

Tips from a Flavorist:

Creative Flavor Customization

BY: REBECCA GENOISE, FLAVORIST

At FONA, we often call flavor creation a combination of artistry and science. And for our customers, there are a number of benefits to capturing that artistry and science to deliver the right flavor in a finished product. Beyond creating a standardized product and helping with total ingredient cost, flavor can enhance, mask, and most importantly — impart a specific flavor profile. With the help of a flavor house, you can receive completely customized flavor solutions to meet your desired profile. However, you may be interested in repurposing what you already have in your toolbox and coming up with creative solutions. Let's explore a few ways in which you can deliver complexity and nuance in common profiles like vanilla and chocolate. Here are a few approaches I wanted to share.

CONSIDER THIS: VANILLA CUSTOMIZATION

- A classic Bourbon vanilla is brown, creamy, rummy and caramelic. Sometimes I may add a Bourbon or oak flavor to a vanilla, it may help give an upfront lift and provide a woody and oaky vanilla extract note.
- Another option I often explore is to find the right ice cream flavor to combine with a bourbon vanilla. At the right usage, you can come away with a complex French vanilla profile.
- A Tahitian vanilla is more floral and anisic compared to a Madagascar vanilla. I may try adding a flavor like a clover honey to a vanilla. The sweet brown of the honey complements the vanilla while the floral can help make the Tahitian profile pop.
- Unlike a Tahitian, an Indonesian vanilla has more smokey notes when compared to a bourbon vanilla. Some oaky, woody, grilled, or charred flavors can impart that specific smoke note and could complement a vanilla nicely to drive it more towards an Indonesian profile.





CONSIDER THIS: CHOCOLATE CUSTOMIZATION

- Cocoa and vanilla beans have significant similarities in chemical composition (but also important differences), so it makes sense that a chocolate will benefit greatly from having vanilla. Even if there is vanilla in your chocolate, I've found adding more of the right vanilla at the right usage can help round out the whole flavor, add some sweet nuance and make the flavor more indulgent.
- Similar to vanilla, adding an ice cream flavor or a caramel flavor to a chocolate can drive a more milky profile. Depending on how heavy your creamy/dairy flavor is, it could also help bring out a mouthfeel that consumers would expect to experience in real chocolate.
- Some customers want to achieve a more dark chocolate profile, so one approach I take is to enhance the natural nuances you would expect. I may add a brown fruit flavor like a fig or plum to give some dried fruit and vanilla notes. Or, I may add the same oak or bourbon flavor to give some aged, woody notes.

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SOME INNOVATION INSPIRATION

- A coffee or espresso flavor is sweet, brown and roasted. I've found when these flavors are added to a peanut butter, nut, chocolate, or a savory/meaty flavor at various levels, it can help achieve the appropriate roast.
- Adding the right mixed berry flavor to a raspberry, blueberry or strawberry can add depth and complexity to your fruity flavor.

- Alcohol type flavors like a brandy or rum can help with upfront lift and contribute to overall sweetness. These are especially beneficial in fruit or sweet brown flavors like caramel.
- Using sweet brown flavors like caramel, maple, brown sugar or graham at low levels in conjunction with other sweet brown flavors can help round out the whole flavor system, add depth and contribute a more complex profile.
- Mango flavors generally have some nice tropical and sulfuric character to them. Like the mixed berry, I've found adding a generic tropical flavor or a ripe mango to a peach, passionfruit, orange or pineapple can help brighten a flavor, reinforce what is already inherent in the flavor, and add complexity.

NEED DETAILS? LET'S TALK.

The limit to creative flavor customization is seemingly endless. With guidance from your flavor house, you can create new and unique flavor solutions or you can repurpose what you already have in your toolbox to meet your brand's exact need. What flavor profile is right for your consumer? Our flavor experts can help you along that journey.



Rebecca Genovise
Flavorist
rgenovise@fona.com
630-715-3066

