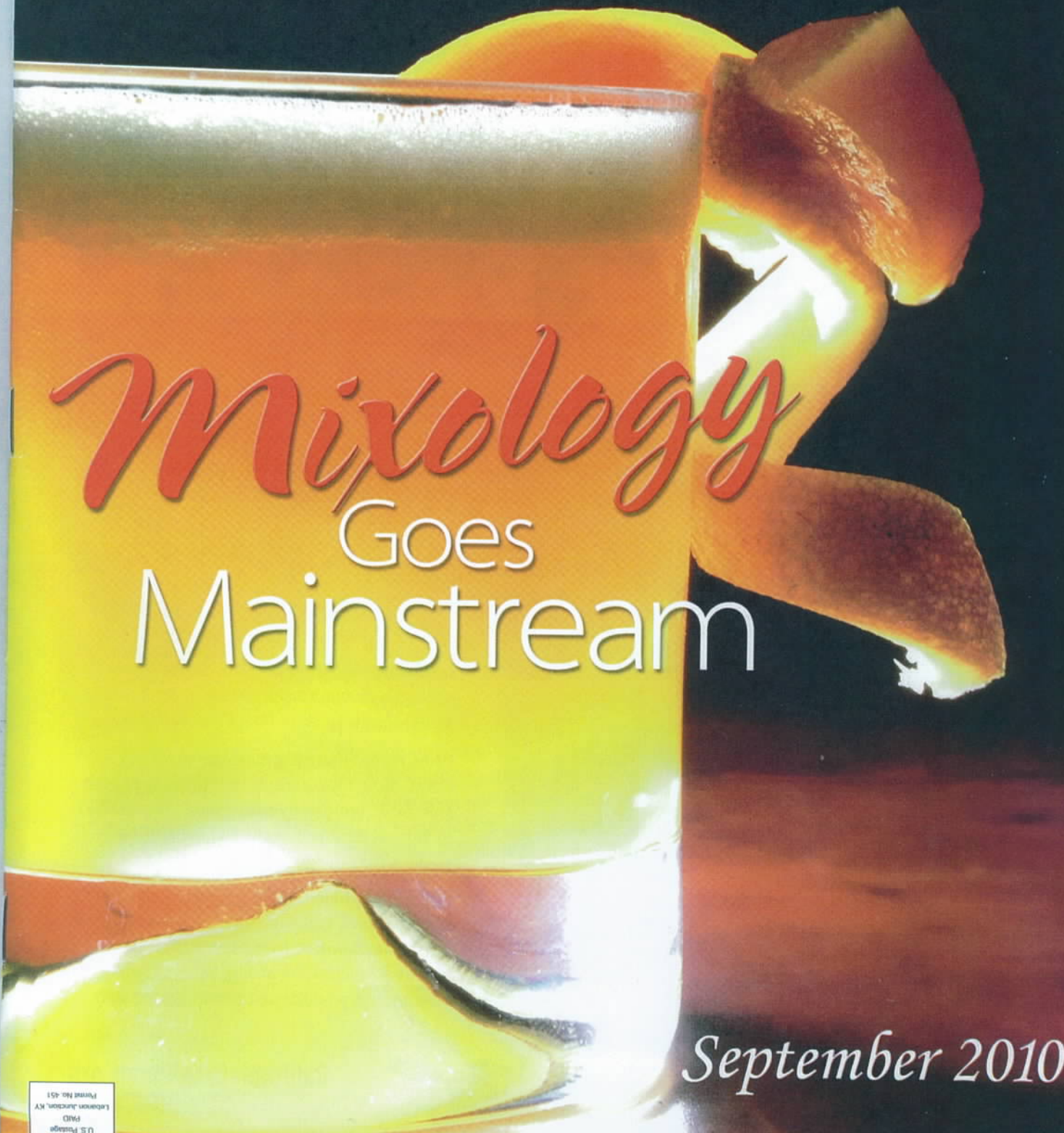


CULINOLOGY[®]

