



# NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO EAST NEW PRODUCT REVIEW 2019

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# CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WATCH

“

Hope has never trickled down, it has always sprung up.

”

— Naomi Klein  
*Canadian filmmaker, social activist, political analyst and writer*



## INDUSTRY REBOOT

Reinvention, rejuvenation, recycle, revive, restage, reengineer, regeneration... the food industry is badly in need of a refresh.

CW: Even if you think it isn't broke, you're gonna want to fix it.



## COLLAGEN FOODS



Collagen has been around for decades, particularly in beauty products, but is just now finding its stride in food.

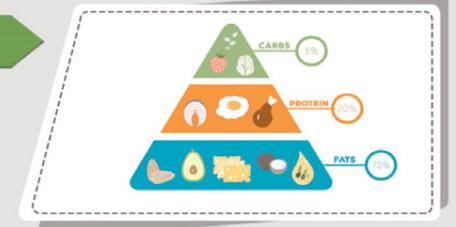
CW: Looking better & being healthier.



## TRENDY DIET PLANS

Keto has become the latest diet craze and a social media phenom with hundreds of thousands of people posting pics of their keto-transformation.

CW: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



## HEALTHY FIZZ



As consumers ditch soda for healthier, more natural drinks, they still want bubbles.

CW: It's all about the fizz!



## BEYOND CBD

The endocannabinoid system has emerged as the novel central control system that manages our human physiology and modulates our experiences and perceptions.

CW: CBD and cannabis are only the tip of the iceberg.





# FOOD INDUSTRY REBOOT

Ubiquitous technology. Fast growing CO2 emissions. Collapsing ecosystems. Water scarcity. Higher water temperatures. Increased threats to public health.

The evidence of dramatic change is all around us and it's happening at lightning speed. We are at the beginning of a new revolution that's fundamentally changing what we buy, the way we eat, how we travel, and dispose of waste. Nothing is off limits now.

Health and Wellness has been a big movement for years, but the industry hasn't moved the needle enough. There's a feeling that we have reached the tipping point and we're not going to tolerate the pursuit of eternal economic growth over our moral responsibility to the planet.

Things may feel out of balance, but be assured, more people are paying attention and even more are now willing to participate in the actions of change. The result is we're increasingly surrounded by paradigm-shifting innovations rocking the industry with young consumers swapping legacy brands for newer, healthier ones. Why? They've got skin in the game -- and plenty of it.

The future that is unfolding today it is a positive one for all of us, collectively.

The following are some of my favorites.

## **JULIAN'S RECIPE® CAULIFLOWER WAFFLE BUNS**

juliansrecipe.com

Alex Dzeduszycki is the king of waffles in the U.S. Alex, a trained chef and entrepreneur, launched Julian's Recipe in 2009 selling authentic Belgian, Liege-style waffles stateside. Today, Julian's sells Belgian waffles, Waffle Thins, crispy, bite-sized waffle snacks, and now, Waffle Buns. The chicken and waffle craze has been joined by a new wave of waffle mania that showcases waffles with names like stuffles, puffles, wafflewiches and waffle sliders. Julian's Waffle Buns come in four varieties, but it's the Cauliflower variety that hits the hardest. I must admit, I wasn't sure if these cauliflower waffles would measure up to the same crispy deliciousness as Julian's other sweet varieties but I was pleasantly surprised. Crispy and savory, these waffle buns are the perfect alternative to the everyday sandwich bun.

*A new twist on the classic bun*



*Seafood evolved*



## **GOOD CATCH CRAB-FREE CAKES**

[goodcatchfoods.com](http://goodcatchfoods.com)

A few years ago, if you asked a restaurant for a vegan option, you got grilled or steamed vegetables or a salad with no dressing. Well, that's simply not the case anymore. Good Catch made a big splash in 2017 with the launch of their fish-free tuna and has been cranking out amazing products ever since. Their new plant based burgers, sliders and crab cakes continue to garner Good Catch "best of" awards wherever they exhibit. The crab-free cakes are so good, they're guaranteed to win over the pickiest vegans, not to mention Flexitarian crab cake lovers.

