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makeovers for
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chocolate



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Coffee innovations brewing new experiences

Don't drink coffee, but it's fascinating to watch the innovations surrounding it lately. That includes coffee-infused chews aimed to keep you energized during the day, nootropic coffee products exhibited at almost every food and beverage show this year, and ready-to-drink (RTD) offerings flying off the shelves.

We covered Projo Power Coffee, a collagen-enhanced instant coffee stick pack, in the July digital magazine [The Game Changers column](#). Founder Charbel Mawad said he developed it because he wanted to easily consume more protein in the morning.

"I started adding protein into my cup of coffee, and I felt great," he explained. "We learned that protein [counterbalances the spike in cortisol](#) that you get from just caffeine alone."

This trend of functional coffee continues to expand with products like Coffeellagen, another collagen-infused coffee option that merges potential beauty benefits with caffeine's energy boost.

Perhaps most intriguing is Koffucha, a canned, lightly fermented sparkling probiotic cold-brew coffee inspired by kombucha, as veteran writer Cindy Hazen describes in this issue.

The innovation doesn't stop there. Southeastern Roastery's Rwandan Fruit-Dried single-serving coffee represents a shift toward premium, convenient experiences with unique processing methods that enhance flavor profiles. Meanwhile, Trumeta Mushroom Coffee joins the functional mushroom trend, incorporating adaptogenic fungi for possible cognitive benefits beyond caffeine's stimulation.

For those seeking caffeine without the cup, Dry Brew offers coffee chews that deliver energy in a portable, mess-free format. These chewables represent a completely new consumption method that fits seamlessly into active lifestyles.

What's driving this wave of innovation? Consumer demand for functional benefits, novel experiences and convenience has pushed coffee beyond its traditional boundaries. The category now spans multiple formats, functional ingredients and consumption occasions.

This column is all about coffee, but this month we're also tackling new frontiers in functional chocolate. You'll see many of those innovations center on low-sugar formulations.

As for coffee, while it continues its evolution from simple morning ritual to functional food, wellness supplement and experiential beverage, we can expect even more creative interpretations to emerge. The humble coffee bean has become a canvas for innovation that extends far beyond the cup.

Be well. *Drink* well.

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Coffee transcends the buzz with **nootropics** and **adaptogens**

by Cindy Hazen

Move over, Joe. Preferences among coffee drinkers have matured. Flavor and energy still reign, but consumers are raising the bar. [Research](#) conducted on behalf of the National Coffee Association (NCA) found that consumption of specialty coffee has increased by nearly 18% during the past five years.

William “Bill” Murray, CEO and president of NCA, said, “Decades of scientific evidence show that drinking either regular or decaffeinated coffee is associated with myriad health benefits, including [increased longevity](#) and a reduced risk of [multiple cancers](#) and [chronic diseases](#).” Too much caffeine may put some drinkers on edge, though, prompting them to look for other coffee beverages that promise calm alertness.

Caffeine and L-theanine: **The foundational synergy**

L-theanine is an amino acid found in green tea. In the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition*, the authors of a [study](#) pointed out some of the potential benefits of this bioactive compound. Among them, L-theanine has shown to be an antioxidant with anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective, anti-cancer and immune-regulatory effects. The researchers noted that when L-theanine was added to beverages, it



increased brain clarity while lowering stress. The flavor is described as having caramel-like notes that can tone down the bitterness of caffeine.

In an episode of his Huberman Lab podcast, Andrew Huberman, an associate professor of neurobiology at Stanford University School of Medicine, said, “When taken together, L-theanine and caffeine can help to ‘even things out,’ making the stimulation from caffeine smoother and less edgy.” He suggested that 200 mg to 400 mg of L-theanine can [reduce](#) depression and anxiety while [enhancing](#) sleep quality.

“When we ingest caffeine, the peak effects of caffeine [occur](#) about 30 minutes after we drink

Caffeine overall seems to be **good for mood** and helps keep depression at bay.

it,” he continued. “The anxiety-inducing effects of caffeine can be kept in check through use of L-theanine. Caffeine overall seems to be good for our mood and prevent depression – or at least keep depression at bay when depression might otherwise surface or be more severe.”

