



LIGHT CATERING EQUIPMENT FEATURE OOH MAY 2017

Please attributes any quotes to Kris Brearley, Sales Director, R H Hall

What items of light catering equipment are essential?

It really can be a mine field to decide what equipment to choose out of the hundreds of brands and variations of equipment available. It really depends on your type of operation, the throughput and staffing levels – there's no point in having lots of individual pieces of kit if they are going to sit on a shelf for the majority of the time!

As a starting point, we would suggest that a Combination microwave oven (such as the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7) which is extremely versatile and can perform a number of multiple tasks in one easy to use unit is one essential. For more details on the benefits of combination microwave cooking – see our online video by visiting www.rhhall.com

Couple this with the addition of an induction hob for further instant heat plus certain specific complementary pieces that can spread the workload such as Panini grills, slicers, rice cookers and soup kettles that can perform individual tasks with ease can all be essential depending on the type of operation and menu offered.

What are the advantages of using light catering equipment (power saving, efficiency etc) over ovens etc?

Light duty equipment is often compact and relatively inexpensive, particularly useful where caterers have limited budgets or want to try out a new menu offering before investing in expensive kit. Most light duty items are also plug and go – operating from just a 13 amp socket, meaning low running costs and good energy efficiency.

What should caterers consider before buying new equipment?

Equipment that is multi-functional and versatile is ideal and where space is at a premium, units with a small footprint can help save valuable space – as can those that can stack, one on top of the other. It may seem fundamental, but consider the footprint of some equipment in comparison to their potential output. The Combi Chef 7 has a small counter top footprint and can be stacked one on top of the other – so you can save on space yet double the output.

Many cheaper imports are flooding into the UK and it can be tempting to go down this route, but unknowingly to many, a lot of this equipment doesn't have any product conformity standards and the back-up of a full warranty. So when purchasing, I would recommend operators to go for a well-known brand - guaranteed quality doesn't cost you more!

Regardless of size or duty, sturdy manufacture is a 'must' and this is what you get by choosing a well-known brand - anything else won't perform or last. Choose a leading brand with an established reputation for good quality, durability and reliability. These brands usually build in great operational features too, which should always be considered.

Should caterers look for companies with a long history of products? Or is it worth gambling on the latest innovations?

New products are always hitting the market, and whilst some of these will stand the test of time, it is always worth considering brands with a proven track record of reliable, established products and services. Consider the availability of any spare parts or warranty call outs, along with conformity standards. Choosing a well known brand with guaranteed quality shouldn't cost you more – and companies are always looking for ways to incorporate the latest technology and innovations – so you shouldn't lose out!

What kind of warranties should caterers look out for?

Commercial equipment should come with a minimum of a 1 year warranty, with spare parts and service readily available. Some equipment comes with a warranty of 3 years or more! Once the product is outside of its manufacturer warranty period, consider the cost of the equipment and whether it is economical to look at an on-going maintenance contract, or if it would be more cost effective to replace the machine if any issues occurred.

What one tip would you offer someone who is investing in light catering equipment?

Look at your menu offering and ensure that the equipment chosen meets the needs of your menu now, but also importantly consider any future developments. Ensure all staff are fully trained to use the equipment to its full potential and also in any regular cleaning/maintenance to ensure it is performing at its best.

Please include a definitive website address where readers can go for more info on your company.

www.rhhall.com

www.maestrowave.com

R H Hall are the Sole Worldwide Distributor for the Maestrowave range of Catering Equipment

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