## OATLY NON-DAIRY FROZEN DESSERT

[us.oatly.com](http://us.oatly.com)

Unlike other plant milks, whose origins date as early as the 13th century, oat milk is a modern creation, developed by the Swedish scientist Rickard Oste in the early 1990s. So it's not surprising to learn that Oatly, a 25-year-old food-and-beverage company, was founded in Malmo, Sweden. Since launching in the U.S. five years ago, Oatly has gone through a major image reshaping and used its creamy, neutral taste, foamability and ecological cred (almonds require over six times as much water as oats) to charm a lot of baristas.

Now Oatly is shaking up the ice cream category with a big launch of non-dairy frozen desserts in seven flavors. The products may be non-dairy but they look like ice cream, have the texture of ice cream and taste like ice cream. Oatly could probably pass for ice cream.

*I Can't Believe It's Not Ice Cream*



*A tasty way to take a step  
in the right direction*



## **OLD WORLD NATURALS GRASS FED UNCURED MUSHROOM BLENDED BEEF HOT DOGS**

[eatnaturaldeli.com](http://eatnaturaldeli.com)

Old World Naturals may be a small regional business but their naturally cured skinless mushroom dog is a big idea.

A big idea, but not a new idea. The benefits of blending umami-rich mushrooms with beef sprung from The Mushroom Council's blended burger contest years ago and was fueled on by the James Beard Foundation's own Blended Burger Project. Who would have thought that a project to educate diners on the benefits of The Blend and the future of food would have turned into a movement.

The James Beard Foundation cites a study from the World Research Institute that estimates if 30% of the beef in 10 billion burgers annually was replaced with mushrooms, it would save as many emissions as taking 2.3 million cars off the road. That's just for starters, as US burger consumption is closer to 50 billion annually. And, let's throw in hot dogs. The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council estimates the US consumes 20 billion hot dogs. Do the math... it all adds up to a big number.

Old World Naturals mushroom blended beef hot dogs are gently smoked and brimming with garlic, mustard and sea salt. But, better yet, are helping consumers take a step in the right direction without sacrificing food they love.



## TRENDY DIET PLANS

Americans have always been open to fad diets to improve eating habits and lose weight. Consider Zone, Atkins, Southbeach, Mediterranean, Vegan, Vegetarian, Paleo, Whole30, WW (formerly Weight Watchers), Ketogenic, Baby Food and Cabbage Soup to name a few of the more popular ones. Let's face it, there's no shortage of weight loss diets vying for our attention.

Of all of the fad diets, "keto" is the most popular weight loss approach right now, but does it really work? In general, diets that cut out entire food groups, even for a short time, are not sustainable. The ketogenic diet was created in 1921 by Dr. Russel Wilder from the Mayo Clinic, who built on research done by an endocrinologist who noted ketone bodies were produced by the liver as a result of starvation. His research used these ketones to treat epilepsy. To get the benefits of ketosis, the body needs both fat and the ability to digest fat. And, to digest fat, you need the amino acid glycine, typically found in the odd bits of animals such as organ meats, bones, and skin. It's this dynamic duo of fat and glycine that makes foods such as bone broth and pork cracklings perfect for keto diets.

Is the keto diet too good to be true? It probably is, but in the meantime, as we wait for definitive research proving that keto is safe and effective for the long haul, more and more companies are continuing to ride the wave of keto's popularity.

Here are a few of my favorites.

## FOURTH & HEART WOKE BAR

wokesnack.com

Energy bars, protein bars, oats bars, nut bars, candy bars, and many more. The global Snack Bar Market's cup overrunneth and is projected to reach \$31.60 billion by 2025 according to a report by Grand View Research, Inc. That's bigger than current carbonated soft drink sales at \$26.7 billion.

Fourth & Heart, the California-based artisanal food brand known for their superfood ghee, launched a new line of healthy indulgent grass-fed collagen ghee protein bars. Ghee has been growing as an alternative to butter and other cooking fats and oils for anyone on a low carb or keto diet plan. Why? More fat, more MCTs, more butyrate, more CLA, more vitamins and as if that's not enough of more of the right stuff, it's more versatile. For those following a keto diet plan, Fourth & Hearts WOKE bar gets you a bundle of benefits in indulgent flavors such as Blueberry Cobbler, Cookie Dough and Dark Chocti.