Mark Curry, functional nutritionist at nootropic-focused CPG Savvy Beverage, suggested L-theanine can help [regulate mood](#) by influencing neurotransmitters like GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), serotonin and dopamine. “This is why users often report not just better focus, but a greater sense of control, reduced mind-wandering, and a lessened susceptibility to distractions and daily stressors. It essentially transforms caffeine’s raw power into a more refined, controlled and sustainable mental state, making the combination feel productive rather than just stimulating.”

Curry described L-theanine’s flavor as having a slightly astringent taste typical of green tea. This trait adds to the ingredient’s other challenges such as mixability and solubility. While L-theanine is fairly water-soluble, he stressed that formulators must ensure all

ingredients dissolve completely without creating sediment or cloudiness, especially in powdered products.

Julie Daoust, chief science officer for mushroom powder provider M2 Ingredients, indicated that low levels of L-theanine have been detected in mushrooms, which are generally not sufficient to deliver the benefits of supplemental L-theanine. “Functional mushrooms, particularly reishi [*Ganoderma lucidum*], are well known for their adaptogenic properties, [helping](#) the body better manage physical and mental stress. While their biological pathways differ from those of L-theanine, they contribute to similar outcomes: [greater stress resilience](#), [improved mood](#) and [enhanced clarity](#).” Because of this, adaptogenic mushrooms are often paired with L-theanine in mushroom coffee products touting to deliver focused, sustained energy. They may also serve as an effective option for those looking for alternatives to L-theanine when formulating for calm focus and mental performance.



Keep it Clean With

Organic caffeine



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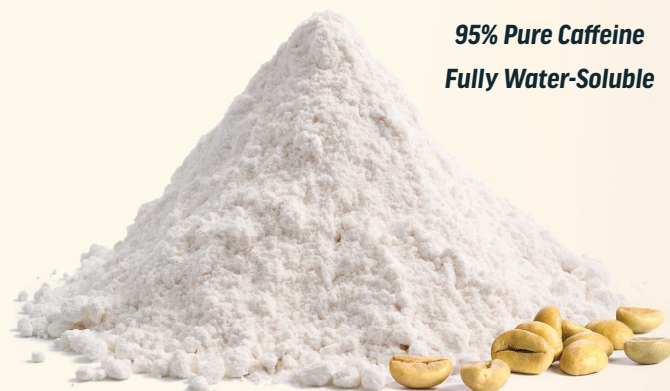
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Beyond cognition, mushrooms like cordyceps (*Cordyceps militaris*) offer prebiotic benefits.

Mushrooms are on the rise

NCA's 2025 report found that two-thirds of Americans (66%) have never heard of mushroom coffee; however, Murray said around half (53%) of Americans said they would like to try it.

Daoust is confident that adding mushrooms to coffee isn't just a trend. "It's a response to a growing consumer need backed by compelling science," she explained. For example, Drive Research [noted](#) in 2024 that 1 in 3 consumers reported trying to reduce their caffeine intake, often due to concerns around jitters, energy crashes or sleep disturbances.

"This creates the perfect opportunity for functional mushrooms to shine either as additions to coffee or as a caffeine-free alternative," she continued. "We see reports from many consumers that they still maintain their favorite coffee ritual and are replacing their second or third cup with mushroom coffee."

Not all mushrooms are the same, though. "At M2 Ingredients, we study and grow 10 different species of functional mushrooms, and we use both the fruiting body and mycelium to

capture their full-spectrum bioactivity," Daoust explained. "While each species is unique, all functional mushrooms in their whole form share a common foundation; they are rich in dietary fiber, [immunomodulating](#) beta-glucans and antioxidant compounds like ergothioneine and polyphenols."

The company's proprietary research on full-spectrum M2 Lion's Mane 102 revealed that it supports both energy and mood. "Beyond cognition, mushrooms like cordyceps [*Cordyceps militaris*] offer prebiotic [benefits](#)," Daoust added. "Another type, reishi, provides adaptogenic [support](#) to help buffer the stress response, complementing or even balancing out the effects of coffee."

