

# Forward Thinking: Sweet on Vanilla

Vanilla has warmed its way into flavorists' and perfumers' palettes as a classic, yet on-trend ingredient

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Vanilla is a tried-and-true flavor and fragrance that connotes warmth and comfort. In flavor, it's most commonly used in ice cream and confections. In fragrance, it crosses categories including air care, fine fragrance and personal care. According to reports, the current worldwide annual demand for vanilla is 2,200–2,500 tons. The United States is the world's largest consumer of vanilla, followed by Europe, especially France. Reflecting its mass market appeal, Beverage Industry's 2012 New Product Development Survey stated that 44% of respondents reported that vanilla was among the top flavors used in 2011. Vanilla led the list of forecasted best-selling flavors for 2012, with 20% of respondents choosing the traditional option.

## We All Scream for Ice Cream

Of the companies participating in the Beverage Industry survey, 92% said vanilla is the most popular flavor among their consumers. Vanilla is a classic flavor and continues to be the foundation for new ice cream launches. *Breyers Blasts* added three new varieties that highlight vanilla as a base. *Breyers Golden Oreo Cookies & Cream* is made with *Golden Oreo* cookies, sweet cream and vanilla, while *Klondike Krunch* features Breyers creamy vanilla with chocolate-covered rice crisps. *Banana Split* is formulated with vanilla, chocolate chips, strawberry swirl and banana puree. Häagen-Dazs recently introduced *Raspberry & Vanilla Milk Chocolate* bars and earlier in the year, it unveiled a limited edition *Vanilla Bean Espresso* ice cream inspired by the Italian vanilla affogato dessert with what it calls "a twist of intense espresso swirled into creamy, rich vanilla ice cream."

C+M (Coffee and Milk), located at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and Chicago's Chi-Scream mobile artisan ice cream cookie sandwich company are quick-service newcomers highlighting the vanilla trend. C+M is an artisanal craft coffeehouse known for its signature milk sorbet crafted with Straus Family Creamery milk, organic sugar and Tahitian vanilla bean. The sorbet is frozen and used in *Milkwiches* and *Milk Handshakes*. Chi-Scream has two products containing vanilla: *vanilla bean shortbread with strawberry ice cream* and *molasses cookie with double vanilla ice cream*. Also worth noting, San Francisco's Crème Brulee Cart serves *classic vanilla bean* and the *Tupac* (vanilla with champagne cranberry sauce and candied pecans) crème brulee.



## It's Greek to Me

According to The Nielsen Company, "Greek yogurt, overall, has had one of the fastest growth spurts the food and beverage industry has seen in recent history. In each of the past three years, sales of Greek yogurt have boomed more than 100%."

Ice cream manufacturers are riding the coattails of the fast-growing success of Greek yogurt and are launching Greek frozen yogurt variants. Recent results from the International Ice Cream Association's survey stated that "52% [of respondents] said they are seeing increased demand for frozen yogurt." *Ben & Jerry's* launched four Greek frozen yogurts during this year's first quarter, one of which was *Blueberry Vanilla Graham*. *Blue Bunny Naturally* introduced frozen yogurt bars in *Blueberry & Vanilla Bean Swirl* and *Chocolate & Vanilla Bean Swirl* while Unilever extended its Popsicle brand with the launch of the Yosicle line. Four varieties of Yosicle pops feature vanilla and contain 10% nonfat yogurt: *Yosicle Torpedo! pops* are one pop layered with three flavors including *Purple Berry*, *Watermelon* and *Vanilla*; *Yosicle Layerz! pops* combine *Cotton Candy & Vanilla* and *Orange & Vanilla* flavors; *Yosicle Duos! pops* highlight a creamy vanilla core with a flavored ice shell in *Watermelon-Vanilla* and *Cotton Candy-Vanilla* or *Purple Berry-Vanilla* and *Cherry-Vanilla* varieties. In April, TCBY rolled out its first Greek frozen yogurt product in *Honey Vanilla* and followed in June with *Pomegranate* and *Blueberry* flavors. In October, as an extension of its successful ice cream flavor, it released *Salted Caramel* seasonal frozen yogurt made from "a French vanilla base, which contains eggs for added richness and a little salt," available until Jan. 8, 2013.

## Candy is Dandy, but Liquor is Quicker

Chocolate-flavored candies may dominate the candy aisle; however, vanilla flavors offer a popular sweet alternative. Recently, Hershey's released *Simple Pleasures* chocolates "made with 30% less fat compared to the average of the leading milk chocolates," which are available in *Milk Chocolate with Vanilla Crème*. Mars announced the launch of a limited-edition *Milky Way French Vanilla & Caramel Bar*, "which combines caramel, French vanilla-flavored nougat and milk chocolate," expected in February 2013. *Oh, Yes You Candy Heavenly Bites (Truffle Treats)* has five flavors including *Hazelnut Vanilla Chai*, which is available



in vegan and gluten-free options. Meanwhile, Kind Healthy Snacks added *Madagascar Vanilla Almond Nuts & Spices* bars and *Kind Healthy Grains Vanilla Blueberry Clusters with Flax Seeds* to its collection.

Candy isn't the only treat that's appealing to the vanilla palette. Flavored vodka inspired from confections is the newest craze in alcohol with an emphasis on vanilla characteristics. In 2010, Pinnacle released *Whipped Cream* vodka and then, in 2011, *Marshmallow* vodka. Later that year, Cupcake Vodka followed suit and introduced *Frosting* vanilla-flavored vodka and Smirnoff released *Fluffed Marshmallow* and *Whipped Cream* flavors. *UV Whipped* was introduced this summer and is described as having a "light, fluffy taste profile with hints of crème chantilly and vanilla." Stoli added *Salted Karamel* vodka, "the perfect balance of sweet and savory golden-brown caramel delicately enhanced with salt" to its lineup. Other noteworthy launches are *Glazed Donut* by 360 Vodka, which debuted on National Donut Day on June 1. Georgi Vodka's *Waffle* flavored beverage was released in honor of National Waffle Day on Aug. 24, 2012.

