

Forward Thinking: Sensory Sensations

New and interesting sensory concepts, products and restaurants continue to be introduced, such as flavor-enhanced products, mashups, edible nail polish, lifestyle destinations, scented spaces and immersive experiences.



Amy Marks-McGee, Trendincite LLC; amy@trendincite.com

The Five Senses

The fragrance and flavor industry is unique because products and services are continually being developed to engage our five senses, particularly our sense of smell and taste. Driven by technology, there is no end to innovation in multisensory products and services. New and interesting sensory concepts, products and restaurants continue to evolve, such as flavor-enhanced products, mashups, edible nail polish, lifestyle destinations, scented spaces and immersive experiences.

Flavor Enhanced

Enhancing flavors to give consumers custom experiences is an ongoing area of exploration. As consumers' palettes and tastes become more sophisticated, expectation for enhanced sensory experiences grow.

In 2014, the Aromafork^a was launched to create an "olfactive experience that will trick your mind and forever change the way you perceive flavors." In March this year, researchers from the University of Tokyo in Japan developed a flavor-enhancing fork, which uses electricity to send mild electric currents to the tongue to stimulate the taste of salt while eating. The rechargeable device can deliver three different levels of saltiness and is geared towards users on low-salt or salt-free diets. New York-based **The Right Cup**^b designed five flavored cups that trick your brain to think plain water is flavored. Currently offered in **Apple**, **Cola**, **Mixed Berry**, **Peach** and **Orange** flavors, the cups are infused with a natural aroma combined with a patented sweet taste technology to trick your brain to think plain water is flavored. It is available in five flavors, including **Mixed Berry** (pictured). Photo courtesy of Indiegogo, Inc.



The Right Cup is infused with a natural aroma combined with a patented sweet taste technology to trick your brain to think plain water is flavored. It is available in five flavors, including **Mixed Berry** (pictured). Photo courtesy of Indiegogo, Inc.

Mashups

Mashups and hybrid food and beverages have been going strong since 2012. Unexpected textures and flavor combinations combined with familiar ones add an element of surprise and play on multiple senses. From fast food and casual dining to fine dining, mashups commonly appear on restaurant menus, but now are trickling into consumer packaged goods.

Project 7 specialty gum carries unique flavors such as **Kettle Pop**, **Rainbow Ice** and **Wedding Cake**. The company recently launched the **Build-A-Flavor** range, which features six flavors that have 24 pieces of chewing gum divided among two flavors that can be combined to make a third flavor. For example, the **American Pie** variant comes with 12 pieces of **Apple Pie** and 12 pieces of **Vanilla Ice Cream** while **Half & Half** has 12 pieces of **Sweet Tea** and 12 pieces of **Front Porch Lemonade**.

With a "When snacks & dessert come together, your taste buds win," tagline, Planters' introduced the **Dessert-Inspired Mixes** range in four varieties: **Banana Sundae**, **Chocolate Peanut Butter Brownie**, **Oatmeal Raisin Cookie** and **Turtle Sundae**. Each blend combines different flavors and textures associated with a specific dessert. For example, the banana sundae is an assortment of honey roasted peanuts, chocolate candy-covered peanuts, vanilla yogurt covered peanuts, strawberry flavored yogurt-covered peanuts and banana chips.



Truly Spiked & Sparkling beverages combine carbonated water with alcohol and are available in **Colima Lime**, **Grapefruit & Pomelo** and **Pomegranate** flavors. Photo courtesy of Hard Seltzer Beverage Company, LLC.

Gourmet popcorn brand **Pop Art Snacks** debuted the **Mash-Ups** popcorn line, which is based on Chicago-style popcorn that blends cheese and caramel. **Honey Caramel & Feta Cheese** and **Chipotle Caramel & Cheddar Cheese** are the two current flavors.

^a <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-right-cup-trick-your-brain-drink-more-water#/>

^b <http://moleculargastronomy.com/molecular-shop/volatile-flavoring/aroma-r-evolution.html>

Associated with perfumery, ambergris, the precious and coveted ingredient from a sperm whale, is making its way into flavors. Infused with ambergris, Robe Town Brewery in Australia crafted the limited-edition **Moby Dick Ambergris Ale**^c for the GABS 2016 beer festival. The brewery has plans to create another small batch. Inspired by the growth of carbonated bottled water and the interest in low-calorie alcoholic beverages, **Truly Spiked & Sparkling** beverages introduced a line of spiked waters. With a 5% ABV, 100 calories and 2 grams of carbohydrates per serving, the company offers three flavors - **Colima Lime, Grapefruit & Pomelo** and **Pomegranate**.