To incorporate mushrooms into coffee, it's important to explore the differences between mushroom extracts and whole mushroom powders. Although both come in powdered form, they are fundamentally different in what they deliver and how they behave in a coffee formulation. "Mushroom extracts are concentrated powders, typically created by extracting for a specific compound – most commonly beta-glucans. These extracts are

Beverage breakthroughs

often used because they integrate easily into instant coffee or ready-to-mix [RTM] applications,” Daoust said. Because they are concentrated, many bioactive compounds may be lost in the process.

In contrast, whole mushroom powders are created by drying and milling the entire mushroom structure, including both the fruiting body and the mycelium. She emphasized her company’s research – including clinical trials and in vitro studies – was conducted using whole mushroom powders, precisely because they deliver the full array of health benefits, including beta-glucans, polyphenols, antioxidants and prebiotic fibers.

In coffee, a role exists for both formats, depending on the brand and consumer prioritization. Daoust noted that some mushroom coffee companies choose extracts because they can accommodate a lower inclusion rate. For brands and consumers looking for the true benefits of full-spectrum mushrooms, whole mushroom powders are the gold standard. But a challenge has been the powder’s solubility.

Daoust maintained that M2 Ingredient’s product Myco-Solv overcomes this issue. She claimed the product is a first-of-its-kind whole mushroom powder that suspends easily in liquid, passes through a traditional coffee filter and retains all the bioactive diversity of the full mushroom. “This opens an entirely new application frontier: brewed coffee and bagged ground coffee,” she added. “Until now, most mushroom coffee products relied on instant coffee, which isn’t always the top choice for coffee lovers or specialty brands.”



Cindy Hazen is a food industry professional with decades of experience in food formulation and food safety. She is PCQI, HACCP and ISO 22000 trained.

Awaken the possibilities

Koffucha, a canned, lightly fermented sparkling probiotic cold-brew coffee in the spirit of kombucha, embodies the innovation overtaking the category. Dalton Honore, founder and CEO of Dreamland Koffucha, explained, “Through fermentation, the taste and functionality of traditional coffee is transformed, giving way to a completely new and unique beverage experience.” Because the caffeine level of this product is 50 mg per serving – roughly one-third the caffeine in a comparable cup of coffee – the beverage brand claimed the drink may offer the alertness and focus of traditional coffee, but without the headaches, jitters, digestive issues or energy crash.

Fermented using traditional techniques, Koffucha also aligns with digestive health beverage trends. Honore admitted the probiotic levels may differ from batch to batch, but stated, “This kind of variability is to be expected in ‘real food’ items. For reference, think about oranges: Some oranges may have more vitamin C, while some will have less,” he said. “We view this variability as a sign of authenticity.”

The unique fermentation process also allows the taste of the coffee to be reimaged – some current varieties include lavender grapefruit and pineapple mango. “Koffucha is as much like coffee as wine is like grape juice,” Honore said. “As such, we are able to explore flavor profiles and combinations that would not work in traditional coffee. The possibilities for new flavor combinations are nearly endless.” ■



The Game Changers

Here's a spotlight on 10 top brands leading the industry with successful concepts, mindful execution.



Four Sigmatic

Eat Gold Organics



Sträva



Everyday Dose



alice



Awake



Strive



Paul John Caffeine



Throne Sport Coffee

Honey Mama's



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10 brands using
**functional
ingredients** to
make coffee and
chocolate even
more ... **premium**

by Scott Miller



The food industry is responding to environmental and economic challenges by transforming traditional products into functional offerings with added health benefits.

A study in [Science Advances](#) indicated that climate change and land use may have an increasingly unpredictable effect on the keystone of our global food chain: pollinators. Specifically, pollinators in tropical regions where coffee and cocoa are grown.

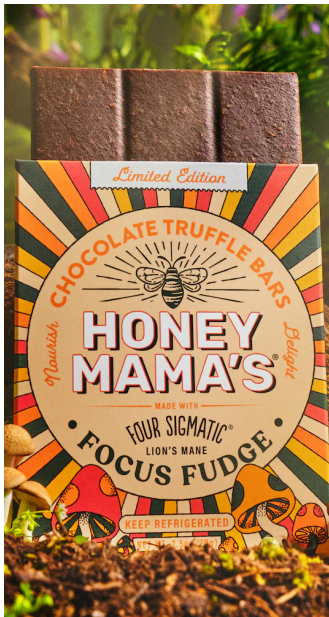
Coupled with widespread pressure from evolving global tariffs, the coffee and chocolate industries are having to adjust. Luker, for example, a chocolate supplier, touted its direct sourcing model, “which gives us visibility across the supply chain and enables a high price transfer to farmers,” Daniela Quintero Fernández, design and product development director at Luker, said.

