

# LANE FOOD & BEVERAGE BEAT 2013



It's a new year, and at LANE, that means digesting recent trends in food and beverage while determining where the industry's headed. I grilled half a dozen influencers for their opinions about the coming year, where they find inspiration and what gets them salivating.

If you want to render additional ideas about what's ahead for our country's food and beverage scene, I'd love to hear about them. Shoot me a note at [kristen@lanepr.com](mailto:kristen@lanepr.com).

Cheers!

**Kristen Siefkin**  
Vice President and National Product Leader, Food & Beverage  
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## **BRIAN BOYLE** The Banker

Can't wait to eat at **Naf Naf**, a northern Mediterranean chain.

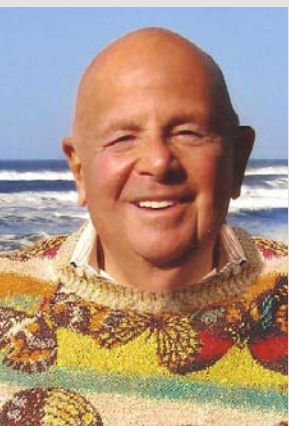
Thinks the next big buzzword in food/beverage will be **non-GMO**.

*Brian Boyle is a managing director at D.A. Davidson & Co. and oversees the investment banking division's food and beverage practice. He provides a full range of advisory and execution services in the areas of mergers and acquisitions, public and private equity offerings, senior and subordinated debt financings, financial restructurings and fairness opinions.*

## **Boomers and Millennials Challenge Brands and Retailers**

Consumers across the board—including Boomers and Millennials—are increasingly focused on eating healthier, and food producers and retailers are adjusting their product offerings to address evolving preferences. Brian notes that in the bread category, for instance, “healthier options have emerged containing whole grain and purer ingredients with fewer additives.” He believes that producers across all categories will continue to introduce new, better-for-you products to meet demand.

Brian also thinks consumers are “ravenous for new tastes,” and this hunger for something different will bring about rapid growth in the ethnic foods category. “Changing demographics will affect this trend,” says Brian. “Currently there is a mismatch between what retailers offer and the shifting population. Indian food is a good example.”



## **GERRY FRANK** The Columnist

Can't stop eating **good barbecue**.

Can't wait to try **Quartet in Portland, Ore.**, slated to open in an elegant space vacated with the closure of Lucier in 2008.

*Gerry Frank is known for his Gerry Frank's Picks column in the Oregonian, appearances on local broadcast news and lifestyle programs, and authoring the best-selling guidebook, Where to Find It, Buy It, Eat It in New York.*

## **On the Road Again**

America is the ultimate melting pot, and the variety of regional foods and influences translates into a culinary cornucopia. According to Gerry, San Diego, Calif., will emerge as an attractive culinary destination, particularly due to Mexico's proximity and influence on the area's cuisine.

I asked Gerry about what he thought travelers could expect from their hotel dining rooms in the coming year, and it appears that trends will mirror those developing in the greater restaurant industry. Consumers and proprietors are wary of economic conditions and continue to mind their budgets. Hotels have introduced popular-priced menus, and Gerry believes that this trend should continue. Smaller portions will also be popular, both to contain costs and to control calories in a more health-conscious environment.



## **SALLY SWIFT** The Producer

Thinks the next big buzzword will be **Street Food** – from Singapore, Israel, Mexico, everywhere!

Can't go one day without reading **The Improvised Life blog** by Sally Schneider; it's an incredible mix of food, art, design and philosophy.

*Sally Swift is the managing producer and co-creator of public radio's award-winning food program The Splendid Table. She is co-author of The Splendid Table's How To Eat Supper and How To Eat Weekends and has written for various national publications.*

## **Enough Already**

Sally has some strong opinions about food and beverage trends that have played out. Over-the-top, innovative interpretations of cocktails are just one of them. She says, “When bacon started showing up in them, you lost me.” Also, although Greek yogurt has captured many fans for its high protein, low fat content, it can't count Sally among them, as she can't abide the flavor.

## **Seeding Better Health**

Natural, organic, sustainable, whole grains, gluten-free are just some of the recent buzzwords in nutrition. I asked Sally what she foresees next, and her answer: Chia seeds. “Chia seeds are taking over and showing up in drinks, cereal and baked goods. In fact, at my local Washington, D.C., co-op they are back-ordered six months,” says Sally. “Sounds like a trend!”