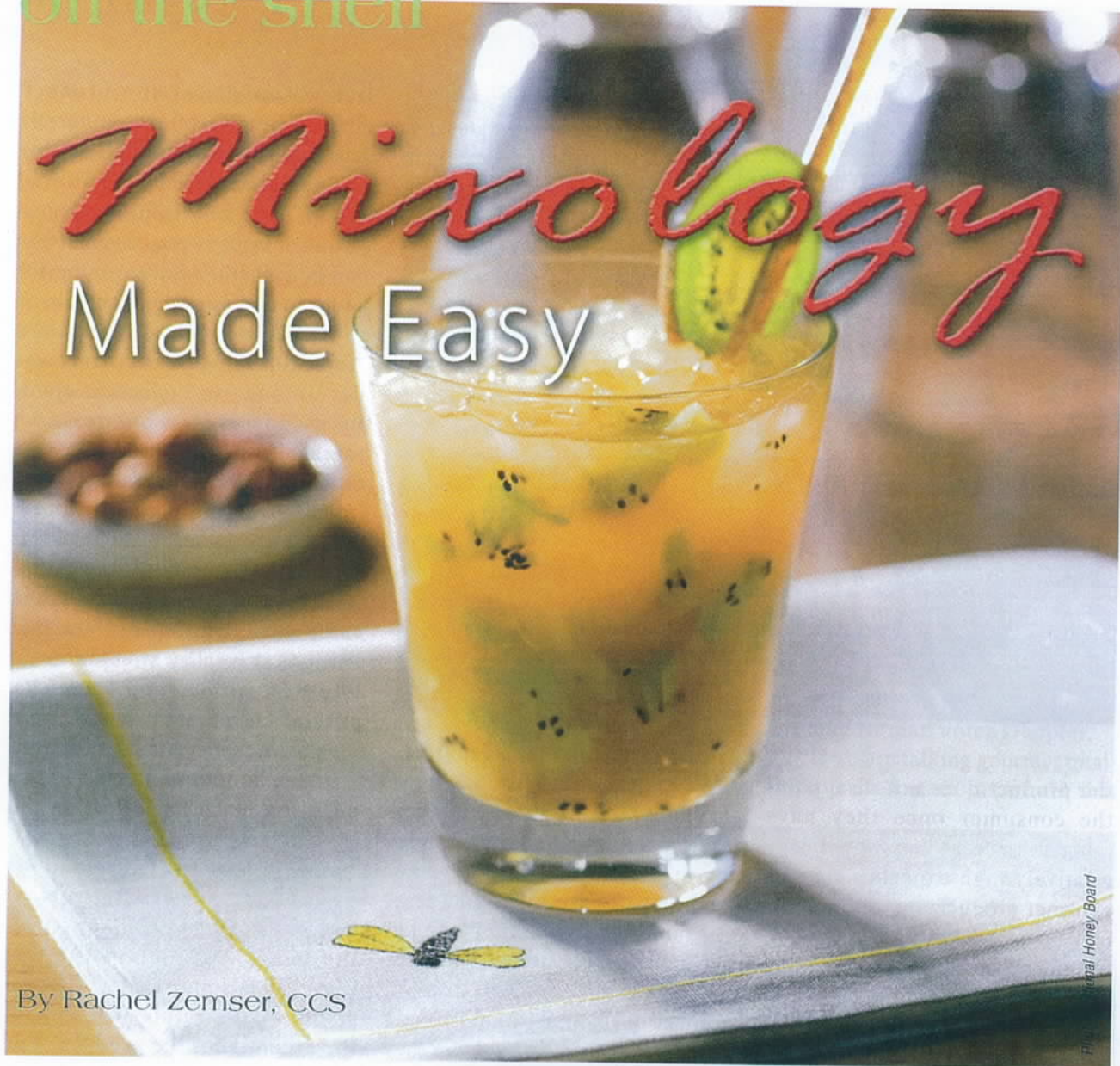
The Official Magazine of the Research Chefs Association



Mixology Goes Mainstream

September 2010

Postnet Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lebanon Junction, KY
Permit No. 451



By Rachel Zemser, CCS

Photo: Terminal Honey Board

Don't even think about asking for a Cosmo at the Bourbon and Branch Telegram in San Francisco. House rule No. 4 strictly forbids it! So while the cast of "Sex and the City" might leave thirsty, Don Draper, from the 1960s-era TV series "Mad Men," would feel right at home.