But not all brands have the resources and reach to effect such a strategy. Instead, some are looking to validate premium

pricing by counterbalancing new costs with nontraditional ingredients in the category – ingredients with the potential to perform, like adaptogenic mushrooms or cannabidiol (CBD) oil.

Kevin Ryan, CEO of Malachite Strategy and Research, proposed, “How do we make coffee even more premium?” He added, “Same for chocolate ... chocolate and coffee are both threatened by the economy, climate change and different things happening politically and globally. So, the idea of moving to a more functional side is an attempt to get in front of that, in a sense, and to appeal to what consumers want, which is a product that works harder for them.”

This batch of Game Changers explores some of the latest innovations in functional coffee and chocolate.



Honey Mama's – Functional fudge-like bars

Founder: Christy Goldsby

The story: The savory profile of the brand's lion's mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) bar – created in collaboration with mushroom provider Four Sigmatic – blends cleanly with rich coconut butter in Honey Mama's Focus Fudge.

Jill Wilson, VP of marketing at Four Sigmatic, explained, “In early formulation, Christy [Goldsby] felt she was overcomplicating the recipe by wanting to add spices or nuts to deepen the functional properties of the bar. No matter the combination of ingredients, Christy felt disappointed anytime the lion's mane took second stage in the overall flavor experience.”

Why it's a game changer: Lion's mane forms the functional backbone of Focus Fudge.

“In the past few decades, research and interest around lion's mane has skyrocketed,” Wilson said. “This is likely due to two constituents identified within the species, *hericenones* and *erinacines*, which can [cross the blood-brain barrier](#) and activate the hormone NGF (nerve growth factor).”



Paul John Caffeine – Traditional Indian coffee

Founder: Shonali Paul

The story: Paul wanted to bring traditional South Indian “filter coffee” – made by pouring hot milk and sugar through a metal filter filled with finely ground coffee and chicory root – to a global audience.

Why it's a game changer: Chicory root inherently contains prebiotic inulin, which [supports](#) a healthy gut microbiome.

Paul said, “Our South Indian filter coffee pairs shade-grown Indian coffee with chicory root, a natural prebiotic, creating a smooth, low-acid brew that supports gut health.”



Awake – No-sugar-added chocolate bites

Founder: Adam Deremo

The story: Awake’s individually wrapped chocolates contain 50 mg of caffeine per “bite,” and are only 60 calories each. They’re sweetened with maltitol, a sweetener with half the calories of sucrose.

Why it’s a game changer: Deremo shared, “Eliminating the bitterness of caffeine, especially without added sugar, isn’t easy. We used a combination of techniques ... One of those was encapsulation, which helps mask the bitterness of the caffeine.”



Four Sigmatic – Mushroom-enhanced coffees

Founders: Tero Isokauppila and Mikael Mäkinen

The story: Four Sigmatic’s mushroom extracts are featured elsewhere on this list, but with 500 mg of lion’s mane per serving, along with prebiotic yacón, the brand’s new Focus Organic Medium Roast Half Caf Ground Coffee deserves its own spot.

Why it’s a game changer: A lot goes into sourcing functional mushrooms.

Marketing VP Jill Wilson said, “Many of their unique compounds are conversions of compounds found in the trees these mushrooms are found on. The fruiting body of the mushroom contains more [bioactive compounds] than the mycelium ... extraction breaks down the chitin in the cell wall, [making the nutrients bioavailable](#) to the body.”



watch

Luji’s Chocolate founder shares brand inspiration, advice – video

Iyin Akinlabi-Oladimeji shares the inspiration behind her brand, challenges she’s faced, accomplishments, and advice for food and beverage brands.



Alice – Mushroom-infused chocolates

Founders: Lindsay Goodstein and Charlotte Cruze

The story: The Alice founders bonded over a shared belief in food as medicine. Both were tired of pills, gummies and powders.

