

ALI WORLD

NORTH AMERICA

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**UNIVERSITY
OF NEVADA,
LAS VEGAS**
TEACHING TOMORROW'S
HOSPITALITY LEADERS

UTAH STATE PRISON
A NEW DIMENSION IN
CORRECTIONAL FOODSERVICE

BOJANGLES
MAKING DELICIOUSLY FRESH
FRIED CHICKEN





Welcome to the 11th North America edition of *Aliworld*.

hope that all of you are well and surviving — and indeed thriving — in these challenging times in which we continue to find ourselves.

The industry continues to face significant challenges across many fronts. But with those challenges come opportunities to look at our businesses in new and more innovative ways. That means it is more important than ever before to have a long-range view of your business and the foodservice industry as a whole. To help with that, we asked four foodservice design and management advisory services consultants to give us their view of where foodservice currently is, and where it's going in the future. I think you'll find their answers helpful and revealing.

Once again, we have filled this issue with articles that we hope will provide ideas on how to operate your business more profitably and successfully by showing how other operators are prospering. In our cover story, we'll show you how tomorrow's hospitality leaders are learning about the culinary side of operations in a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen.

In other articles, you'll see how a social media influencer has parlayed that success into an innovative ice cream shop. And we'll show you how a Denver restaurant in a complex dedicated

to wellness is delighting its customers by serving healthful, nutritious food and drinks. And you'll get to see how an upscale farm-to-table restaurant is not only surviving but prospering as well.

I would also like to send a special congratulations to eight of our companies: Belshaw, Bongard, Cleveland, Mareno and Metos are all celebrating their 100th anniversaries, while Grandimpianti ILE, Olis and Wexiödisk are celebrating 50 years. Each of these companies has remained successful by consistently focusing on innovation and service to customers.

Since our last edition, we've welcomed some new members to the Ali Group family. Notably, the Welbilt® group of companies (see p. 14), which includes such renowned brands as Delfield®, Frymaster® and Garland®, is now part of the Ali Group. The Montague Company, producer of a wide range of high-quality cooking and frying equipment, has also joined us (see p. 18). The addition of these companies means we will now be able to provide our customers with an even greater range of best-in-class products. These are incredibly exciting times for the Ali Group. While I am personally delighted to see these exceptional brands and companies join the Ali Group stable, bolstering our global presence, you — our trusted partners — can rest assured you will always receive the same high level of service and support you have come to expect from Ali Group companies.

I look forward to reconnecting with many of you at our schedule of shows and conferences, which include the NAFEM Show, the National Restaurant Association Show, the NACS Show, HostMilano, or one of the many other trade shows, buying group conferences or industry events in which we will participate this year.

In closing, from all of us at the Ali Group, let me wish you a most profitable, productive and safe 2023.

Filippo Berti
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group



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01

Cover Story

Hospitality Meets Technology at UNLV



Chef Mark Sandoval is in charge of the kitchen at the William F. Harrah School of Hospitality.

Hospitality students need to be well versed in many areas. Not only must they have management skills, but they also need to be

knowledgeable about such areas as event planning, human resources, beverage management and culinary operations.

The William F. Harrah School of Hospitality at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) is widely considered one of the top hospitality schools in the country. It offers a four-year program with a Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality Management, and students can choose concentrations ranging from event management to (as might be expected in Las Vegas) gaming management.

At UNLV, the job of teaching students the ins and outs of the culinary side of the hospitality business falls on Chef Mark Sandoval. As with most culinary instructors, he didn't originally plan on a career in education. After receiving his bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1995, he moved to San Francisco to attend culinary school. Over the next decade, he worked at a number of upscale hotels in the Sonoma/Napa Valley area of California. In 2005, he got what he termed one of his dream jobs: working with acclaimed chef Joël Robuchon at his Mansion restaurant in the MGM Grand Las Vegas hotel. "Opening that and being a part of that experience was amazing," he says. But it also was, he adds, "a ton of hard work. In the first year we opened, I had 11 days off." His next job came after he received a call from celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck, who needed a chef at his Postrio restaurant in the Venetian hotel.

During these stints in Las Vegas hotel kitchens, Sandoval was making connections. "Las Vegas is a really small community in hospitality, and there's just a ton of opportunities," he says. One of



Students train on this Garland XHP Broiler with Synergy technology.



those connections mentioned to him that UNLV was looking for part-time instructors. "I never really thought about being an instructor," he says. "So I went down and taught a couple of classes and really enjoyed it. The rest was kind of history." After four years of part-time teaching, he was offered a full-time position on the UNLV Hospitality School faculty in 2016.

Sandoval admits that for the average chef, moving from the kitchen to the classroom takes some rethinking. "It's very difficult for many chefs to take that 'chef mentality' out of themselves and then go into education," he says, noting that the demands of the fast-paced kitchen environment often lead to behaviors which are unacceptable in an educational environment. "In the industry, I wasn't so pleasant to be around a lot of the time, and it's because you're demanding perfection. When you get into education, you have to be able to step outside that mentality, and if anything goes wrong, it's a teachable moment."

The Kitchen as Laboratory

Sandoval says that giving hospitality students hands-on kitchen training serves two purposes.

Students in Hospitality Hall can stop at Rebel Grounds for a quick cup of coffee.



First, it provides them with essential life skills. "They're going to need to know how to cook for themselves the rest of their lives," he says. But more importantly, it's an essential part of their hospitality education. "When you go into any aspect of hospitality, I think that it's important to understand how food and beverage operates. It gives [students] a really good knowledge of how to conduct themselves in the kitchen."

A breathtakingly modern kitchen in Hospitality Hall on the UNLV campus serves as the base of operations for Sandoval's teaching activities. In true Las Vegas style, the kitchen features a stunning design, and it operates in prime real estate on the fourth floor of the building. That's in contrast to most hotels and restaurants, where the kitchen sits out of sight. "Our dean made a very conscious effort to make this the showpiece of the entire facility," claims Sandoval. The entire outside of the kitchen is glass; windows in the kitchen overlook the Strip. "It's kind of funny — when you come off the elevator, it's the first thing you see. Everyone who gets off the elevator — the first thing they do is pull out their phone and take pictures."

Sandoval treats the kitchen as a learning laboratory. “We have classes in there daily, sometimes up to 12 different sections per semester. I’ll do 45 minutes of instruction in the classroom next door, and then will come into the lab. I will demonstrate the recipes that they will do that day, and then they will go on to their own stations.” The kitchen consists of 10 stations; a team of three students works at each station. After the students prepare their food for the day, they take it to a long chef’s table in the center of the kitchen and, for better or worse, eat what they prepared. “The really teachable moments are in what they prepared and what they eat,” he says.

Sandoval’s teaching method combines modern technology with his own years of experience. For example, he will demonstrate how to prepare a dry-rubbed double-cut boneless pork chop. First, he shows students how to prepare the pork chop in a Convotherm® mini combi oven (of which there is one at each station). “They’ll follow my lead, hit start and there they go.” Next, he prepares a pork chop the old-fashioned way. “I’ll sear it in a pan, put it in a normal convection oven, and then I’ll cook it until I feel that the pork chop is right.” Then he does a side-by-side cutting of the two chops. His point is to prove to students that even though they don’t have the same depth of experience that he has, they can still produce a delicious result by using modern technology. It also shows students that technology can help them rethink kitchen staffing because they can develop “a restaurant concept around technology where you have one cook, and maybe they’re operating four or five combi ovens and [they’re] able to do great food,” he says. “It’s more reliant on that technology versus one cook doing everything by feel.”

(Left to right)
Also helping
out at UNLV
are Garland
convection
ovens, a
Delfield reach-in
refrigerator and
a Frymaster
fryer.



But UNLV uses the kitchen for more than just classes. “We do a ton of catering, both on and off campus, and 90% of what we do is prepared in that kitchen,” Sandoval says. Culinary staff use the kitchen to prepare food for special events, such as dinners for the ultra-exclusive Chaîne des Rôtisseurs culinary society. The kitchen has hosted regional culinary competitions for young chefs; since competitors can work independently at their own station, they can concentrate fully on creating their culinary masterpieces.

Smart Technology

Much of the advanced technology in the Hospitality Hall kitchen comes from Welbilt®. “I had worked on a lot of equipment [from Welbilt brands]. That’s really the equipment that I learned to cook on,” Sandoval says. When the kitchen was being designed, he said he hadn’t put a lot of thought into the equipment supplier: “At that point, I had just kind of left it up to the construction company to outsource that.”

One of the school’s advisory board members suggested Sandoval get in touch with Welbilt. “They looked at all the plans, reviewed everything. And from there, it was just a great relationship. All of the equipment in our kitchen lab is Welbilt.” That includes Merrychef® high-speed ovens, Convotherm combi ovens, Delfield® reach-in refrigerators and Frymaster® fryers.

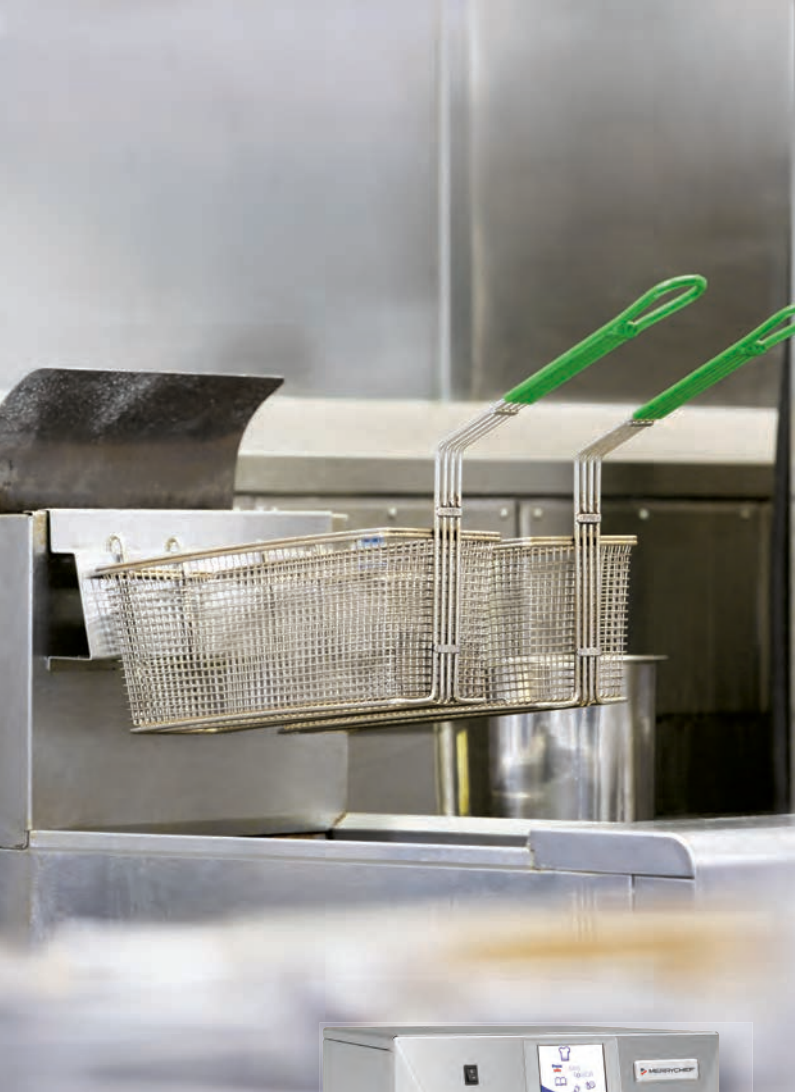
One of the most exciting pieces of equipment in the kitchen is the Garland® XHP Broiler” with its special Synergy technology because it helps Sandoval emphasize his message of sustainability. “One of the ideals that I try to teach all our students is sustainability and the responsibility of everyone to embrace that,” he says. UNLV uses biodegradable items where possible; recycles cardboard, glass and plastic; and composts food waste on campus for the community garden. “One of the things I love about the Synergy technology is that it uses less gas than normal technology,” he says. “It’s a very even cooking surface. It doesn’t



matter if [food is] on the back of the grill or the front of the grill — you get a much more even cooking surface, and that’s something I love. It’s also very quiet; you can hardly tell it’s on.”

Welbilt is proud to be an important part of teaching tomorrow’s hospitality leaders, says Patrick Simon, Director of Sales, Merrychef USA West. “Teaching the next generation of hospitality leaders on the most innovative kitchen equipment is what they do in UNLV’s Hospitality Hall,” says Simon. Giving them the opportunity to work on state-of-art equipment “is going to help them on their path to success in the field of hospitality.”

Equipment that’s on the cutting edge of technology helps Sandoval accomplish his goal of giving his students real-world, practical experience. “My aim is to provide them with hands-on experience so when they go into the job market, they have this experience,” he says. “It’s resume-building. They’ll go into an interview, and if two people have the same degree, this is why this candidate is better.”



Rebels Yell...for Coffee

When it’s time for a quick bite and a coffee, the Rebel Grounds coffee and snack bar in Hospitality Hall is the place to go to. Chef Sandoval and Assistant Executive Chef Stephanie Bogert are in charge of the menu at Rebel Grounds, which includes a variety of grab-and-go items for breakfast and lunch. Here, too, Welbilt equipment makes things run smoothly. Recipes for hot sandwiches and other items are already programmed into the Merrychef eikon® e4 high-speed oven. “With the picture icon, all the students have to do is hit the icon and open it up. It beeps when it’s done, they pull it out, cut it and serve it. It’s extremely fast and very simple,” says Sandoval. For sophisticated coffee drinks, a Multiplex Blend-in-Cup® machine “allows us to do frappés, smoothies, frozen lemonades...all those sorts of things.”



BRAND WATCH GARLAND®

Founded in:	Countries in Garland’s network:	Meals served per day prepared on Garland equipment:	garland-group.com
1864	160	5 million	

02

Trends

Solutions for New Realities

Success in foodservice operations represents a faster-moving, harder-to-hit target today than ever before. In the wake of the COVID pandemic, some consumer patterns and behaviors have changed permanently, while others seem to be returning to the status quo. Finding, training and retaining adequate staff sometimes seems all but impossible.

Supply chain issues with food and other inputs are significant and unprecedented. Technology continues to move ahead at dizzying speed, transforming the very nature of foodservice.

What are operators and specifiers to make of all this? What do they need to know to make the best decisions when embarking on new builds or remodels of foodservice kitchens?

Four foodservice design and management advisory services consultants share their latest thinking. Collectively, this group has more than a century's worth of experience in foodservice operations, distribution, management and consulting:



Lenny Condenzio,
CEO of Ricca Design Studios



Eric Goodrich,
Associate Principal of Rippe Associates



Khaled Halabi,
Director of Design at Cini-Little International



Carolyn Ruck,
Principal of Ruck-Shockey Associates

Here's what they had to say.

Finding the Flex Points

Q: In the current foodservice environment, how can you design operations to build in flexibility — segment flexibility, daypart flexibility and menu flexibility?

KHALED HALABI: There was always a need to design for relative flexibility, but that's true now more than ever. We find equipment that does multiple things: a pizza oven can also roast Brussels sprouts. The essence of flexibility is combination. The combi oven is the best steamer and the best convection oven, and combining the two cuts cooking time in half. If you want to cook for 500 people, it's your thing. Other multi-mode ovens excel at cooking smaller batches of food in different trays at the same time — a pizza, chicken breasts, croissants and bacon, with no odor transfer.

We've gotten rid of permanent structural components and permanent pieces of equipment in favor of seamless replaceable countertop equipment. Think of a college, corporate dining or healthcare server with induction burners out front. One day, you're cooking burgers and offering condiments; another day, you're finishing pasta dishes with different sauces and toppings. Three weeks later, you remove the induction burners and put in electric wok burners to offer made-to-order Asian stir-fry.

LENNY CONDENZIO: Modularity is key — plug-and-play equipment that's ventless or can be switched

out for other equipment under a hood. If you only use a wok or charbroiler a few times a month, you can flip it in or out of the cooking lineup as needed. We have always designed our serving counters to be up on legs so finished flooring could run through underneath. During the coronavirus pandemic, when these stations weren't self-serve anymore, they were easy to convert from island stations into single-sided stations for served salads, with an employee on the other side.

ERIC GOODRICH: We try to build in future flexibility so we can interchange equipment as diner preferences change. Hot-and-cold wells can be whatever they need to be to support the menu items. Food shields can be positioned for served or self-service foods. Mobile equipment stands under island hoods with overlapping fire protection mean you can switch out a griddle or wok range or Teppanyaki grill. Equipment should also be as multi-functional as possible to support changing trends in menu preferences. We often like to rough-in utilities for future equipment and oversize exhaust systems nominally to handle future equipment changes.

CAROLYN RUCK: You can never predict the future. Flexibility in kitchen design means looking at all the options and how to maneuver around them as conditions change. Energy requirements are changing, going from gas to electric, but brownouts are also an issue, so it might be good to have different power sources available, whether you're using them or not.



Design Decisions Help Manage Food Costs

Q: How can kitchen design address rising food costs?

LC: This is chef- and operation-driven. Depending on the operation, we're thinking differently about receiving, about storage, about kitchen prep areas. It comes back to flexibility — more options are offered by sous vide, cook-chill and new technologies.

EG: It's a balancing act — additional food costs versus additional labor costs. Do you bring in somebody new, or pay somebody on your staff time-and-a-half to dice tomatoes, or do you pay more for pre-diced tomatoes? If you have the labor, you can do more advanced prep, more sous vide or cook-chill, and then have larger storage areas. You can purchase local produce in bulk to process and store for use later on. Then, you can throw it in a combi or a ventless accelerated oven and serve it hot with the food quality preserved. For us, it's important to give operators all the tools in the toolbox: enough space, ways to consolidate production at one location rather than a number of locations, like a high-output food processor. A blast chiller or blast freezer is now a necessity in a kitchen today.

CR: Computer software can tell you when to buy, when to menu something, how to manage costs. This has given chefs more freedom and flexibility to change menus.

But you have to buy the right software package for your program that includes software for equipment — not necessarily the biggest or best. Getting profitability out of it requires a lot of attention to the operation, appropriate documentation and adjusting the parameters you need to adjust. There definitely should be one or two people dedicated to running the software.



Foodservice Everywhere

Q: Operators today have more different points of service than ever before. How can design accommodate this decentralization trend?

KH: A lot of this happened during the pandemic years, and it's kind of here to stay. In a corporate dining setting, for example, the employees working on the eighth floor no longer come down to the cafeteria all at once every day. What system can we provide for the people who choose not to congregate? One thing is vending. Another is mobile phone preordering for pickup. That has certain advantages, just as it does for hotel room service; you know beforehand exactly how many orders you will have of what foods and can plan accordingly.

EG: Especially on campuses, there are more foodservice locations that might not have a back of house for prep or cooking, from coffee shops to salad bars. Small, unmanned

kiosks and automated vending machines are also part of this. They allow the operator to get additional revenue from someone who might not walk a mile to the student center. Most of them require a minimal investment, although unstaffed POS stations are more expensive. Central commissary production is perfect for those kinds of decentralized foodservice operations. The use of central baking and centralized cold prep can help control quality and make the most of labor.

We have multiple projects right now with veterans' homes, which compete with private senior living locations. Given this competition, we're really changing the service model. Food is made in a central production kitchen and sent to serving kitchens in each unit, some equipped with a speed oven, to be plated and served in a real dining room. We're no longer doing central warewashing with flight-type machines; each unit cleans its own china, flatware and glassware in undercounter machines. It ultimately improves the residents' quality of life.

CR: We are definitely seeing more unstaffed micro-markets. Operators can stock them with fresh foods, and customers can use smart credit card technology to unlock the unit and get products at any time of the day or night. They can't take out something without getting a charge on their credit card. Nobody is there to watch the unit, so there are security cameras. You lose a little product, but so far, there has been a low loss rate.



The Labor Squeeze

Q: How can design and equipment choices address today's labor challenges?

