

# NRA 2012

## Ideas and inspiration

With nearly 2,000 exhibitors and many tens of thousands of individual products to see, it is impossible to see everything – even if you spend all four days exploring the Show! However, the following are a list of products and services that caught my eye. They are not all available in the UK (yet), but contact details are shown to obtain more information on any that interest you.

### Miracle Noodles

Miracle Noodles is an interesting new food product that is calorie-free, gluten and soy-free and Kosher! It is available as angel hair, fettuccini and rice, and is made from a naturally water soluble fibre called Glucomannan. Miracle Noodles are very versatile, can be used in all types of cuisine and absorb the flavours of any soup, dish or sauce. Ideal to help reduce the calorie content of dishes, they work well with all the major weight loss plans. Available in the UK too.

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

### Is it chopsticks? Is it a fork? No! It's a CHORK!

Combining a fork, chopsticks, and a trainer/cheater configuration for the novice, this patented three-way eating utensil is a welcome and intriguing option for every type of customer. Noodles can now be gathered with greater efficiency, pot-stickers can finally be grasped with more confidence, and children can enjoy a fun and captivating alternative to traditional chopsticks.

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

### Wine Shield

Staying on the wine subject, the Wine Shield is an Australian invention and it is a floating lid that prevents wine from oxidising for up to five days. After the first glass is poured, and using the tweezers provided, you pick up a wine shield disc

and place it on top of the open bottle. Then using the tweezers you

simply push the Wine Shield into the bottle and it will settle on top of the wine. No gas, chemicals or taint and it keeps wine fresh to the last glass.

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

### Crisps and chips – but not from potato!

One trend evident at the NRA was the growth in alternative snacks. Whilst potato crisps (chips) are still popular, there was lots of evidence of a wide variety of tortilla chips and crisps made from alternative ingredients – multigrain tortilla chips and crisps made from sweet potato, lentil, hummus or even falafel. California-based Flamous Brands are behind the first-of-a-kind Falafel Chips – they do taste just like crispy falafel and are perfect for dipping.

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

[www.simply7snacks.com](http://www.simply7snacks.com)

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

### Make-your-own ice cream vending machine

The Microcreamery Group has developed a make-your-own ice cream vending machine that makes a portion of ice cream in less than 45 seconds. The machine offers 42 combinations, freshly made, one cup at a time. Customers first choose the flavour they want then the mix-ins they want with it – for example, chocolate chips. The machine is easy to refill and maintain, can be cleaned in less than 30 minutes a day, and takes up about a square metre of floor space.

[www.micro-creamery.com](http://www.micro-creamery.com)

### ECO-disposables

ECO Products offer a multitude of disposable products but what makes this company interesting is that two ranges, Bluestripe and Greenstripe, are particularly eco-friendly. The Bluestripe range is made from post-consumer recycled waste in varying proportions, depending on the item. The Greenstripe range is slightly more expensive but this range is all made from renewable resources and every item, except the Plant Starch Cutlery, is compostable.

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

### Frontflip

Looking for a new way to engage with your customers? Consider frontflip. This is an App that enables users to scan and download from QR codes a special scratch card that they can 'scratch' on their iPhone to see if they have won a prize. It's a great way to deliver fun experiences in-restaurant/bar and out that captures customer data in an easy way.

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

### Which food certification system should I use?

LEAF? Red Tractor? Freedom Food? All are good systems but no one system ticks all boxes, as each covers some unique elements and doubles up on other areas. In the US, SPE Certified claim their unique restaurant certification and consulting programme is designed to enhance the nutritional quality of meals, without compromising taste. SPE provides third party

certification with a focus on sourcing ingredients seasonally, locally and sustainably; preparing using specific cooking techniques that preserve the integrity and nutritional qualities of the ingredients; and enhancing dishes by optimising density through specific ingredient combinations. There are four certification levels – Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

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

### *Theatre cooking for smaller locations*

There is no doubt that theatre cooking builds value in the eyes of the customers, but if space is at a premium it is hard to squeeze in a theatre cookery station. The Professional Bakeware Company has two compact solutions – the Induction Action Station and the Grill Action Station – which incorporate the cooking zone and a number of wells for storing ingredients surrounding the hob or grill. They are available in a number of configurations and they can ship to the UK.

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

### *The Coca-Cola Fountain of the future has arrived!*

Coca-Cola had a hugely popular stand at the NRA and there were big queues waiting to try out the new Coca-Cola Freestyle self-serve fountain, which is due to launch in the UK this month. It features a touchscreen display that offers over 100 branded drink choices, over 70 of which are low-/no-calorie, and over 90 are caffeine-free. It is now possible for customers to personalise their drinks, so if you want a Diet Coke/Sprite/Minute Maid Lemonade combo with a splash of Coke Zero with Raspberry – you got it! Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Coca-Cola Zero and Caffeine-Free Diet Coke are each available in seven flavour options too.

[www.coca-colafreestyle.com](http://www.coca-colafreestyle.com)

### *Drinks vending gets social!*

Pepsico has introduced a new vending machine aimed at giving users a more fun experience. The Pepsi Be Social vender features a large touchscreen that offers users three options – buy a drink, watch some promotional videos or, the most interesting, send a drink to a friend. Choose the latter option and you enter, via the touchscreen keyboard, the mobile number of the friend and a text message, including who the drink is from. You then pay for the drink and have the final option to record a video message for your friend. Your friend will receive a text message with a unique code that they redeem on a Pepsi Be Social vender and once they redeem their drink, they also see the video message you recorded for them – very cool!

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

### *TurboChef introduces its latest super-speed oven*

TurboChef is well known for its rapid cooking ovens in use in pubs and restaurants around the world. One of its latest ovens, the Encore, is even easier to use – only two key presses to cook any item and even though some of the cooking is microwave based, it is now possible to use metal pans as well. The Encore uses a mix of impinged top and bottom air heat, side-launched microwave and bottom radiant heat, and will cook a breakfast sandwich in 20 seconds and an 8-inch pizza in a minute. It also works without a ventilated hood.

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

### *Dudson, flying the flag for Britain!*

It was great to see a number of firms representing the UK at the NRA and Dudson was one

of those companies. Dudson was launching its new Precision range of Fine China for contemporary fine dining to the US market, and the NRA Show also provided an opportunity to explain the part that this range will play in Sodexo Prestige's hospitality offer at the Olympics, given that several pieces from the range were specifically designed for this. The Sodexo brief gave Dudson an opportunity to create additional innovative items that will now be used to showcase British design and manufacturing excellence to visitors from all over the world.

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

### *Novel idea for reading menus*

Small print on restaurant menus, coupled with dark dining areas, has been troubling the eyes of patrons, young and old, for years. Even the bill at the end of the night is a challenge to read for the same reason. Menu-Vision has come up with an innovative idea – an inexpensive credit card-sized magnifier card with a built in light! Available with a special adhesive sleeve for attaching to menu or bill folders, these little cards are sure to be a talking point with guests and an inexpensive reminder of your business details.

[www.menu-vision.com](http://www.menu-vision.com)

### *Drinks coasters with a twist!*

Katz Coasters produce a really innovative range of drinks coasters that could provide fun, interest and conversation points to your customers. Sudoku cards, crossword cards, feedback coasters and door hangers, scratch n' sniff coasters, spot glossed finished cards and even pull-apart coasters that provide the component parts to assemble a 3D helicopter model. Sitting at the on your own could be action-packed in future!

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