The bartenders at Bourbon and Branch specialize in making vintage cocktails just like they tasted back when they weren't, well, vintage. However, rules about classic cocktails, just like Prohibition-era restrictions, are meant to be muddled. So

mixologists are updating vintage recipes with fresh, contemporary ingredients like Meyer lemon and lavender syrup, pink peppercorns, and herbs like oregano.

The macro trend that made the National Restaurant Association's top-20 of What's Hot in 2010 survey was "culinary cocktails," which includes a multitude of micro trends that both complement and contradict one another. These include retro, but with a modern twist, and beverages that can be prepared with small-batch artisanal spirits, fresh ingredients, house-made condi-

ments, tea infusions, bitter liqueurs and egg whites.

In 2010, cocktails are full of contradictions. They have more spir-its and less citrus, but there's also a demand for booze-free options. Bartenders are layering flavors, yet they strive for the ultimate two-ingredient elixir. Some trends are transcending well and are rapidly making inroads at multi-unit establishments, whereas other more-abstract concepts will take time to achieve mainstream status. Retail cocktail-mix manufacturers are creatively marketing trend-friendly

ingredients that enable chains to reproduce culinary cocktails easily, but restaurant chains, retail developers and chefs alike need to push the boundaries.

Even the terms “mixology” and “mixologist” are up for grabs. “Bartenders don’t like to be called mixologists because of the stigma,”

says Marcos Dionysos, bartender/mixologist, Smuggler’s Cove, San Francisco. “Bartending is all about serving drinks and taking care of the customers, but a mixologist focuses specifically on the creation of cocktails.”

But Scott Baird, mixologist, Romelo 15, San Francisco, notes that

great cocktails can be made without the “cocktailian pretense” of a serious mixologist.

Interpretations of the word vary, but it’s clear that bartender and mixologist sensibilities are similar when it comes to flavor balance, creativity and fun.

FRESH & EXOTIC TRANSLATIONS

Retro classics, Caribbean cocktails, fresh ingredients and exotic teas are a few of the micro trends cropping up at the bar.

Smuggler’s Cove, which carries 200 rums from around the world, serves classic Caribbean cocktails that would have easily fit into the Prohibition-era scene in Havana, Cuba. Simplicity and retro define the approach—but also with a touch of artisan style and fresh ingredients. For instance, its Mai Tai contains aged Jamaican rum, fresh lime, house-made orgeat (a sweet syrup made from almonds) and orange liqueur.

Mojitos, the traditional Cuban cocktail widely consumed during the 1980s, have recently regained popularity. Kathy Casey—who runs the Liquid Kitchen as part of her consulting business—used fresh cherries and basil in a “farmers’ market” contemporary version of the classic mojito for Volterra Restaurant, Seattle.

Tea is surfacing everywhere these days—including cocktails. For instance, at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, tea sommelier Cynthia Gold serves a Yin and Tonic—gin infused with Chinese Ti-Kuan Yin Oolong and spice.

“It is very exciting to see what is happening in the major cities where mixology is flourishing, but it’s casual dining’s responsibility to take some of that innovation to the



Photo: California Avocado Commission

masses in a way that resonates with them," says Stuart Melia, beverage director, O'Charley's, Nashville, TN.

Chains have taken ideas like these—diversifying retro classics, use of fresh and new ingredients, etc.—and are running with them. For instance, The Melting Pot offers a Passion Fruit Mai Tai made with Barcardi Dragon Berry Rum, amaretto, sweet & sour and red passion fruit juice.

T.G.I. Friday's has its own version of the mai tai with spiced rum, pineapple and peach nectar. The signature cocktails at T.G.I. Friday's are often made with "ingredients such as freshly squeezed limes and fresh-cut pineapple," says George Barton, vice president of beverage and bar innovation, T.G.I. Friday's, Carrollton, TX.

Fully delving into "fresh" territory, Chili's Grill & Bar recently introduced the World's Freshest Margarita, made with Milagro silver tequila, agave nectar and fresh-squeezed lime juice. They also serve a fresh strawberry mojito.