Finger Licking...Nail Polish?

In 2009, Revlon launched scented nail polish in eight scented shades. Then in 2013, Revlon repackaged and rebranded the line with a catchier moniker, **Parfumerie**, and offered 24 scented shades, like **Orange Blossom** and **Powder Puff**. This year, nail polish is getting a makeover and instead of being scented, it is edible. As part of a KFC's (Kentucky Fried Chicken) Ogilvy & Mather marketing campaign in Hong Kong, the fast food restaurant launched two edible nail polishes. KFC worked with McCormick and Company, the spice manufacturer that supplies the spice blends for their signature fried chicken, to make sure the tastes were accurate. Available in two shades and sourced from natural ingredients, the nude color was **Original Flavor** while the orange was **Hot & Spicy**. Consumers were encouraged to apply as nail polish and then lick their nails, making them "Finger Lickin' Good."



Kid Licks nail polishes are vegan, non-GMO and made from organic fruits, vegetables and plants. Photo courtesy of Kid Licks.

A similar and unique product for children is **Kid Licks** organic and edible nail polishes created by husband and wife, Audrey Amara and Josh Kroot. The couple recognized that their children put their fingers in their mouth and tried to eat nail polish, which was not safe. Kid Licks' nail polishes are vegan, non-GMO and made from organic fruits, vegetables and plants. Currently the nail polishes are offered in three edible formulas: **Barley Grass Green, Beet Red** and **Sour Carrot Orange** and can be eaten or removed with water.

Fashion Forward

Fashion brands are enhancing the in-store shopping experience by adding food and beverages. For example, **Selfridges**

in London recently debuted the **Body Studio**, which the retailer has self-described as an in-store department that focuses on all things body including lingerie, nightwear, hosiery, swimwear, sportswear and loungewear. In addition to selling clothes, Selfridges offers an experiential program including **Psycle**, a high-intensity studio cycling initiative, **Yung Club**, a multi-sensory, immersive yoga experience and the **Hemsley + Hemsley café** that serves nutritious options, snacks, organic cocktails and biodynamic wines.

Last year, Brooklyn lifestyle brand Kith, opened **Kith Treats**, a cereal and ice cream bar located inside the retailer's flagship store. Offering over 20 different cereals and assorted toppings with four milk choices, customers can customize their creations. Known as a sneaker destination, the cereals are served with a bowl, spoon, and Kith-branded milk in a custom cereal box set that mimics a sneaker box.

Glossier and **Morgenstern's Finest Ice Cream** partnered for the launch of Glossier's three flavored **Balm DotComs** in May. Morgenstern's created **Cherry, Mint** and **Rose** special-edition ice cream flavors to match the lip balms and the first 20 people who tried any one of the ice cream flavors received a free tube of lip balm. Kanye West, an avid ice cream eater, inspired **First We Feast** and **Morgenstern's** partnership to create a limited edition line of ice cream in honor of West's birthday last year. Following the partnership's success, in June, the Kanye Ice Cream Week Season 2 limited-edition menu featured the infamous **I Am a God Ice Cream Croissantwich**, and offered 11 new items such as **Bound 2 Banana Split** and **You Left Your Fridge Open Ice Cream Sandwich**.

MAC Cosmetics' **Tendertalk Lip Balm**, which launched in June, is an interesting new product. Reminiscent of mood rings and color changing lipsticks from the '80s, Tendertalk Lip Balm is available in five colors and the tints are formulated to change color according to your skin chemistry.

Human Connection

Consumers crave human connection and experiences to enrich their lives, particularly millennials and younger demographics. Storytelling is a trendy marketing buzzword and brands and services are exploring ways to capture and engage their consumers through this technique. To connect with consumers, restaurants, gyms and other services are creating immersive and transformative experiences.