KH: Inception studies help reduce labor costs when we design kitchens. We try to combine elements of designed space so that one person can do at least two things at once. The staffer standing in front of the oven all day, turning the pizzas — can you give that person something else to do? Can you consolidate the salad and deli stations so the same person who chops tomatoes and makes salad dressing can make a hoagie? If you can combine two tasks with one skill set, one person can do both; when you get busy, you can add a second person.

Labor challenges affect equipment selection. We're seeing a lot of self-service vending — french fries, burgers, pizza, soft-serve with toppings. Unstaffed micro-markets where you put in a QR code and pick up food. All that is labor-friendly.

Many pieces of equipment are becoming "smart" or connected in the cloud. The head chef can be sitting in an office half a world away, choosing menus, and can set up the mechanics of the combi — and the person coming in at 6 a.m. only has to put the chicken in the oven and press Go.

Cook-chill-retherm systems in big production kitchens pump out an amount of food that you would have needed ten times the staff to produce 30 years ago. That's a huge labor-saving technology.

LC: You still have to prepare food, cook it and put it together. Where I see tremendous change is in self-checkout with no cashiers.

Another new technology that coordinates with this: scanners that can now see the food item itself, such as a hamburger, and don't need a bar code or QR code. That speeds throughput without the cashier and ensures food charges are correct.

Business and industry, healthcare, higher education are all making more use of mobile app ordering. And not just for takeout — the customer can approach the venue and the mobile app will alert the staff to produce the order so it will be ready. All this has implications for other systems. This data can be captured to help the operator plan the menu with the right items for quick throughput, see what dayparts need to be improved and see where he can build another location to capture more customers.

CR: Anything that means kitchen staff aren't spending as much time playing with the equipment is a labor-saving feature. If the oven can start at 350 degrees F and in 10 minutes automatically drop to 200 degrees F, the cook can move on to the next task.

Equipment cleaning and maintenance have been a big focus of innovation for manufacturers for several years. All the things that can be done to make it easier to keep equipment clean and maintain its reliability will have a big impact. I don't know how much robotic components in the kitchen are going to help, until the time that the robot can do everything a person can do. But a robot device for

cleaning floors could have a real impact in the future.

EG: Mobile preordering and POS stations with no cashiers change how you design the square feet of a foodservice operation. There's more back-of-house prep and cooking and less front-of-house action. You need equipment that can handle high throughput, is easy to operate and requires less skill to use, like conveyor ovens, brick ovens with rotating decks, speed ovens and combi ovens with touch screens and preprogrammed recipes, and kitchen display systems. You have to design the kitchen around the preferred technology. You need more space and more power in the kitchen to handle future retrofits.



Tech Done Right

Q: How can operators find and implement technologies that actually solve their problems, rather than chasing new technology just for the sake of doing so?

LC: For me, as a consultant who does management advisory services, creating operating efficiencies that save labor and save money — what comes to mind is Revit® for creating kitchen layouts. We use all the virtual tools we can in Revit. As soon as possible in the planning process — hopefully in the schematic design — we show the client virtual walk-throughs in the space. It helps everybody on the design team and the

client team arrive at decisions and feel good about what's happening as the design evolves. It's such an invaluable tool that I'm surprised it took folks so long to adapt to doing things that way.

CR: Choosing the right technologies begins with understanding what your service is, what your business is and how you can build it. Don't bring in technology if it's not going to help you. I see with a lot of tech that comes in; staff don't understand it so they do a lot of workarounds. They're not taking advantage of it. It's all about putting in tech that works and then training your people in how to use it.

A big area of innovation right now is the dish room — what's the right sizing for the volume — whether you need more than one dish room and how you move dirty plates around. How you move food waste, whether you use a pulper. Dish machines have improved a lot over the past 10 or 15 years and have gotten much better at water usage. In the future, think of what robotics will be able to do for the dish room.

KH: We've seen gimmicky fads come and go, and we've seen things stick. You might see a robotic arm that flips burgers, but you've got to figure out what serves an operational need. The technological advance might help you with operations or cooking. Or it might be an equipment design solution to save space. Or it might be equipment that does the same thing as before but looks sleeker, like a hidden spigot underneath a counter.

Most equipment today is connected to the cloud for diagnostic purposes. Back in the day, if the dishwasher went

down, you'd call the service provider, maybe they switched the unit off and back on and it worked, maybe they didn't have the part needed and had to come back. Now, you call the servicer, give the unit's serial number — they can tell the person in the kitchen what to do or what part is needed. It saves a lot of time and a lot of equipment downtime.

EG: There are some no-brainers. For management and daily supervision, it's important to have as connected a kitchen as you can, with pieces of equipment communicating with each other — diagnostics to see if preventive maintenance is needed or alert you if something is wrong. Walk-ins and reach-ins that automatically record temperature are incredibly important. It no longer takes a human being's time out of the day to maintain logs and records for when the health department shows up. We see more redundancy in refrigeration systems — if the compressor goes down, it automatically switches to a backup.

All of these are huge savings in labor costs, but there's also a cost to ongoing tech support, especially when the tech is proprietary.

For 50 years, the typical foodservice design didn't change much. Now it's advancing by leaps and bounds. The next five years will be very telling in terms of how technology improves and becomes more affordable. As wages continue to increase, as the labor market remains tight, as market costs go up, it's going to be much easier to see payback. It's a fascinating time to be in this industry.

03

People

ALL WELL AND GOOD

In July 2022, Ali Group officially completed its acquisition of Welbilt, Inc. The move sees the consolidation of a powerful global foodservice equipment entity.



Ali Group's acquisition of Welbilt®, Inc. was the culmination of more than one year of negotiation and regulatory approval, which began on May 28, 2021. It sees Ali Group consolidate and increase its global presence in the foodservice equipment market, bringing to bear

the full power of Welbilt's offerings and worldwide partnerships with customers and suppliers alike. The move sees Ali Group adding leading Welbilt brands such as Delfield® and Frymaster® into the fold. The Ali Group now consists of 113 global brands in 34 countries, with 75 manufacturing facilities in 17 countries — including primary manufacturing facilities in the U.S., Mexico and China — and sales and service subsidiaries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, North America, South America

and Asia Pacific. It also saw Kevin Clark, formerly president of ACP, Inc., and a 39-year veteran of the foodservice equipment industry, become CEO of Welbilt. The acquisition was a great move for both parties, says Clark. "Welbilt has great brands, in the North American market particularly, so it expands Ali Group's presence in that market, not just in volume, but in categories — that's important to both our end-user customers and our channel partners. Ali Group is excited about the acquisition.

It's a long-term strategic fit for both businesses."

The acquisition highlights the unique strengths of both companies, says Andrea Cocchi, Ali Group's Chief Executive Officer EMEA and APAC. "It's a win-win situation," he says, as "Welbilt brings some expertise in key technologies, like accelerated cooking with Merrychef® and induction cooking with Induc®. Induction technology is one of the assets of Welbilt that's already important in Europe." Clark agrees that induction cooking presents a great growth opportunity for the company. "It brings some unique technology in an area that's growing globally."

Another benefit for the combined company is a broader reach to foodservice segments. "I would say this is one of the most important ways the companies complement each other," says Cocchi. "Welbilt is well recognized and well organized in chains and national accounts like c-stores where you deal with the operators directly. Ali Group is historically stronger in what we call the

general market. Merging the two cultures and the two reputations absolutely brings value worldwide."

Geographically, Ali Group now has an even broader global reach than before. In many areas, the combined company, says Cocchi, "can accelerate the growth and presence of some Ali Group brands [which might have been] smaller and without the resources to enter." While some of the Ali Group brands — such as Carpigiani, Scotsman and Rancilio — do significant business worldwide, this will allow more brands to become truly global. This will benefit end-users, he says, "because they expect a kind of global supplier."

The acquisition will also benefit the partner organizations, including dealers and consultants, that both groups currently work with, says Clark. "There is certainly a scale of portfolio advantage, where we bring some weight as well as adding some pieces to the puzzle that Welbilt didn't have, as well as the other way around. There's very little overlap in this acquisition, which means these



Above: New CEO of Welbilt, Kevin Clark, believes the acquisition by Ali Group was "a great move" for both parties.

businesses will continue to grow and innovate.” Clark believes the move works because it sees two “special” companies uniting. “If you look across Welbilt’s global portfolio, there’s very established brands in major key categories in a commercial kitchen. Whether it’s Delfield in the [North American] fabrication and refrigeration piece, Garland in core cooking, Frymaster as one of the premier frying brands in not just North America but in the world — all the brands are very strong and have their unique position in the space. All of the Welbilt brands we acquired are considered leaders in their category: number one, two or three — very much in that upper echelon,” he says.

Sharing Synergies and Innovation

Clark believes both organizations will benefit from sharing best practices. “There’s certainly some customer-facing sales synergies we can share. Welbilt has some strong sales relationships that do not overlap with Ali Group’s offering, so we can roll in some of the existing Ali Group companies to talk about how we can better serve their markets. It goes the other way too: There’s some existing long-term relationships in the Ali world that Welbilt can benefit from. And there are other synergies in foodservice equipment. We’re a big purchaser of sheet stainless steel, so our stainless leverage goes up and we would expect some cost synergies there.” One thing Clark is adamant that won’t happen is that companies won’t be “smashed together”

to save costs, he says. “That’s just not the way Ali Group works. Our synergies will be more market-facing.” And innovation will remain core to Welbilt’s — and Ali Group’s — product offering, says Clark. “Welbilt and Ali Group are both very innovative companies. Ali Group’s legacy is entrepreneurial, nimble companies that are close to their markets. Innovation often comes from market need, so you’re perhaps going to see a little bit more of that kind of philosophy from the Ali world permeating into Welbilt.” The acquisition will see a mix of cultures where “central innovation takes a backseat to market or local-led innovation, giving the best of both worlds,” says Clark. In terms of his new role, Clark is excited to realize the opportunities the acquisition presents to his teams — and their clients. “I’m grateful for Filippo Berti’s confidence and trust he has shown in giving me this opportunity,” says Clark. “I’ve worked for a variety of different companies in this industry. I have been in the foodservice manufacturing side since 1992 and people have often asked me where were my



“ We need a balance of seeing what the next decade brings, but also solving our customers' issues today... We will continue to do what we can to invest in our business. ”

Kevin Clark
CEO, Welbilt

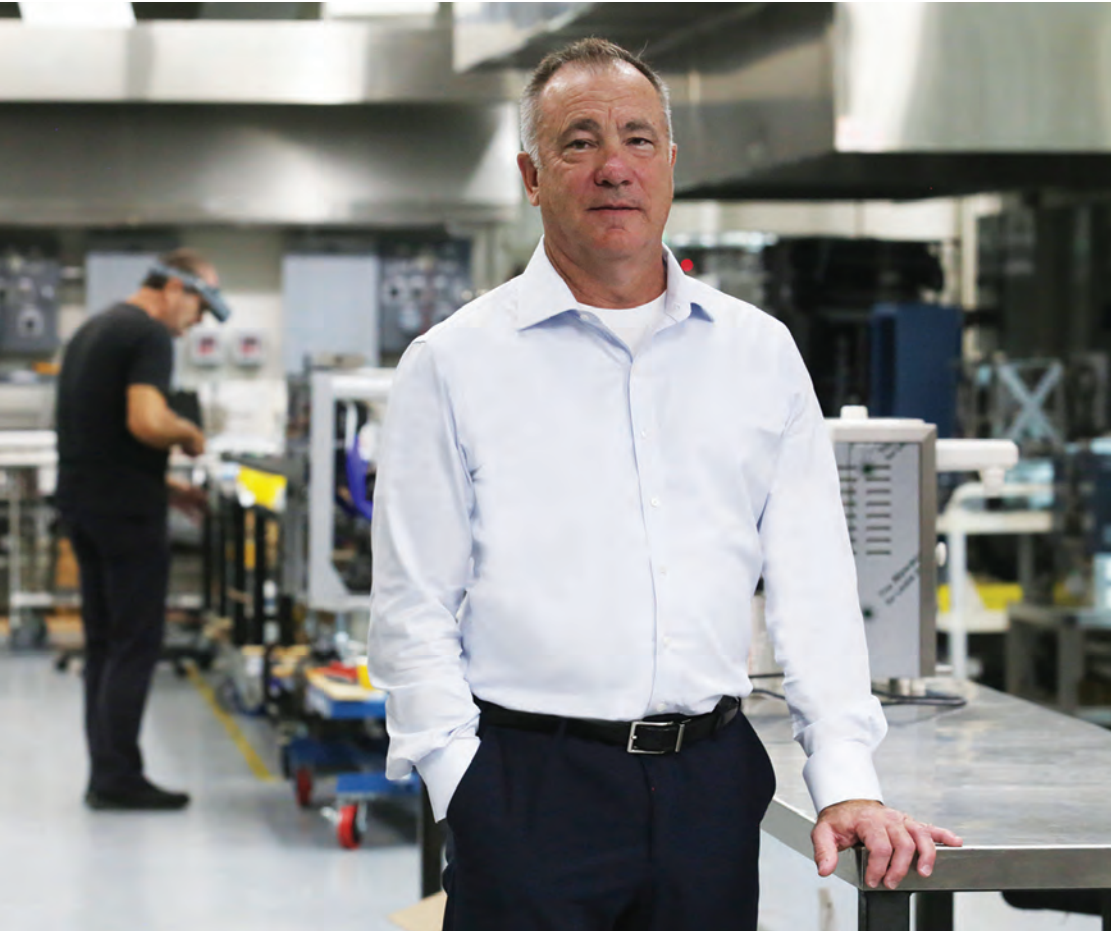
favorite places to work. Ali Group is top of the list, but the next one was working for Delfield in the Enodis days. So, in some ways, it’s a little bit like coming home. I have intimate knowledge of these businesses, so, it’s a good fit for me, but it’s also exciting to come in and see the changes made in Welbilt in the last 12 years and work my way through those before leading it forward into its next generation of growth.”



Facing Global Impacts

With the industry currently dealing with some significant challenges, including rampant inflation, supply chain pressures and spiraling energy and food costs, combining expertise and skill will prove vital for end-user customers, says Clark, particularly when trying to address labor concerns. “Customers are facing major labor challenges. That has seen automation go from a buzzword to reality. But there’s innovation that will be more effective in 20 years and some that will be effective next week. We need a balance of seeing what the next decade brings but also solving our customers’ issues today. Sometimes those are innovative steps, not leaps, but [they] eventually get you there. We will continue to do what we

can to invest in our business. Our goal is to continue to innovate, grow and find ways for these great brands in the Welbilt portfolio to continue on that path.” Being close to the market, flexible, nimble and entrepreneurial makes Ali Group, now augmented with Welbilt, ideally placed to weather these storms and adapt to changing times, says Clark. “From an overall industry standpoint, if COVID has taught us one thing it’s that, especially here in North America, there will always be a need for food prepared outside of the home and, through its resilience and creativity, the restaurant industry will remain up to the challenge of meeting that need. The future of foodservice equipment continues to be bright.”



“Welbilt brings some expertise in key technologies, like accelerated cooking with Merrychef and induction cooking with Inducs,” says Andrea Cocchi (left), Ali Group’s Chief Executive Officer EMEA and APAC.

BRAND WATCH



Founded as Welbilt Stove Company:
1929
Number of brands:
27
Number of consecutive years that Welbilt has earned the ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year - Sustained Excellence Award
13
Number of employees worldwide:
4,000+
welbilt.com

The Montague Company Joins the Ali Group

The Montague Company’s roots reach all the way back to the time and place of the Gold Rush: San Francisco in 1857. There, a young inventor named Wilfred Weed Montague started a business selling pots, pans and other assorted hardware items. Eventually, he expanded the business into making steel-and-brick ovens, the predecessor of today’s Montague line of products.

By 1910, the company, now incorporated as W.W. Montague, Inc., was widely recognized as the leading maker of stoves on the West Coast, and soon thereafter expanded into furnace-making as well. Like so many other companies, W.W. Montague ran into financial trouble during the Great Depression and was purchased by Joseph Whalen, a Montague employee who had worked his way up to foreman after starting as a sheet metal mechanic in the 1920s. In 1936, the furnace side of the business was spun off, with Whalen retaining the range manufacturing portion of the company. He moved to San Francisco’s Mission Street and began operating under the current name of The Montague Company.

Through the ensuing years, Montague grew its product line as the company developed a worldwide reputation for producing a broad range of high-quality kitchen equipment. In 2022, the Whalen family — descendants of Joseph Whalen — decided to sell the company, and The Montague Company became one of the newest members of the Ali Group family of companies.



Joe Deckelman

Focusing on Quality

Joe Deckelman, President of The Montague Company, says, “We’ve never aspired to be the biggest and widest-ranging company per se. We’ve tried to focus on our core expertise, which is providing high-value cooking products.” Producing a piece of equipment that chefs will want to buy takes in-depth knowledge of their world, he says. “Our products are built with the operator in mind: how they’re going to use it, how they’re going to abuse it, how they’re going to clean it or not clean it. All of those things have been central to the design component of everything we’ve done here.”

True to its roots, cooking equipment is still the heart of the Montague product line. Reflecting the variety of prep methods found in the modern restaurant kitchen, Montague offers standard, convection and pizza ovens; broilers and fryers; and a variety of ranges and range tops. Montague island cooking suites are an essential component of many foodservice kitchens. The company also offers specialty cooking equipment such as pasta cookers and wok ranges.



Montague has a worldwide reputation for producing a broad range of high-quality kitchen equipment.

And more recently, Montague added to its product lineup a selection of refrigeration equipment, like prep tables and chill stations.

To respond to industry changes, Montague keeps a close eye on the way restaurants operate today. For

example, Montague island cooking suites are known for their durability; Deckelman says the suites can easily have a 20-year operational life. However, with restaurants changing their concepts or menus more frequently than ever, the equipment they need today might not be the same equipment they will require five or 10 years down the road. To facilitate these changes, Montague developed its UDC plug-and-play modular suite. “The framework of the system stays the same,” Deckelman says, “but you can just disconnect the equipment from the utilities, roll it

out of there and plug whatever it is that you want in there for your new design. We completely evolved our island suite concept to cater to what people are doing these days and the fast turnover of staff and menu changes.”

Montague’s close connection to the foodservice consultant community has been another important factor in its success. “It’s our lifeblood,” Deckelman says. “It’s a daily activity for us to interact with them.” A consultant can come to Montague with a design — anything from a finished design down to the proverbial sketch on the back of a cocktail napkin — and Montague will develop an integrated cooking solution. “Cooking equipment is the centerpiece of a commercial foodservice operation,” he says. “It’s very complicated, intricate and specific. And that’s our wheelhouse. Working with design consultants is what this company is built around.”

A New Beginning

Deckelman previously worked at Champion, another Ali Group company, so he is familiar with the Ali Group and its decentralized structure. Each Ali Group company is encouraged to operate as an individual business unit, and that will work well for Montague, says Deckelman. “It allows us the freedom to breathe and to do the things that we need to do to succeed, but it’s always in the context of what they’re trying to do as a group.” He has also seen the management styles of the founder of the Ali Group, the late Luciano Berti and current Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Filippo Berti. “Filippo Berti is just as impressive as his father for maintaining consistency across all the brands. They demand a lot from their people, but they’re firm, fair and have integrity. From operating an individual brand, that’s all you can ask from a parent company — to know what they’re trying to get you to accomplish and how you fit into their larger goals.”

What’s in the future for Montague? “That’s an easy one,” says Deckelman. “The world is going electric. We are 95%-plus gas-powered cooking equipment right now. In five years, I predict it’ll be 50-50. In 10 years, it’ll be 95% electric and 5% gas. We are at the forefront of a major fuel type paradigm shift in our industry. We’re going to be the leader of that.”

BRAND WATCH



Established: **1857**

Average lifespan (in years) of a typical Montague island cooking suite: **20+**

The Montague 24/7 heavy-duty range supports cooking: **montaguecompany.com**

24 hours, 7 days a week

The Ali Group, in partnership with The Berti Foundation, is pleased to announce the recipients of its fourth annual round of college scholarships. The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program supports dependents of Ali Group North America US-based employees. The Berti Foundation, named for the founder of the Ali Group, Luciano Berti, and his wife, Giancarla, promotes education and the arts. In 2022, 39 students applied for the scholarships.

