

Introducing Five Aussie Food Trends: Inaugural Austrends 2009 Report Unveiled at Australia House

Submitted by: food&drink towers

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FOR AN E-COPY OF THE AUSTRENDS 2009 REPORT PLEASE EMAIL HELEN@FOODANDDRINKTOWERS.CO.UK

Free-From – Super-Premium – Real CSR – Enhanced Convenience For Convenience – Digestive Health

Austrade (Australian Trade Commission) has officially published its first top five trends report providing insight into how Aussie food and beverage producers are delivering innovation within key trends in the UK market. The report is successfully attracting media and industry attention and creating a much-needed buzz in the UK market during a difficult time for new product development and marketing.

'The Austrends 2009 Report' was officially unveiled at a media breakfast briefing at Australia House in London on February 12, 2009. The report was written to provide inspiration and spark debate surrounding the opportunities for both Australian and domestic food and drink producers in the UK market.

Diana Latchford from 'of wine and yabbies ltd' (www.ofwineandyabbies.com), the UK importer and distributor of three brands included in the report, says: "The Austrends 2009 media event was a tremendous success for 'of wine and yabbies' and our Australian suppliers. I received a fantastic response from several areas of the media with regards to all of our products. As an importer and distributor we found the event invaluable for the presentation and marketing of our products and potential future sales".

Kylie Hargreaves, Senior Trade Commissioner at Austrade, comments: "We were very pleasantly surprised by the number and quality of media visitors we received at the report launch.

"We were particularly pleased with the interest shown in the free-from ranges. While free-from ranges are essentially mature and mainstream in Australia, there is still good

growth opportunity in the UK for retailers who wish to position high quality, tasty free-from ranges side-by-side with the traditional favourites. But the real measure of the interest in Austrends will, of course, be in the amount of coverage the five trends get in the UK food media. Or to borrow from one of the featured clients, the proof is in the (macadamia and brandy) pudding."

Helen Lewis, author of the report and managing director of food&drink towers (www.foodanddrinktowers.com), which helped to organise the event, comments: "The UK food and drink sector may be going through a turbulent time, but innovative retailers, suppliers and producers are focusing on the better times ahead by developing a stronger understanding of evolving consumer needs and demands. The five trends identified in the 'Austrends 2009 Report' exemplify important new product development and marketing opportunities.

"Australian producers are in a strong position to translate their experience and knowledge, particularly in terms of premiumisation and free-from foods trends, into the UK sector. I hope that the

report provides inspiration for companies in a rapidly changing market.”

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Notes to editors:

**For an official electronic copy of 'The Austrends 2009 Report' please email Helen Lewis at helen@foodanddrinktowers.co.uk or Julianne Davis, Senior Business Development Manager at Austrade (Direct: +44 (0) 20 7632 0075 / Julianne.Davis@austrade.gov.au). The report is also available for download free-of-charge at www.foodanddrinktowers.com/press_article.php?id=1670 (you have to register at the website first – this is also free).

Julianne Davis can organise telephone interviews with Australian food and drink producers, samples, images and press information. Some of the producers featured in the report will be exhibiting at the IFE 2009 (March 15-18) – please get in touch with Julianne if you'd like any further information.

More about the report:

Five key food and drink trends have been identified that Austrade believes will continue to become increasingly important to the UK over the next 12 months, and which are already thriving in Australia.

Austrade commissioned food&drink towers (www.foodanddrinktowers.com) to conduct a mini online survey in January 2009 to capture qualitative and quantitative information and insight from a selection of Australian producers with a presence in the UK market and those looking to launch here shortly.

Each trend is analysed in this report incorporating quotes and results taken from the online survey of Australian producers. Examples of how Australian producers are meeting consumer demand (both in Australia and the UK) are provided for each trend, alongside analysis of the potential of each of the trends in the UK market.