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## **SAM GUGINO** **The Editor & Oenophile**

Can't wait to eat at **Sbraga** in Philadelphia and **Empellon Taqueria** in New York.

Can't go one day without reading **Mark Bittman's blog**.

*Sam Gugino is a contributing editor at Wine Spectator magazine and writes a food and wine blog, Samcooks.com. A graduate of The Restaurant School in Philadelphia, Sam includes restaurateur, critic and author among his culinary credentials.*

### **What's Emerging**

According to Sam, Americans are looking for new frontiers in cuisine and in wine. Portugal is a natural choice: its wines have traditionally been good values and their quality continues to improve. On the domestic front, the New York Finger Lakes region and Washington's Columbia Valley AVA are emerging as favorites. "Americans are continuing to recognize the versatility of Riesling, and both of these regions do an excellent job with this grape."

On the flip side, our thirst for New Zealand wines may have been sated, as the country's Sauvignon Blanc is everywhere and its Pinot Noir is still shy of its potential. The Loire Valley also may need some time to adjust to climate change, as hotter, longer summers aren't doing its white wines any favors.

### **Bars and Buzzwords**

At bars, tropical flavors in drinks should continue their popularity. Sam also shares, "I see Americans going for cleaner, fresher flavors, especially citrus in more variations, such as eju mandarins and finger limes." Plus, be on the lookout for "flavored ice" as one of the next big buzzwords in food and beverage.



## **ALEX ONG** **The Chef**

Can't wait to eat at **Alvin Leung's Bo London**.

Can't go one day without reading **SF Chronicle's Inside Scoop** webpage.

*Chef Alexander Ong is at the helm of San Francisco's Betelnut. A vibrant culinary history – traversing the globe from Malaysia to Bermuda to Atlanta to Tahoe to the Bay Area – contributes to unending creativity that makes Betelnut one of the region's favorites.*

### **Far-eastern Influences Prevail**

I asked Alex about which part of the world would have the greatest influence on chefs in 2013. He thinks that American chefs will look to Asia for inspiration. In recent years, Asian cuisines have earned raves for their unique flavors and preparations. Curiosity is going to get the better of many chefs, who will seek out firsthand experiences of the regions, food and culture.

### **On-premise Dining: Quick, Healthy, Focused**

With the increased interest in Asia, noodles are going to be big in 2013. Noodle bar concepts will mimic the real things in Asia. "Concepts will go even more casual and affordable," says Alex, with grab-and-go locations favored over full-service versions. Restaurants will highlight regional differences by offering specific types and styles of noodles, such as from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Plus, America's growing wellness concerns will be addressed with smaller portion sizes and the promotion of healthy, wholesome features, such as zip code-specific products that highlight microregional producers.



## **MOLLY O'NEILL** **The Writer**

Can't stop eating, baking with and cooking with **chili chocolate**

Thinks the next big buzzword will merge environmental and human rights consciousness with "**sustainably-sourced**"

*Molly O'Neill is the author of four cookbooks and a former reporter and food columnist for The New York Times and its Sunday magazine, respectively. Through cooknscibble.com, Molly trains and mentors food bloggers, writers and authors.*

### **Industry Challenges Present Opportunity**

One of the largest issues facing the food industry is water shortages. This factor will impact the cattle industry in particular, and prices of beef could very well double. As a result, Molly thinks we'll see that alternative proteins will gain ground, such as chicken, turkey, lamb and pork. Side dishes and vegetables will also receive continued emphasis.

### **Consumers Tuned in to Health**

Health and wellness concerns continue to be on the minds of many Americans. "I think we'll see increased awareness of smaller portion sizes, particularly in entrees," says Molly. Gluten-free has also gained greater prominence in recent years, and Molly expects that it will continue to be an influential category.



With offices in the culinary hubs of New York and Portland, Ore., LANE is an experienced digital marketing, public relations and investor relations agency that knows how to magnify messages and elevate brands. With more than 20 years of experience in the food and beverage industry, LANE tracks trends and monitors consumer sentiments from coast to coast. With insights garnered from firsthand experience as well as from media, influencer and consumer circles, LANE makes creative strategies bigger than life, using customized, multifaceted campaigns that connect across social and digital media, traditional media, stores and restaurants, and community events.

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