*Combining the benefits of keto, collagen and energy*



*Great bones since 2014*

## **BRODO BONE BROTH & FLAVOR SACHETS**

brodo.com

Brodo was born in 2014 from a tiny take out window at Hearth, Chef Marco Canora's popular restaurant in New York City's East Village. Marco personally ladled out the first cups. The genius of selling hot cups of broth as an alternative to coffee was to offer customization, just like coffee. Brodo's menu offered a variety of fresh add-ins with enticing names such as Sipping Beauty, Deeply Rooted, Spicy Nonna and Morning Rush.

That was 2014. Today, Brodo ships bone broth directly to 48 US states. Until now you had to go to one of their shops in New York City to experience their delicious customized broth-based beverages. Brodo's new line of flavor sachets are inspired by the popular offerings in their shop, but now you can enjoy a customized cup from the comfort of your home. And, if you want to go full keto, simply add a healthy fat.

# EPIC PROVISIONS ARTISANAL PORK CRACKLINGS

epicprovisions.com

Epic Provisions sold to CPG conglomerate General Mills in 2016 after a mere three years in business. It was a gutsy move. History shows that founders of insurgent brands making healthy products as an alternative to big-food healthy may lose control of their passion-driven mission.

Good news here. Rather than GMI snuffing the life out of the small company, the small company breathed new life into the GMI. It turned out General Mills was genuinely interested in bringing more of Epic's insurgent energy to the company. They supported Epic's Whole Animal Project as well as their commitment to regenerative agriculture.

General Mills was one of the key sponsors at Expo for the showing of the film, *The Biggest Little Farm*, about a couple's journey to develop a sustainable farm on 200 acres outside of Los Angeles. They announced that they will advance regenerative agriculture practices on one million acres of farmland by 2030.

As a new addition to their line of delicious pork rinds, bone broth, and cooking fats, Epic launched artisanal pork skins. The crackling is a fried pork skin taken from the shoulder region of a hog. The shoulder skin is tougher texture and has less subcutaneous fat when compared to the back or belly. As a result, cracklings are harder and crispier than pork rind and contain small pieces of meat that adhere to the skin that provides extra protein and flavor. Hog heaven!



*Walking the Snout to Tail Talk*



## COLLAGEN FOODS

Once reserved for beauty-circle chat, collagen has become a big wellness food trend.

Collagen isn't new. Japanese women have been using marine collagen for hundreds of years and American women were taking Knox Flavored Gelatin for stronger hair and nails decades ago, but it's just now hitting its stride in the U.S. It's popularity appears to be the result of a convergence of trends -- natural beauty, bone broth and paleo -- and while there's a lot of exaggerated claims as to what collagen can do for us, there's also good emerging research pointing to benefits, especially for skin and joints.

With the onslaught of collagen products entering the market, consumers are wondering what to look for in a collagen product. There are at least 28 types of collagen in the body but it's mainly types I, II, III that we hear about. They all have very similar structure and function. Collagen is the most abundant protein in your body. The important thing is that as long as you're consuming hydrolyzed collagen, or collagen that's broken down, you're getting the same amino acids that your body needs to repair and rebuild all types of collagen throughout the body.

If adding collagen powder to your smoothie is not your thing, try a collagen bar, collagen water or brew a coffee drink.

Here are some of my favorites.

*Your daily dose of collagen made easy*

## RENEVA COLLAGEN PROTEIN DRINK

renevaworld.com

Reneva is a beverage startup founded by an ex-Chobani executive. The company has taken a bifurcated approach with their collagen drinks, targeting both performance and beauty with their Fit and Fresh varieties.

Their drinks feature patented collagen peptides -- BodyBalance® and Veriso® from Gelita AG, a global market leader in the production of gelatine, collagen and collagen peptides. With global presence, Gelita not only serves the food and beverage industry, but they are also active in the health and nutrition, pharmaceutical and medical sectors. Reneva was smart to use collagen peptides backed by science in their formulas. In addition to bundling strategic vitamins and nutrients with their collagen, their collagen peptides are halal and kosher. Quality, dosage and science... oh yeah!



*A healthy addition to your morning cup of joe*



## VITAL PROTEINS COLLAGEN CREAMER

vitalproteins.com

Collagen has been the core ingredient in beauty-from-within products for years but a major shift is happening. Collagen is being marketed as a protein source. This has re-focused it on joint health, bones, nails, hair and skin.

Chicago-based Vital Protein exhibited its many functional collagen powders and supplement capsules. However, it was their collagen creamer that is the most brilliant delivery system for a daily dose of collagen. Creamers are a backdoor into the coffee category -- a huge category with ritualistic behavior.

