

## Expo East 2012 is Extraordinary

As a Registered Dietitian (RD) and a health conscience consumer I was so excited to attend my first Natural Products Expo East trade show (September 20-22, 2012) in Baltimore, Maryland just a few weeks ago! The drive from the Philadelphia area was quite relaxing. I was able to listen to some tunes that I haven't heard in a while including Eric Hutchinson's ([www.erichutchinson.com](http://www.erichutchinson.com)), *Sounds Like This*, CD, and songs that did not include *Elmo* or *Clifford*, some of my toddler's favorites. The parking situation in Baltimore has gotten worse than I remember when I was a co-op student over 20 years ago at Baltimore, Gas, and Electric in the Information Systems department on Charles Street. After circling for about 20 minutes I was able to find a parking lot that was not full, another great reason to go green and take public transportation or carpool if you can.

Once in the convention center I went to get my badge as I had preregistered. I entered the show in the "supplements" area. The Nordic Naturals, [www.nordicnaturals.com](http://www.nordicnaturals.com), booth was on my list as I was curious to learn more about their relationship with The Holman Omega 3 Test™, [www.omega3test.com](http://www.omega3test.com), an at home test identifying your omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acid levels. Coromega, [www.coromega.com](http://www.coromega.com), also has a relationship with this test. I was interested as many commonly used labs do not offer this type of testing. Since I wasn't going to be able to attend the next day, I was lucky to be given a free test as a sample, which I sent off earlier this week. I look forward to the results of my blood fatty acid levels. Also, I stopped by the Vega booth, [myvega.com](http://myvega.com), to learn more about their products. The Vega line includes plant-based bars and sports supplements, which are not free of potential nut contamination, but they have all-in-one nutritional shakes, Vega One, in various flavors that are free of dairy, gluten, soy, and nuts with no added sugar. The staff at the Vega booth was very helpful and honest regarding potential allergens in their products. I enjoyed the Chocolate and the Vanilla Chai Vega One shake flavors the best.

A line that has some interesting combination of vitamins, minerals, and herbs is the Redd Remedies Line, [www.reddremedies.com](http://www.reddremedies.com), that has a number of very specific formulations for certain health conditions or concerns. I spoke to the founder, Dan Chapman, who is very passionate about his work!

Another product worth mentioning is JUVE Juice, [www.juve-international.com](http://www.juve-international.com), which contains the Maqui Berry from Patagonia, Chile which has the highest known Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity or ORAC value of any fruit. The juice is meant to be used like a supplement and the product representative suggested drinking 2 oz. a day. It has a great flavor and having only a few ounces does not add excessive sugar calories, but should be taken into consideration. The United States Department of Agriculture, USDA, has removed their table of ORAC values of foods and their rationale can be found on their website which is



Lori & Jill Robbins (HomeFree Founder)

something to consider before making food and supplement choices based solely on ORAC values, [www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=15866](http://www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=15866).

An added bonus in this section was a free book signing for *The Misled Athlete, Effective Nutritional and Training Strategies Without The Need for Steroids, Stimulants and Banned Substances* by Carl Germano, RD, CNS, CDN, [www.themisledathlete.com](http://www.themisledathlete.com), compliments of [www.bluebonnetnutrition.com](http://www.bluebonnetnutrition.com). I look forward to reading this book soon.

The next section I ventured into was the personal care , household products, and pet foods. What a fun section to explore. I noted many of familiar brands that I use (Desert Essence Organics ([www.desertessence.com](http://www.desertessence.com)); Aubrey ([www.aubrey-organics.com](http://www.aubrey-organics.com)) and found some new ones. One luxury that I treat myself to is “fancy” soaps. Ancient Olive Soap made only of olive oil and laurel oil was new to me, [www.ancientolivesoap.com](http://www.ancientolivesoap.com). This soap sounds like it would be great for persons with many allergies and skin sensitivities since there are only two ingredients unlike many soaps that have paragraph long ingredient lists. There is a video on the website of how it is made which is really interesting. Being half Greek the olives on display in the booth caught my eye! Another line of soaps which I liked was Dr. Woods soaps, [www.drwoodsnaturals.com](http://www.drwoodsnaturals.com). I found it quite humorous that one of the reps last names was Greenhouse – seems like a perfect match!

Overall there were many companies sampling drinks and snack foods. I noted many various popcorn products. I was specifically looking for new products, peanut free and gluten free products, and trends. As a RD and health educator is important to know what is available on the market and to be able to answer questions about products meant for consumption. Now to discuss some finds from the food section of the show.