The Foundation also renewed the scholarships of 12 students who had been awarded scholarships in previous years. To date, a total of 30 students have received educational support from The Berti Foundation.

“During this difficult economic time, we understand how challenging it can be to put a child through college,” says Filippo Berti, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group. “Through these scholarships, we are pleased to be able to help this group of students attain their educational goals.”

The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program offers renewable scholarships of up to \$10,000 annually to cover qualifying tuition and fees. Awards are renewable up to three years or until a bachelor’s degree is earned, whichever occurs first, on the basis of satisfactory academic performance (maintaining a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent).

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be high school seniors/graduates or college undergraduates who are dependent children of full-time Ali Group North America US-based employees and planning to enroll in full-time undergraduate studies at an accredited two-year or four-year college or university for the entire academic year.

This group of scholarship winners covers a wide range of disciplines, from nursing to horticulture to business management, and each of the students has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. The scholarships were awarded to the following students, representing six Ali Group companies:

“Through these scholarships, we are pleased to be able to help this group of students attain their educational goals.”

Filippo Berti
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,
Ali Group

THE BERTI FOUNDATION

The Berti Foundation Awards Seven Scholarships



- Ariana Brown** *Parent:* Thomas Deloach (Scotsman Ice)
- Yaquelin Cuevas** *Guardian:* Maria Cuevas (Ice-O-Matic)
- Claire Freitag** *Parent:* Charles Freitag (ACP Solutions, Inc.)
- Da’Nayja Johnson** *Parent:* Katrina Johnson (Scotsman Ice)
- Braeden LaBonte** *Parent:* Lisa LaRock (Edlund)
- Juan Montiel** *Parent:* Olibell Velasquez (Beverage-Air)
- Abbie Talken** *Parent:* Kimberly Talken (Electro Freeze)



Ariana Brown
Columbia, S.C.

Intended school:
South Carolina State University,
Orangeburg, S.C.

Major/course of study:
Cybersecurity

What got you interested in that course of study?
I love computers and trying to figure out the hows and whys of them. So being in cybersecurity will help me find out.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I would like to secure a job at a company as a cybersecurity analyst.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I would like to be working in Houston at a Fortune 500 company as a cybersecurity specialist.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I am from the South and don’t like coleslaw!

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
Africa — just to see the culture and experience the motherland. I don’t feel TV or pictures give the true insight.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
I love to listen to music! My mom will dance with me, and sometimes we make up our own choreography. Music is the key to love and life!



Yaquelin Cuevas
Denver

Intended school:
Community College of Aurora,
Lowry Campus, Aurora, Colo.

Major/course of study:
Accounting

What got you interested in that course of study?
Math is my favorite subject, and I [enjoy] solving math problems.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I am going to transfer to a four-year university.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself working as an accountant for the IRS or doing accounting for businesses.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I am a first-generation student who is going to college.

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
I would travel to Paris or Hawaii because Paris is a beautiful place, and I have always had the dream to go there. Hawaii, because my friend went there, and she says it is a relaxing place by the beach.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
I like to go to the gym, go out with my friends and family, listen to music and watch movies.



Claire Freitag
Marion, Iowa

Intended School:
Liberty University,
Lynchburg, Va.

Major/course of study:
Strategic Communication

What got you interested in that course of study?
Communication is used in every career and in all aspects of life. I can use my skill set and training wherever my career may lead.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I plan to start working toward my master’s degree in Nonprofit Management Leadership.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself finishing my master’s degree and working at a nonprofit organization that I am passionate about.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
Every car I’ve owned has reached over 300,000 miles.

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
My dream has always been to travel the world, beginning with Ireland, New Zealand and Europe.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
My free time is spent with my family and enjoying life with them.



Da’Nayja Johnson
Allendale, S.C.

Intended school:
College of Charleston,
Charleston, S.C.

Major/course of study:
Studio Art

What got you interested in that course of study?
Drawing gave me peace of mind, so I wanted to further my knowledge on what it would be like to truly be an artist.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
Hopefully, open my own art studio and help others.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself inspiring others and my art studio thriving. Being an overall better person altogether, making a difference in the world.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I am talented, but I prefer not to showcase it. I’m not really sure why.

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
I would travel to Jamaica because it was where my mother and my godmother planned to go before my godmother passed away.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
Drawing, nails, hair.



Braeden LaBonte
South Burlington, Vt.

Intended school:
State University of New York,
Albany, N.Y.

Major/course of study:
Digital Forensics

What got you interested in that course of study?
I attended a GenCyber camp in high school and realized this was the major for me. It was incredibly interesting, and I knew after that camp, this is what I wanted to do.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
Ideally, any work for an agency in the government or even the private sector, depending on what the specific job is. I want to specialize in mobile forensics, though.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself working in mobile forensics for the government.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I raised over \$10,000 for the Special Olympics doing the Penguin Plunge over a few years.

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
I would go to Ireland because I am part Irish and have always wanted to go to see what it is like.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
I love to hang out with friends, whether we are out and about or just playing video games.



Juan Montiel
Winston-Salem, N.C.

Intended school:
Guilford Technical Community College,
Greensboro, N.C.

Major/course of study:
Culinary Arts and Hospitality

What got you interested in that course of study?
I would always look at the homemade foods my mom or grandma made and think of how happy those foods made people feel.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I would like to work on my craft in the culinary side and find my place in the foodservice industry either as a cook/chef or as a manager/bartender.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I dream of having my own business of Venezuelan cuisine.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
My charisma. I have a great ability to attract people and lead them in some kind of way.

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
I want to be able to travel through Europe, starting with Italy.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
My favorite thing to do is hang out with my friends — try new and exciting activities, eat in new places. I also play video games and listen to music.



Abbie Talken
Blue Grass, Iowa

Intended school:
University of Iowa, Iowa City,
Iowa

Major/course of study:
Biology

What got you interested in that course of study?
I love biology and human anatomy, so I wanted to enter a course of study that allowed me to take my knowledge of those subjects and use it to help others.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I’d like to become a medical research scientist so I can work to find treatments that can improve people’s quality of life.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself continuing my education to work towards a PhD in Biomedical Sciences.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
When I was 12 years old, I had spinal fusion surgery to treat my scoliosis. I made a full recovery and couldn’t be happier.

If you could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?
Spain. I’ve taken four years of Spanish and I would love to improve my skills.

What’s your favorite activity to do in your spare time?
I love playing video games to learn new things and express my creativity.

THE BERTI FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: IN NUMBERS

2018-2019
Inaugural academic year for the Berti Foundation scholarships

30
Students who have received educational support from the Berti Foundation

12
Ali Group North America companies represented to date by scholarship winners’ parents/guardians

10
States represented to date by scholarship winners

2.0
Minimum GPA (on a 4.0 scale) students must maintain for scholarships

\$10,000
Maximum annual amount for renewable scholarship, to cover qualifying tuition and fees

39
Applicants for scholarships in 2022

12
Scholarships renewed in 2022 for previous winners

04

Success stories

The only lakeside private country club in New Hampshire, Bald Peak Colony Club was founded in 1921. It sits on 1,000 acres next to the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee by the Ossipee Mountains and near its namesake, Bald

Peak. “Originally, the idea was to create a Boston getaway,” says Chef Mark Brown.

Founder Thomas Gustave Plant sought to turn the former private estate into a country club, so he added a golf course, clubhouse, boathouse and guest cottages just two years after breaking ground. Much of the earlier era’s structures still remain. Although Plant’s nearby home, named Castle in the Clouds, is no longer part of the club property, The Castle Preservation Society continues to preserve and maintain the house and its grounds.

Every day for four and a half months out of the year, **Bald Peak Colony Club’s** kitchen operates at full throttle, requiring maximum cooking efficiency.

Country Club Streamlines Production

Bald Peak’s original buildings still rest on the hilltop among pine forests and rolling hills overlooking the lake. Throughout the years, the original ridge cottages were converted to private homes, and residences have been added along the lakeshore and hillsides. What is unique is that a third of the club’s 400 members and 95% of its more than 100 employees reside on Colony Club property during the season.

“Years later, this is still a regional retreat, with Florida snowbirds and residents of surrounding cities comprising our membership,” Brown says. “There is a four-plus-year waiting list to become a member. This is a good problem to have but also an issue as we only have one golf course and one restaurant; we don’t want to create long wait lists for golfing and dining.”

Today, the club’s scenic 18-hole Donald Ross golf course features elevated greens and gentle sloping fairways. The racquets department includes five tennis courts and a new sports complex with pickleball and paddle courts. Bald Peak hosts clinics, tournaments and special events for all skill levels.

Bald Peak’s world-class restaurant serves as a popular amenity and one of the few eateries in this rural area.

The Bald Peak beach provides access for members to swim and kayak. Throughout the season, members attend clambakes, themed parties and private events at the beach. Club activities for the young and old range from yoga on the beach to bridge in the clubhouse, cooking classes and more.

Bald Peak’s world-class restaurant serves as a popular amenity and one of the few eateries in this rural area. In addition to the main dining room on the clubhouse’s lower level, which accommodates up to 220 people, the single kitchen regularly caters events in the East Lounge and Upper Terrace, located on the clubhouse’s main floor, which holds 150, and the Racquet Club, which can seat up to 135.

“The restaurant is open from Memorial Day weekend to Columbus Day and serves three meals a day, seven days a week, to guests and employees during this period,” Brown says. “We’re in a remote area about two hours from Boston and 1½ hours from Portland, Maine, so we need to offer a diverse menu.”

The large kitchen has 27 employees who serve on average 120 to 130 people for dinner, 120 to 140 people for lunch, and 20 to 30 people for breakfast.



The warm, charming dining room at Bald Peak Colony Club.



“We also have guest rooms for people to stay overnight, so that drives the breakfast numbers,” Brown says. “Our wedding meals are all plated, and these events average 200 to 230 people.”

In addition to serving dining meals and supporting golf tournaments, the foodservice operation hosts special events such as theme nights with wine-pairing dinners, an Eastern European buffet and steakhouse nights. “We really have to be a jack-of-all-trades,” Brown says.

About 50% of the menu features classic country club fare such as eggs Benedict, sandwiches and crab cakes, while the other half is seasonal and changes once a month. The restaurant also offers nightly specials consisting of three entrées and three to four appetizers or starters.

Though the restaurant’s kitchen had been well used, it needed some updates. “When Mark took over as chef of Bald Peak, the country club’s kitchen was pretty outdated, so the plan was to update the back of house with new equipment,” says Matthew Auck, Eloma USA’s Vice President of Sales and Marketing. “When updating older kitchens, space is at a premium.”



Chef Mark Brown

(Left, top and bottom) Whether indoors or out, dining at Bald Peak offers spectacular views.

Brown first reached out to an old friend, Martin Huddleston, Eloma USA’s former Vice President of Sales and who is now General Manager at Convotherm US. Brown and Huddleston began working together in kitchens in the late ’90s. “Mark is an incredibly talented chef, having competed in major culinary events nationally and internationally,” Huddleston says. “We teamed up several times to compete at various cooking events, and his experience on the culinary stage was instrumental in our success.”

Brown and Huddleston also founded an artisanal bakery in the early 2000s that focused on handcrafted breads. “Working alongside him, baking professionally, was a great learning experience and wonderfully memorable time in my career,” Huddleston says.

When Huddleston transitioned from chef to commercial foodservice equipment sales in 2005, he



(Right) Chef Brown starts the prep for a busy evening.

(Above) The Eloma Genius^{MT} in use.

remained in contact with Brown. “I respect Mark’s culinary acumen and expertise as much as anyone’s today, and we regularly discuss cooking techniques and equipment,” Huddleston says. “He reaches out to me for advice about specific equipment categories of cooking equipment, and I rely on him for insight on how chefs are using our equipment and what they want to see in future offerings.”

The two joined forces again for Bald Peak’s kitchen update. Up until 2022, Brown said the kitchen operated “old school” with its double-stacked convection ovens and steamers. “These single-use units took up a lot of room,” Brown says.

Brown became familiar with the Eloma Genius^{MT} 6 combi oven line one off-season while he was working for Georgia’s world-renowned Augusta National Golf Club. “I had familiarity with the combis while working at the Masters Tournament, and already had a relationship with Martin, so I knew what I wanted for Bald Peak,” Brown says. “We

made the move to a combi oven, and it definitely gets the most use and is our workhorse.”

The 6-11’s versatility has accommodated Bald Peak’s extensive and diverse menu while keeping up with the club’s high-volume requirements. The combi is located on the kitchen’s banquet side to back up the two convection ovens but runs solo during smaller events.

“It has a smoking feature, so we’re making our own Canadian bacon for breakfast and smoking our own meats and salmon,” Brown says. “We’re able to utilize the leftovers from our events, reheating items in the combi for employee meals. We also use the probe and hit the program function for retherm; everything is uniformly hot.”

Eloma’s 6-11 also cooks shrimp, mussels and clams as well as smaller batch stocks. “I’ll run sous vide in there with 100% moisture at a precise temperature and can slow poach fish and cook corned beef and pulled chicken,” Brown says.



“We’ve only had the combi at Bald Peak for four months, and we’re doing a lot with it.”
Mark Brown
Chef

“We’ve only had the combi at Bald Peak for four months, and we’re doing a lot with it.”

“This cooking platform worked out well due to its flexibility with catering and à la carte menu items,” Auck says. “Mark utilizes all the oven’s capabilities due to his many needs.”

Along with versatility, space savings was key. The Eloma 6-11 combis’ smaller 36-inch footprint did not require a major reconstruction of the cookline. Two units could handle the high-volume production and specialty cooking needs. “Our units are super flexible and can do just about anything — steaming, baking, poaching, grilling,” Auck says. “The oven works 24/7 for an operation. Even though saving labor wasn’t the focus for Bald Peak, it was gravy on top to be able to roast overnight.”

In addition to the Eloma combi oven, the kitchen uses equipment from other Ali Group companies including Beverage-Air, Champion, Cleveland®, Delfield®, Garland®, Lincoln®, Moffat, Moyer Diebel and Scotsman.

Auck provided the club with chef training on a slow day, cooking a variety of Bald Peak’s menu items, then saving the necessary settings on the oven. “We developed cooking profiles for his products, so all workers need to do is select an icon and push a button,” Auck says. “We also educated

BRAND WATCH



Established:
1975

Eloma USA launched:
2007

Global reach, in number of countries:
65+

eloma.com

Mark on the platform’s nuances so we could develop and save settings for easy, time-saving cooking.”

Intuitive cooking is key as much of Bald Peak’s staff is from overseas and there can be a language barrier. “A large percentage of our staff is from South Africa, the Philippines, Eastern Europe and Asia, but we can train them to use this oven in five minutes or less,” Brown says. “We can put a less-trained employee on a project that involves Eloma’s combi oven and trust that it will be done correctly.”

This takes much of the heavy lifting off of Bald Peak’s sous chefs. Eloma’s 6-11 combi also is easy to maintain with its push-button cleaning program. “It’s like watching a car wash,” Brown says. “We did popovers in there at a high temperature, and it became smoky, but we rinsed the oven down in just 20 minutes.”

Brown needed a cooking solution that was not only easy and efficient but also made the most of Bald Peak’s back-of-house footprint and would be fully utilized. “When I’m making an equipment purchase, I look at how user-friendly the unit is as I don’t want to purchase equipment that just takes up space in the kitchen,” he says. “Eloma’s 6-11 combi oven is definitely being used to a high degree in our kitchen.”

How an innovative new facility
meets the challenges
of correctional foodservice

New Utah Prison Serves Food **SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY**





Crew members depend on a Scotsman ice machine and Victory refrigerators to perform efficiently.



Food for the inmates and staff comes from one major prep kitchen and three receiving kitchens. At press time, the facility was expected to serve around 3,000 inmates, so “we’re looking at [producing] 10,000 meals per day,” Habibija says, factoring in additional meals for staff.

Beyond the daunting task of preparing that volume of meals daily, the foodservice staff must contend with other issues. “First is to maintain separation between different populations, different [levels of] security, threat groups or whatever the case may be at the moment,” says Habibija. “Also, not allowing food distribution to become a means of contraband distribution...or [the passing of] notes or anything that might be a threat to the safety or security of our prison.”

(Left) A Scotsman ice machine and Amana Commercial microwave ovens from ACP Inc. are ready to serve inmates and staff.

(Below) A Vortex power wash sink from Champion makes quick work of dirty pots and pans.



The heavy-duty Edlund can openers in the kitchen (left) have extra features for additional security (right).

The challenges correctional foodservice operations face are numerous and well documented: a frequently changing inmate population with diverse nutritional requirements, staff turnover, tight budgets and, perhaps most importantly, the need for safety and security for both employees and inmates.

The Utah State Correctional Facility, which opened in mid-2022, meets those challenges head-on through a combination of intelligent design and modern equipment. The facility, located 5 miles west

of the Salt Lake City International Airport, replaced a prison built in 1951. The new facility is a massive 1.3 million square feet in size, consisting of 37 buildings (10 housing units and 27 support buildings). When fully occupied, it will hold a maximum of 3,200 male and 600 female inmates. “One of the unique features of our prison is that we house male and female inmates inside of one perimeter,” says facility Lieutenant Bisera Habibija. “They’re separated by a sound and visual barrier wall, but the females have everything the men have.” Most of the prison’s facilities are kept separated, but there are some — like major medical services — that serve both sexes. “Having both sexes under one perimeter saves the taxpayers money on the management cost,” she says.



The prison operates on a classic cycle menu, says Division Director Steven Turley. “We have a rotation of meals,” he says. “We buy certain products, and then every few weeks, that same meal is served again.” A staff dietitian helps manage the overall caloric intake of the inmates.

Besides the sheer volume of meals necessary to meet the prison’s needs, the facility also must deal with a multiplicity of other requirements. “We have to abide by federal and state laws for any religious meals,” Turley says. “And we have a lot of medical diets that we have to abide by.”

Designing for Security

The kitchen design at the Utah State Correctional Facility revolves around two ideas: safety and flexibility. Safety and security is paramount, says the project’s consultant, Hans Faassen of Faassen

The kitchen design at the Utah State Correctional Facility revolves around two ideas: safety and flexibility.

& Associates in Charlotte, N.C. “We have inmates,” he says. “You cannot just ‘be there’ — you always have to be one step ahead of them. It’s a different way of thinking.”

One way that the facility combines safety and flexibility is in its serving line. It has the option of being an open or closed line, as Turley explains. “We have a garage door, so to speak, that you can put up if you want,” he says. “When [the inmates] get to the hole in the wall, they get a tray. And they don’t see how much is put on it. That causes security concerns within an institution. If one inmate gets more than another, or if you’re my cellmate and you wink at me, and then I put two scoops of lasagna on your tray while everyone else gets one — we got problems.” While at this point, all the facility’s lines are running closed, that garage door, as Turley calls it, could be lifted to make the line totally open.



Victory refrigerators in the kitchen at the Utah State Correctional Facility.



How do you interact with consultants?

Rob Geile: In general, as an Ali Group representative, we try to help identify specific pieces of equipment consultants may want to put into their designs. On a more specific level, we’ll have direct conversations about a particular product line and, in some cases, a specific product within that product line.

How were you involved with the Utah State Correctional Facility project?

RG: I’ve known Hans [Faassen] for 30 years. I was made aware of the project at an Association of Correctional Food Service Affiliates (ACFSA) conference

Partnering with Consultants

A Q&A with Rob Geile, CFSP, LEED AP, Vice President of Consultant Services, Ali Group

where we had a very general conversation about a project that was at that time seven years out. Once the project was allocated to Hans as consultant, because of my relationship with him and his relationship with the Ali Group, we started to talk specific products.

What are some of the challenges that consultants are facing these days?

RG: Identifying the customer’s long-term vision. In the past, owners could have a long-term vision, but with concerns about how COVID interacts with their facility and the other things that have taken place since then, consultants must become mentors to their clients.

How so?

