Host/Mixer Observatory/4: A more cosmopolitan and healthy taste

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The three words of taste, natural and technology are very important to Paolo Marchi, concept of Identità Golose, one of the key engagements in the world for award-winning chef and partners of HostMilano: “Innovation will be developed especially in the sense of combining natural flavours and taste. Innovative technologies will remain an important element, because they play an important role of enablers in this evolution. Creativity shall remain the key, in line with the philosophy of Identità Golose which puts people in the centre of the innovation and creation process, as well as dealing with creating recipes, developing formats and creating and using new technologies.”

A key role is played by the so-called “free form” products, namely, products without lactose or gluten. While the number of celiacs recognised by the Ministry of Health number just under 136 thousand, research by the AIC – Italian Celiac Association estimates that the market in Italy for gluten-free products is equal to 237 million euro per year, with growth of 6.4% in 2012. As much as 67.5% (161 million euro) is covered by the food distributed by the national health system, which celiacs can purchase in certain retail stores as well as in pharmacies.

Company ideas

Tiramisù is no longer out of reach for celiacs, for example. Bake Off Italia will feature a recipe submitted for gluten-free ladyfingers, layered with a creamy mascarpone filling, in the finest of traditions, as well as fresh cream and an unusual topping of wild strawberries. Molino Dallagiovanna G.R.V. was a pioneer in this market and today, it is introducing a number of specialty flours (including some without lactose) and special 100% natural flours, for which the important step of washing the grain was reintroduced to new applications in pastry.

The semi-processed foods segment is the front line in the evolution of taste. Another of the more interesting trends involves traditional flavours of local regions. The trend is being led by Elenka, a

Sicilian company operating in the raw ingredients segment. “We are referring to Nero Modicano, a registered trademark,” commented Rocco Niro, the Marketing Manager. “It is based on fine chocolate di Modica. The peculiarity of the Nero Modicano Elenka chocolate is the cold processing used which creates a granular consistency to the dark chocolate finished product. In the innovative process, we have married Nero Modicano chocolate with the traditional flavour of Elenka and Sicily, the storied Cassata cake. Therefore, the flavour of Cassata ice cream with Nero Modicano chocolate (processed as fillings and as coatings) as well as with the classic candied fruit of Sicilian cassata creates a brand new flavour. Here are two classics (chocolate and cassata) that become brand new.”

The segment has estimated revenue of approximately 400 million euro of which 55-60% is exported abroad. This export data is spread over 90 Italian production companies, small to medium-sized business focused predominantly on the Italian market. For some of the leading companies, export data can exceed 80%. Therefore, an average of 50 and 60% is reasonable.

One of the most internationalised of the sector is **Comprital**: “Comprital pursues its strategy of foreign development,” noted the Research and Development Manager **Fabrizio Osti**. “We are further reinforcing our presence in Asia and the Middle East, partly thanks to a dedicated export manager. As regards China, we are shoring up the staff in our offices and we are assessing the possibility of producing on site in the future. We are expanding in the western hemisphere, where we have begun to export to Canada and in the United States and, in the future, we will expand our presence in Central and South America. In this perspective, the presence of Host is extremely important for us: our participation to the edition 2013 has fully satisfied the expectations and we have developed a number of major new clients by contracts made in the exhibition. Thanks to the strong internationalisation of the event, which is expressed especially in the quality of the foreign companies participating, we are looking for a very positive response from Host 2015.”