Riding the health and wellness trend coattails, the **Burger King** in Helsinki, Finland, designed two saunas for guests to relax while they ate their fast food meals. The 15-person sauna was designed for parties while the 10-person sauna was designed for more private relaxation. The saunas are decorated in the brand's colors and guests use branded towels and robes while servers come to take food orders and deliver it inside the sauna. In London, **Bunyadi**^d, which means "fundamental, base, natural," is the world's first naked pop-up restaurant, which opened in June. The 42-seat restaurant is split into two-sections, "naked and pure" and "non naked" and diners sit on tree stumps and wooden furniture. The menu features Stone Age-style meats cooked on a wood fire and served in handmade clay tableware with edible cutlery. Seats are ticket-based on a first come, first serve basis. As of June 7, 2016 there were 42,836 people waiting.

^c<https://robetownbrewery.com/products/moby-dick-ambergris-ale-gabs-festival-beer-2016%E2%99%A0/>

^d<http://thebunyadi.com/home.php>

In addition to smell and taste, the connection with sound is a factor in how enjoyable food is. According to Public Radio International's February 6, 2016 "How music can affect your sense of taste" article, "different sounds, or even different sound levels, have different ways of enhancing or detracting from taste experiences."^e Intrigued with food and music, New York chef, Adriano Ricco, and record producer/DJ, Eric Reithler-Barros, have teamed up to create **Edible Audio Works.**^f The duo crafts thematic, experimental pop-up dining concepts that explore and connect the link between taste and sound.

In the dating scene, the newest buzz is "**Smell Dating,**" a New York matchmaking service that matches clients by olfactory scents. Customers wear a T-shirt for three days straight without bathing and then a swatch is cut and sent to potential matches. Potential candidates smell 10 dirty T-shirt swatches to determine if they like the smell of a person and "a match will be made if one client likes the scent of another and the olfactory attraction is mutual." Similarly across the pond, Bompas & Parr created the "**Romancing the Armpit #2**" event on May 26. Self-dubbed as Armpit Sniffing speed dating night, participants smelled each other's armpits using nosing cones and then graded their reactions with the hopes of finding their match.^g

On the opposite side of the spectrum, for those that are concerned with smelly socks from foot odor, there is **Corrymoor Mohair Socks.** Accidental entrepreneurs, Steve and Jenny Whitley, own an angora goat farm in East Devon, U.K., as well as the Corrymoor knitwear company. The couple's mohair socks made from the fleece of angora kid goats are scent-free and can be worn multiple times without washing. Originally the couple marketed the socks for comfort and durability, but after being informed by customers that the socks did not smell after multiple wears and no washes, they are now marketed to be worn "day after day, week after week in extreme conditions and without any stench or discomfort."

Scented Spaces

Scented spaces are a common method used to create sensory and memorable experiences. The newest activity can be seen in fashion and entertainment.

Fragrance brand Byredo and eyewear brand Oliver Peoples have collaborated to create the limited edition **Oliver Peoples and Byredo^h** collection that "explores the intersection between sight and scent." Master perfumer Ben Gorham translated his perception of the sights of Los Angeles through different colored lenses into various smells. Oliver Peoples crafted three unisex, acetate sunglasses with three different photochromic lens colors, including **Indigo, Champagne** and **Green** that are correlated with Byredo's custom blended aromas.

Participating in the Clerkenwell Design Week (CDW) in the U.K. in May, design practice Hassell partnered with Scandinavian brand HAG to engineer the **Sensoriumⁱ**, a structure that stimulated all five senses and was "an immersive journey

through an urban pleasure garden." The InterContinental New York Barclay hotel reopened in May after a 20-month renovation and the hotel features a custom olfactory blend aptly named "**The Barclay**," which is composed of green, metallic and leather notes, juniper berry, elemi, ylang ylang and heliotrope. **Cyrano** by Vapor Communications is the latest digital air care technology. In conjunction with the oNotes app, the digital scent speaker and mood modification platform can remotely play "mood medleys" and emit predesigned or customized scents, which can be coupled with music and video.

According to an article in The Hollywood Reporter^k, ArcLight Cinemas Theater in Hollywood, California, is experimenting with bringing "smell-o-vision" back to the big screen. As part of the Turner Classic Movies Classic Film Festival, the theater showed the 1960 movie **Scent of Mystery** and gave attendees numbered vials and Smell-O-Vision paper fans to have an olfactory experience. Expected in 2018, the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California is adding a 300-seat immersive theater with a high-definition projection system to simulate seascapes and coastal environments and wired seats with simulated vibrations, fog, wind gusts and scents.