RG: For example, do you put in a salad bar? A year and a half ago everyone said, “Absolutely

no way.” Now that’s changed to, “Maybe we can have a modified salad bar because it’s very popular.” So all of those things that everyone was swearing off are slowly being taken back off the shelf, and we’re transitioning back — at least in part — to where we were pre-2020.

How does the Ali Group help consultants do their job more effectively?

RG: We have a broad portfolio of products that address a lot of different needs. That’s one way. The other part is our go-to-market strategy of each company standing on its own. That allows the consultant to be more specific in having discussions with a representative from a particular manufacturer. The reps are experts who understand, in depth, an individual company’s product line.

How did that come into play here?

RG: Let’s take Victory. The conversation started with the general term “refrigerator-freezer,” but transitioned into “How does this product fit a correctional scenario?” In order to do that, it was a combination of talking not just with myself and the sales team, but with the engineering team internally to design things like the proper hinging, the safeguards with handles and other items specific to this product for this application. So it was a combination of multiple things. That’s where the Ali Group’s flexibility as a manufacturer and our go-to-market strategy allows a consultant to talk directly with those various departments. You wouldn’t see that at most manufacturers.

There is also flexibility built into the amount of product the kitchen can produce. Because the kitchen in the new facility has more production room and better cold storage capabilities than the previous prison, more prep can be done in advance. And since a greater quantity of food can now be produced from the kitchen, it may, at some point in the future, supply local halfway houses or other facilities.

Training for the Future

The new kitchen also helps with the facility’s prisoner rehabilitation efforts, Habibija says. “Ninety-five percent of our inmates will go out to the community one day,” she says. “Our biggest objective is to make sure inmates leave with some type of skill where they can make a living or become a productive member of society once they get out.” To achieve this goal, the prison has culinary arts programs that teach the inmates culinary prep and management skills. “Chefs come in from the outside and teach the inmates how to run a

restaurant, how to cook, how to prep, and how to maintain everything within health code and safety standards,” she says.

A variety of brands from the Ali Group help the Utah State Correctional Facility produce food for their inmates. Amana® Commercial microwave ovens from ACP Inc., Bi-Line power wash sinks from Champion, Edlund can openers, Scotsman ice machines and Victory refrigeration products are just some of the products the facility uses. When necessary, the companies made adjustments to the products to fit the specialized security needs for correctional foodservice. For example, security locks were installed on the Scotsman ice machines. The handles on some of the Victory refrigerators had to be reconfigured so that they could not be removed and used as weapons. In consultation with Ali Group’s Rob Geile (see sidebar), Faassen suggested those equipment changes. “We worked with the factory [to make changes because] the equipment was good but it was not correctional,” he says. “And they did that.”

BRAND WATCH



Established:

1945

Products:

800+

Product series:

22

Product categories:

9

victoryrefrigeration.com

The chicken chain's consistency and food safety assurances have improved with a new hand-breading process that incorporates custom equipment from **Beverage-Air**.

Bojangles Enhances Efficiency



Good can always be better. That's an idea embraced by Bojangles, the North Carolina-based chicken chain with a fanatic following. The concept's Southern-style fried chicken, biscuits, sides and sweet tea, among other offerings, remain a big draw for customers.

For years, Bojangles has hand-breaded its chicken in-house, including bone-in pieces, boneless tenders and Cajun-seasoned filets. This commitment to quality helped the chain grow to almost 800 units.

The hand-breading and the steps underpinning it work well. Bojangles' chicken is great, and the company has been growing.

But all processes can be improved, including the breading process at Bojangles, says the chain's Director of Equipment, Innovation and Sourcing, Javier Fonseca. "We were doing well with the previous equipment, but we were trying to find a better solution," he says. "We wanted quality assurance in terms of health department requirements. We wanted to develop better procedures to increase employee efficiency, and we wanted a more consistent process."

Making such changes is much easier said than done. Adding to the challenge was

Bojangles' timeline. To fully support the launch of a chicken sandwich, the new breading process project launched in early 2020 with a goal of having new equipment ship that summer.

According to Fonseca, one focus of this project involved the pans that hold batter and uncooked chicken immediately before breading and frying. The ingredients in these pans, he says, were kept cold with an ice bath. While that approach held food safely, it presented some challenges. Employee movements weren't as smooth and efficient as they could be. It also made maintaining a steady temperature difficult, which could impact product consistency. And as ice melted, staff would need to add more to the bath, taking team members out of the food production process.

So Fonseca and his team sought out manufacturing partners to help reimagine how Bojangles breaded chicken. A key piece of this effort was a redesigned station with a sifter table and integrated refrigerated table for holding uncooked chicken and batter.

The needs of Bojangles were so unique that no off-the-shelf product could meet them.

And Beverage-Air was an essential partner in the creation of this table.

Oscar Villa is President of the Ali Group North America – Refrigeration Division, which includes Beverage-Air and its sister company, Victory Refrigeration. According to Villa, Beverage-Air was first brought into the project by an outside factory, Marshall Air Systems Inc., which helped develop the sifter table. The two factories, says Villa, are friendly, and Marshall understood how Beverage-Air could contribute to the project.

"Marshall Air initiated contact between Bojangles and Beverage-Air because they knew that we could customize units and deliver a high-performance unit in a very timely fashion. From there, we worked through the traditional channels and partnered with Bojangles and the kitchen equipment suppliers they selected," says Villa.

Indeed, customization played a huge role in making this project a success. Simply put, the needs of Bojangles were so unique that no off-the-shelf product could meet them.

Most refrigerated tables are designed to hold food at safe temperatures for up to four hours with the lid



off. At Bojangles, that’s simply not long enough. With strong breakfast and lunch dayparts, staffers can end up breading and frying chicken for six straight hours. Bojangles wanted refrigerated breading tables that could hold food safely for that period with no lid. What’s more, says Ryan Ricker, Vice President of Sales for the Ali Group North America – Refrigeration Division, the table had to meet this requirement with pans that were 6 inches deep, which are 2 inches deeper than a standard pan.

Bojangles and Beverage-Air then worked together to develop not one, but two tables that could meet these requirements: a 32-inch unit for existing restaurants and a 41-inch unit for new builds.

After several iterations, the companies created tables up to the task.

This sort of customization is a strength of Beverage-Air, says Villa. The company has an engineering lab at its headquarters in Winston-Salem, N.C., where it tweaked factors like airflow, fan speed, condenser capacity and louver size to develop refrigerated tables that meet Bojangles’ temperature requirements. During testing and development, Bojangles and Beverage-Air placed 12 temperature probes in each pan, with probes located at the top, middle and bottom of each corner. “To this day, we haven’t had any health department issues related to the refrigerators,” Fonseca says.

The tables also support efficient operations in the kitchen. Bojangles worked with Beverage-Air to design guides and rails for the chain’s optimal pan configuration. This has reduced movement and helped speed up production, which are priorities for any QSR operation. Beverage-Air even added a rail to the side of the tables where staffers can hang the lids, keeping them out of the way but still easily accessible.

While this was plenty of work, Beverage-Air has a culture that’s made for



A Beverage-Air breading table ensures all ingredients are kept at the proper temperature.

this sort of challenge, says Villa. “We jump on projects, and we take our chances. We don’t have a lot of bureaucracy. That’s a strength of the Ali Group in general. We don’t have 20 different levels where you have to build a business case and show the ROI to a bunch of people. It was me talking to Bojangles, understanding how serious they were, what the potential was, and then just getting it done.”

Once the customization was complete in the lab, the next step was taking the table to the field. This, says Fonseca, is the last and most important phase of new equipment testing. “You can validate a refrigerator in terms of the [food it helps produce], but if the equipment isn’t heavy-duty, it is going to give you more headaches,” he says.

One of the biggest lessons during this period didn’t involve the performance of refrigeration components themselves. It was actually much simpler: The casters weren’t bearing up to the weight of deep pans holding heavy chicken and batter constantly being filled and emptied. Beverage-Air then worked with Bojangles



to find more robust casters that could stand up to the demands of the chain’s breading process without a change in height that would disrupt flow of work.

With operational issues like the casters addressed, the tables were first shipped in July 2020, just a few months after Bojangles and Beverage-Air first talked about the project.

At this point, many project teams would take a victory lap. Bojangles and Beverage-Air, though, saw it as just

(Top) Chicken being prepared at the breading table.

(Middle) An undercounter refrigeration unit from Beverage-Air keeps product within easy reach.



BRAND WATCH



Established:

1944

Products:

1,000+

Product series:

31

Product categories:

10

beverage-air.com



another step in the process. The factory had team members watch how staff use the tables in stores and worked with the operator to develop custom training materials that address use, cleaning and maintenance.

“It was very important to us to make sure that the operator understood the unit and exactly how to use it,” says Ricker. “We made sure the operators had very clear instructions on the unit itself and how they needed to operate it in order to ensure it worked as intended.”

With more than a year in the field, the custom Beverage-Air tables continue to meet Bojangles’ expectations, Fonseca says. The QSR business, though, is a competitive one, he notes. Factoring in training and employee turnover, the chain is still learning how to make the most out of this new breading process.

Fonseca has been extremely satisfied with Beverage-Air’s equipment and, in particular, the responsiveness of the team. The factory has been quick to address any issues and answer any questions that have bubbled up in the field.

This sort of accessibility is a key part of Beverage-Air’s culture. If there’s a problem, it’s easy to reach the person who can address it, says Villa, whether it’s an engineer helping with technical issues or an executive addressing business concerns. Questions are addressed in hours or days, not weeks or months.

Beverage-Air has proven so responsive, in fact, that Fonseca has started specifying not just these breading tables but two additional Beverage-Air refrigeration units, with more under consideration.

“We found that Beverage-Air is highly committed to providing solutions,” says Fonseca. “They were willing to redesign or review some elements in the equipment. They helped not with just the redesigned concerns, but the field concerns. They helped us solve issues related to real-world problems. That’s when you could say, ‘Yes, this is the kind of vendor I can trust.’ Beverage-Air is one of those companies you can trust.”



Kansas City eateries offer fun, upscale atmosphere

A Diverse Trio of Neighborhood Restaurants

BRAND WATCH



Founded:

1950

Size of ADS' Edwardsville, Kan., manufacturing facility in sq. ft.:

208,000

americandish.com

Summit Grill, which has just celebrated its 10th anniversary, is enjoying a fresh round of success after the lull all restaurants experienced during the pandemic. The three-unit chain, whose locations are all in the Kansas City, Mo., metropolitan area, welcomes a strong brunch, lunch and dinner crowd and keeps customers coming back with its upscale, polished-casual atmosphere and varied menu.

"We're a full-service, sit-down restaurant and attract a diverse demographic," says Domhnall Molloy, who co-owns

the restaurants with his partner Andy Lock.

Local Food, Carefully Prepared

Summit Grill's menu centers on traditional American fare. Appetizers include seared ahi tuna and calamari but also the more unusual poutine; entrées include dishes like dry rubbed rib-eye and grilled salmon. But the restaurant's probably best known for its beef tenderloin street tacos served with queso fresco and cilantro. "We slow-cook the tenderloin overnight, then chop it up with onion; we sell thousands of them," Molloy says. "It's a by-product of cutting our own meat in-house."

Summit also offers carryout

family packs to its customers, though Molloy admits these menu items have declined in popularity since they were launched during COVID because people "would rather just come into the restaurant now." But he kept them on as an offering because they're easy meals for families of four to five people. Options include chicken fried chicken, street tacos, and seafood mac and cheese.

It's important to Molloy to source locally as much as possible, and his beef comes from a local cattle company about 30 miles away. During the peak growing months, all produce comes from the Midwest, including from many nearby farms. The local sourcing

extends to the drinks, too. "Lots of breweries and distilleries have popped up across the city, and it's really important that we support them," he adds.

All desserts are made in-house by two pastry chefs with popular options being coconut cream pie, red velvet cake and crème brûlée served in a chocolate shell.

The restaurants' happy hour is a big draw between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. every day, offering full-size appetizers at discounted prices of \$2.95 to \$8.95, and tiered drinks ranging from \$2.95 to \$6.95. The happy hour, Molloy says, "has grown in popularity and keeps the restaurant busy and gives people exposure to our restaurant at a cheaper price."

Summit Grill also has a thriving catering business, with event spaces in two locations of 8,000 to 10,000 square feet. These venues can accommodate 70 people for a seated dinner or 120 for a cocktail event.

"Our events business is big," says Molloy. Events range from wedding showers to rehearsal dinners and corporate parties. "We're versatile and can do anything people want." The events business runs all year, with corporate events year-round, lots of weddings in the summer and a boom during the holidays.

Business at Summit Grill is largely repeat business from satisfied diners, but last year, tourism was starting to grow a little, and Molloy expects the Kansas City area to build momentum from there. He points to two big events that will give business a boost in Kansas City: In 2023, Kansas City will host the NFL Draft, and then in 2026, it will host

games as part of the FIFA World Cup". "Kansas City is starting to get on the map as a great destination," he says.

Worry-Free Dishwashing

All this business leads to a lot of dirty dishes, and Summit Grill utilizes two types of dishwashers from American Dish Service (ADS): Each restaurant has a conveyor unit (ADC-44) in the back of house and an undercounter (ET-AF-3) machine in the bar to wash glasses.

The Lee's Summit location had a double-door dishwasher when it first opened but converted to the conveyor unit for speed since the latter can wash twice as many dishes per hour. "These units are definitely needed to keep up with the volume we do on a weekly, daily basis," says Molloy. "They're great systems."

The conveyor units are easy to use, says Molloy. "We load them up over a spraying sink, and then the rack catches on the conveyor belt and makes its way through and comes out the other side." He prefers to air-dry the washed dishes so the warewashing area features racks for pots and pans to sit on, and the racks of plates may sit for a while, too.

Molloy leases the dish machines for his first restaurant in Lee's Summit, which he opened when he had less cash flow, and owns the machines for the remaining Summit Grill locations in the metropolitan Kansas City, Mo., area, which he prefers so he can "depreciate the cost of them from a tax perspective." He leases and buys from nearby Prime Chemical, which also runs maintenance on the machines weekly and supplies the chemicals for them.

That maintenance is key and the machines last for a long time, says Molloy, who also does daily maintenance in-house. "They last longer than most pieces of equipment. You just clean them out, break them down and make sure there's no food particles in them. We de-lime them every month because there's a lot of lime in our water, and the lime gums them."

When properly maintained, these machines can last decades before they need to be replaced, points out Walt Rogers, Owner of Prime Chemical in Kansas City, a distributor, which buys the dishwashers from American Dish Service. Prime Chemical will distribute these dishwashers with a custom label promoting their brand. The dishwashing units Summit has "are very, very popular," he says. "You can do your dishes about three times

faster because you just push the racks through and don't need to stand over it."

"We are proud to manufacture and produce such high-quality machines like the ADC-44 and ET-AF-3 units that Summit Grill relies on daily," says Dan Eber, Vice President of Operations for ADS. "Knowing our equipment provides quality, durability and reliability for our partners and ultimately the end-user is what drives our associates. Our dish machines are a crucial part of providing a safe and sanitary dining environment for us all."

This undercounter glasswasher from ADS cleans glassware safely and efficiently.



Not so long ago, a foodservice director in a typical hospital only had to worry about two things: patient feeding and the cafeteria. But today's healthcare foodservice directors have responsibilities that go far beyond those two areas. And Bob Ashe, Director of Food and Nutrition Services at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, N.J., is no exception. He has to balance a number of foodservice operations daily, both on- and off-site. When it comes to patient feeding, however, he's getting some help from a new technological advance from Burlodge.



Bob Ashe,
Director of Food and
Nutrition Services

Facing Challenges

Holy Name is a 361-bed facility with a number of specialty services, such as specialized centers devoted to caring for patients with multiple sclerosis or cancer, and it also has off-site foodservice facilities. On campus, Ashe says, "we serve an average of 5,000 meals a day in diverse settings, including inpatient room service, multiple retail cafés and a coffee shop. Off-site feedings [include] senior daycare, child daycare and a hospice villa with a restaurant for family members." In addition, Ashe's 85-person staff handles catering for the medical center, serving six major events annually and a number of daily functions.

Ashe's typical day starts with a management huddle to address areas of immediate concern. "The biggest challenge these days is staffing — ensuring staffing is consistent throughout the day," he says. Monitoring the cafés and retail services makes up a big portion of his day, while the afternoons are often taken up with planning, budgeting and systems analysis. It's certainly not a desk job: "We're always running around checking on the off-site [operations], in another meeting, or a committee, or a patient — anything that comes up during the day we need to address," he says.

Besides staffing, Ashe and his department face the same problems plaguing the rest of foodservice. "Right now, the food supply chain and paper supply chain are a huge challenge. The product variability hasn't really stopped," he says. Ongoing product shortages mean menus change constantly. "You need to adjust your menu and change with what's available and what's not."

However, opportunities often come with those challenges, as Ashe notes the pandemic has given him a chance to rethink his retail services and focus on more takeout products. "People need to be able to transport [food], so we have a grab-and-go option where people can order and pick up." The increase in takeout has also allowed him to reexamine his usage of disposable products and switch to a container that's more environmentally friendly yet can still handle both hot and cold items.

Serving the Patients

Patient feeding represents the bulk of Ashe's operation, and Holy Name is a room service operation. "We've created the best of both worlds by adding bedside menu entry with our staff. We also offer a patient-interactive option at the bedside for menu selection. We found that the face time with patients was invaluable toward integrating our meal experience with patient wellness," Ashe says. Getting food to patients at the precise serving temperature is critical to his operation but also presents some unique issues. "Room service requires some staging, where carts sit in the kitchen area for up to 10 minutes before they're moved to the patient area."

To help him serve his patients more efficiently, Ashe selected the new Logiko meal delivery system from Burlodge. In fact, Holy Name was the first facility to use this system, which was designed with substantial user input. Clients told Burlodge current meal delivery systems with heated bases were heavy and cumbersome. They wanted a system that could handle both hot and cold food for extended periods, yet with carts that were manageable enough for room service usage. And they wanted a system that allowed them to hold meals in patient areas.

The state-of-the-art Logiko system solves those problems. It's a self-contained hot and cold meal delivery system that can be used in any location with an electrical outlet. There are no heavy pellets or special insulated tray wares; all hot and cold foods are in a temperature-controlled, insulated cart from kitchen to patient. The Logiko system will facilitate a traditional hotline,



The Burlodge Logiko system cuts down on labor while increasing patient satisfaction.



room service or even à la carte dining room models. "With Logiko, operators can do tray or room service better than their current method, with greater efficiency and affordability, while serving hot and cold foods at the perfect temperature," says Paul Gauntley, President, Burlodge Canada & USA. "Logiko uses any type of dinnerware, providing a familiar, homestyle meal tray to the patient, which in turn improves nutritional intake. There are various tray capacities, as well as innovative, human factor-friendly features."

Ashe currently uses the Logiko system for room service delivery but sees other usages for it in the future. "We're going to use it for our mother-and-baby unit, where we'll send the cart up and plug it in their pantry alcove. Hot and cold trays will be available to patients all night long. We have other ideas too — to extend it to other patient care units like oncology, who would prefer to have a cart on the floor with cold

items that substitute for what they have on their menu."

Logiko helps Ashe run his room service delivery smoothly and easily. "Its performance has been even better than I expected," he says. "It's easy to maneuver and was designed to work well with any type of staff. It's unique in this industry. The Logiko meal delivery system exceeds anything out there on the market today for maintaining both quality and temperature. Meals help heal, and this new delivery system allows us to better serve our patients."

"We're proud to offer the latest in meal delivery systems to enhance the experience and healing of our patients," says Michael Maron, President and CEO of Holy Name. "We align with partners such as Burlodge who, like Holy Name, value both innovation and cutting-edge technology."



BRAND WATCH

burlodge
TOGETHER, WE WORK.

Countries in Burlodge's network:

50

Exclusive partners:

14

Distributors:

25

Meals served per day on Burlodge equipment:

4 million+

burlodgeusa.com (USA)
burlodgeca.com (Canada)

The Logiko system is an important part of Holy Name's meal delivery system.

Holy Name Feeds Patients Efficiently with Burlodge



Specialty Equipment
Makes it Possible to
Toss and Catch
the Creamy Concoction

A New Way to Enjoy Ice Cream

Dylan Lemay:
from social
media influencer
to ice cream
entrepreneur.

