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### Attendance at World Tea Expo Breaks Record

APRIL 04, 2006 -- More than 200 exhibitors representing more than 30 countries covered 22,000 square feet at the World Tea Expo held at the Las Vegas Hilton March 27-29, 2006. The Expo has always served as a catalyst for the fast-growing tea industry and this year, the Expo's impressive growth was an indicator that the market for tea is stronger than ever -- over 4,122 attendees were on hand to discover all things tea.

"The record attendance we experienced is evidence of the exponential growth the industry is experiencing," explained George Jage, World Tea Expo founder and president.

Highlights from this year included the nation's first-ever Tea Auction, in which teashop owners and tea connoisseurs were able to purchase 5- and 10-kilogram lots of one-of-a-kind premium teas from the Nilgiri region in India; the "Chado Chef" Cooking with Tea Demonstrations featuring top chefs Rick Mooner and Kerry Simon; authentic Chinese and Japanese tea ceremonies; a keynote address from founder, CEO and president of Jones Soda Co. Peter van Stolk; and a series of educational seminars.

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### Consumer Prices Rise, Stock Market Flounders With Inflation Speculation

MAY 19, 2006 -- Prices paid by U.S. consumers rose more than forecast in April, rekindling inflation concerns that may spur the Federal Reserve to spawn more increases in the interest rate. Government reports released Wednesday led to a stock market tumble.

### Furitechnics USA Inc. Hires Morgan and Sampson for Key Markets

MAY 19, 2006 -- Furitechnics USA Inc., distributors of professional knives, sharpeners and cooks' tools, announced the signing of manufacturer representative firm Morgan and Sampson USA for the West and East Coast regions.

### J.C. Penney Shifts Focus from Catalog to Online

MAY 19, 2006 -- A J.C. Penney senior executive told attendees at last week's catalog-focused ACCM 2006 show in Chicago that J.C. Penney was lowering catalog circulation to focus more on sales at www.jcp.com.

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*The Gourmet Retailer's* editors were also on hand to scour the aisles for the latest trends in tea. Here's a rundown of what we found:

### Ready-to-Drink

Tea companies are remarketing their brands to keep up with our busy, drive-through society. As the desire for "healthy on-the-go" foods and beverages continues to grow, the market for RTD teas is also expected to benefit from this trend. Companies like **Adagio** showed their Anteadote Bottled Teas.

Available in four varieties: Green, Black, White and Jasmine, they are pure, unsweetened tea made with fresh tea leaves, not concentrate.

**Ito En**, suppliers of the popular Teas' Te, introduced their 2-liter bottles in three varieties: Pure Green, Green Jasmine and Green White. Brewed using purified water and high-quality loose tea leaves, these premium teas produced in Japan have been newly packaged for the American market. They also introduced Sencha Shot, a canned tea loaded with five times the antioxidants found in a standard cup of green tea. Newcomer **The Cha Dao Tea Company** created a series of products based on the motto "The True Taste of Tea" rather than masking the tea under fruit juices and sugar. Interesting flavors included Jasmine Green Tea with Lemon, Chrysanthemum Herbal, an exotic Oolong and the Japanese "Shogun of Teas," organic Sencha.

### Tea as Accessories

An interesting product we saw allows tea drinkers to make hot tea without tea bags and strainers. The **Wisdom Health Tea Wand** is a glass straw with a glass strainer at the bottom. You simply pour the hot water over the tea leaves, stir with the straw and then sip. Another trend we saw was tea as the accessory itself. **Prences**, a company from Turkey, avoids utensils altogether with its disposable spoon tea. **Sympatea SpoonTea** offered its leaves in a plastic netted spoon. Peel the wrapper, immerse in hot water, stir and toss.

### Tea-Infused Products

Tea-infused products, from gum to candy to cookies, were everywhere at the Expo. **Tearrow USA** introduced "chewing gum with a purpose," which promises a cup of tea in every stick. Not only does it come in eight flavors -- green tea, oolong, black tea, lemon, jasmine, osmanthus, mint and kuding, but company representatives say it helps kill germs and battle gingivitis. **Keiko US** set out its green tea chocolate bars and green tea chews, drops, ginger and Marzipan -- all made with fresh Matcha powder. **Torn Ranch** displayed its addictive tea-infused cookies in Peppermint Chill, Orange Pekoe with Black Tea, African Rooibos with Guava, Hibiscus with Lemon Oil, Masala Chai and Green Tea Jasmine. **Pure Inventions** introduced six delicious green tea flavor extracts that were warm and inviting when served hot and cool and refreshing over ice. Non-caloric, naturally decaffeinated, alcohol free and easy to use (just one dropper full in cold or hot water is all you need), flavors include Original, Vanilla, Peach, Tropical, Raspberry and Pineapple Coconut.

Next year's World Tea Expo will be held June 9-11, 2007, at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

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