Companies featured in the report and included in the event (goody bags were provided for the media and samples continue to be available upon request):

- www.3drops.com (olive oil, white wine, red wine)
- www.allseps.com.au (starch moulded jelly and grain mallow confectionery)
- www.annascuisina.com.au (fruit cake and pudding specialist)
- www.brollos.com.au (Western Rock lobsters)
- www.carmansfinefoods.com.au (muesli, muesli cereal bars)
- www.cheznuts.com.au (chestnut products)
- www.dlea.com.au (confectionery)
- www.energyproducts.com.au (health bars and macadamia nut products)
- www.kailisorganic.com (olive oil)
- www.kezs.com.au (gourmet crisp breads and biscuits – free-from)
- www.maggiebeer.com.au (vincotto, wine, jam and condiments)
- www.passionpasta.com.au (pasta including free-from)
- www.puddinglane.uk.com (handmade puddings including Christmas, chocolate and free-from)
- www.punchcoffee.com (coffee and coffee humidors)

- www.rochway.com.au (probiotic and nutraceutical products)
- www.seatonfire.com (chilli chocolate)
- www.snailsbonappetite.com.au (snails)
- www.southernaqua.com / www.cleanseastuna.com.au (sustainable tuna)
- www.tolivefor.com.au (olive oil)

Extracts from The 'Austrends 2009 Report':

Flavourful Free-From

The Australian free-from food and drink market is thriving with new product launches and interest, not only from people with food sensitivities, but also the mainstream market. There continues to be negative flavour and quality perceptions pervading the UK free-from market, which manufacturers are keen to shrug off. However, with a lack of support from retailers who seem reluctant to position free-from products alongside their traditional counterparts, it continues to be more of a niche trend here in the UK than it is in Australia.

Australian producers recognise the importance of maintaining the same (or superior) quality rationale for free-from products as is expected of mainstream goods. High quality ingredients is the most important factor influencing Australian consumers wishing to purchase free-from products, according to 71% of respondents to the Austrade online survey conducted for the 'Austrends 2009 Report'. This is followed by products that are free from artificial ingredients and the need for the product to be equally as flavourful as mainstream variants. Taste, ultimately is the most important purchase influencer for food and drink, regardless of whether it is produced for the mass-market or those with food sensitivities.

Super-Premium

Unsurprisingly, superior quality ingredients are perceived to be the most important purchase influencer for people paying more for a super-premium product (85% believe it to be 'very important'). The exclusivity of the ingredients can also be a factor, for example, The Punch Coffee Company (www.punchcoffee.com) in Australia uses high-altitude coffee beans, only of a specific size and quality, which are produced by small land-owner farms and batch-roasted to order on a small scale.

Real CSR: Less Talk More Action

Food miles and carbon footprints were hot topics in 2008 and will continue to dominate NPD, branding and marketing activities for many food and drink companies in 2009. However, the ethical debate has shown signs of maturation; demanding action by food and drink brand owners. Manufacturers and retailers will need to be more proactive from 2009 onwards by offering practical advice about how consumers can recycle, reduce food waste, minimise energy and water usage and generally be more environmentally-friendly via websites, marketing literature and public relations.

Enhanced Convenience For Convenience

Enhanced convenience food and drinks are designed to minimise preparation times while maintaining the expected high levels of quality, flavour and freshness. The Australian convenience market, including foodservice (cafes, bars, restaurants) and food/drink stores, is demonstrating high levels of innovation that mirror the key trends influencing the UK market. Quick and convenient products for the foodservice market that are proving popular in Australia include smoothies distributed as frozen packs that can be

de-frosted and mixed to create bespoke flavours at the point of sale. Also, pre-mixed gelato that simply requires the addition of water. Such products add value to the convenience sector without compromising on flavour, value for money or quality.

Digestive Health

Acceptance of the role of prebiotics for digestive health remains limited to ultra health-conscious consumers and is not yet prevalent in the mainstream market. Indeed, all of the respondents to the Austrade survey disagreed with the statement: "There is a good understanding of the role of prebiotics among consumers".

Probiotics, however, are developing a more positive consumer perception (in both the UK and Australia) thanks to marketing efforts from leading brands such as Yakult. One-third of respondents agreed that there is a good understanding of the role of probiotics among consumers. As a result, it is unsurprising to find that more than half (67%) 'strongly agree' that more must be done to educate consumers about the role of probiotics and prebiotics for digestive health.