Consumers generally prefer liquid creamers but Vital Proteins Powdered Collagen Creamer may be just the disruption needed to wake up a sleepy segment. It has healthy fats from organic coconut milk, plus 10 grams of collagen peptides sourced from grass-fed, pasture-raised bovine. Paleo-friendly and Whole30 Approved, their Creamers are free of dairy, soy, carrageenan, gluten, artificial sweeteners, and added sugars.

## HARMONY PROTEINS COLLAGEN WATER DRINK MIX

harmonyproteins.com

Harmony Proteins has taken collagen on the go with their Beauty Collagen Water Drink Mixes. Unveiled last summer, these mixes are already gaining traction. And, for good reason. Consumers can easily open a packet and enjoy a collagen drink anytime, anywhere. They can also be mixed into smoothies, sparkling water and food.

These drink mixes deliver 5 grams of collagen per serving, a healthy dose, and are made with natural ingredients and sweetened with natural fruit essences. No added sugars, artificial flavors, colors, preservatives, or additives.

But how do you know you're getting good collagen? Evaluating taste and color is the easiest way. Quality collagen should be tasteless and colorless when added to water. These check that box. But what I really like about this product is that it tastes great and mixes well. Not all collagen powders are created equal.

*Daily hydration gets a protein-packed makeover*





## HEALTHY FIZZ

Consumers are abandoning carbonated soft drinks in record numbers. Concern over sugar and artificial ingredients are driving category users towards simple, natural alternatives. The problem is, people miss their fizz. American fixation with bubbles dates back to the 18th century with the invention of soda water.

Sparkling water brands such as La Croix and Spindrift have helped fill the void along with newcomers like Pepsi's Bubly (not to be confused with Bubl ) and Coca Cola's brand new AHA, launched to compete with the soaring popularity of La Croix. After only one year in the market, Bubly is on track to become a billion dollar brand. This massive shift in drinking habits is reshaping the category and the wider world of sparkling beverages. Competing with these brands are a fast-growth segment of functional teas such as Zest Tea High Caffeine Energy Tea, Cham Cold Brew Tea and Minna.

Health conscious consumers increasingly quench their thirst with fizzy beverages. Hot on the heels of water and tea are a host of coffee sodas and botanical drinks. Don't expect this category to go flat anytime soon.

Here are a few of my favorites.

## LA CROIX NICOLA

lacroixwater.com

La Croix doesn't have consumers, it has fans. One fan posted on social media to say that he loves the product so much he was going to name his first born Pamplemousse! That's loooooove.

La Croix has been a leader in fruity fizzy water for quite a while and is now facing a challenging competitive environment, especially as brands Topo Chico and Bubly gain traction. The company lost significant market share last year over a mislabeling issue. With that behind them, they are now hoping to gain back sales with their new product lines Curate and NiCola.

NiCola, named after the company's CEO, Nick Caporella, is their take on a healthy cola inspired by Miami's Cuban culture and South Beach vibe. The products are color and calorie-free sparkling waters with cola flavoring. These cola drinks don't taste like traditional cola, but they're not designed to. They have a light natural refreshing cola flavor in varieties like La Cola, Coconut Cola, Cubana, an alcohol-free mojito, and Coffea Exotica, a Sumantra coffee & cola blend.



*A cult-favorites  
take on cola*

*Coffee Soda is about to become even more of a thing*



## **SLINGSHOT COFFEE SODA**

[slingshotcoffeecompany.com](http://slingshotcoffeecompany.com)

The coffee soda market has had its share of ups and downs. Lore has it that coffee soda was a Nashville creation and stayed local until around 1994 when Starbucks and Pepsi joined forces in an attempt to claim the coffee soda market with Mazagran. Mazagran was made with Starbucks coffee, high fructose corn syrup and carbonated water. The drink never really caught on and was quickly discontinued. Coke jumped into coffee soda market a dozen years later with BlaK, but this was pretty much Coke with coffee flavoring and consumers didn't take to it, either. Today, coffee sodas are popping up across America and consumers are finally warmed to the idea.

Slingshot Coffee, a North Carolina cold brew company, has entered the coffee soda market with two refreshing effervescent flavors, Black Cherry Cola and Citrus Vanilla Cream Soda, which take cues from old-school favorites. Like other trendy sodas, Slingshot uses real fruit juice, natural cane sugar and of course, their amazing cold brew coffee.