A New York City ice cream shop has introduced a novel way to serve ice cream, and patrons are having a ball.

Literally.

The shop's name sums up the reason: Catch'N Ice Cream from Dylan Lemay. (Why tack on the founder's name? If you know, you know. If not, we'll "catch" you up later.) Inside the NoHo, Manhattan shop, the display cooler features near-perfect spheres of ice cream coated with various toothsome treats, including Fruity PEBBLES® cereal and cookie dough. As enticing as they appear in this initial state, these icy orbs will be tossed about and beaten before they are eaten. As customers look on, the ice cream ball of their choice gets chucked around from one employee to another in a game of catch that involves hand-eye coordination and a cup for a catcher's mitt. Then, their server slings it onto a cold slab, smashes it, chops it, folds the coating into the ice cream and reshapes it into a ball that's superior to its previous state in all respects except geometry. Into a cup it goes and gets handed off — with much fanfare and care, as though the finished product were a fabulously valuable diamond — to the customer, who is invariably impressed if not applauding.

And quite possibly starstruck. You see, before Lemay opened up shop, he was a social media celebrity. A Cold Stone Creamery® employee for nine years, the seasoned scooper mastered the art of balling up ice cream, tossing it in the air and catching it in a cup. (Cones are considerably trickier.) He later began to post on-the-job videos of himself on TikTok and other social media platforms, and the concept of catching ice cream caught on in a big way. He has more than 11 million

followers on TikTok, and a typical post surpasses 1 million views.

Lemay didn't invent the concept of catching ice cream. At Cold Stone, he'd been a customer favorite — until his co-workers started tossing ice cream around prior to serving it. His regulars started gravitating to the servers who did tricks. "I became lame at that point. I wasn't the cool one anymore," Lemay says.

So, he started practicing, layering a performative element over his winning personality to lure back his defectors. But though Lemay didn't dream up the concept, he perfected and popularized it. "I really got inspired when I saw my audience (on social media) trying to re-create what I was doing. That's when I knew I was on to something," which eventually led to the July 2022 opening of Catch'N Ice Cream.

If his audience seldom gets it quite right, it's because they lack the proper equipment. At Cold Stone, Lemay had access to commercial-grade Carpigiani equipment, which he now relies on for operational efficiency and product quality and presentation. The star of the lineup is Carpigiani's Mister Art Plus-A, which uses spherical

silicone molds and a hose to dispense ice cream into impeccable orbs. Just as essential to the efficient formation of flawless balls is Carpigiani's Nordika-200 Blast Freezer, which, at -40 degrees F, instantaneously gives the balls the firmness they require to withstand being tossed about.

After their deep-freeze, Lemay coats the balls in chocolate ganache and dredges them in toppings or coats them with an outer layer, such as brownie or cookie dough. These casings "are kind of like a protective shell" holding the airborne ice cream together, Lemay says, adding that





The Process

Lemay makes his unique ice cream balls with the help of Carpigiani's Mister Art Plus-A machine and Nordika-200 Blast Freezer.



attempting to ball up ice cream without specialized equipment usually yields a “melty mess.”

Carpigiani’s corporate chef, Baron Gottsacker, worked with Lemay to select equipment, to determine which ice cream mixes and coatings best suited his purposes, and to perfect his recipes. Catch’N Ice Cream now serves seven flavors of ice cream balls, along with ice cream cakes and other frozen treats. Rounding out the lineup of Carpigiani equipment are the Turbomix and the Ready 502 G Batch Freezer.

Without the Mister Art machine in particular, “making ice cream balls would be an extremely labor-intensive process,” says Kami Poppen, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Carpigiani North America. “You’d need to dispense the ice cream into a container and then manually scoop into the molds.”

The Mister Art machine comes standard with several molds, including popsicle shapes and spheres; therefore, it was ready to “play ball,” so to speak, at the premier Catch’N Ice Cream parlor in New York City. (Lemay is tight-lipped about expansion plans, focused for the time being on the success of his first location.)

Carpigiani did, however, customize the equipment’s colors to match Catch’N Ice Cream’s store and branding.

At the parlor, catching ice cream is largely a spectator sport; however, it can be participatory. “I promise you anyone can catch ice cream,” Lemay says in one of his reels. He admits later in an interview that it can take a significant amount of training and practice, and the feat, when mastered, is as much mental as physical.

“Ice cream is just something you feel like you shouldn’t be throwing, so at first, people have a tendency to freeze up,” he says, without a trace of irony. “Mainly, the catching and throwing is between the employees right now. That may shift in the future, but I want to make sure they master throwing it at each other first.”

When patrons ask to play catch, however, “if we’re not crazy busy and they feel confident in themselves, then, yes, we’ll throw it to them. But we don’t force it on anyone.”

Before conceiving Catch’N Ice Cream, Lemay, who admits he ate ice cream every night for dessert as a kid, had set his sights on owning a franchise. After TikTok and Instagram launched him to social media stardom, he realized he had major-league entrepreneurial potential and could perhaps even start a new ice cream chain. The first step was quitting the job he loved, and where his videoing and publicity-seeking had been supported. He moved back home with his parents and started rounding the bases in what turned out to be a grand-slam success story.

First base: cementing his celebrity status by making personal appearances and doing demos at ice cream shops around the country.

Second base: expanding his social media presence to include YouTube and developing his unique-at-the-time “personal point of view” video technique.

Third base: attracting not just an audience but actual investors, who saw in him the goose that laid the golden egg, er, ice cream balls.

Sliding into home: the July 29 opening of his very own ice cream parlor — the

eponymous Catch’N Ice Cream from Dylan Lemay since his name is as much of a draw as the concept—and the mainstreaming of his celebrity status. “Good Morning America” sent a reporter to make ice cream balls alongside him. He and his shop have been featured in *People* magazine, The New York Times, and other major publications.

On some of the social media platforms, viewers can message him with questions. The most common one, he says, is “Isn’t an ice cream ball just a scoop?”

No, Lemay replies, and it’s not just because scoops aren’t uniform. Scoops can be made into balls, but it’s a palm-chilling process that yields

imprecise results. Scoops aren’t as aesthetically pleasing or throw-friendly. But most importantly, the ice cream ball preparation and serving process surpasses scooping when it comes to consistency and taste.

“Typically, when you go to an ice cream shop, all the ingredients are premixed and distributed unevenly throughout, or toppings are just sprinkled on. It’s sort of like playing the lottery as to what you’re going to get,” says Lemay. “With the balls versus the scoops, when we flatten and chop them and fold the outer coating in with the ice cream, you’re guaranteed the perfect ratio.”

By contrast, the food and beverage biz offers no

guarantees, although the pall of the pandemic has lifted and people are lining up to eat ice cream again. Lemay’s success shows no sign of slacking, though, and setting up shop with the right equipment to achieve his vision and business objectives is a big assist in his winning streak.

BRAND WATCH



Commercial branches:

8

Service centers worldwide:

500

Distributors worldwide:

180

carpigiani.com



The Catch’N Ice Cream parlor in New York City.



Growing Caterer Banks On Warewashing

By adding state-of-the-art warewashers, Best Impressions Caterers has significantly improved its warewashing efficiency and efficacy.

Dave Byron was a year out of college, selling computers to insurance companies, when he discovered he had a passion for catering. “I used my prior experience working in restaurants and bartending in assisting an Annapolis, Maryland, restaurant owner with catering on weekends,” Byron says. “I loved it and got the bug.”

Byron enjoyed it so much that he quit his sales gig and partnered with the restaurant owner to go after more catering opportunities. “This was back in the mid-’80s, and we had some great clients over the years, working with Maryland’s governor and the Maryland General Assembly as well as catering events in Washington, D.C.,” he says.

Shortly after moving to Charlotte, N.C., in 1989, Byron founded his own catering company, Best Impressions Caterers. “I started from scratch as Charlotte was growing, so there was a lot of opportunity,” he says. “Thirty-three years later, I still have some of my original clients.”

Best Impressions Caterers is now a 250-employee turnkey operation that handles all aspects of events, including tents, tables, linens and tableware, in addition to food and beverages. Byron explains, “The events we

handle can take six to 18 months to plan and are attended by several hundred to thousands of people.”

Food is delivered to event venues via 18-foot box trucks that require 10 to 12 people to unload. A culinary crew manages food preparation. “It’s the type of business where you’re selling your services, making product, delivering it, executing the event and cleaning up,” Byron says. “Folks that attend these events don’t know or see all that goes on behind the scenes, and we don’t want them to think about it.”

Byron decided seven years ago that his growing business warranted a big commissary kitchen. “We had outgrown our last facility, which we were in for 14 years,” he says. “Best Impressions grew to where we had nine banquet facilities that we used throughout the city, so we were in need of a large production facility in the area.”

On a busy Saturday, Best Impressions typically handles as many as 20 events and approximately 40,000 pieces of glassware and china.

“Each person uses three to four glasses and a full set of flatware in addition to dinner, salad, dessert and appetizer plates. We need 10 to 12

pieces of china per person. For a 400-person event, that’s 4,000 pieces that need washing in one day,” Byron says.

While many caterers

rent tableware, Byron says the downside is not having control over the quality and quantity. “We would get to the site and realize our rental company shorted us plates, so we would run to a nearby restaurant and pay them to use their warewasher for 20 minutes during an event,” he says. “This is when we realized we needed our own tableware supply that we can count, control and, most importantly, know that it’s cleaned properly.”

At the time, Byron was operating out of an 8,000-square-foot building in which he replaced an antiquated dishwashing machine with a single-rack chemical warewasher. “A year later, I replaced this with a double-rack machine to handle twice the volume,” he says. “Dishes were chemically sanitized but came out wet.”

When Byron was seeking warewashers for his new 32,000-square-foot commissary, he took a tour of Champion’s facilities and tested the warewashers. “I always heard how good Champion equipment was and bought in right away,” he says.

As a result, Best Impressions purchased three Champion units: a flight-type warewasher for plateware, a rack conveyor for glassware, and a unit for pots and pans. “He saw the need for segregated warewashing with cups and flatware in one machine, china in another and a separate pot washing area,” says Will Means, President of Champion Industries. “He was forward thinking as most operators don’t make these choices.”

Installing all three units at once could have been challenging, given that the commissary’s opening was on the Friday after Thanksgiving during the hectic holiday party season. “December is hugely busy for us as we typically handle 270 parties in just three weeks,” Byron says. “There is a staggering amount of work, so it was a tight time frame moving into the new facility.”

Fortunately, Champion came in and specced out the necessary infrastructure in advance, ensuring electricians and plumbers were able to properly install the warewashers.

The 24-foot-long flight machine handles up to 20,000 plates an hour using hot water rather than chemicals. Up to four people can feed the unit on the front end, and as many as six staff pull dishes out after cleaning. Located nearby, a smaller conveyor machine has 66 racks and is dedicated to glassware and flatware. The third unit, a tall door warewasher, is reserved for production items, such as pots and pans.

Segregating machines not only means staff are not running back and forth, but it also helps prevent cross-contamination by keeping debris from plates from

winding up on glasses. “What’s great about the conveyor warewashers is that plates dry quickly on the same conveyor belt used for washing and rinsing,” Byron says. “The machine is awesome with cleaning and sanitizing.”

This is a far cry from Best Impressions’ warewashing of the past, which was a 24-hour ordeal. “Many new staff members don’t know the pain it was to wash dishes all night after working 18 hours,” Byron says. “We’d be washing until 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. the next morning.”

With Champion’s warewashers, loads finish in just 20 minutes; over the course of two to three hours, all of the day’s dishes, flatware and glassware are ready for the next day. “When the first truck came back, everyone was so excited to use the new dish machine,” Byron says. “There were literally 20 people on the dock, cheering. When you haven’t had something like this, and then have it, you appreciate it so much more. The warewashers have been tremendous assets for our business and a game changer.”

Even with more warewashing equipment, Byron is saving money on chemicals and the use of hot water due to higher capacities and shorter wash times. Other Ali Group brands used in the

kitchen include Metro (heating/proofing cabinets, plate warming cabinets and wire shelving), Ice-O-Matic, Scotsman and Cleveland (tilt skillet and steamers).

Means adds that warewashing is an absolute necessity and something that Byron looked at as he would a cooking suite. “Typically, operators are looking at what machine will fit into the allotted space, but Dave [considered the equipment first], and that makes him a forward-thinking operator.”

Byron is currently looking at adding an even larger capacity warewasher to accommodate his new event venue, The Revelry. The facility, built in the early 1900s, will accommodate up to 750 people. “Fortunately, now that we have a bigger warehouse in conjunction with the new commissary, we can buy more tableware so we’re not needing to turn all dishes around for the next day,” Byron says. “The Champion machines have held up well, and I can’t say that about all our equipment.”

“We helped Dave design the optimal warewasher facility,” Means says. “Dishes are no longer the bottleneck to growing his business.”



Three Champion dish machines make quick work of all of Best Impressions’ warewashing.



BRAND WATCH
Champion

Founded:
1890

Distribution
warehouses
across North
America:

championindustries.com

5

A Profitable Spin



Carousel's capitalizes on a unique product and partnership.

Profitable partnerships don't come along every day. But when it comes time to innovate and develop new concepts, it's often best to turn to tried and trusted partners to get things started. So to understand how Carousel's came to spin its own brand of sweet treats, one must first learn how Polish Water Ice was able to bring its vision to life by partnering with an equipment manufacturer and a distributor.

When Tom Curyto created Polish Water Ice in 1995, it was the custom design of Electro Freeze's soft-serve machines and one of the manufacturer's equipment distributors, Sentry Equipment, that enabled his trademark recipe to come to fruition. Between 1996 and 2018, Curyto grew his mom-and-pop organization to 20 locations on the Jersey shore and in the Northeast with the help of his first vendor partner and Sentry's owner, Bob Romarino.

"Italian ice is popular here in the Philadelphia area, and my dad wanted to make the traditional product better. He's Polish, so he wanted that reflected in the name," says Curyto's son, Corey. "It was his dream to re-engineer an Italian ice product through a soft-serve machine."

It all began when Tom Curyto met up with Romarino at a trade show, determined to take traditional Italian ice to the next level. "Our fathers are both second-generation Americans who worked together to come up with the idea of running Italian ice through a soft-serve machine," says Rob Romarino, Bob's son and current president of Sentry. "It hadn't been done before, as the traditional method utilizes a batch freezer."

After an exhaustive R&D process, and a week of tinkering with Electro Freeze equipment, the two men came up with a fresh, creamy, fat-free Italian ice alternative that dispenses from a soft-serve machine, similar to the way ice cream does. "When traditional Italian ice is served, it's out of a tub, so it can be a day old or more; because Polish Water Ice comes straight out of a machine, every cup is fresh," explains Rob Romarino. "This process also adds a little bit of air, so the consistency is smoother, more like a sorbet."

Like Italian ice, Polish Water Ice does not have the dairy, fat or calories of other frozen desserts. There are 25 flavors,





“Our product has the same nutritional panel as Italian ice but eats like ice cream, so it is a big value add.”

Corey Curyto

Carousel's trucks are designed to serve large crowds quickly.



including mango, cotton candy, blue raspberry, cherry and lemon. Electro Freeze's modified equipment also produces what Carousel's calls "gelati," which is half ice and half vanilla soft serve. The advantage of marrying Italian ice with sugar water and a stabilizer using Electro Freeze equipment is that it keeps the product consistent while injecting just the right amount of air for an ideal consistency.

“Our product has the same nutritional panel as Italian ice but eats like ice cream, so it is a big value add,” Corey Curyto says. “We're the only ones Electro Freeze has worked with to accomplish this. It all started with our dads tweaking the machines so the units that were meant for soft serve would work with ice.”

Due to the increasing popularity of the product, Curyto set out to expand and grow his father's unique concept nationwide. In 2018, “I called my dad and discussed licensing Polish Water Ice, and this is when Carousel's was born,” Curyto says.

At that time, Corey and Rob began working together in a similar capacity as their fathers before them. “I knew not only did I have a great product, but I had a great vendor partner

in Sentry,” Curyto says. “I reconnected with Rob, who had taken over the family business.” The two were tasked with building everything from scratch, as they were turning a regional mom-and-pop business into a national franchise. “Corey contacted me wanting to take Polish Water Ice off the boardwalk and expand it,” Romarino says. “He had proof of concept and wanted to leverage the product's popularity.”

They quickly realized that brick and mortar wasn't the best place to start, so in 2019, they shifted from retail to a mobile-first concept. “We had a refined product, so the next step was figuring out how to produce it on a truck,” Romarino says. “This wasn't as easy as it sounds. The electric and power are different, and the air needs to be vented out of the vehicle.”

The two men were tasked with how to design and develop a food truck that would fit three Electro Freeze machines. These units had to produce enough product to serve an influx of people with minimal wait times. “Each truck is outfitted with three high-volume, pressurized Electro Freeze GES-5099 units,” Curyto says. “We have five spouts for our ice and one spout for our soft-serve vanilla ice cream.”

The unique and eye-catching trucks are shaped like a carousel, complete with a big top roof similar to a circus tent, bright colors and an awning over the order window. “The branding is on point,” Romarino says. “And you just don't see

three big soft-serve machines on a truck; Carousel's is the first to do it.”

Speed of service is the key to Carousel's' success, as the mobile concept wouldn't work with lines of 30 people deep and 40-minute waits. “A big advantage of Electro Freeze's equipment is the capacity to handle crowds as well as the consistency of the product,” Romarino says. “For fast turns and high revenue, there is a limited menu with five ice flavors, our gelati (soft-serve vanilla with any ice flavor), ice cream cones and sprinkles.”

The pressurized equipment includes a refrigerated compartment underneath, with product pumped from the bottom to the top. Its cabinet doors seal tightly and are closed and locked during transport to protect the product. “Operators don't have to drain product, take it out or worry about it sloshing around while the truck is in motion,” Romarino says. “This equipment is designed to withstand the challenges of a mobile setting.”

Due to the many truck variables Carousel's needed to contend with, feedback has been provided along the way. The concept is getting closer to becoming plug-and-play as Carousel's' brand continues growing. “We're never confident we're at 100%, since technology and products change, and there are variables we don't control, but we have it 98% there,” Romarino says. “We're on our sixth truck design and design a new one every month or so. We're confident we have the foundational part down, although it may need tweaks here and there. We have a great relationship with Corey and his team; they provide feedback, and we react right away.”



Carousel's trucks hold three Electro Freeze machines to serve customers.



BRAND WATCH



Established:
1929
Sold the first soft-serve ice cream machine:

1946
Current number of models:
40+
electrofreeze.com

Carousel's began franchising in 2021 with mobile trucks, kiosks and licensing into existing locations. It is now franchised in nine cities: Sarasota, Manatee, Tampa, Orlando, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale in Fla., Omaha, Neb.; Toledo, Ohio; and Santa Monica, Calif. At press time, 63 Carousel's units were in development. “We're leveraging the relationship with Sentry and its services nationwide,” Curyto says. “We can also put our machines in existing sites like movie theaters and convenience stores. And we're partnering with major hotel chains. The concept works in a lot of mediums.”

Carousel's is now one of 12 concepts participating in Walt Disney World's food truck program. “With Carousel's' main office in Florida, one of the first goals of the company was getting involved with Disney,” Romarino says. “We have two trucks operating there — one at Fort Wilderness and the other at ESPN Wide World of Sports. The brick-and-mortar crowds come in a calmer fashion, but when a truck is brought to the crowds, it's a hit and run. You have to be able to quickly serve the masses.” Philanthropy is part of the business, too. With its Carousel Cares program,

schools, businesses and other organizations can hire the food truck for a nominal fee and donate up to 100% of the profits to the entity or a charity. Electro Freeze and the Sentry teams have been true partners with both Polish Water Ice and now Carousel's, helping with concept development, recipe design, franchisee consultation and so much more. “Sentry has been our best partner. They are amazing to work with,” Curyto says. “As we scale up, it brings opportunity to Sentry and Electro Freeze. It's a great partnership, and we are thankful they're a part of what we're doing.”

