



Aligning with overall beverage trends, health-focused and sparkling attributes were the big beverage themes at this year's NACS Show. Beverage marketers said that with Millennials more concerned with physical wellness than perhaps any previous generation—while consumers overall remain time-pressed and open to quick, convenient ready-to-drink beverages—the time is right for retailers to stock up on new, exciting drink entries.

Highly Functional

Several infused waters were spotted on the Show floor in keeping with consumer interest in healthy alternatives to soft drinks. Infused waters—particularly those containing organic ingredients, fruits, vegetables and vitamins—are seen as simple, flavorful options to soda, as well as packaged bottled water.

CSC Brands' V8 Infused Water, for example, touted one full serving of vegetables per 16-ounce bottle. With no sugar added or artificial ingredients, V8 Infused Water contains 30 calories per bottle and is available in three flavor combinations—mandarin orange ginger, cucumber lime and black cherry pomegranate. (V8+Energy, containing 80 mg. of natural energy from green tea, and available in three flavors, was also on display.)

Trimino protein-infused water—containing seven grams of protein, B-complex vitamins and essential amino acids in each serving—was also sighted in this year's first-ever New Exhibitor Area. The product is described as a low-calorie, refreshing protein drink that's lighter than most protein-formulated beverages. "While protein has long been recognized

as a muscle-building and tissue-repair aid, it is also gaining usage as a weight management tool, providing satiety and hunger-management relief," said Casey Hoban, co-founder and COO of Miami Bay Beverage Co., marketer of Trimino. Available in four flavors with a suggested retail price of \$2.49 per 16-ounce bottle, Trimino is already available in convenience chains including, 7-Eleven, Casey's General Stores and Holiday Stationstores.

Celsius, promoted as a "negative-calorie" beverage, was also looking to build its presence in the convenience channel with its attendance at the NACS Show. According to Gerry David, CEO of Celsius Holdings, the brand—currently available in five flavors with two more to come—is "the world's first negative-calorie, fat-burning, clean energy drink," backed by clinical research. Consuming Celsius before exercise has been proven to help burn 100 calories and more per serving, while boosting metabolism and reducing body fat, according to the company.

Sparkling Sizzles

Retailer and consumer interest in sparkling beverages—ranging from waters to juices to wines such as Prosecco—continues to run high. While consumers might be giving up carbonated soft drinks' sugar, they still seek bubbles. Sparkling water, with sales increasing at a double-digit rate, according to IRI, is seen as a less sweet, yet still sophisticated, beverage choice.

The continued popularity of sparkling was evident on the Show floor. Coca-Cola Co., for example, sampled its Minute Maid Sparkling, which will launch in 16.9-ounce PET bottles in March. "Flavored sparkling water/juice drinks are growing double-digits, according to 2014 Nielsen data," Scott Tillman, director, commercial operations, at Coca-Cola, said. "This low-calorie sparkling juice drink made with real fruit and natural flavors is perfectly formulated for shoppers on the go or just relaxing at home." Minute Maid Sparkling will be available in four

PROOF POSITIVE

Not to be outdone by their non-alcoholic counterparts, alcoholic beverages had a few new flavors up their sleeves this year at the NACS Show.

Notable in the wine category were new offerings from E. & J. Gallo Winery (Dark Horse, available in red blend, cabernet sauvignon, merlot, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc) and Constellation Brands (Ravage, available in cabernet and chardonnay).

Capriccio Bubbly Sangria, meanwhile, seeks to capitalize on two beverage trends: sparkling and sangria. According to Dave Steiner, national sales director at Florida Caribbean Distillers, Capriccio—packaged in four-packs of 375 ml. bottles with twist-off caps (suggested retail \$9.99)—is expanding nationally in early 2016. "Capriccio is the first carbonated sangria in the U.S. in a convenient single-serve package that blends two of the fastest growing subcategories of wine—sparkling and sangria," Steiner said. "Due to its sweetness and effervescence, Capriccio appeals to consumers who are looking for a variety of choices, including beer, flavored malternatives, wine and even sangria."

Constellation Brands also featured its latest distilled spirits product at the NACS Show: Serpent's Bite Apple Cider Flavored Whisky. Serpent's Bite is 70-proof and available in one-liter and 750 ml. bottles.



flavors—fizzy lemonade, fruit punch, mixed berry and tropical citrus—and will be supported with a multimedia advertising campaign and consumer promotions, including an Olympics sponsorship, the beverage company said.

Another soft drink marketer, Reed's Inc., sampled retailers on its latest product: Reed's Stronger Ginger Brew. The drink features 50% more ginger than the company's flagship Reed's Extra Ginger Brew. "With the renaissance of ginger beer as a mixer, particularly in the fastest-growing cocktail, the Moscow Mule, consumers, retailers and bars and restaurants have been saying, 'We want more ginger' to give those Mules more kick," said Chris Reed, founder and CEO. Packaged in four-packs of 12-ounce bottles, Extra Ginger Brew is priced at a suggested \$4.99 to \$6.99.

Root beer—particularly hard root beer—is another budding beverage trend. Pabst Brewing Co. showcased the fast-growing Not Your Father's Root Beer, while MillerCoors featured two hard sodas: Henry's Hard Ginger Ale and Hard Orange. The Henry's flavored malt beverages, which contain 4.2% alcohol by volume, will launch in January in six-packs of 12-ounce bottles and 16-ounce single cans. They will be priced in line with Blue Moon, MillerCoors said.

According to Marty Maloney, spokesman for the brewery, hard sodas are no flash in the pan. "We feel this is the perfect time and opportunity to grow and lead a new category," he said, noting that ginger ale and orange soda are three times larger than root beers in CSDs. "Leveraging our exper-

Convenience stores can't always offer the same variety of beverages as other channels, but they can offer the first taste of new products.

tise in brewing and marketing FMBs, Henry's will play a key role in maintaining and growing our FMB category leadership," Maloney said.

Fun Flavors

While new beverage products piqued the interest of NACS Show attendees, a number of established brands also garnered attention with new flavors, flavor combinations and line extensions:

- In the energy category, Red Bull announced that kiwi twist will be the featured summer edition flavor in 2016.
- Voss Water previewed two new sparkling water flavors: lemon cucumber and tangerine lemongrass, packaged in 375 ml. glass bottles.
- Coca-Cola's Powerade showcased two new flavors to launch next year: twisted blackberry and watermelon strawberry.
- Sparkling Ice, marketed by Talking Rain Beverage Co., previewed its new black cherry line extension, available in January, as well as a special-edition Kevin Durant orange mango variant, in collaboration with the NBA star and brand ambassador.

NACS Show attendees found that whether it's new brands or novel flavor extensions of existing products, the beverage category will be loaded with exciting opportunities in 2016. **NACS**

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