## MINNA LIGHTLY BREWED SPARKLING TEA

drinkminna.com

Sales of sparkling teas are bubbling. The category launched decades ago but has remained small and sluggish. Now that consumer attitudes towards sugar have shifted, healthier fizzy products are enjoying new life.

Minna describes itself as “kind of like tea” and “kind of like sparkling water.” Yup, that pretty much describes Minna. Minna sits comfortably in between sparkling water and tea, with fuller body and flavor than a fruity fizzy water.

The products use lightly brewed tea with extracts and flavors and have no added sugar or sweeteners. Their initial three flavors -- Tropical Green Tea, Lime Hibiscus Tea, and Citrus Black Tea -- are crisp, fizzy and only lightly flavored. They hit notes that other sugary tea drinks don't.



*Straight-up Refreshing*



## BEYOND CBD

As a result of the tidal wave of interest in cannabis and hemp, New Hope added the Hemp Pavillion, a new venue at Expo this year. I counted no fewer than 60 exhibitors, largely selling CBD products. Cowen and Company, a broker-dealer business offering a range of investment banking services, estimates the U.S. CBD Market will reach \$16 billion by 2025.

It's early days for the Hemp Market and the focus is mainly on CBD. Many investors believe that, in the future, we will be talking as frequently about the endocannabinoid system just as much as we talk about the microbiome. Non-psychoactive CBD is only one of more than 200 cannabinoids that can be extracted from cannabis. With slowly developing federal legislation and regulation for cannabis-derived substances in the United States, worldwide research and trials that have been delayed for almost a century are receiving considerable interest.

A key appeal of hemp is that it requires fewer chemicals and much less water than other crops. Consumers can find hemp-based products in industries ranging from personal care, industrial use, food, clothing and supplements. With the capability to produce vital resources such as medicine, rope, clothing, and paper, this humble plant will undoubtedly serve as an invaluable resource in our future.

Here are some of my favorites.

# ELMHURST 1925 HEMP CREAMER

elmhurst1925.com

Someone was going to do it, and why not Elmhurst? The unsweetened creamer is crafted with just four ingredients: filtered water, hemp seeds, dipotassium phosphate and natural flavors with no added sugar, gums or oils. The hemp is grown on Elmhurst's fields in western New York and does not contain CBD.

Elmhurst 1925 has indicated that if CBD ever becomes legal, they would definitely add it. With the current climate, like many companies, Elmhurst is not ready to take that risk. The product looks like whole milk when added to coffee, but the taste may take a little getting used to. However, I suspect hemp fans will adapt to the taste easily.

Elmhurst, a 90-year old, family-owned company was a dairy until 2016 and reemerged as Elmhurst 1925 at plant milk company in 2017. Going plant based has been a tough decision for many dairies, but as Elmhurst has shown it can offset declining dairy sales.

*America's first  
hemp creamer*





*CBD rides the sparkling water wave*

## WELLER SPARKLING WATER

[wellyou.com](http://wellyou.com)

Weller, an innovative pioneer in CBD-infused food and beverage products, launched their highly anticipated CBD-infused sparkling water earlier this year in three flavors. Their new line, infused with 25 mg of CBD (cannabidiol) broad-spectrum hemp extract per can, is made with clean, simple and sustainably-sourced ingredients.

Weller sells their products online through their website and in several natural and conventional retailers.

Thanks to the passing of the Farm Bill in late 2018 containing a provision legalizing hemp, a species of non-psychoactive cannabis that CBD can be extracted from—hemp and CBD are on retailers' radar. Major chain retailers like CVS, Walgreens, Sprouts and Whole Foods have started to include CBD in their product mixes.

While the opportunity is real, legal risks remain. Jury's out.



# Not JUST world-class product development



**Barbara Brueckner Shpizner** is a professional food developer at Mattson—the country's most experienced, independent developer of new food and beverage products for the retail foods industry, as well as food service and restaurant chains. Barbara's career in the food industry spans 40 years, with the last 18 years focused in the natural and functional food channels. Barbara's expertise at Mattson includes innovating and developing products for some of the nation's largest companies along with many mid-size companies, startups and international food companies. After more than three decades, her vast knowledge of the food industry has given her a better understanding for how the food we eat contributes to our basic quality of life—from our health to our happiness.

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