

# The Best of '09

Supermarket Guru picks 2009 New Products Award winners

By Don Longo



**S**ixteen supplier companies in 14 product categories were recognized in Las Vegas at the 2009 NACS Show for bringing the best new products to the convenience industry over the past year.

The 13th annual *Convenience Store News* Best New Products Awards, judged by Supermarket Guru and NBC News' "Today Show" food trends editor Phil Lempert, rated submitted entries on the basis of taste, value, convenience, healthfulness, quality ingredients, preparation requirements, appearance and packaging.

Here's a list of this year's winners, along with Lempert's commentary on why they won.

**BEER: Hop Hound Amber Wheat, Anheuser-Busch.**

"This unfiltered amber beer had a hint of citrus, and a perfect balance of sweetness and hops. Terrific imagery of 'the hop hound' and packaging made it fun and really a stand out in an already overcrowded subcategory."

**PACKAGED SWEET SNACKS (TIE): Tiramisu-Solo Mio, Solo Italia.**

"I would go to Italy for this product! The taste and the

packaging are perfect — add that it contains no preservatives and is all natural, and there is little doubt this indulgent dessert will put a smile on many customers' faces."

**Big n' Fudgy Down Home Brownie, Prairie City Bakery.**

"The BEST prepackaged brownie I ever tasted! Not only is it moist and chocolaty, but the amount of chocolate chips made every bite worthwhile."

**OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS: Zig Zag Cigar Wraps,**

**National Tobacco.**

"Brilliant build on rolling your own cigarettes to rolling your own cigars. Easy to use and individually wrapped."

**PET FOOD: Friskies Party Mix Cat Snacks, Nestlé Purina Pet Care.**

"Why shouldn't cats enjoy a party as well? Seriously, taking the party mix concept to the pet food aisle not only expands the category, but the Friskies brand also makes it credible. Their 'beachfront' variety makes me wonder if the next big trend might be beach towels for cats!"

**SALTY SNACKS: Bigs Vlasic Dill Pickle Sunflower Seeds, Thanasi Foods.**

"Kids love the taste of pickles, but typically eating pickles on the run is messy! Combining healthful sunflower seeds and pickle rind is genius — and using the Vlasic brand (and ingredients) takes it even further."

**ALTERNATIVE SNACKS**

**(TIE): Peppered Cheese Jerky, Snack Patrol LLC.**

"The terrific combination of high-quality Wisconsin mozzarella and a blend of pepperoni, habanera and chipotle, satisfies both kids and adults in a unique size that is one-and-a-half times that of a traditional string cheese serving."

**Oh Yeah! Nutritional Shake, Oh Yeah!**

"Low in sugars, the taste of Oh Yeah! is exceptional and loaded with a well-balanced blend of nutrients. The smaller size is not only convenient, but for most people, the correct serving size with no waste."

**LIQUOR: New Amsterdam Straight Gin, New Amsterdam Spirits Co.**

"New Amsterdam produced an exceptional product and brought gin back in the game. Smooth and citrusy, this product could well do



Hop Hound Amber Wheat from Anheuser-Busch, with Nate Scuderi.



Tiramisu-Solo Mio from Solo Italia, with Tom Gellert.



Zig Zag Cigar Wraps from National Tobacco, with Larry Wexler and his team.



Friskies Party Mix Cat Snacks from Nestlé Purina, with Cindy McEntire.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE BEKICH II



## 2009 CSNEWS SUPERMARKET GURU BEST NEW PRODUCT AWARDS



Peppered Cheese Jerky from Snack Patrol, with Ross Segal.



New Amsterdam Straight Gin from New Amsterdam Spirits.



Mini Monster Chili Cheesedog Battered Taquito from Don Miguel Foods with Ron Mendoza and his team.



Vitaminwater10 from The Coca-Cola Co., with Tom Riggio.

for gin what Absolut did for vodka. Brilliant strategy to produce a domestic product and tie into the New York heritage and origins."

### **NON CARBONATED SOFT DRINKS:** Vitaminwater10, The Coca-Cola Co.

"With only 10 calories and naturally sweetened, the taste profile and street marketing muscle is among the best on the market."

### **EDIBLE GROCERY:** Heat & Eat Original Brown Rice Bowls, Lundberg Family Farms.

"Finally a convenient, tasty and nutritious product hits the c-stores! Offering rice is a perfect midafternoon snack that

can replace other more fattening, high-calorie or less nutrient-dense foods. The rice cooks perfectly in its own bowl and the whole grains are satisfying."

### **HBC:** One A Day Energy, Bayer HealthCare.

"Brilliant build on the existing trend of add-your-own flavor to bottled water and waters infused with vitamins. One A Day brand brings credibility and convenience to the concept, and may just be the one savior of the bottled water category!"

### **FOODSERVICE:** Mini Monster Chili Cheesedog Battered Taquito, Don Miguel Mexican Foods Inc.



5 Solstice from Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., with Kurt Laufer.

"Easy to cook, great tasting and unlike so many other pre-made Mexican foods, this one was flavorful and has a unique recipe of ingredients."

### **CANDY:** Skittles Crazy Cores, Mars Snackfood US.

"Skittles has always led the trends in flavor extensions, taking a page from other categories, its Crazy Cores."

### **GUM & MINTS:** 5 Solstice, Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co.

"5 Solstice's flavor is refreshing and a stand out. Appeals to wider audience, while many of the new gums recently introduced have been targeting their flavors to a younger demographic."

### **GM:** Sweet Sounds, iessentials.

"Great value and quality for the money. The idea of color coding the ear buds makes it an impulse buy vs. replacement for broken or lost originals." ■



Sweet Sounds color-coded earbuds from iessentials, with Joe Chmiola.



Oh Yeah! Nutritional Shake, with Jonathon Faye and Wes Strickland.



Skittles Crazy Cores from Mars Snackfood US, with Larry Lupo and Tammy Schroeder.



One A Day Energy from Bayer Healthcare, with Beth Seymour and Todd Marshall.



Big n' Fudgy Down Home Brownie from Prairie City Bakery, with Bill Skeens.