



Hot Trends from the Seafood Show

“Flavor” and “sustainability” were the two hottest trends to grab the spotlight at the recent International Boston Seafood Show. All of the flavors that were gracing new product applications provide enticing new menu options, and sustainability will ensure that there is plenty of seafood available now and in the future.

Once considered too delicate for bold flavor treatments, seafood today is a delicious canvass for a broad range of ethnic and nontraditional flavors. At the show, new products with flavor profiles ranging from Caribbean to Kashmiri were everywhere. Consider a new product called Big Bob’s Belly Buster Colossal Skewered Shrimp with Lime and Garlic Glaze, or Kashmiri Curry Salmon, for example. Coconut shrimp, almost a mainstream staple now, was the star in two new products with new flavor twists. One upscale version added macadamia nuts to the coconut breading. Another added a sweet and spicy dipping sauce.

The old favorites were plentiful as well. Shrimp with penne pasta provides an economic way to serve the No. 1 shellfish. Crab also had a solid presence at the show, and in a variety of applications. Crab cakes, crab and lobster cakes, crab pizza and crab sticks offer operators a range of tasty opportunities to tempt diners.

Salmon has also swum successfully onto mainstream menus and there were new salmon dishes galore. In addition to the Kashmiri curry salmon, there was tempura salmon with dipping sauce, both adding an ethnic flavor profile to the popular fish. Trout also took on tasty glazes and Parmesan crusts for new applications.

As exciting as new product development is in the seafood segment, concerns have also risen about supplies of some popular species. At the show, suppliers made it clear that they’ve become strong supporters of sustainability programs. Wild-caught seafood has been harvested with eco-friendly methods and farmed seafood has been raised with best practices in place. These include monitoring use of antibiotics and protecting mangroves and wetlands. Look for more information coming from your distributors about this important initiative.

Seafood has become much more user-friendly for foodservice operations. Now, with the new flavor trend and the increasing availability of top-quality convenience seafood products, this category has the potential to really shine on foodservice menus.

Two New Species Surface

It's always exciting when a new fish species is brought to the marketplace, and two were featured at the recent International Boston Seafood Show. One, called barramundi, is raised by Australis Aquaculture in Turner Falls, Mass. in the largest indoor fish farm in North America. The fish, whose Latin name is *Lates calcarifer*, is a native of Australia. It is a white, flaky sea bass described as having a moist, delicate mouth feel and a buttery flavor.

The second newcomer was from Kona Blue Water Farms in Kona, Hawaii. The company's offering is called Kona Kampachi and it's a sashimi-grade version of Hawaiian yellowtail. Kampachi, or *Seriola rivoliana*, has an extremely high fat content, making it prized as sashimi and in cooked preparations. It has a high level of omega-3 fatty acids, even higher than mackerel. Kampachi is more appropriate for upscale restaurants, while barramundi has a broader application.