Why it's a game changer: Alice's Brainstorm Chocolate contains a variety of bioactive ingredients in addition to organic cacao. First, lion's mane [supports](#) cognitive benefits, but [L-theanine](#) and the adaptogenic herb *Rhodiola rosea* may help modulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, enhancing cognition.

Check out the rest of the list of game-changing brands, on page 19.



watch

Sustainable packaging: Better ways to ensure shelf stability – webinar

Bridge the gap between planet-friendly and making sure your product can stay on the shelf for as long as possible.



Better-for-you chocolate hits the sweet spot

by Kimberly J. Decker

Chocolate isn't the guilty pleasure it once was. And if you need proof, just ask consumers. Kash Rocheleau, CEO at sweetener specialist Icon Foods, explained, "They still want chocolate – always will. But now they're reading labels, watching sugar and looking for added functional benefits."

That's driven momentum for indulgence with intention. And when formulated strategically, contemporary chocolates deliver precisely that.

Leading with less

Jen Bae, senior scientist of confectionery at global ingredient provider Tate & Lyle, pointed to brands like Lily's, ChocXO and Unreal as leading the chocolate-with-intention vanguard.

"Many of these innovative brands center on no/low sugar claims," she added, "which have seen an 8.7% year-over-year increase in volume sales, according to the National Confectioners Association's 2025 State of Treating [report](#)."

That doesn't surprise Rocheleau. "Sugar reduction is one of the most impactful – and most requested – ways to tilt chocolate into better-for-you territory," she said. "It's also one of the trickiest. Once you start pulling sugar out of a chocolate matrix, texture, mouthfeel and the sweetness curve can go sideways fast."



Category evolution



Sugar reduction is one of the most impactful – and most requested – ways to tilt chocolate into better-for-you territory.

Swinging at curveballs

Although current sugar alternatives significantly improve upon their predecessors, no single option measures up to the real thing, functionally or otherwise.

Take allulose, for example, which has a well-earned reputation for bulking, browning, melting and tasting remarkably like sucrose. But when allulose is used in chocolate, Thom King, Icon Foods' chief innovations officer, explained that it lowers the melt profile, softening a bar's texture and potentially attenuating its crisp snap.

"To mitigate this," King advised, "formulators can pair allulose with structuring fibers like inulin, soluble tapioca fiber, partially hydrolyzed guar gum, gum acacia and polydextrose, or increase cocoa butter for better crystallization."

As for erythritol, Rocheleau conceded it "can be a bit of a diva," contributing bulk and mild sweetness, but with a cooling effect that doesn't always jibe in chocolate. Erythritol

tends to recrystallize if handled improperly, too, producing grittiness and bloom over time.

Once again, King suggested leveraging soluble fibers and humectants like vegetable glycerin to stanch crystal formation, or blending erythritol with monk fruit or stevia to cut use levels overall.

Rocheleau considers stevia a "powerhouse" if it contains the right glycosides. "Reb [rebaudioside] A? Certainly an option," she offered. "But newer forms like reb M, or our new RM95D – a proprietary blend of reb M and reb D – deliver a smoother, clean finish that complements cocoa rather than competing with it." Reb M can also dampen off-notes from botanicals, nootropics and adaptogens, she maintained.

Process orientation

"When you layer these ingredients thoughtfully," Rocheleau suggested, "you can get a chocolate that checks all the boxes: great taste, great label and no compromise on performance."

But first, you have to modify production.

The physical and thermal properties of sweeteners – particularly their solubility and [glass-transition temperature](#) – influence how they behave during chocolate manufacturing, which is why Daniela Quintero Fernández,

Continues on p. 18



Tasting chocolate's future

Functional actives are changing the way consumers think about chocolate – but they're also changing chocolate.

Philip Caputo, marketing and consumer insights manager at flavor and extract company Virginia Dare, noted, "Bitterness is often the tax that functional ingredients charge for their benefits, especially in confections like chocolate."