Romarino agrees, saying as Carousel's' business continues to grow, it's been fulfilling to take what their dads started years ago and grow the business so many years later. “What's nice working with Carousel's is the lineage with our fathers working together first, and we're family owned like they are,” Romarino says. “It's great to work with good people and share success. I believe in the marriage between product development so many years ago and the equipment. Corey is all about establishing a new-age product and branding, and we're infusing that on our end to scale Carousel's' brand where it needs to go.”

GOURMET ICE

Provides

Round-the-Clock Support

to Drink Program

Describing itself as a “wellcare marketplace,” Denver’s Nurture is many things to many people.

Set inside a historic two-story building, Nurture, which opened in May 2020, features more than 60 wellness providers offering mental, physical, emotional and spiritual services that range from acupuncture and family medicine to intuitive healing and couples therapy.

On the first floor, Nest Café and Rewild serve as the central hub, offering ingredient- and health-focused food and drink. Nurture also acts as an event space with some 1,100 square feet available. A general store sells products for the mind, body and home. Looking for a welcoming place to work remotely? Nurture has spaces for that too. The operation hosts fitness and movement classes as well and, conversely, recovery services — a Himalayan salt room and infrared sauna, anyone?

This synthesis of different skills, experiences, goals and passions also serves as an accurate narrative of Nurture’s co-founder, Kelly Campbell. “I have a diverse background,” she says.

Diverse is an understatement. Campbell has 15 years of experience working in the hospitality industry for a prominent restaurant group in Denver. She also has expertise in bodywork that

includes studying Thai massage in Thailand, followed by opening her own studio in the States. She has also explored retail, with a couple of brick-and-mortar stores focused on women’s lifestyle goods, local apothecary products and activewear under her belt. And during her 20s, Campbell spent time traveling and exploring different cultures around the world, including in India, Africa, Southeast Asia and Europe.

But no matter what she did or where she was, one universal theme kept coming up. “The common denominator in all these villages and towns and cities was this sense of community,” says Campbell. “That is the glue that keeps people together.”

Which brings us back to Nurture. “That sense of community is primal and necessary to live a purposeful and fulfilling life,” says Campbell. “Nurture seemed to be something that could really embody that, whether it’s the businesses coming in and rallying around each other and operating from the same core values of compassion, life of service and quality, to the guests.”

Originally, however, Nurture had different goals. It was Campbell’s business partner who first presented the idea to her and a third partner of a beauty collective focusing on self-care. Imagine a place where you could get



Healthful food and drink is on the menu at Nurture.



“We tried to create a space that is inclusive to everyone, no matter your definition of self-care.”

Kelly Campbell
Co-founder



a facial, get your hair done and experience various beauty services under one roof.

But for Campbell, self-care meant much more. “That’s not how I take care of myself,” she says. “I also need to move my body. I need to break bread with family and friends.”

As they brought more people into the self-care conversation, the full structure of Nurture began to take shape. “Self-care doesn’t have to be this radical approach. It doesn’t need to be all or nothing,” says Campbell. “No matter what part of the human you are addressing, Nurture is a place to take care of yourself.”

Initially, the partners thought they would rent a space for their new project. But that changed when they found the centrally located Highland building that would eventually become Nurture’s home.

Formerly a school for social activists founded by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, an activist of the Chicano Movement in Denver in the ’60s, the 23,000-square-foot space fit the group’s spiritual and aesthetic goals for what they wanted Nurture to be. “When I set foot in there, and we had walked through many buildings, I knew this had to be the one,” says Campbell.

Big windows let in an abundance of natural light, while exposed terra cotta remains visible throughout the space. Raw concrete floors, blemishes and all, were simply coated with a sealant. Some original murals remain, and the space now features plaques that tell the stories of those who previously inhabited it.

Just as important as what Nurture is, however, is what it isn’t. “We won’t define wellness as we all have different needs based on our life experiences. But we will provide the best wellness opportunities for our community to become curious,” says Campbell. “We

tried to create a space that is inclusive to everyone, no matter your definition of self-care.”

A big part of creating a place where all feel welcome and, well, nurtured, comes via Nest Café and Rewild, Nurture’s two eateries. “I’m an avid believer that we are what we eat and how we feel is directly correlated to how we consume, whether that’s our food or our environment,” says Campbell. “I knew going back to my travels and time in the hospitality industry that the kitchen is the heart of the home.”

Using simple, wholesome ingredients — local, organic and sustainably sourced when possible — while eschewing refined oils and sugar serves as the starting point for the food and drinks on the menu. A focus on health remains at the forefront, but that doesn’t translate to boring.

That means at Nest Café, which serves breakfast, lunch and weekend brunch, you’ll find a Harvest Salad and Spanish Pimiento Pasta made with gluten-free fusilli alongside an organic bison burger and Indian-inspired dosas. Open for happy hour, dinner and weekend brunch, Rewild, the more formal of the two, might serve a Citrus Burrata Salad, Roasted Delicata Squash, and White Mole Roasted Half-Chicken, among other among other seasonal dishes. Celebrating the little pleasures of life also plays a role in Nurture’s hospitality experience, with plenty of vegan and gluten-free baked goods available.

Beverages, both with alcohol and without, are another focus at Nurture. At Nest Café, you’ll find a variety of cold-pressed juices, smoothies, juice cleanse packages, and hot and cold coffee drinks. At Rewild, there are creative spirited and spirit-free cocktails.

Like with all the other areas of service at Nurture, striving for the highest standards is paramount when it comes to its hospitality

programs. “The quality of the ingredients speaks to the quality of the experience,” says Campbell. “When it comes to our beverage program, it starts with the ice.”

That’s where Dolly Fiedelman, CFSP, Regional Sales Manager of Ice-O-Matic, comes into the story. Already familiar with Nurture through teaching cycling classes there, Fiedelman approached Campbell about bringing in an ice machine that could dramatically change its beverage programs. “She was all about it,” says Fiedelman.

With an Ice-O-Matic modular cuber already doing the heavy lifting in the back of the house, Fiedelman recommended Ice-O-Matic’s UCG100A Gourmet Series Undercounter unit. “What I like to tell my customers is the way we price the Gourmet units allows people to have that dedicated unit for their bar and/or coffee programs, and then they can still budget-wise have a cuber for their higher production needs,” says Fiedelman.

In addition to its small footprint, the plug-and-play unit creates a unique top-hat style cube that melts slower, therefore not compromising the quality of the drinks. “Because they do so many different drinks, it made sense for them to have ice that was going to elevate their offerings,” says Fiedelman. To meet the needs of all of Nurture’s beverage offerings, Fiedelman suggested the more versatile standard Gourmet-size cube.

For Campbell, the change has been dramatic.



BRAND WATCH

Ice-O-Matic
Ice. Pure and Simple

Established:

1952

Machines shipped annually to more than 45 countries:

40,000+

Product SKUs:

250+

iceomatic.com

The convenient Ice-O-Matic UCG undercounter ice machine produces ice for the coffee bar and cocktail bar.



“Since we brought in that machine, it’s night and day, especially with our coffee program,” she says. “At first, we thought, ‘This is going to be amazing for the bar,’ and it is. But for our coffee program and iced drinks, it’s truly such a better experience.”

Another plus of the Ice-O-Matic Gourmet unit is its ability to produce ice quickly, with a harvest time of about 10 minutes a batch, and up to 100 pounds a day. “Through that unit, which isn’t huge, we are able to serve both our coffee bar, which is buzzing, and our cocktail bar,” says Campbell.

With restaurant space at a premium — and with no signs of that changing — creating equipment that offers higher production capabilities while fitting into smaller spaces is an ongoing concern for restaurant operators and manufacturers.

“From an Ice-O-Matic standpoint, the application of ice is forever changing,” says Fiedelman. “This is a perfect example of how we’ve been more adaptable, flexible and advanced with the different demands of the industry.”

It's Taco Tuesday Every Day at Taco John's

If you've ever uttered the phrase, "It's Taco Tuesday!", you can thank Taco John's for that. That term was coined by a Taco John's franchisee back in the 1970s and is a registered trademark of the chain. By making delicious tacos every

Tuesday — and every other day of the week — Taco John's has become one of the largest Mexican quick-service restaurant chains in the US.



The Hottest Spot Gets Hotter

The Taco John's story starts in 1968 at a small taco stand run by John Turner in Cheyenne, Wyo., called the Taco House. The stand's popularity attracted the attention of two local businessmen, James Woodson and Harold Holmes. Holmes had a business that manufactured trailers, and as Turner expanded his taco business, Holmes manufactured trailers for him to use as additional locations — sort of prehistoric food trucks. As the taco business became more successful, Woodson and Holmes bought the franchise rights from Turner in 1969, and in the process renamed it Taco John's in his honor. The earliest stores bore the slogan, "The Hottest Spot in Town."

The early expansion strategy for Taco John's focused on smaller communities. The chain's first drive-thru location opened in 1973, and by 1975, Taco John's had opened 100 locations, primarily in Midwestern states. Growth continued at a brisk pace over the next two decades. In 1994, a Taco John's store in Iowa became the first in the chain to gross \$1 million in annual sales.

Today, the chain is at 390 units nationwide, of which all but seven are franchised. Many Taco John's franchisees operate multiple units, and the chain is proud of the assistance it gives franchisees. "From the day they sign either an area development agreement or a single-store franchise agreement," says Taco John's President and CEO Jim Creel, "we have a team that works with them all the way through ordering their equipment, working with the construction team and general contractor on the building, making sure they get everything they need."

That's backed with a sophisticated online training system and hands-on, in-store training, says Amber Novak, Senior Director of Training and Development. New franchisees, she adds, "complete a four-week training program in a restaurant. So we get them to make some tacos for us and teach them how to do it right — do it the Taco John's way."

Standing Out in a Crowded Field

The quick-serve Mexican segment is a crowded field, so why has Taco John's survived where so many others have failed? From day one, the chain has prided itself on its proprietary spice blends and unique menu items. Take, for example, Potato Olés®. These crispy potato coins topped with a special seasoning were added to the Taco John's menu in 1979 and have been a consistent seller ever since. "It's extremely craveable," says Thomas Hackett, Director of Operations Services. "If somebody mentions Taco John's, the next thing they're going to mention is Potato Olé."



BRAND WATCH

MERRYCHEF

Designed first microwave ovens:

1950

First combination oven launched:

1968

High-speed ovens launched:

2000

merrychef.com



Brad Bergaus (left), Corporate Chef and Director of Menu Innovation, uses the Merrychef to prepare burritos while Culinary Coordinator Andy Cook works the line.



A variety of Welbilt brands — including Merrychef, Frymaster and Merco — make the Kitchen Olé work efficiently.



The Kitchen as Laboratory

Taco John's two big strategic moves — the Kitchen Olé redesign and the relocation of franchise-focused activities — come together at its new Innovation Center kitchen in Minneapolis. This 1,215-square-foot kitchen is “just like a kitchen in a restaurant,” says Jim Creel, Taco John's President and CEO. “That's the idea so we can work through what it's going to be like for a team member in the restaurant making product.”

The kitchen will provide a location for running speed of service tests and gauging customer response to potential new products, Creel says. “We've got a lab set up where we can bring consumers in, give them food and get their feedback immediately.”

Taco John's will also use The Innovation Center to

refine the chain's equipment needs. It's large enough to allow for experimentation. “It's a plug-and-play kitchen,” says Sava Hesthaven, Senior Director of Operations. If Taco John's Corporate Chef Brad Bergaus wants to test a piece of equipment, “he can bring that in, test it out and determine if this is the right thing to do,” Hesthaven says.

“We have the new kitchen we worked on with Welbilt, and we need to continue to work with them because we believe there's more automation we can put into the kitchen,” Creel says. “That's going to be very important as we go forward. Given the difficulty with labor right now, we don't see that getting any easier in the future, so we want to continue to work on our equipment to make it as efficient as we can.”



That has prompted the chain to develop other menu items around it, like a breakfast Meat & Potato Burrito and Super Nachos, both of which include the popular potato as an ingredient. Limited-time-only offers are also popular. For example, if you're in need of some holiday cheer, stop by Taco John's around Christmastime for the Nachos Navidad: green, red and yellow chips topped with beef, beans and other nacho toppings.

Another thing that sets Taco John's apart from others in the segment is its emphasis on freshness. Items like chips and taco bowl shells are fried fresh daily. “We hand-cut our steak in the restaurants. We make Pico de Gallo every single morning,” says Sava Hesthaven, Senior Director of Operations. “We are

all about having quality ingredients at a reasonable price to stay competitive in the market.”

Above all, the chain puts an emphasis on customer service. “When we're taking an order, we use the guest name. When their order is ready, we call their name out,” says Novak. “That gets us to really know our regulars.” In some areas, she says, customers come so frequently that when they pull up to the drive-thru order screen and say their name, the team member already knows what their order will be. “That's how much they come to us and [we] really know them personally,” she says. Hesthaven calls that attention to detail “being guest-obsessed. That's truly the most important thing we do for the brand.”

Gearing Up for the Future

As Taco John's continues to grow, it's making some big changes internally. First, many of the chain's internal and franchisee functions have been moved to Minneapolis from Cheyenne. “When you're a 50-year-old company and you've always had your headquarters in Cheyenne, Wyo., making a move to Minneapolis is really a big deal,” says Creel. “As we came through COVID, one of the things we realized is within six hours of Minneapolis, we have about 200 restaurants — about half the chain.” Besides giving the chain a bigger talent pool from which to draw, the move also makes it easier for franchisees and potential franchisees to travel to meetings, he says. “It really is going to be the center of the chain where franchisees come in for meetings. The office is built out so that we can have meetings of 60 to 80 people in one room if we need to.”

More importantly, however, Taco John's has made changes to its kitchens so it can produce food more efficiently. “In late 2018 and early 2019, we wanted to engage some restaurant equipment companies to take a look at our legacy kitchen and determine if there was anything we could do to increase throughput to make it better for our team members and guests,” says Hackett.

Taco John's had already been using Frymaster® fryers, so the Welbilt FitKitchen® team put together some ideas on how the chain could streamline its kitchen operations. With the go-ahead from Taco John's, the team visited some company locations in Wyoming and Nebraska, and then did test runs of new kitchen designs, producing Taco John's menu items at Welbilt® headquarters in Florida. “We went back and forth with the FitKitchen team, and they mocked up the kitchen multiple times using foam board,” Hackett says. “It's crazy to see what they did.”

The ideas that Welbilt came up with — based

around rethinking equipment usage — helped increase both speed of service and food quality. “The quality of the food coming from this more modern equipment is much, much better — a much hotter product going to the customer,” says Creel.

Novak adds that the redesign also improved ergonomics: “Taking out the sheer number of steps [crew members] would have to do to complete a product was amazing.”

There were some unexpected benefits as well. The existing kitchen design uses steam tables, which put out a lot of heat and steam. “The air-conditioning had a hard time keeping the kitchens cool. When you have steam, you also have dirt collecting on wet ceilings. So cleaning was much more difficult. With this new line, a lot of those problems are solved,” says Creel.

The new kitchen design, termed Kitchen Olé, features a number of products from Welbilt brands and was first installed in one of Taco John's Cheyenne locations in July 2021. Along with the Frymaster fryers, a Delfield® production table helps streamline production and eliminate several stand-alone production tables. MercoMax™ and MercoEco™ holding cabinets and a Merco CrispyMax™ serving station keep product at perfect serving temperatures. Convotherm® combi ovens cook proteins and heat other products, while the culinary staff uses a Merrychef® high-speed oven to produce quesadillas and burritos.

The first Kitchen Olé installation was carefully watched from a customer perspective, Hackett says. “We gauged what the guests were saying to us about the temperature of food, speed, things like that,” he says. “All those metrics just increased. We had a winner and decided to move forward with it.” Currently, 25 Taco John's units have the Kitchen Olé configuration, with more planned.

All the Welbilt brands were proud to be part of the Kitchen Olé project, says Garamy Whitmore, General Manager of Merrychef USA. “Our team at Merrychef was engaged to deliver a solution to replace existing quesadilla grills that were not meeting the desired speed, texture and temperature for their products,” he says. “We quickly developed an improved process that that increased internal temperatures but also provided grill marks on the quesadillas and burritos. The end result provided Taco John's with the ability to improve speed of service, food quality and the overall guest experience. Merrychef, the entire Welbilt and FitKitchen team are very excited to have provided this unique solution to enhance our partnership with Taco John's.”

“The quality of the food coming from this more modern equipment is much, much better — a much hotter product going to the customer.”

Jim Creel
President and CEO



The rustic interior at Blackbarn reflects its farm heritage.

Farm-to-Table Meets Elegance at Blackbarn

John Doherty had a vision. That vision was a rustic farm-to-table American restaurant in a modern barn-house environment. It

would be casual and approachable, lots of wood and steel, and have an open kitchen to connect diners to the source of their food. It would have virtually nothing in common with the Waldorf Astoria, the legendary white-glove New York City hotel where Doherty spent 23 years as Executive Chef. “I grew up through those years dining at fine four-star restaurants,” says Doherty. “And I lost interest in it.”

He had the perfect name for his new establishment — Blackbarn — and a wealthy backer, his childhood buddy Tom Struzzieri. He even had the ideal space: a soaring, sunlit room just across the street from Madison Square Park in Manhattan’s trendy NoMad neighborhood.

“Every other space that I looked at over the years had something wrong with it,” says Doherty. “But when I walked into this space, I knew.” Doherty and Struzzieri got a great deal, buying the previous restaurant out of bankruptcy, and financial and critical success came quick. After a year, Blackbarn was in the black. Within five years, it had nearly doubled revenues.

Then — and you know what’s coming here — COVID hit. Doherty closed down, vacated the space for a year, and renegotiated a favorable 10-year lease. Then, his team learned how to operate in a down market. They shrunk the menu, which resulted in less prep and fewer cooks. Salaried managers went to hourly rates without losing their benefits. With payroll down and careful control of expenses, the restaurant increased its margins once again.

It helped that the massive space had a large bar and five private event spaces — two features that historically represent the highest profit margins in restaurants. “The day after Labor Day in 2022, we had five events on the calendar,” says Doherty. “And it’s not letting up.”

Those events are playful, interactive and pure fun — for example, “Suddenly Sous Chef,” where diners are randomly



The Montague cooking suite ready for action at Blackburn.



called into kitchen action while a master of ceremonies does a play-by-play commentary and Doherty himself picks a winner. “After a few glasses of wine,” he says, “everybody thinks they’re Gordon Ramsay.” Then there’s the soufflé-making lesson, in which Doherty demystifies the notoriously difficult dessert and opens a bottle of champagne with a saber à la Napoleon’s army.

Among the abundance of whiskey tastings, wine cellar tours, and chef’s kitchen table dinners, Blackburn’s most popular event is the World Leader Menu, which features his five-course, \$250 meal composed of dishes he prepared at the Waldorf Astoria for politicians such as Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher. It’s worth the price of admission alone just to hear Doherty tell stories about leaders breaking bread



during historic moments, like, say, the fact that Nancy Reagan always made sure there was nothing spicy on the menu for her husband. “George H.W. Bush wanted to know how we made everything,” Doherty says. “Bill Clinton? Not much of a foodie.”

The last item left on Doherty’s wish list for Blackburn — the one thing that could elevate the restaurant to the next level — did not involve his 80-person staff or full scorecard of events. It was his kitchen suite. “We’d been spending a lot of money on repairs,” recalls Doherty. “Coming out of COVID, we resigned our lease for another ten years, and there was no way that the equipment we had was going to make it ten years.”

At the Waldorf Astoria, Doherty favored a certain line of equipment, but considered going in a different direction with a different manufacturer. When Anthony Muzia, a sales rep from BSE Marketing, asked if he would be interested in receiving a bid for a Montague island suite, Doherty took a look. He was so impressed that he asked his trusted service agent, Milton Rodriguez of Kitchen Dynamics, what he thought of Montague. “No, no, no, not Montague,” Rodriguez joked. “It’ll put me out of business. Those things last forever.” Doherty was sold.