Mainstream mojitos like the Ruby Mo-Tea-To at T.G.I. Friday's often include signature flavors, like sweet-tea vodka in this example, to distinguish themselves from the classic version. O'Charley's recently introduced its classic version of the John Daly, made-from-scratch lemonade mixed with sweet-tea vodka.

MIXOLOGY FOR THE MASSES

Beverage developers for large chains should see their need for high volume and mass production as an advantage in the mixology game. It allows them to work directly with culinologists, food

scientists and flavor developers to create their own signature "hand-crafted" syrups and mixers.

Corporate mixologists can develop signature, fresh-tasting cocktail mixers that expand beyond hand-

squeezed limes to add freshness and ingredient diversity to the mix. Manufacturers use ingredient-processing techniques to preserve volatile top notes in a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs, includ-

Roland

YOUR CULINARY INNOVATORS

Quality • Consistency • Flavor

From farm to fork, we bring the world's finest ingredients to you.

©2010 American Roland Food Corp.
800-221-4030 x222
www.rolandfood.com
salessupport@rolandfood.com

ing single-strength purées, concentrates and pastes.

“Our herbal pastes can be custom-blended with honey and used to add an extra signature boost of flavor to any cocktail,” says Scott Adair, executive corporate chef, SupHerb Farms, Turlock, CA. He adds that a combination of honey and citric acid blended in with the herb paste can extend the refrigerated shelf life for 30 days or longer.

Some cocktails require a splash of exotic fresh fruit purée, and shelf-stable, aseptically filled fruit-purée pouches are available. “Most fruits, which are naturally acidic and have pH values that are below 4.6, do not support the growth and toxin formation of *Clostridium botulinum* and are not a public health risk,” says Keith Ito, microbiologist and processing expert, University of California Laboratory for Research in Food Preservation, Dublin, CA. Companies take advantage of the fruit purée’s naturally low pH and

use flash pasteurization to package a commercially sterile product in sterile pouches. A high-temperature, short-time (HTST) process combined with aseptic filling can also work well for such products. “The fruit purée can be aseptically processed to allow it to maintain fresher flavors by reducing its exposure to heat,” he says. Both flash-pasteurized and HTST aseptic-filled pouches can yield products with improved flavor compared to those subjected to retort.

The same process can be used to create shelf-stable acidified fruit blends. These blends combine low-acid fruits with the naturally high-acid fruit, and the finished product can still have a pH below 4.6. An FDA-approved acidifying agent, such as citric acid or lemon juice, may also be required.

However, fruit and vegetable purées and concentrates, especially exotic ones, are not always the most cost-effective options for a restaurant chain. Flavor companies provide a more-affordable

way to create signature tastes. Tea and rum flavors can allow developers of both retail and foodservice products to maintain authenticity and reduce ingredient costs.

Traditional aromatic bitters can also add flavor. Mixologists enjoy making their own house versions, which are already finding their way out of the house and into retail, with flavorful bitter varieties made with rhubarb, peach, cherry and blood orange already hitting shelves. Beverage directors could work directly with culinologists and ingredient suppliers to create similar signature flavors for their chains.

And then there’s the egg. Whisky sours, the New Orleans Ramos gin fizz, and the San Francisco Barbary Flip all have one thing in common: egg whites, which give these drinks viscosity, texture and a frothy white-foam finish. The FDA recommends avoiding raw eggs because of potential Salmonella contamination, but pasteurized eggs—in readily available whole, liquid and dehydrated

What’s Hot!

	Then	...And Now!
Cosmo	Too-sweet fruit bombs	Well-balanced blend of sweet, tart and salty
Martini	Flavored and sugar-rimmed	Made with vintage gins, artisanal vodkas and contemporary flavors
Margarita	Pre-blended mixes	Fresh lime, agave syrup and premium tequila
Rum drinks	Daiquiris; rum and Coke	<i>Cuba libres</i> , <i>caipirinhas</i> , mojitos
Tea flavors	Long Island iced tea	Tea liquors, tea-infused vodkas
Alcohol-free	Coffee, tea, soda, water	Carbonation, natural sweeteners, exotic fruits, premium tea flavors
Herbs and spices	Mint, basic bitters	Basil, tarragon, oregano, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, black pepper, exotic bitters, flowers
Condiments	Lemon, orange, maraschino cherry	Seasonal fruits, fresh herbs, vegetables, cinnamon sticks, savory kitchen items
Wine	Wine and Champagne spritzers	Sherry, Madeira and Port cocktails

forms—can be used to make frothy-style cocktails without safety risks.