Fortunately, savvy flavor strategies help brands dodge that tax while expanding the horizons of what chocolate can be. Professionals from three different ingredient suppliers explained how:

Jen Bae, senior scientist in confectionery, Tate & Lyle: "In functional chocolate formulations, spices like cayenne [*Capsicum annuum*], black pepper [*Piper nigrum*] and ginger [*Zingiber officinale*] are especially effective at masking bitterness and adding sensory intrigue. Cayenne delivers a clean heat that distracts from the sharpness of caffeine or adaptogens, while black pepper adds a subtle pungency that enhances complexity, particularly in dark chocolate. Ginger, with its warm and zesty profile, not only complements earthy botanicals like ashwagandha [*Withania somnifera*] or reishi [*Ganoderma lucidum*], but also brings a perceived sweetness that helps round out bitter edges. These spicy elements work well in both indulgent and wellness-oriented chocolate formats, offering a bold, balanced flavor experience."

Aaron Rasmussen, head of global applications, Ohly: "When you're reducing sugar content, chocolate can feel flat. Boosting its umami



or salt can bring more complexity, letting consumers truly taste those bold chocolate notes rather than the lack of sugar or added protein or adaptogens. When brands on the market use umami-boosting ingredients, they tend to use them either subtly to give complexity, or they make a big deal of it and highlight it on the packaging, as with Vosges chocolates, which regularly feature high-umami ingredients like manchego, Parmesan, olives and bacon. And being a product of fermentation, chocolate is [naturally rich](#) in glutamic acid, which is key to what consumers see as high-quality, full-flavored chocolate."

Philip Caputo, marketing and consumer insights manager, Virginia Dare: "Chocolate is evolving from a one-note indulgence into this complex web of possibilities. We're seeing a real blurring of boundaries: dark chocolate with smoked salt [*Sodium chloride*] and black garlic [*Allium nigrum*], or truffles [*Tuber genus*] infused with turmeric [*Curcuma longa*] and candied yuzu [*Citrus junos*]. You name it, people are trying it. These profiles wouldn't have gotten much traction 10 years ago, but now, consumers crave novelty and depth in sensory experiences."

– Kim Decker

Category evolution

Continued from p. 16

head of product development at Luker Chocolate, counsels brands working with sugar alternatives to “adjust processing across raw-material handling, mixing, refining, [conching](#) and storage.”

Exhibit A: Sweeteners with high solubility or low melt points can agglomerate at typical conching temperatures, preventing a uniform mix and impairing finished-chocolate texture and flavor distribution. Conching is the process of prolonged mixing, heating and aeration of liquid chocolate, to refine its properties.

“We advise lower conching temperatures and proper moisture management to avoid grittiness or flavor imbalance,” Quintero said.

She added that Luker often balances variables like fat content, solids and emulsifiers to target specific viscosities in reduced-sugar bases, leveraging polyglycerol polyricinoleate and lecithin to improve flow, especially in molding or enrobing chocolates.

It’s also wise to recalibrate tempering protocols for reduced-sugar chocolates, perhaps by raising initial temperatures, slowing cooling rates or controlling shear, particularly when using polyols or high-intensity sweeteners that inhibit crystal growth.

Sensational

How do you know you’re on the right track? By putting the product to the test.

Quintero recommended “early, iterative sensory testing with trained panelists and target consumers,” adding that her company tailor-tests protocols based on whether the brand is benchmarking, optimizing an existing formula or gauging appeal.

Ryan Dillman, sensory scientist at ingredient solutionist Tate & Lyle, noted that brands can use a combination of descriptive methods to compare functional prototypes to controls, adding that validation with consumers gives brands a view into liking, preference and use patterns as compared with full-sugar controls.

Understanding how a chocolate’s flavor evolves over the eating experience, he continued, can lead brands toward formulations that target a particular flavor duration or time to maximum intensity while also helping mask functional off-notes. And here, temporal methods like [time intensity](#), [temporal dominance](#), rank order of sensations and [temporal check-all-that-apply](#) get the job done, he said.

“The key intention is to create a prototype that mimics or improves upon the texture, flavor and basic taste of a full-sugar chocolate,” Dillman concluded. And if you’re looking for intentional indulgence, that’s the intention that counts. ■



Kimberly J. Decker is a Bay Area food writer who has worked in product development for the frozen sector and written about food, nutrition and the culinary arts. Reach her at kim@decker.net.



