



Golf Club Hospitality – September 2014

Feature: Ovens

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Which type of oven best suits the cooking processes involved in the food being prepared in garden centres, including bakery goods such as cakes and scones, in addition to roasting meats, vegetables etc.

There is a lot of choice on the equipment market for prime cooking, whether it is gas, electric, dual fuel or increasingly induction, the choice is wide and varied and comes down to personal preference as well as space and budget restrictions. Whatever the preference though, it has to be a versatile and flexible workhorse able to make light work of the most demanding and varied dishes and be able to respond to the on-going changing demands that come with any professional commercial kitchen.

Garden centres need to have a varied and attractive food offering and without a doubt, I would say that an oven that can 'multi task' in response to that will be a good investment. This will work for the smaller catering operation in a centre through to those catering for larger numbers.

The options:

Microwave ovens are definitely an essential part of today's commercial kitchen – essential for speed of service and still allow an operator to offer a wide choice of menu. Microwaves are also very energy efficient. If simple reheat and defrosting of foods is required then a microwave will suffice, but if an operator wants to reheat and cook food products then a combination microwave convection oven is well advised.

The latest and most flexible **combination microwave oven** from **Maestrowave**, is the **Combi Chef 7**. It is able to operate in a combination of modes and can bake, roast, grill, steam, defrost, regenerate, microwave, boil or simply keep food warm all in one flexible, efficient unit. Packed full of new features and the latest version of Menu Creator (Menu Creator 2.0™) the oven will produce the best results ever in super quick time!

For example, a beef topside joint of up to 6lb (2.7kg) can be cooked in combination mode in just 11 minutes. By using the combination mode of grill and convection, you can also be sure of a quality result. Accelerated cooking, with quality!

Menu Creator 'create your own menu' feature now allows for up to 99 menus to be pre-programmed using any method of oven, microwave, grill or combination or microwave plus grill using the turbo fan function on or off.

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Errors are eliminated with perfect cooking stages and timings all very easily pre-programmed onto the unit's Menu Creator 2.0™ software. Great results can be achieved within both skilled and non-skilled operations.

The **Smeg ALFA Range of bake-off ovens** provides an alternative, innovative and versatile solution. Savouries, breads and morning goods including the most delicate of products, like croissants, can be cooked to perfection. Plus the equipment's flexibility expands way beyond that – in fact, there is relatively little that these ovens can't cook! Another big plus is that they look good enough to be sited 'front of house' with the aroma of freshly baking food, helping to maximise sales.

Also Smeg has introduced models with the oven chamber lined in refractory stone to combine traditional cooking methods with modern technology to enable the foods to develop further in flavour whilst cooking – creating dishes with sublime tastes!

What attributes or features is the garden centre menu likely to require from an oven e.g. bakery and desserts requiring evenness of temperature?

For pastries and delicate products like croissants the Smeg ALFA range can cook these to perfection with their efficient fan configuration which circulates the heat evenly within the oven chamber. Other features on the Smeg include: rapid pre-heat function to enable fast recovery after unloading; easy control functions especially for de-skilled operation; auto power cut-out to save energy when not in use; programme pre-sets and manual options for ease of operation – so at the touch a button set menu items can be cooked quickly; cool touch doors for safety; fans for efficient heat circulation; grill function for versatility, when finishing off foods and the ability to vent that wonderful bakery smell into the premises if required!

With regards to the **Maestrowave Combi Chef 7**, items such as pastry, which become soggy if reheated in an ordinary microwave, can achieve that golden brown slightly crispy finish when heated in this Combi with microwave speeds. New menus can be developed and adapted easily using the **Menu Creator 2.0™** software and then deployed via an updated SD card at the touch of a button! Errors are eliminated, with perfect cooking stages and timings all pre-programmed on the software, so quality results can be delivered time after time, improving customer experience and reducing costly waste.

The beauty of **Menu Creator 2.0™** is that it is extremely simple to understand and operate. Loading menu information takes seconds and accessing saved menus for updating is very easy too. However, if a user requires it, full technical support is available. The system operates off standard PC software and is Windows 7 compatible.

With the **Combi Chef 7's** ability to offer a number of cooking stages, garden centre chefs can program in a series of different defrost /cook / reheat tasks to allow a complete process to be carried out at the press of a button. For example, it is possible to defrost then cook and keep warm ready for serve up all in one go.

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Is it necessary to have several types of oven for the different processes?

No, it isn't! With the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7, everything can be done in this one oven. It is able to operate in a combination of modes and can bake, roast, grill, steam, defrost, regenerate, microwave, boil or simply keep food warm all in one flexible, efficient unit.

What are the key considerations operators must make when investing in new ovens?

Garden centre caterers should consider their equipment needs in line with current and future menu requirements, numbers and times/peaks in service – for example, it may be that two smaller, versatile ovens that can adapt to changing service needs are better than investing in one large unit or that for example, one larger bake-off oven could cover a breakfast offering by itself and then bake-off products, such as baguettes, ready to be filled for the lunch service.

Space and installation aspects are also key considerations. It may seem fundamental, but consider the footprint of some ovens in comparison to their potential output. Both Smeg ALFA ovens and the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7 can be stacked one on top of the other – so you can save on space yet double the output. Caterers can easily switch between one or two ovens depending on demand, which will give them great flexibility and potentially added profits when operating to full capacity, off-setting initial outlays. Alternatively a secondary smaller back-up oven such as the Smeg ALFA43UK could be installed to help cater for peaks – or a microwave added for speed. There is a huge range of options to suit and fulfil all needs and cost effectively.

Also many ovens will need hard wiring to a certain KW rating – unique to Smeg is that the range is switchable i.e. they can run off different KW ratings depending on the power on site – anything from 3KW upto 8.3KW making them ideal for any site, there is no limitations. The Maestrowave Combi-Chef 7 is simply a plug in and go unit!

Top tips on choosing a new oven

Whatever the choice of equipment, caterers must carefully consider their purchase. Sturdy, commercial manufacture is a must, anything less won't perform or last! Choose a leading brand with an established reputation – they shouldn't be tempted to go down the cheap import route. Also consider the availability of spare parts and after sales service, plus what length of warranty is available.

To help make the right choice, caterers must be clear on the intended use: the volume of throughput; the types of dishes/menu available; variations in service time; staffing skills and find out about the latest features and operational functions before they invest.

RH Hall can also offer bespoke and tailored solutions for any foodservice brand, concept, menu or operational need through their in-house Foodservice Solutions team. Cont'd...



Garden centre caterers can tap into this service and the successful creative foodservice solutions that have been developed already with a number of major foodservice chains and operators, including ready-made packages that offer a simple start up way to launch a concept into a foodservice operation – one such example is the package created with Chicago Town with their Pizzas and the Smeg ALFA43UK oven – all the leg work has been done – all the optimum menu timings, products selections have been developed and the package is ready to buy and have installed, up and running, almost immediately.

With RH Hall's access to the most extensive range of foodservice equipment available on the market today, together with our vast knowledge and experience within the sector, we are ideally placed to offer this specialised service. Our development team can work closely with a centre's own chef/caterer to look at equipment and create new menus, adapt recipes and perfect equipment timings to enhance cook/bake/regeneration results or bring in our tried and tested concepts to also maximise their operation.

For more information, please visit www.rhhall.com

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