But what about the silky texture that can only be achieved with raw eggs? “Using very low levels of gum arabic in cocktails can slightly increase the viscosity, which can, in turn, create that desired robust mouthfeel,” says Allen Freed, CEO, Gum Technology Corporation, Tucson, AZ. Gum arabic can also function as an emulsifier, binding together oil-based flavors and water in a cocktail blend. He also recommends incorporating alginates into liquid or powder retail mixers for egg-white cocktails that need that frothy foam finish. “Alginates can help stabilize and maintain a foam that has been generated via vigorous shaking,” he says. Ready-to-use retail items with a similar effect include Whipped Lightning and Whipahol,

alcohol-infused whipped creams that come in flavors like cinnamon and spiced vanilla.

Eggs aren't the only way the kitchen is increasingly moving into the bar. Peppered watermelon cubes and lavender cherries garnish drinks at Elixir in San Francisco, and readily available items like bacon and avocados are also finding their way into the glass.

“Beverage directors need to start taking garnishes more seriously, because oranges, cherries and lemons just don't offer that ‘wow’ factor unless they are part of the ingredient drink,” says Melia, who points to their Cotton Candy Cosmo as an example of how to bring nostalgic excitement to the table.

Multi-unit beverage programs often face challenges not only in R&D, but also in the implementa-

tion and acceptance of menu items. “We develop cocktails that we think our team members will get excited about, because that will guarantee a big hit with the guests, as well,” says Melia. He also recommends developing drinks that can be made in a few steps and require minimal SKUs. With ingredients like basil-honey paste, egg-white powder, gum arabic, and honey-infused vodka, high-end signature cocktails can surely adhere to such principles and still please customers at any 1,200-chain unit in the United States. ●

Rachel Zemser, CCS, has a B.S. and M.S. in food science, a culinary arts degree and almost 15 years of food-industry experience. She is a member of the Research Chefs Association and is an industry consultant.

Just Announced —

20+ NEW
Topic-Focused
E-Mail Updates!

Choose from:

- ◆ Flavors ◆ Beverages
- ◆ Frozen Foods ◆ Foodservice
- ◆ Food Safety ◆ Colors
- ◆ Bakery/Cereal ◆ Market Trends
- ◆ Healthy Foods ◆ More!

FOOD PRODUCT DESIGN

Food Product Design

Market Trends - April 08, 2010

HOME TOPICS BUYER'S GUIDE WEBINARS eBooks BLOGS MORE

Did you know we have a daily update? [Click here to switch](#)

Hot Dogs Red Hot in Ballparks

America's love affair with hot dogs is red hot, especially in the nation's ballparks, according to the National Hot Dog & Sausage Council's annual survey. The NHDSC predicts that ballparks around the country will serve 21,378,064 hot dogs this season, enough to round... [More>>](#)

Americans Plan to Up Private Label Buys

The appeal of store brand products is stronger than ever and may even be intensifying, according to a poll of nearly 800 main household grocery shoppers conducted in February 2010 by GfK Custom Research North America for the Private Label Manufacturers Association... [More>>](#)

NRA Launches Greener Restaurants

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) has launched Greener Restaurants, a new, national program to recognize restaurants' environmental sustainability efforts... [More>>](#)

Fast Casual Expanding

One of the few foodservice business segments that's expanding in the current economy is fast-casual. Chains like Panera, Fazoli's, Smashburger, Noodles and Company and Pei Wei are attracting customers from higher-end, sit-down restaurants that expect more from their meal... [More>>](#)

NAFFS Convention Explores Global Flavors

In-depth presentations on innovation and flavor trends from around the globe will be

Now it's easier than ever to stay informed — Subscribe today at www.foodproductdesign.com