He showed drawings of what he wanted to Marc Fuchs, Executive Vice President of foodservice equipment dealer Singer M. Tucker, asked if they could match with a Montague suite, and Fuchs’ team ran with it. “John knew what he wanted,” says Fuchs. “We worked within the conditions we had, which was the same footprint as the existing suite, 15 to 20 feet. And we were able to shave a few dollars.”

On a slow weekend in July, Blackburn disconnected its old suite. Doherty didn’t even bother to close the restaurant;

he nimbly switched to a smaller menu and did service out of one of Blackburn’s two other kitchens. By Monday morning, the new equipment arrived; by Tuesday evening, with a factory representative supervising the installation in what Fuchs calls “an exercise in coordination,” everything was in place. The fire suppression system had to be redone, but by Wednesday morning, the Montague was ready to go.

Since then, Doherty says, the Montague has revolutionized the way Blackburn operates. For starters, the new suite has added more ovens, burners, a fryer and a charbroiler into the line, making for a more efficient workspace and more versatility in the menu. “Before, if we wanted to fry or grill anything, we had to have somebody in another kitchen do it,” says Doherty. “I never bothered to put a little fried garnish on a dish because the fryer was too far away. Now, I can do a salad with a little fried goat cheese or fried little lobster roll. Or I can grill a steak and throw some wood chunks on there to get a nice smoky flavor.”

Another benefit has been added refrigeration. Doherty’s team had grown accustomed to running downstairs in the middle of service every time they needed to bring up food from the production kitchen. In the new streamlined process, no one has to leave the line. The operation is leaner and more efficient; Doherty estimates the Montague has saved him \$40,000 a year in payroll. The staff, after a brief adjustment period to the change in their routine, has embraced the upgrade.

As far as success stories go, it’s a feather in Doherty’s cap, but also Montague’s. “Having a new installation like this in an open kitchen gives the manufacturer a chance to show the product in a good restaurant

and the dealer a chance to show a smooth installation. It’s a great partnership,” says Fuchs.

Montague agrees it’s a great partnership. “Serving upwards of 450 guests at capacity in such an elegant setting requires the best. Getting to work with Chef-Owner John Doherty was special,” says Dede Kramer, Director of Sales for Montague.

All this has enabled Doherty to put more time into Heavenly Harvest, the nonprofit organization that he runs with his wife, Jennifer, and daughter, Jenna Elliott. Since 2015, Heavenly Harvest has cooked 280,000 nutritious high-protein meals, packaged them in state-of-the-art sterilized pouches to give them a 24-month shelf life, and distributed them to food pantries around the country. Every single meal, whether Asian stir-fry chicken or macaroni Bolognese, has been conceived and developed by Doherty, and each meal ends up in the hands of a family or individuals in a distressed community — at no cost. “The foundation is my true purpose,” says Doherty. “And the restaurant is a vehicle to get me there and support my family while I make it happen.” And it goes without saying: Doherty plans to develop new recipes for Heavenly Harvest with his Montague.

Meanwhile, Blackburn keeps rolling along. Doherty’s goals now include figuring out ways to incentivize early dining, utilizing the event spaces during the day, and perhaps pairing with Goldbelly, an online marketplace that ships food products across the country — including fare made famous in the restaurants of hallowed chefs such as Thomas Keller and José Andrés. “It’s another stream of revenue, and I think some of our products would be really good for that,” Doherty says. “So, yeah — I think there are some easy ways to get to the next level.”

Doherty estimates that the Montague has saved him \$40,000 a year in payroll.



Beer, Art and Fun: The Hoots Story

This Winston-Salem-based brewery offers its hometown fun, approachable hangouts thanks to a passion for beer, some elbow grease and, in part, a Craft Series glasswasher from Moyer Diebel.

By the time he hit his early 30s, Eric Weyer was ready to move on to the next thing.

Weyer spent his early adulthood as a musician, traveling and playing guitar in a band that ended up touring nationally and even got some play on MTV. It was a great experience, but by Weyer's own telling, he was starting to age out. It was time to return to his hometown of Winston-Salem, N.C., and take on the next challenge.

That challenge ended up being a brewery.

"I've always wanted to do something different and offer Winston something that's unique and fun," Weyer says. "For the most part, I was done with playing music. I was getting older. I was also a bartender, so I thought a brewery made sense. I'm passionate about beer, and in our town at the time, we only had one brewery."

With little more than a goal, Weyer and his partners were able to bootstrap an operation together. Some of his old bosses gave him two years of free rent in a shuttered flour mill in Winston-Salem's West End historic district. He found some investors and raised more than \$20,000 for the brewery on Kickstarter. With \$500 worth of old barnwood, he built a starburst-style piece that now sits over the tasting room's back bar.

He even found a very used dishwasher made by Champion Industries for \$75. "I



Eric Weyer getting ready for service at Hoots Satellite.

put in a new heating element, cleaned it up and it worked," says Weyer.

That brewery opened its doors in October 2013. The name: Hoots Beer Co., named after the flour mill that first occupied the space. Hoots' tasting room measures less than 900 square feet. In that space, though, Weyer has squeezed in a lot of personality.

The bar, the owners say, isn't for beer snobs. It's meant to be a

neighborhood spot serving high-quality but approachable beers, along with craft cocktails and sodas also made by Hoots.

The company has thrived with this approach. It has a loyal customer base, hosts regular fundraisers for animal rescues (Weyer's passion) and other causes, and fits well with nearby industrial district businesses, including a popular Tex-Mex place, tattoo shop and doggie bakery. It also helped launch



a brewery boom in Winston-Salem, with about a half dozen more opening since Hoots opened its doors.

Hoots is also a bit off the beaten path, says Weyer, and with the entry toward the back of the building, "you have to be looking for it. You're not just going to walk down the street and say, 'There it is.'"

In late 2019, Hoots opened its second location, dubbed Hoots Satellite. According to Weyer, Hoots Satellite is, by design, reaching a different group than the crowd at the original Hoots. "I'm seeing more of a business-class group coming up," he says. "A lot of people are coming in after work for drinks or for meetings. There are also people who are just enjoying downtown on a Friday or Saturday night. They're not going to seek out our other spot that's a few miles away, hidden, but once they come in here, it's like, 'Hey, there's another spot, too.' So, it's also marketing. We reach this new crowd and get them to come to our original spot."

Turning foot traffic into regular customers, and even customers who will seek out your other locations, isn't a given, though. A lot of thought went into making Hoots Satellite a good hang. The Satellite's three-level space, says Weyer, features a more modern aesthetic compared to the original location's neighborhood bar/pub ambience. Its features include circular booths on the third level, pinball on the second and a large patio with a walk-up bar on the ground floor.

One important but easy-to-overlook element of the Hoots Satellite experience is the undercounter Craft Series warewasher from Moyer Diebel, a sister company of Champion Industries.

It was through the earlier Champion connection that Weyer learned of the Moyer Diebel machine. According to Daniel Short, Director of Marketing for both Champion and Moyer Diebel, the Craft Series "is a series of undercounter dish machines that is extremely focused on nicer drinking establishments." For Weyer and Hoots Satellite, that focus was just what they were after.

One key feature of this unit is its double-walled design, with an extra layer of insulation between the cleaning chamber and exterior. This feature keeps the machine's exterior cool to the touch,

eliminating the chance of employees burning themselves on the high-temperature warewasher's cabinet.

The double-walled design also means the Craft Series is very low-noise. That's an especially important feature to Weyer, who definitely didn't want a loud machine disrupting the atmosphere of Hoots Satellite. "You don't want a piece of machinery that is making a lot of really loud noise, especially if there are not a lot of people in there and you are trying to maintain a certain vibe."

The bar's warewasher also offers heat recovery technology, which uses steam at the end of a cycle to heat incoming water. With the hot air cooled during this process, there's no massive puff of steam that escapes when the Hoots staff open the door. "I've been to places that have dishwashers that when you open it up, you get blasted. It steams up the whole place and everybody's like, 'Wow, look at that.' That's not the look you want," says Weyer.

With the Hoots Satellite open for a couple of years, the Moyer Diebel has been a workhorse, Weyer adds. Even better, Hoots' relationship with the Ali Group warewashing group remains strong. He's toured their facility, also in Winston-Salem, and appreciates how quickly the company responds to questions or requests. This approach has earned Champion and Moyer Diebel a committed customer.

"[The people with Champion and Moyer Diebel] are just so friendly," says Weyer. "Whenever I see any of the guys from the team, it seems like I've known them forever. We get along great. I feel like the line of communication is always open. Usually I can just text them personally, and boom, I get a reply. It's a great relationship. If I open up another Hoots

somewhere, I'll absolutely continue doing business with them."

Whether Hoots continues to expand or stays at two locations, the brewery continues to achieve what Weyer set out to do. It offers something new and different to his hometown: two fun spaces that serve great beer and allow its owners to contribute to the community through one of their passions.

BRAND WATCH



Established:

1945

First conveyor-type dishwashers:

1958

First undercounter dishwasher:

1977

Number of active glasswasher installations throughout North America:

50,000+

moyerdiebellimited.com



The exterior artwork at Hoots was done by Jeks, a graffiti/mural artist from Greensboro, N.C.

Biscuitville could be satisfied with its status quo. After all, this breakfast-focused chain is doing well. With about 70 units in North Carolina and Virginia, the company has loyal customers who come back again and again for scratch-made biscuit sandwiches that feature biscuits baked fresh every 15 minutes. On top of this, the chain, with roots going back to 1966, is 100% company owned. And the company itself is owned by the family of founder Maurice Jennings. That sounds like a recipe for a nice, stable business. One that could almost run itself.

Biscuitville restaurants feature a warm, homestyle decor.

The chain’s leaders, however, refuse to put Biscuitville on autopilot. While the company could continue opening one or two new locations a year, it has instead invested in the people and processes to launch a new growth phase. Biscuitville is ready to move into South Carolina and plans to open at least 10 to 12 locations a year for years to come, says Jim McCurley, the company’s Vice President of Culinary Operations and Training. “We have been refining our build, our designs. We have been refining the way we open restaurants. By building that foundation over the last two or three years, we are now ready to jump off that springboard and become a growth company,” McCurley says.

Many of Biscuitville’s investments have been in its people. The company, for instance, beefed up its training program. It has developed digital assets and platforms that allow new and existing restaurant employees to learn the ins and outs of their jobs, get up to speed on new processes, and more. Biscuitville is also working to give these same employees a career path, says McCurley. This helps with employee retention and creates a pipeline of new talent that can support expansion. “We want to be able to promote significantly from within,” he says. “Biscuitville is one of those companies where you can start as an hourly employee and work your way up to store operator at some point and eventually into a multi-unit



This Southern breakfast chain could coast on its success. Instead, it’s entering a growth phase, thanks to investments in processes, people and equipment, including a new Moffat oven.

Biscuitville Rises to the Occasion





Biscuitville's menu has expanded to muffins and other baked goods.

BRAND WATCH



Number of Moffat Group offices currently supporting its global business around the world:

9

Number of US states currently using Moffat products:

50

Acquired by Ali Group:

2000

moффatusa.com



The small footprint of Moffat ovens allows them to be placed near the cookline.

position. That is one of the great things about the brand. A lot of the folks in higher-level field positions started as hourlies years ago with the company.”

Some employees in these higher-level field positions, in fact, play an important role in Biscuitville’s expansion plans. The chain, for example, has built out a new store opening team

staffed with some former on-the-ground employees. From the time construction is complete, this group needs just 14 days to open a new restaurant for business. “When you’re talking 10 to 12 restaurants a year, it really means you’re opening a restaurant every four weeks. With our operational structure, with our new unit opening

teams, I think we are going to be able to pull it off very well,” says McCurley.

Biscuitville’s preparation for expansion does not center exclusively on internal teams and processes, of course. While those are necessary for success, the chain continues to work on changes that customers can see *and* can taste, too.

One area where the brand has upped its game is the bakery program, which covers baked treats like muffins, cookies and more. The chain, says McCurley, has long had a small selection of baked goods. In recent years, though, Biscuitville has expanded those offerings with new muffin options, cinnamon rolls and even hand pies made with local fruit. “Those couple of items we have added over the last few years have really catapulted that dessert category for us. It was fantastic to expose that there is still really a big need for that in restaurants.”

These guests do not just choose a muffin over a biscuit for breakfast, McCurley adds. With sweets taking a more prominent place on the menu, more and more customers now come in after the breakfast rush for coffee and a treat.

To make the most of these new offerings, though, Biscuitville saw a need to upgrade its equipment, says McCurley. “That midmorning coffee or a midafternoon pick-me-up is a piece of our business strategy. For us to do that, we had to go back and review our equipment packages.”

One piece in particular that Biscuitville evaluated was the bakery program’s oven. The legacy unit in many locations could only hold two pans. That just wasn’t enough to keep up with growing demand.

Larger capacity ovens are easy to find, of course. The

Biscuitville Timeline

1966: Maurice Jennings launches the company that would become Biscuitville.

1975: Based on the popularity of its biscuits, Maurice rebrands his restaurant chain Biscuitville.

1979: New HQ and distribution center opens in Graham, N.C.

1982: The chain reaches 25 locations.

1996: Burney Jennings, Maurice’s son, becomes President and CEO.

2007: HQ moves to Greensboro, N.C.

2014: New logo and restaurant design introduced.

2016: 50th anniversary.

2019: Biscuitville enters its first new market (Fayetteville, N.C.) in a decade and begins a new expansion phase.

2020: Kathie Niven named President and CEO, and Burney Jennings becomes Executive Chair.

2022: New 78,000-square-foot distribution center opens in Burlington, N.C.



challenge came in finding a high-capacity unit that could fit in the existing footprint of less than 2.5 square feet. And whatever the company chose had to uphold the chain’s commitment to quality: Biscuitville bakes its biscuits fresh every 15 minutes. While the culinary staff does not use this piece to bake biscuits, the company needs a unit that can live up to that standard.

Biscuitville found a unit that checks all the boxes in an electric-powered convection oven from Moffat.

On the capacity front, the Moffat oven takes Biscuitville from two to four pans in the restaurant’s required footprint. This larger size positions the chain to offer a greater variety of baked items, including more limited-time and seasonal offerings.

Biscuitville’s partnership with Moffat did not come about by simply checking the spec sheets. The chain first evaluated the oven in Moffat’s test kitchen in Winston-Salem, N.C. There, Biscuitville found the Moffat oven was not only big enough but also produced a high-quality, consistent product. This

is largely thanks to the unit’s dual, reversing fans, which can eliminate hot spots and provide a more even bake, says Tim Zirkle, Regional Sales Manager for Moffat.

“That’s one of the reasons it works so well for what they need. There’s a lot of airflow in there,” Zirkle says. “The fans are changing direction every two minutes, so it’s better at evenly distributing the air. That’s a signature of many of our ovens.”

Once Biscuitville was happy with the unit’s test kitchen performance, it took the Moffat and a few other contenders for testing in one of the chain’s restaurants. There, the chain confirmed that the Moffat not only improved consistency but also simplified operations. No hot spots, McCurley says, eliminates the need to rotate pans to get an even bake, even under the pressures of a quick-service restaurant environment.

“Not having to manipulate the product midcycle is a big win for us,” McCurley says. “That technology was one of the big selling factors. We put several hundred products through these ovens. All the products came out

evenly cooked. Ultimately, we could not break it.”

Biscuitville has been placing these new ovens in both new and existing stores since early 2022. Even after the sale, Moffat has been available and responsive to any questions from the chain, says McCurley. “Those are people we want to partner with. If you look at Biscuitville’s history, we have partners we have been in business with for 60 years. Those relationships are extremely important to the brand and to the organization. Any time we are looking to select a vendor or add a new vendor, it is important that it not be just a transactional relationship. For us, it has been a great fit.”

With Biscuitville’s team and operations locked down, the chain is on the verge of major growth. In a few years, Biscuitville could easily double in size. Beyond that, who knows?

“Ultimately, it’s really a great time to be part of a growth company,” says McCurley. “It’s very stable and operates well. I think we are going to be poised for a great growth story over the next 10, 20, 30 years. It will be great to watch.”

With sweets taking a more prominent place on the menu, more and more customers now come in after the breakfast rush for coffee and a treat.

After being baked in a Moffat oven, piping hot cinnamon swirls are iced.



Kinkaider Brewing Takes Ice to the Next Level

Microbrewery benefits from a next-generation ice machine.



The perfect drink needs the perfect ice.

Cody Schmick's goal is to create taproom destinations in major Nebraska towns. He is well on his way with his Kinkaider Brewing Company operation. "We have several microbrewery locations, and when we go into a new space, we don't want to copy and paste," Schmick says. "My team and I look at the neighborhood and the surroundings [before deciding on the layout and design]."

Currently, every Kinkaider Brewing location was built on a pre-existing site, with the exception of a new German beer hall concept that is currently in the works. In fact, choosing atypical spaces has been the goal.

Schmick established his first microbrewery location back in 2014 at a former pumpkin patch on a 4-acre farm in Broken Bow. This site, situated in north-central Nebraska's Sand Hills, features a full-service restaurant, bar and outdoor space. In 2017, the Grand Island Kinkaider's location opened in a 100-year-old former theater that was converted into a bar. It also includes a full-service restaurant, along with a microbrewery.

A year later, Schmick opened another microbrewery, this time in Lincoln's upscale Haymarket area in what was formerly a train station. "This is a trendy, downtown spot with concerts and other events happening nearby, so it's in a very high-traffic area," Schmick says.

"It's strictly a taproom with no restaurant, but we have food trucks and hold events like brunch on the train platform."

Schmick also owns a distillery in Lincoln, Side Show Spirits, the first distillery in the city, he notes, and one of only a few in the state of Nebraska. Opened in 2020, Side Show Spirits is cocktail-driven and bartender-inspired. The distillery's spirits are part of the menu at all Kinkaider locations and distributed to supermarkets and liquor stores within the state. These include peach whiskey, white whiskey, jalapeño vodka, Nebraska corn vodka, barrel-aged vodka and apple brandy.

It was last year that Kinkaider's Omaha microbrewery opened its doors and quickly became one of the top five breweries by volume in the state, according to Schmick. Serving as a community bar for 10 years prior to Kinkaider moving in, this location offers cocktails, craft beers and ciders, but no food.

"We have brand continuity from Kinkaider, which has built a strong name being synonymous with beer and cocktails," Schmick says. "We wanted to make the Omaha space not just beer- but cocktail-focused. So, we built that program from the ground up alongside our distillery."

This 3,000-square-foot microbrewery seats 100 inside and 60 on the patio. When customers first walk in, they see a red phone on the wall. "It's used to call my partner and our head brewer, Dan 'The Wiser' Hodges, the company's original brewmaster," Schmick explains. "He doesn't leave the Broken

Bow location, so the phone dials him directly." Customers can use the phone to leave a message for Hodges and sometimes he even picks up and talks to them directly about Kinkaider Brewing.

The Omaha site has two separate and distinct spaces — the microbrewery portion sits in the front and features a 15-foot-long bar, and the Side Show Lounge, which has a more upscale vibe and features a cocktail bar, is in back. The latter space is set off by drapes and a green color palette. There also is a retail component located to the left of the entrance, where customers can purchase Kinkaider's T-shirts, hats, glassware, flannels and other merch.

"All of our locations have a robust cocktail list, as we want to make sure those who don't drink beer can choose something else."

Cody Schmick



A pleasant summer evening at Kinkaider Brewing Co.

“All of our locations have a robust cocktail list, as we want to make sure those who don’t drink beer can choose something else. We offer bourbon, whiskey and high-end cocktails,” Schmick says. “Whether it’s a cocktail over ice or a bartender-created cocktail that’s stirred or shaken, ice plays a big role in our concept.”

Executive Bartender Benton Alexander builds the cocktails to reflect trends and the different neighborhoods’ demographics. “Although we started as a beer bar, we’ve been introducing a major cocktail element to all sites,” Alexander explains. “Our program showcases Side Show Spirits’ whiskeys, brandies and vodkas.” He echoes Schmick’s feelings that ice plays an important role in the guest experience as it accounts for a third of what customers receive in their beverage presentation or preparation.