The Future of Virtual F&F

Technology is advancing at warp speed and virtual reality once dedicated to gaming is making its way into mainstream consumer packaged goods and services. Through technology, instead of being passive, consumers can actively participate in an experience.

As virtual, immersive experiences gain momentum in consumer products and services, Trendincite foresees opportunities for brands and services to incorporate fragrances and flavors, creating the next generation of interactive experiences. Scents and flavors will add a new dimension to users' experiences; it will no longer just be visual and audio.

Molton Brown installed a new digital "**Magic Mirror**" in its flagship store on London's Regent Street and it will be toured across 18 of the brand's U.K. stores in 2016. Designed to give consumers a multisensory experience and learn about the brand's scents, the mirror showed their reflection with exotic location animations and sound effects. Consumers were given a souvenir clip and a free 30mL sample of their selected scent. This could be an opportunity for the fragrance industry to incorporate scent during the user's experience and make it feel more authentic.

Described as "immersive fitness," **Les Mills The Trip^l** and **IMAXShift** are high-tech spin classes, which combine digitally created music and videos that are projected on a cinema-size screen while a live instructor teaches a spin class to "transport you into virtual worlds" during the workout. For those that prefer relaxation, Crunch gyms introduced an **AntiGravity Cocooning** yoga class. Hammocks are used for resistance and support for 45 minutes while the last 15 minutes are allotted for a quick micro nap where the lights are dimmed. Virtual technology allows the exploration of fantasy worlds, such as outer space, and marrying scent with gym experiences could

^e <http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-02-06/how-music-can-affect-your-sense-taste>

^f <http://edibleaudioworks.com/about/>

^g <http://www.alcoholicarchitecture.com/#events/qr5ss>

^h <http://oliverpeoples.com/branded/oliver-peoples-x-byredo/>

ⁱ <http://www.sensoriumcdw.com/about-1>

^j <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/vapor-communications-launches-cyrano-a-digital-scent-speaker-and-mood-modification-platform-300258033.html>

^k <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/tcm-fest-smell-o-vision-889103>

^l <http://www.lesmills.com/us/immersive-fitness/>



Les Mills The Trip's immersive cycling workout combines music, video and exercise that "wraps around your senses." Photo courtesy of Les Mills International, Ltd.

be an opportunity to heighten consumers' experiences during their workouts.

For artists, Google unveiled the **Tilt Brush** and app, which when worn with a connected HTC Vive headset, a user can paint life-sized, three dimensional visuals with fantasy materials such as fire, snow and stars. With unlimited possibilities, this virtual reality device has potential to revolutionize the design industry including architecture and fashion. Imagine an artist painting with fire and having the smell of fire emitted; or a designer creating an installation and painting a lush garden landscape with the smell of individual fresh flowers. Integrating fragrance into

virtual reality seems to be a logical progression and this could be an opportunity for fragrance and flavor suppliers to experiment with scents and technology.

Immersive experiences are also emerging in flavors. Last summer, Bompas & Parr launched **Alcoholic Architecture^m** in the U.K., featuring a walk-in cloud of breathable cocktail.ⁿ The installation is described as "an alcoholic weather system for your tongue where meteorology and mixology collide."

Conclusion

To differentiate from the growing number of flavor and fragrance products, brands and services are focusing on creating multisensory experiences by creating multifaceted products. Through innovative technology, consumers are able to experience, smell, and/or taste products. Flavor enhanced products, mashups and edible nail polish are a few recent examples of how consumers are being engaged. Lifestyle destinations, scented spaces and immersive, transformative experiences enable consumers to create personal, emotional relationships with brands. The addition of scent and flavor technology that is emitted in the environment is foreseeable as an extra sensory element and the next generation of immersive experiences. Expect consumers' desire for personal connections and life enrichment in their products to continue growing, while brands and services meet these demands and deliver unique experiences that address all five senses fueled by technology. Fragrance and flavor will continue to play an influential role in capturing consumers' attention and creating personal and memorable connections through innovative product development.

^m <http://www.alcoholicarchitecture.com/>

ⁿ <http://bompasandparr.com/projects/view/alcoholic-architecture1/>

To purchase a copy of this article or others,
visit www.PerfumerFlavorist.com/magazine. 