

TAKING A BITE OUT OF THE **BIG APPLE**

Local foodies sample, dine and nosh in the city that never sleeps.

CHAMPAGNE WISHES AND TRUFFLE DREAMS. That was the theme of our long weekend in New York City. We spent two days at the Javitz Center at the Fancy Food Show, tasting many of the 140,000 products representing 88 countries. We stayed at the luxurious New York Palace Hotel and then on our last day, gathered some of the best food on the Lower East Side. It doesn't get much better than that, folks.

Sponsored by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, the show gives anyone with a dream, a product and some dollars for a booth, the opportunity to attract the attention of major distributors or supermarkets. Some go home empty-handed, some products wind up on the shelves of chain stores and some win the grand prize—a mention on Oprah.

Consider **Bacon Salt** (baconsalt.com), the buzz of the show for the past two years.

Three guys had one or two too many beers at their local pub, when they decided that

everything should taste like bacon. Seriously, even vegetarians salivate at the smell of frying bacon, right? The guys needed \$5,000 in start-up money. As it happened, one of their kids won just that much on *America's Funniest Home Videos*. Shazaam! It's now one of Oprah's favorite things and if it's not on a shelf near you, wait a minute. It's fabulous and it has a hook: no calories, no fat and it's Kosher because it's made from soy.

Every year a few ingredients seem to find their way into seemingly impossible pairings. Last year it was chocolate with pop rocks. This was the year of the truffle. Many people think truffles taste like dirt. If they do, give me a spoon and let me loose in my backyard.

Gourmet Attitude (laboutiquedelatruffe.com), a truffle importer, has a line of products that include among other things, **truffle honey** (4.23 oz/\$19). It's a strange combo but oddly compelling. I haven't figured out what to do with it yet but for now, I'm eating it out of the jar with a spoon. They also make **white truffle oil** (3.38 oz/\$21); **truffle carpaccio**, slices of black truffles in olive oil (2.82 oz/\$35), and a **white truffle cream** (2.28 oz/\$27). Just add a touch of butter and you have a very impressive—yes, I slaved for hours—pasta sauce.

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