Sträva – CBD-infused coffees

Founders: Lindsey Sozio and Kevin Crowley

The story: Sozio said, “Crafting hemp-infused coffee is a delicate dance between two worlds. Our process is a master class in balance, designed to ensure the star of the show – the coffee – shines through, even at higher CBD potency levels.”

Why it’s a game changer: Sträva roasts its carefully sourced green coffee beans before infusing them with organic, U.S.-grown broad-spectrum hemp oil.

“We were uncompromising in our search for a clean, high-purity oil, conducting rigorous testing to ensure it was free from contaminants and met our strict standards,” Sozio stated. “It involved countless rounds of testing and tweaking to find the precise balance of coffee and CBD that would result in a smooth, delicious and effective product.”



Throne Sport Coffee – Coffee combined with performance-enhancing ingredients

Founder: Michael Fedele

The story: NFL star and lead Throne investor Patrick Mahomes told [ESPN](#), “I finally found a way [to drink black coffee], but I didn’t enjoy it. I was drinking it just for the functionality of it.”

Mahomes relied on coffee to stay awake during team meetings, until he partnered with beverage industry veteran Fedele to develop Throne Sport Coffee.

Why it’s a game changer: Throne’s proprietary functional formula is low in calories and sugar, with 10 g of protein, plus B vitamins and branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs). It’s also NSF Certified for Sport, aiding coaches and players in making easier decisions about what to drink.





Strive – Milk created with fermented whey protein

Founders: Dennis and Austen Cohlma

The story: Strive's products, including Chocolate Freemilk, are made with animal-free whey protein created through precision fermentation. This process uses natural microflora to ferment plants into protein containing all nine essential amino acids (EAAs), resulting in a dairy alternative with 50% less sugar and 25% more protein than traditional chocolate milk.

Why it's a game changer: Proteins produced through precision fermentation present unique challenges.

Dennis Cohlma said, "We knew for the finished product that it had to be great tasting with intelligent nutrition, and we had to achieve a stable product that did not separate. Understanding that this protein was beta-lactoglobulin (BLG) only, we knew that there would be challenges with heat stability and volatility created by the UHT [ultra-high temperature] treatment of the BLG protein."



Everyday Dose – Coffee with added superfoods and nootropics

Founder: Jack Savage

The story: Savage started taking Adderall – a prescription medication primarily used for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) – at 5 years old. When high blood pressure forced him to stop, he switched to coffee, but that came with energy crashes and stomach upset. That's when he started looking into functional mushrooms and collagen.

Why it's a game changer: The brand's Coffee+ line boasts a host of potential functional benefits, from [improved focus](#) and [reduced stress](#) to [immune support](#) and [hair health](#). It achieves this with lion's mane and chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) mushrooms, whose fruiting bodies are double-extracted for maximum impact.



Eat Gold Organics – Functional chocolate bars

Founder: Brandon Milbradt

The story: Milbradt emphasized, “I want my bars to be delicious, but I also want them to do something.”

The brand’s Be Happy bar uses adaptogen- and nootropic-infused 70% cacao to help elevate mood with tyrosine, a natural amino acid that [aids in the production](#) of dopamine, among other neurotransmitters.

Why it’s a game changer: The company makes everything in small batches, which allows for tighter control over production but also introduces slight variability, as the potency can shift with the harvest.

“Functional food should have a pulse,” Milbradt said. To ensure his products also have a soul, though, he added, “We’ve built a batch-controlled system from raw intake to final wrap. Every active ingredient comes in with a third-party CoA [certificate of analysis] verifying purity.” ■



read

TikTok, nostalgia, sustainability shape consumer preferences for food and beverage products

Younger consumers prioritize sustainability and transparency in ingredient sourcing. That was a major takeaway from a popular SupplySide session in Las Vegas.


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SupplySide Food & Beverage Journal leads CPG brands from ideation through manufacturing, supporting the development of clean label, natural and healthy food and beverage products. SupplySide Food & Beverage Journal provides in-depth data and analysis of the markets and is the source for the latest on ingredients, formulation, supply chain and regulatory issues affecting product innovation. As an official content provider for SupplySide, SupplySide Food & Beverage Journal connects ingredient buyers and suppliers with executives across the health and nutrition marketplace.