## Smelling Sweet

Vanilla has long been a darling of flavors. In fragrance, vanilla's traditional home was in specialty candles, such as those marketed by the Yankee Candle Company, when candles were a destination purchase. Contrary to fine fragrance directions traditionally trickling down into personal care, home fragrance and household products, vanilla and other gourmand fragrances have trickled up and heavily influenced these categories. In 1993, Coty launched *Vanilla Fields*, which was a blockbuster and won a 1994 FiFi award for Women's fragrance of the Year in the Mass Appeal category. This launch commercialized vanilla and its acceptance in fine fragrance and personal care categories.

Today, vanilla continues to be well-liked; numerous launches create scent stories around it while others use it as an ingredient to create warm fragrance base notes. Lavanila Laboratories launched in 2007 with three fragrances based on vanilla and healthy and natural ingredients. There are now eight fragrances and its newest scent is *Vanilla Summer*, a limited edition created with "fresh mango, juicy pineapple, creamy coconut milk and island sugar cane steeped in a base of warm Madagascar vanilla." The company has expanded the line and offers personal care and skin care products in addition to its candle product. In July, French niche brand Parfums M. Micallef launched *Art Collection Vanille* in four variants built on Bourbon vanilla from Madagascar. *Vanille Marine* is an aquatic fragrance described as "an unexpected scent that evokes vanilla covered with sea spray;" *Vanille Fleur* is a floral fragrance with rose;

*Vanille Orient* is oriental with sandalwood, vanilla flower, musk and amber; and *Vanille Cuir* features leather. Soivohle added *Tropic Lime Vanille* to its Studio Collection, which is categorized as a citrus gourmand and "set into a new bourbon vanilla base."

Based on the world and its unique natural ingredients, both The Body Shop and Kiehl's released new natural fragrance collections and each offers a vanilla perfume blend. The Body Shop *Scents of the World* offers *Madagascan Vanilla Flower* described as "off the coast of Africa, the fragrance of Madagascar Island vanilla travels on a warm, African breeze with amber, frangipani and vanilla" and Kiehl's *Aromatic Blends, Pure Scents from Around the World Vanilla & Cedarwood* is "one part feminine from the Uganda vanilla, smooth, smoky and just slightly sweet; one part masculine from the Virginia cedarwood, raw and earthy." In a similar vein, CB I Hate Perfume's newest addition is #205 7

*Billion Hearts*, a new smoky vanilla fragrance conceptually based on the fact there will soon be seven billion people on this planet and “the planet cannot provide enough vanilla to satisfy [their] hunger for it.” *7 Billion Hearts* is crafted from vanilla absolutes from Tahiti and Madagascar with smoky resinous notes.

Other recent fragrance introductions that use dominant vanilla accords include celebrity Selena Gomez’s debut scent, Bath & Body Works (BBW) *Sweet on Paris* and *Aquolina Pink Sugar Sparks*. Gomez’s scent is built on her three favorite smells: raspberry, vanilla and freesia, and she states in the marketing campaign that “vanilla just makes me feel cozy and yummy.” BBW’s *Sweet on Paris* fragrance collection is “an enticing medley of juicy blackberry, lemon meringue and creamy vanilla” and *Pink Sugar Sparks*’ notes include bergamot, raspberry, peach, green tea, cabbage rose, jasmine, freesia, vanilla orchid, vanilla, musk, patchouli and coffee bean.

## Home Sweet Home

Due to its popularity, vanilla is still a staple variant in air care and candle lines. Brands capitalize on the acceptance of vanilla and gourmand directions, and combine it with familiar and unfamiliar ingredients to add newness. Caramel is a popular vanilla interpretation for the fall season. Air Wick partnered with the National Park Foundation and designed three new scents: *Shenandoah Apple Harvest*, *Great Smoky Mountains Warm Spice & Twilight* and *Acadia Sweet Vanilla & Pumpkins* a “rich autumnal blend of sandalwood, vanilla and creamy pumpkin.” Renuzit launched *Tempting Indulgences*, a new line of dessert-inspired adjustable cones; *Crème Brulee* is described as “the

delectable aroma of creamy caramel.” White Barn’s recent fall scent is *Marshmallow Fireside*, which is described as “a warm blend of marshmallows, smoldering woods and creamy vanilla reminiscent of a cozy evening ‘round the bonfire.” Yankee Candle’s new fall scents include *Caramel Pecan Pie*, which is described as “a mouthwatering invitation ... serve up a buttery slice of gooey goodness with this scrumptious recipe of walnuts, pecans and creamy caramel” and *Woopie Pie!* described as “creamy vanilla frosting meets moist, rich, chocolate for a treat that is so real you may want to lick your fingers!” Method collaborated with designer Orla Kiely on a limited edition collection with four signature prints for its new exclusive fall fragrances: *Pear Ginger*, *Vanilla Chai*, *Bay Leaf* and *Primrose*, which are sold at Target. The *Vanilla Chai* blends vanilla sugar, allspice, cinnamon, clove and nutmeg.

## Sweet Smell of Success

Vanilla has warmed its way into both fragrances and flavors and will remain a staple in perfumers’ and flavorists’ palettes because of its continued market appeal. Like other tried-and-true flavors such as citrus and mint that I wrote about in 2011 and 2012, respectively, organic versions and new vanilla species will be explored. Expect to see traditional vanilla flavors and fragrances combined with familiar and unfamiliar ingredients and new interpretations that tweak vanilla characteristics.

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