

Synergy Flavours looks at emerging trends in Italy

Global innovator in flavourings, extracts and essences, Synergy Flavours predict future flavour profiles that are expected to see a huge amount of growth in the confectionery and bakery industry

Synergy Flavours is a leading global innovator in flavourings, extracts and essences and has extensive experience across the food and beverage industry, developing high quality, innovative taste solutions which help customers to stay one step ahead of the competition. Whether manufacturers seek flavour profiles to meet new flavour trends or require flavour solutions for healthier recipe formulation to give better mouthfeel, masking and taste, Synergy says it has the proven expertise, application knowledge, sensory science and passion to help.

Investing continuously in R&D and technical capabilities, the company's commitment to analytical and sensory innovation ensures it is always on hand to deliver the latest market insights and flavour breakthroughs. Combining a long heritage of flavour development with modern extraction technology, Synergy blends art and science to create an exceptional array of tastes.

Synergy's flavour creation and application capabilities span the globe – with commercial, manufacturing and technical support facilities in Ireland, the UK, the US, Mexico, Brazil,



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Indonesia and Thailand in addition to its site in Trieste, Italy. The company is part of the Carbery Group – a leading international manufacturer of speciality food ingredients, flavouring systems and award-winning cheese producer, owned by four Irish dairy co-operatives

What plans does Synergy have in place for growing its business from the Italian site?

Synergy acquired Synergy Flavours (Italy) S.p.A (formerly Janousek) in Trieste, Italy in 2018, as part of its long-term strategy to develop the Synergy Flavours international footprint and bring new expertise and products into the natural portfolio of the business.

They say their priority is to expand into new geographies within southern and eastern Europe with its specialist product ranges such as natural extracts and essences, specialist dairy flavours, 100+ years of vanilla extraction expertise and strong in-depth knowledge and competency in flavouring bakery, beverage, confection and dairy. The company has already

invested in and grown the team, adding new skills and new capacity to the site as required and says its intent is to continue that over the coming years. Longer term integration with Synergy's other businesses will aim to streamline processes and maximise combined strengths that comes with being supplied by a larger, better resourced international company.

Where has recent activity for Synergy Italy been focused?

At Synergy Flavours (Italy) they support flavour and natural ingredient manufacturing to service new and existing customers in Italy and the wider region. The beverage and bakery categories have been a particularly active area for the company and one in which they have a long tradition offering flavour expertise. Synergy says it continues its legacy of being one of the world's first suppliers of herbal extracts and natural flavourings and adapt its product offering to many diverse product applications in the aforementioned categories.

The health and wellness trend have been prominent in the bakery category both in Italy and further afield. Bakery manufacturers are continuing to focus on moving towards



cleaner labels, moving to natural flavourings and introducing provenance (particularly in Italian biscuit category). Low fat content and low sugar content are identified as the most important factors by Italian consumers when looking for healthy foods. To improve the image of baked goods (biscuits to croissant, Panettone to Pandoro) and boost consumption, Italian manufacturers continue to extend their offering to include healthier variants e.g. reduced sugar/fat, removal of palm oil, ingredients with added health benefits.

Progress in sugar reduction in indulgent categories globally has been slowed by concerns related to the impact of taste on the product. 76% of US cookie consumers ranked 'favourite flavour' as an important cookie attribute compared to just 17% for 'healthiness', indicating that consumers will not compromise taste for health. In Italy it remains a hot topic and presents a significant challenge for developers to maintain functional and flavour integrity of the product whilst managing cost.

More recently launches are offering lower sugar with additional benefits e.g. added fibre, fruits, high protein. Almost two in three Italian consumers would like to see more biscuits with

added health benefits, says a Mintel report in 2018, to counteract the guilt of consumption.

At Synergy, they aim to work closely with their customers during recipe reformulation to help bakery manufacturers to make substantial reductions in sugar and fat, support the move from natural identical to natural flavourings and manage the flavour complexity introduced by adding more fibres. By combining textural solutions with modern flavour technology, their solutions work to build back indulgence, rebalance flavour and improve sweetness while maintaining the overall consumer perception of the product.

Flavour variability of dairy ingredient supply remains a challenge for some confection and bakery manufacturers. Synergy's strong dairy heritage means they are well positioned to offer flavour solutions to counteract this challenge. They work with customers enriching butter taste in Italian and Eastern European biscuit recipes and delivering consistent, smooth, uniform dairy profile which manages the flavour variability exceptionally.

Where in the world will influence the trends in 2020?

Going beyond traditional flavours and exploring new flavour combinations and sophisticated ingredients has the potential to unlock exciting opportunities for the confection and bakery categories. Consumers are increasingly looking for products which can break the monotony and impart a little bit of fun into their day. In fact, 30% of UK consumers are interested in new flavours and 55% of German consumers would like to see more exotic ingredients in their sweet biscuits, says a Mintel report: Biscuits, cookies and crackers 2018. Mintel's 2020 big stories highlights the continued appetite for new flavours which is no surprise for a category as personal and indulgent as confectionery.





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Mediterranean regions such as Italy, Spain and France have traditionally been viewed as culinary hotbeds. There is a growing curiosity building amongst consumers around authentic regional recipes and ingredients. Some of the interesting flavours beginning to emerge include bergamot (the citrus fruit commonly found in earl grey tea), Gianduja (a combination of chocolate and hazelnut) and mascarpone. Classic gelato flavours such as pistachio, Malaga (rum and raisin) and Stratiacella (vanilla with chocolate flecks) would make an interesting addition to any sweet bakery product.

The flavours of tomorrow are most likely to be the flavours of yesterday. According to Mintel, 60% of consumers say they would be interested in buying discontinued brands

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from their childhood and there are plenty of opportunities to experiment with flavours around this trend too. A great example of this is the revival of Parma Violets – a popular flavour now in gin liqueurs but one that lends itself well to cupcakes and doughnuts. Another side to the retro trend is the growth in the ‘reworking’ of British dessert classics where familiar profiles such as banoffee, carrot cake and sticky toffee are given a twist by appearing in cookies, cakes and even vegan products!

Cooking with fire is a technique often associated only with summer and BBQs in the UK but it’s a trend that is starting to creep into launch windows and restaurant menus across the whole year. Sparked by the American BBQ revolution a couple of years back, cooked notes such as chargrilled, blackened and burnt are appearing in recipes as a way of adding an extra dimension to food. At Synergy Flavours, they have developed a range of authentic

‘cooked’ notes including embered, blackened and seared, a simple way to replicate the taste of a stone baked or wood fired bread.

Synergy have selected five flavours as part of their flavour forecast for 2021. Cherry blossom is expected to be a globally trending flavour whilst toasted sesame, mascarpone, chargrill and white tea are tipped for growth across Europe over the next year.

