

Virginia Food Expo Showcases New Products for Retail and Foodservice

Foodservice Monthly editor Michael Birchenall recently judged new products at the biennial Virginia Food and Beverage Expo, which was held at the Richmond Convention Center. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services holds the trade Expo to showcase Virginia products to retail buyers, chefs and possible distributors. This year 42 new products were entered in the competition for the Best Product overall and Best New Food and Best New Beverage.

Other judges included Amy Lacey, WRIC-TV8 in Richmond, Lorraine Eaton, Virginian-Pilot; Patrick Evans-Hylton, Hampton Roads magazine and Bonnie Benwick, Washington Post deputy food editor.

Some favorite tastes from this palate:

Ayrshire Farm, Upperville: Pulled pork frozen cooked 12 ounce portions for the home ... prepared on the farm from animals raised there.

Popghum: the grain that is used to make a sweet syrup and also has uses as fodder, as a fermented alcoholic beverage and a biofuel has been taken by Arlington resident Dan Gadra and air-popped into a mini popcorn-like snack without the hulls to get stuck in your teeth.

Rodgers' Banana Pudding

Sauce: I fell in love with this banana pudding in a jar ... it had a clean fresh taste and had rich banana flavors. I kept going back to see if there were any sleight of hand taking place. It tasted so good, there had to be something wrong. I couldn't find it.



Rodgers' Banana Pudding Sauce



Homestead Creamery

Raspberry Yogurt Drink: sold in a glass quart bottle this thick, luscious yogurt drink defied my wanting to not like it ... rich and tasty. They told me I could look for it at Whole Foods in the DC area.

Wasmund's Barrel Kit from Copper Fox Distillery: I met Sperryville distiller Rick Wasmund at Founding Farmers last year in Washington. He is selling in ABC stores in Virginia a two-liter charred American white oak barrel with two cask-strength (60 plus percent alcohol) 750-ml bottles of his single-malt spirit. You can then age in the barrel at home. We declared this the best new beverage of the Expo.

Pungo Creek Mills Indian Cornmeal: Made from the bright reddish ears of corn, the corn meal make a corn bread that was like no other ... dense, yet moist and sweet to the palate. I kept slipping back for more but after we voted it the Best New Food Product whne I stopped by for one more taste the crowd around the booth was too large.

For more information on Virginia products go to www.vdacs.virginia.gov



Bill and Laurel Savage