

**SIAL Paris Wrap-Up (cont'd)**

that house international pavilions representing foods from dozens of countries including our own. There are areas set up for confections, beverages, preserves, "gourmet" products (although this loosely defined category can be seen throughout the show), organics, wines and spirits, and a large French pavilion showcasing the glories of a cuisine that is unrivaled for its influence around the world. In all, there were 6,500 companies exhibiting the finest and most innovative foods from every corner of the globe. In short, it is a food lover's dream.

For those new to SIAL, the show can seem a bit overwhelming at first. There are so many people, so many products and so many languages spoken around you that it can be daunting. But for the intrepid, the show presents myriad opportunities to explore the world of food, find new products, meet some of the most interesting producers from all over the world and see trends well before they hit our shores and our shelves. There is also an interesting dichotomy - classic products that have stood



the test of time, many of which are protected by geographic or name-specific consortiums, alongside some of the newest innovations that food science can devise. Old and new, pantry staples and decadent delights, there is every kind of food imaginable. And yes, there are a few gimmicks to be found at the show too, but I have found that those products tend to be a flash in the pan and are rarely seen from one show to the next.

My colleagues and I walked the aisles - as many as we could in the time we had - and saw and tasted a great many products, some that were quite new to us and others that were old friends. The same is true of the people we spoke to: Many have been exhibiting at SIAL for many years and we have great connections and, in many cases, long personal friendships. I've been attending SIAL for almost 20 years now (the show is held every two years), and one of my colleagues on the trip, my former publisher Ed Loeb, has been doing it for nearly twice that long, so you can imagine the kind of relationships we've built up over that time. The following is

a brief look at some of the more interesting products we encountered at this year's show.

We began our foray into SIAL with a visit to our good friends at Agrovim ([www.agrovim.gr](http://www.agrovim.gr)), Greek producers of one of the greatest extra-virgin olive oils I've ever tasted - Iliada. Export managers Ioannis Daras and Georgia Paradissi were there, and discussed with us their ongoing work to market their extraordinary olive oil in America. They are making great headway and we support their efforts to get the word out. Named for Homer's epic poem, The Iliad, Iliada is a PDO Kalamata oil made by a certified group of local farmers in the Kalamata region that pay keen attention to specific details, including the fields in which the olive trees are cultivated, the harvesting of the olives and the very best processing conditions. The oils, packed in beautifully designed tins, are very special indeed, and the line of flavored oils is unique, aromatized with flavors such as truffle, basil, orange, rose, vanilla, chili and chocolate.

One of the most innovative and truly useful items we saw seems so simple in retrospect and yet someone had to be the first to do it. French Cooker ([www.frenchcooker.com](http://www.frenchcooker.com)) displayed its Julienne de Vinaigre, a unique solid vinegar product in julienne cuts as the name suggests



Cliquez pour lire: [GOURMET Business December 2014 page s29-30](http://ezine.gourmetbusiness.com/gourmetbusiness/december_2014#pg29)

[http://ezine.gourmetbusiness.com/gourmetbusiness/december\\_2014#pg29](http://ezine.gourmetbusiness.com/gourmetbusiness/december_2014#pg29)

**SIAL Paris Wrap-Up (cont'd)**

or, as they call it, vinegar flakes. They come in a variety of flavors - including tomato, shallot, black truffle, honey and raspberry - and they are absolutely delicious. They can be sprinkled on salads, carpaccio, oysters, cooked meats, or mixed into cheese spreads and sandwiches.

Classic and new innovations sat side by side at the stand of the cooperative representing authentic Fontina D'Aosta ([www.fontinacoop.it](http://www.fontinacoop.it)), the wonderfully versatile and delicious cheese from Italy's Piemonte region, a cheese that is widely imitated but never as good as the original. The producer introduced a lovely

canned Fonduta with Truffle, combining two of Piemonte's great treasures in a rich, flavorful sauce that is typically served with rice, boiled potatoes, polenta and/or vegetables. A distant cousin to Swiss fondue, it is one of the specialties of the region, quite delicious and now very convenient.

In the destined-to-become-a-classic department, we paused late one afternoon at Interval, the marvelous cheese purveyor, and sampled one of its newest additions, Agour Fromages du Pays Basque ([www.agour.com](http://www.agour.com)), a family-owned company with some lovely sheep's and cow's milk cheeses. The family recently created a

cheesemaking facility in the heart of the Iraty Valley to be closer to the shepherds and, thus, the source of their milk. St Sauveur, named for the saint who protects the shepherds and whose namesake



church stands next to the facility, is a delicious soft-ripened cheese made from pasteurized sheep's milk and was the first cheese to be made in the new factory. The company's Arpea is a drain cheese made from pasteurized sheep's or cow's milk depending on the availability. The name in the Basque language means cave or grotto, and refers to the small holes that can be found in the paste of the cheese. There is even a picture of such a cave on the label of this scrumptious cheese. Look for these

cheeses to be in the U.S. soon. Always a big fan of traditional English cheeses, I was pleased to discover a company I didn't know, Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses ([www.butlerscheeses.co.uk](http://www.butlerscheeses.co.uk)), where Katy Hanigan let me taste the traditional Lancashire, a tangy and savory cheese that is one of the best-loved British cheeses, and a new one called Blacksticks Blue, a creamy and delicious blue that is great for snacking or cooking. This is a cheesemaking company to watch out for. Someone needs to be

