sugar," and *Pinnacle Rainbow Sherbet*, "an inventive rendition of a classic dessert, with the zesty, citrus taste of orange and sweet lime with a creamy raspberry." According to Pinnacle, new flavors are planned for 2013, including *Pinnacle Strawberry Shortcake*.

On the sweeter side, Ninkasi Brewing Company recently released *Vanilla Oatmeal Stout* made with whole vanilla beans from vanilla bean and products company Eugene's Singing Dog Vanilla, while CB's Brewing Co. introduced *Grande Vanilla Latte Stout*, which is a tasting room exclusive at its Honeoye Falls, N.Y. location. The flavored vodka craze inspired by confections continues with the recent launch of *UV Candy Bar* and *Oodka Salty Caramel Popcorn*, both of which highlight caramel flavors.

## Sweet Sensibility

Vanilla remains a mainstay ingredient and accord in fine fragrance, personal care and air care introductions. Gourmand-inspired formulations with a focus on vanilla, caramel and almond are on trend and inspiring new fragrance creations. *Fresh Vanilla Lemon* joins Lavanila's line and features Madagascar vanilla blended with juicy lemon, lush watery fruits and fresh bamboo. *Crema di Latte* by Hilde Soliani is "based on the Sicilian pastry-filling composed of milk, sugar, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon and lemon zest," while Demeter's new *Vanilla Cookie Dough*, inspired by the perfumer's teen daughter, is described as "yummy, dense, delicious and full-bodied without the cloying sweetness that vanilla fragrances can develop." Not to mention, *Ginger Biscuit* from Jo Malone's Sugar and Spice collection, has a fragrance description that reads like a recipe: "Just-baked biscuit. Spiced with ginger, nutmeg and cinnamon, melting into caramel. Butter-crumbly with roasted hazelnuts. Warmed by tonka bean and vanilla." Mariah Carey's *Dreams* is categorized as a floral gourmand because of the salted caramel apple, honeysuckle and Madagascar vanilla notes, according to the company. Additional warm accords include toasted almonds, star anise, tonka bean, patchouli and musk. *The One Desire* by Dolce & Gabbana is described as a blend of luxurious ingredients with an indulgent rich base of "gourmand vanilla infused caramel melded with warming sandalwood."

## Vanilla Gets Personal

In personal care, recent releases include Philosophy's *Almonds and Cream* stock-keeping unit (SKU) range with a "comforting scent of creamy vanilla and a touch of almond" and Beauty Assortment for the Sun-Kissed (B.A.S.K.) *Vanilla Whiskey Repairative Hair Soak*, which "contains a malt extract derived from Scottish whiskey that's loaded with natural sugars and minerals." Bath & Body Works' new *Honey Sweetheart* line is described as: "Sweeten up to honeyed violets sprinkled with pink sugar!" It uses cedarwood, amber, vanilla, musk and a 'candy heart' accord as the foundation. In addition, vanilla and caramel are even trickling down to scented/flavored lip care. Elizabeth Arden's new Beautiful Color Luminous Lip Gloss is available in 14 shades and has a subtle vanilla scent, while Nivea Lip Butters launched in *Vanilla & Macadamia Kiss* and *Caramel Cream Kiss* varieties formulated with Shea butter and almond oil. Also, Bliss added *Vanilla Mint* to its Fabulips Glossy Lip Balm range.

## Vanilla on the Home Front

In air care, particularly candles, manufacturers keep on launching new products that emphasize vanilla. Jonathan Product extends its Dirt hair care styling range into home care with a *Vanilla Almond Candle* that is made with notes of almond, spice, lemon peel, honey, strawberry jam, peach nectar, sugar cane and vanilla bean. Glade *Tropical Lei* is one of three scents under the new limited edition Tropical Collection and highlights a combination of honeysuckle, water lily and vanilla. Joel Robuchon, the restaurateur, partnered with Mark of Senses to develop a line of five home fragrances. The line includes candles, room spray and incense such as *Infiniment Vanille*, which is described as "a voluptuous and exotic garden, rich with the scent of woody vanilla—a wonderful ode to vanilla in its infinite olfactory splendor." Playing on nostalgic memories, Yankee Candle and Bath & Body Works both launched s'more-inspired candles. Yankee Candle's *Campfire Treat* is described as "the joys of camp . . . mesmerized by the fire, singing and laughing, while toasting marshmallows to rich, gooey perfection!" and Bath & Body Works describes its *Summertime S'mores* candle as "A gooey and guilt-free treat! Toasted marshmallows, crackling campfire and creamy, rich vanilla capture all the sweetness of summer's most loved sweet!"

## Enduring Vanilla

Consumers' acceptance and demand for vanilla-flavored and fragranced products is not waning, as witnessed from the many examples of recent launches. Furthermore, a tell-tale sign of the importance of vanilla is the long-term partnerships and investments the fragrance and flavor industry and consumer packaged goods manufacturers are forming with vanilla producers to source quality and sustainable vanilla. Expect to see new joint ventures with vanilla producers and the continued use of traditional vanilla across flavor and fragrance categories, as well as new, tweaked vanilla interpretations. Vanilla is a staple ingredient with mass market appeal that will remain a go-to ingredient in perfumers' and flavorists' palettes.

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