



GIVAUDAN'S CHEFSCOUNCIL™ DELIVERS NEW INSIGHTS INTO UMAMI AND KOKUMI TO DRIVE FOOD PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

World renowned chefs join Givaudan for culinary inspiration and discovery in Hong Kong

Düßeldorf, 1 November 2010 – Givaudan's ChefsCouncil™ 2010 recently convened in Hong Kong in a global, culinary exploration of umami and kokumi to feed into its 'chef to shelf' programme of food product development for customers.

The three-day event was designed around developing a deeper understanding of umami and kokumi elements in haute cuisine and how these translate into flavours principally for chicken and beef in a variety of foodservice concepts, snacks and ready meals. Whilst the terms umami and kokumi* are of Japanese origin, Givaudan wanted to explore how these tastes are presented in cuisines from around the world.

The ChefsCouncil™ is an ongoing collaboration between Michelin-starred international chefs and Givaudan's own chefs, flavourists and product marketing teams. It is the third in a series of biennial global culinary events which began in Napa Valley, California in 2006 and was followed by the 2008 event in Barcelona.

In the build-up to the event, teams of Givaudan's chefs, flavourists and marketers spent several months working with the guest chefs designing relevant menu items and applying their expertise in a collaborative effort to demonstrate fresh ideas and translate the world of fine-dining into customer-relevant food product concepts ready for commercialisation.

The world-renowned chefs including Alex Atala (Brazil), Jordi Roca (Spain), Paul Virant (USA) and Alvin Leung (Hong Kong) brought ideas and insights from fine-dining techniques and recipes to life through cooking demonstrations followed by tasting and analysis of dishes by Givaudan's regional teams – from a base-line control samples to those with added umami and then kokumi creations. The sampled dishes included: different cuts of cooked beef and processed meats to smoked vegetables, pasta and noodle recipes to bouillons and snacks.

"Consumers are increasingly demanding natural, delicious, balanced and authentic flavours in their foods and we are helping our customers to create great-tasting, eating experiences," explains Michael Peters, director of global flavour creation technology. The ChefsCouncil™ programme is expected to deliver new menu item ideas for foodservice, creative inspiration and guidance for internal chefs and flavourists and new consumer-relevant recipe concepts for customers.

The insights gained will drive better knowledge-sharing between regions, ingredient development for Givaudan's TasteSolutions™ programme and R&D into health & wellness. This will include: new business development opportunities around chicken, beef, processed meats, vegetables, cheese and dairy and provide a starting point for a palette of new, natural ingredients and an expansion of Givaudan's umami flavour portfolio.

"ChefsCouncil™ Hong Kong is a staging post on our ongoing journey of discovery," says Laith Wahbi, global product manager, savoury.

Umami is a well-defined concept and through key ingredients is used to create a delicious taste in soups, snacks and processed meats. The chefs' insights into kokumi are a recognition that taste goes beyond umami and that many ingredients contribute to the overall authentic taste sensation.

This led the Givaudan team to identify kokumi characteristics in dishes and cooking techniques from around the world that will ultimately help to drive flavour creation.

“The dishes presented by the chefs at the ChefsCouncil have opened new avenues in our understanding of kokumi, how it differs from umami and demonstrated that while this taste sensation was inherent to Asian foods it can be found in cuisines from around the world,” says Matthew Walter, head of culinary flavour creation, EAME.

“Umami and kokumi are still closely associated with Japanese cuisine although umami already has a rich cultural background that has been in Chinese and European cuisine for centuries through fish oil, meats and cheeses, but these foods have never been defined and specifically analysed – until recently,” he adds.

On the final day of the event, Givaudan's programme looked at chefs' interpretations of specific trends in haute cuisine and their translation for commercialisation in chicken and beef flavoured food products.

Inspiration from the ChefsCouncil™ and FlavourVision™ will help to set a new direction for flavour innovation and taste research at Givaudan and in the food industry. “It is in the dynamic exchanges of culinary and flavour knowledge that we find relevant creativity and fresh ideas for our customers' products,” adds Laith Wahbi.

Notes to editors:

*Kokumi is a term first created by Ajinomoto, Japan from a combination of the words: 'koku' (rich) and 'mi' (taste).

Givaudan Flavours is a trusted partner to the world's leading food and beverage companies, combining its global expertise in sensory understanding and analysis and consumer-led innovation in support of unique product applications and new market opportunities. From concept to store shelves and quick serve restaurants, Givaudan works with food and beverage manufacturers to develop flavours and tastes for market leading products across five continents.

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