Many of my longtime favorite companies were there including HomeFree with their allergen friendly, nut free and some gluten free, treats, [www.homefreetreats.com](http://www.homefreetreats.com). Founder, Jill Roberts was at the booth and it was great to see her again. We met several years ago at the Philadelphia Food Allergy Walk, [www.foodallergywalk.org](http://www.foodallergywalk.org), where I was volunteering and her company was exhibiting. She discussed that more of her products are now gluten free and that individual serving packaging has changed to make friendly for vending machines. Enjoy Life Foods, [www.enjoylifefoods.com](http://www.enjoylifefoods.com), was sampling their Plentils which are tasty and free of the top allergens and gluten free. I met their CMO, Joel Warady (@EnjoyLifeCMO), who I had tweeted with a few weeks ago. Their display was colorful and fun with staff wearing different color wigs which the attendees seemed to love. Smart Balance Inc. owns Glutino ([www.glutino.com](http://www.glutino.com)) and Earth Balance ([www.earthbalancenatural.com](http://www.earthbalancenatural.com)) recently acquired Udi's ([udisfood.com](http://udisfood.com)). The booths of these brands were near each other displaying their various allergen friendly and gluten free products; for more about this acquisition [www.bcbr.com/article/20121002/NEWS/121009965](http://www.bcbr.com/article/20121002/NEWS/121009965).

There were five products that were new to me that I loved. BOLD's, gluten free, dairy free, nut free pizza ([www.BOLD-Organics.com](http://www.BOLD-Organics.com)) is fantastic; in fact I had to hang out a while at their booth to have more than one sample. I will be looking for this pizza for sure. Good gluten free pizza is very hard to find! I also enjoyed the taste of Nancy's organic probiotic Greek yogurt ([www.nancysyogurt.com](http://www.nancysyogurt.com)) and a positive is that it doesn't have as much added sugar as some other Greek yogurt brands. I asked for it at my local Whole Foods yesterday, but they only carry Nancy's cottage cheese at this time and weren't willing to order it. I will look elsewhere. The Healthy Pantry ([www.thehealthypantry.com](http://www.thehealthypantry.com)) has many great quick healthy gluten free and peanut free/nut free meal kits. I love the variety of flavor influences from Tamale Pie to Punjabi Curry. I will be trying these for sure as it is hard to find many peanut free/nut free Indian foods and who doesn't love

flavor? The Health Pantry is located in Montana and Udi's in Colorado, hum I would love to visit and tour their businesses some time! Hilary's Eat Well, [www.hilaryseatwell.com](http://www.hilaryseatwell.com), veggie burger and adzuki bean burger are delish and gluten free, nut free, dairy free, egg free, corn free, soy free, yeast free, and non GMO. You can cook the patties in the toaster too! If you do not have all of those diet restrictions, then you can dress up your burger however you like. I am thinking some melted cheese would be a great addition. I love that Nut Free is included on the product packaging. On the sweet and salty side of things, I really liked Angie's Caramel Kettle Corn, [www.angieskettlecorn.com](http://www.angieskettlecorn.com), which is gluten free (certified) and nut free (not certified).

One really great thing about the show is that many of the exhibitors for the products are actually the founders of the products or the celebs as I see it! This helps when asking about allergen information. I was at the Brad's Organic, [www.bradsorganic.com](http://www.bradsorganic.com), booth asking allergen questions about the products and found out that I was talking to Brad himself. Also, I sampled the tasty Marley Coffee, [www.marleycoffee.com](http://www.marleycoffee.com), and got a picture with Rohan Marley as well as a signed poster; you are never too old!

The show was worth the drive and quite extraordinary. The vibe was great and I found the attendees and exhibitors friendly. Next year the Expo East trade show will be held September 26-28, 2013. I will have a better strategy for exploring the Expo as there is a lot to see! For more on 2012 Expo East including a press release made after the show see, [www.expoeast.com/expoeast2012/public/enter.aspx](http://www.expoeast.com/expoeast2012/public/enter.aspx). In fact, a couple of the products I mentioned also won awards noted on the press release!

*I apologize for not mentioning other great products or persons that I met at the show, as it is tough to include everything. I was not paid or compensated for attending the show or mentioning any of the products or services above. This article is solely based on my experience and opinion. Remember that many companies have a product locator on their website or sell from their site if you want to try some of the items mentioned!*



Marisa &amp; Allen of Hilary's Eat Well



Rohan Marley &amp; Lori