In addition to fresh cocktails, Kinkaid’s locations offer a wide selection of canned cocktails, such as Blue Mermaid Pineapple Lemonade, The Great Firebreather Spicy Grapefruit Cooler, The Green Dryad Cucumber Mint Cooler and The Witch Doctor Mai Tai. “We currently only distribute our canned spirits in Nebraska,” Schmick says. “We are taking care of home base first.”

The menu also includes flights of cocktails or straight spirits. “Much of it starts with our bar experience and what’s going on; this is where our cocktail ideas begin,” Alexander says. “Talking to guests and making fresh cocktails for our clientele is the R&D part. We look at how we can take recipes and utilize them in our distillery as a canned offering that we can take to market.”

All Kinkaid Brewing locations have been leasing Scotsman Prodigy Plus® ice machines. “We started our lease

program with Kinkaid’s three years ago,” says Ken Leiderbrand, owner of Omaha-based Midwest Distributing, a Scotsman equipment distributor.

When Scotsman was seeking locations to test its new, next-generation Prodigy Elite® line, Kinkaid Brewing appeared to be a perfect fit. “Midwest Distributing has a good relationship with Kinkaid’s, so we decided to put a unit in its Omaha facility to try it out and see how the features work,” says Jeff Biel, Scotsman’s Vice President of Marketing and Product Development. “Kinkaid’s was a good match as we were seeking current customers that we have good relationships with, who we have access to and who will give us honest feedback on the machine.”

It was a consensus that the microbrewery’s Omaha location was an ideal setting for the 500-pound-per-day unit. “We want to test new units in bars because beer yeast creates a solution that negatively impacts the machine,” Leiderbrand explains. “We want to see how the test unit holds up to minerals and what’s in the water. Kinkaid’s was targeted for its cocktail ice.”

The third-generation Prodigy Elite has a basic layout and design similar to its predecessor Prodigy Plus but with a refined user interface. It has added a bin light, a control board that provides better diagnostics for service agents and a preservation mode. “Sometimes ice machines get quirky errors or water hits a sensor and the machine automatically shuts down,” Biel says. “With this line’s preservation mode, the unit will continue operating while indicating there is a problem.” This eliminates nuisance shutdowns that can happen when anomalies occur. The machine knows there is not



The bar at Kinkaid Brewing's Omaha location.



Craft beer and cocktails are on the menu at Kinkaid Brewing.

BRAND WATCH

Scotsman®

Machines installed worldwide:

1,000,000+

Tons of Scotsman flake ice and nugget ice cubes produced daily:

12,500

Scotsman ice cubes produced daily worldwide:

6 billion

Crystal-clear ice cubes introduced:

1950

The Original Chewable Ice introduced:

1981

scotsman-ice.com

a safety issue and will continue producing ice.

A new app launched as part of the Prodigy Elite line allows users to interact with the machine more easily. “Instead of taking the machine’s panels off for a diagnosis, the app allows users to immediately see if the unit is operating properly,” Biel explains. “It has an intuitive cleaning guide, so the app walks users through the cleaning process.”

This feature allows service techs to clean the machine more quickly and efficiently, making it less costly to maintain. “On the app side, it’s easier to add functionality,” Biel says. “Right now, it’s a text-driven interface with basic graphics, but we’re looking to do more on the app side to integrate video clips and multimedia. This will help even more with cleaning, diagnostics and troubleshooting.”

In differentiating the ice machine, Scotsman has leveraged the user interface to provide basic information on the machine and details on its



“It consistently provides clean ice quickly with no issues. Plus, it provides a nice display and presentation aesthetically for cocktails.”

Osmany Fernandez
Omaha location manager

The Scotsman Prodigy Elite ice machine helps Fernandez get through another busy evening.

operation. It will reveal whether the machine is working properly and, if not, when a service agent should be called.

“On the externals, if you don’t have the app, this machine is very simple; a green light is good and a red light means something is wrong and needs attention,” Biel says.

Osmany Fernandez, who manages Kinkaid’s Omaha location, says there have been zero complaints with the unit. “It consistently provides clean ice quickly with no issues. Plus,

it provides a nice display and presentation aesthetically for cocktails,” he says. “We even had one of our guys from another location comment on how clean the ice was.”

Schmick seeks low-maintenance equipment with minimal problems for his breweries. “With multiple locations, I need something that can handle the volume and works when needed,” he says. “My job is to break down barriers for staff. The Prodigy Elite has been great a fit for our business.”

05

Innovation



Food Scientist
Natalie Seymour

Debunking the Myths Around Microwave Ovens



The microwave oven may be the most misunderstood piece of equipment in the commercial kitchen. Unfortunately, the myths and misunderstandings about microwave ovens keep operators from using this equipment to its full potential. Natalie Seymour, a food scientist, works to dispel these myths. She has both a bachelor's and master's degree in Food Science from North Carolina State University, and she specializes in retail food safety, behavior change and science communication. Seymour is a firm believer in the usefulness of the microwave oven in foodservice, and she explains how microwaves can help operators produce food quickly and efficiently.

First, is there a difference between microwave ovens made for home use and the ones made for commercial kitchens?

The main difference between residential and commercial microwaves is really just the size, power and construction. The technology is the same. The commercial models are just designed to stand up to the rigor of a commercial kitchen and cook larger amounts of food efficiently.

What are a few common reasons chefs might not want a microwave in their kitchen, and what would you say to convince them otherwise?

Unfortunately, there is a stigma around microwave cooking, so some chefs might avoid using microwaves in fear of the perception. Microwaves are often underused in home kitchens and associated with rudimentary cooking skills and sad TV dinners. But the reality is that they can provide fast cooking in a safe, programmable and often energy-efficient machine. Even more so, microwave cooking helps reduce

injury from heat (you still have to be careful when removing food), and they can be simpler to teach to new foodservice employees.

Health is a priority among many consumers today, and yet when microwave ovens were first introduced, it was thought they made food less healthy. Can this technology help support healthy eating?

The idea that microwaves make food less healthy by destroying nutrients is unfortunate and incorrect. Microwave technology can help preserve micronutrients in some foods. For many folks, the barriers to healthy eating are time, energy and know-how, so microwaves and a few microwave cooking techniques can make healthy eating much more doable. Will mixed veggies steamed in the bag taste the same as oven-roasted vegetables, or a 60-second scrambled egg taste the same as an egg fried in butter? No, definitely not, but if it helps someone move toward incorporating food that helps them feel their best, then that is a win.

What role can microwaves play in a foodservice operation's food safety efforts?

Because of the speed at which a microwave can heat food, many operations use commercial microwaves to rethermalize products before service. Quick reheating of food that is held cold can be less risky from a food safety perspective since it removes the need for constant monitoring of food that is held hot, or tracking time as a control to manage

food safety risks. Microwave cooking can also be conducive to preparing dishes individually without needing to clean up a cooking surface, which can help with managing allergen cross-contact. Of course, microwave cooking must be coupled with other food safety practices.

How can microwaves help foodservice operators enhance speed of service?

Speed and energy efficiency are two huge draws for microwave technology. Once recipes are developed and optimized for microwave cooking, commercial machines can be programmed for quick, consistent heating and cooking. Processes like steaming and general reheating are much faster in microwaves since there isn't a warmup period for the appliance itself.

Labor remains a center-of-the-plate issue for operators from all segments. How can microwaves help operators make more effective and efficient use of their labor?

Microwaves are generally very user-friendly appliances, and new employees can be trained on microwave cooking relatively quickly. Using microwaves strategically and developing recipes for microwaves can help get new employees up to speed and widen a hiring pool to include folks who don't have as much cooking experience. While this idea may not be for all, it can be a way to incorporate innovation and new techniques in a dynamic labor market.

Cleaning and maintaining a microwave seem pretty straightforward. Is that the case?

Yes, if used correctly, most microwaves should be easy to clean. Definitely check with the manufacturer for usage and cleaning instructions, but in my experience, cleaning a microwave is much easier than cleaning burned food off the bottom of an oven.



BRAND WATCH

AMANA
COMMERCIAL
MENUMASTER
Commercial
XpressChef

Established:

1947

First affordable microwave oven, the Amana Radarange®, sold:

1967

Manufacturing:

ONLY

Manufacturer of commercial microwave ovens fabricated and assembled in the USA

acpsolutions.com



A Microwave Oven That Does More

For a microwave oven that really outperforms other ovens, operators are turning to the HDC Series from Amana® Commercial. They combine peak microwave performance with steaming, thus eliminating the need for a separate steamer. These ovens cost less than a traditional tabletop steamer, require no installation or ventilation, are easy to operate and maintain, and cut cook times by more than half.

An advanced controller on the HDC ovens provides multiple cooking levels and the ability to program up to 100 menu items; the Smart USB function makes uploading recipes and menus easy through the use of a USB port. Available in 1800- and 2100-watt models, the Amana Commercial HDC ovens are perfect for QSRs, fast-casual restaurants, bars, cafés and any other operation that wants to produce food quickly and efficiently.

The Move to Efficient, Adaptive Refrigeration

The buzzword today around commercial foodservice refrigeration is “adaptive.”

Adaptive refrigeration is changing the way refrigerators work — and changing the way operators think about refrigeration as well.

What Is It?

An adaptive refrigeration system “includes a variable speed compressor with a sensor-driven control system capable of modulation in response to a varying internal thermal load,” says Peter Banwell, Director of Product Marketing for the EPA ENERGY STAR® program. Adaptive refrigeration takes into account “all the different aspects of the refrigeration system,” says David Zabrowski, Vice President of Frontier Energy’s Food Service Technology Center (FSTC) in San Ramon, Calif. “The idea behind it is really just taking more control points and having more

flexibility in how the system is monitored and operated so that it’s not overcooling or overrunning when it doesn’t need to.”

The main difference between adaptive refrigeration systems and the average commercial foodservice refrigerator in use today is in how the compressor works. Conventional compressor systems are either on maximum capacity or off, without the ability to ramp up or down the speed of the compressor based on cooling demand.

The compressor now can modulate based on load, according to Zabrowski. When culinary staff initially load food into a refrigerator, he says, “you now have a big energy load and moisture load. The refrigeration system can kick on in a higher gear and remove that excess humidity and heat. But during other times, when the load isn’t as extreme, it can operate at a milder level.”

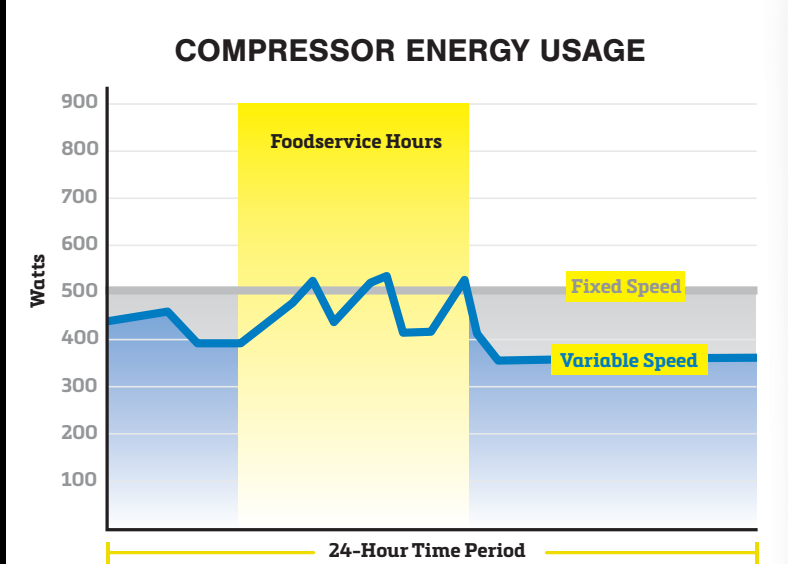
This operational flexibility comes from advanced technology, which

Zabrowski likens to the way automobiles work today. In the past, “cars used to just have a simple carburetor control connected to a gas pedal, and that was modulating the engine. Now, our gas pedal is linked to a sensor, which is linked to other car sensors, which is going to a master computer brain that’s controlling what the engine’s doing.”

Big Benefits

Energy savings represent one of the biggest benefits to adaptive refrigeration systems. While savings across individual models vary, Banwell notes that “models that have achieved the ENERGY STAR Emerging Technology Award perform about 30% to 50% more energy efficiently beyond the US Department of Energy’s federal minimum standard.” Zabrowski says that FSTC studies show similar savings. “We’re seeing savings as high as 30% in a freezer,” he says.

Freezers with adaptive systems have an extra benefit, Zabrowski says. “In freezers,



typically the manual control would run a defrost cycle four times a day, whether you need it or not. An adaptive control would actually measure the temperature and ice buildup on the evaporator, only run the defrost cycle until that ice is melted and then cycle that off.” That results in lower energy costs and more stable temperatures as well, he notes.

While energy savings might be the most obvious benefit, adaptive refrigeration offers other upsides as well. “Advanced compressor systems maintain a more consistent temperature within the cooling cabinet and allow a faster product temperature drop-down,” says Banwell. Zabrowski notes that there is an increase in food quality “because temperature and humidity controls are much more stable as opposed to having large swings of temperature and humidity during the day caused by door openings.”

Operators purchasing units with adaptive controls may be eligible for rebates available through their local utilities, Zabrowski says. “Both Beverage-Air and Victory have a number of adaptive refrigeration units that are on the qualifying product list for instant rebate programs across the country,” he adds.

Award Winners

In 2022, Beverage-Air and Victory were the first companies to receive the ENERGY STAR Emerging Technology Award for their adaptive commercial refrigeration models. These models met various criteria put forward by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which include outperforming the Federal Minimum Standard for Annual Energy Consumption by 25% and containing a refrigerant and foam with a Global Warming Potential less than 15. The award was

given to 35 Beverage-Air and Victory models. “We congratulate Beverage-Air and Victory Refrigeration brands for earning the 2022 ENERGY STAR Emerging Technology Award for a combined 35 commercial refrigerators and freezers. Their leadership in manufacturing models that use low-impact refrigerants and significantly less energy represents an important step in the fight against climate change,” says Ann Bailey, Director, EPA ENERGY STAR Products Program.

FSTC is also enthusiastic about the award given to Beverage-Air and Victory. Adaptive refrigeration is “a technology that we’ve promoted for years as an energy-efficient measure for things like large supermarket cases or walk-in

boxes,” says Zabrowski. “But we’ve never really seen it applied to this level. So we’re very excited to see them taking this step forward.”

“We are extremely proud to be the recipient of the 2022 ENERGY STAR Emerging Technology Award,” says Oscar Villa, President, Ali Group North America – Refrigeration Division. “Being the only commercial refrigeration manufacturer to win this award, for the use of variable-speed compressors, is a great testament to our ability to utilize the most advanced technologies available in the market. We are pleased to provide financial relief to our end users, both through redemption of ENERGY STAR rebate programs, and with their daily energy costs.”



Building Better Foodservice for the Flanagan Falcons



You might have to look hard to find the village of Flanagan, Ill., on a map. It's located about 110 miles southwest of Chicago and has a population of slightly less than 1,000. As you drive through the fields of corn and soybeans on Route 116 (aka Falcon Highway) and approach the center of town, one of the first things you see is an imposing brick building that houses the town's combination grade school and high school, Flanagan-Cornell Unit 74, home of the Falcons. Although it may be a comparatively small school, walk the halls and you'll see that Falcon Pride — which stands for positivity, responsibility, integrity, determination and empathy — is everywhere.

A Greater Mission — and Challenges

At Flanagan-Cornell, as at so many other schools, Kitchen Manager Susan Ulrich and her team of four coworkers see their job as

more than just simply serving food. “We like to not just feed their stomachs but feed their spirit as well,” says Ulrich. That can take many forms, she says, whether it's complimenting students on what they're wearing or having one-on-one conversations with them.

But Ulrich and her staff face many of the same challenges other school foodservice workers face: supply chain disruptions, ever-changing governmental regulations, tight budgets and staffing issues. And, like many other school foodservice departments, she has had to deal with an outdated kitchen and storage area, with equipment that badly needs updating.

On a typical day, the kitchen staff serves an average of 175 elementary and middle school students and 70 high school students. Hot and cold breakfasts are available in the morning, and at lunchtime the kitchen staff serves students in shifts, starting with the younger students and moving up to the older students. In addition, the kitchen prepares takeout meals for about 40 students of the Livingston County Special



Services Unit (LCSSU), which serves students with a variety of physical or behavioral challenges.

The culinary staff prepares the school's meals in a kitchen that measures approximately 650 square feet, which includes all of the prep equipment, the serving line and a reach-in cooler. A dry storage area of slightly more than 200 square feet resides across the hall from the kitchen, and a mobile walk-in freezer sits just beyond the kitchen on the outside wall of the school.

The serving line has been one problematic area for

Ulrich and her staff. After cooking, food was kept warm in roasters or crockpots set on a wooden platform on the serving line. To serve food, her team has had to stand on a wooden box about 6 feet long and 8 inches high, reaching over the hot roasters to hand trays to the students. The safety issues in this setup were twofold: First, there was always a risk of someone falling off the platform, especially when more than one team member was standing on it. This was referred to as the "seesaw" effect as workers got on and off the box and it wobbled.

"It was not the safest. I'd get on one end and the other end would go up," Ulrich laughs. Second, as the team reached over the roasters to dish out food and pass trays to students, they would often receive burns from steam rising out of the pots.

Storage has been another issue at Flanagan-Cornell, both in the kitchen and in the supply area. The kitchen suffered from a lack of proper storage, both for utensils and food, and still had an old-style wooden cooling rack. In the storeroom, Ulrich says, "we had wooden shelves. You couldn't clean them very well. They had stains on them from when a can would leak." The permanent wooden shelves, which were at the point of bowing, were also loaded as high as possible. "The shelves went pretty high. I used as much space as I could and stacked the stuff we didn't use very often up top." This led to some warnings from the local fire marshal. "They were concerned with the sprinkler system, and of course, if something fell over, it would hit someone."

The makeover increased ergonomics and efficiency in the Flanagan-Cornell kitchen.

But it was a little thing that really set Ulrich over the edge — a splinter. "I went in there to grab something," she says. "Of course you're in a hurry and the wooden shelves were splintering. They always splintered. Here you go again — get the tweezers and get your splinter out."

All those little storage problems combined to motivate Ulrich to enter the Metro-sponsored 2022 Kitchen Storage Makeover contest in *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* magazine. Flanagan-Cornell's entry won the contest and the school received \$50,000 of storage solutions, including a kitchen design assessment and equipment installation.

Finding Solutions

AJ Zambetti, Director of Creative & Brand Communications for Metro, says the point of the install at Flanagan-Cornell was to improve storage, both in the kitchen and the storeroom. That, in turn, would have a positive effect on the kitchen's overall workflow. "Proper storage is mandatory in workflow," he says. "Where you have things located and how you have the storage plays the biggest role in improving workflow and efficiency. We always say, the less steps a person has to take in order to do the job, the happier they'll be."

Wooden shelving around the kitchen's prep table was first to go, replaced by a prep area with Metro SmartLever™ Cantilevered Shelving. With convenient overhead storage

shelves, the prep station now holds the can opener, mixer, wraps, foils and other essentials kitchen staff uses in daily food preparation and storage. Similar workstations were installed nearby to facilitate food preparation and provide easy access to ingredients or other pans and utensils that might be needed. The school was also using a wooden rack as a cooling rack, which came as a surprise to Stephanie O'Donoghue,

Principal of Naperville, Ill.-based Rep Concepts, who brought a team to assist with the installation at Flanagan-Cornell. "I've never been in a kitchen that had a wooden cooling rack," she says. That wooden rack was replaced by a Stainless & MetroSeal® Wire Pan Rack with a Microban® coating to help reduce microbial contamination.

One of the keys to effective space utilization in a small kitchen such as Flanagan-

Cornell's is to use vertical space, and an underutilized wall in the dish area proved that. Previously, dishes coming out of the dishwasher were stacked to dry on the dishwasher table. With the installation of a Metro SmartWall® on a wall at the end of the dishwasher table, trays or other pieces of equipment can go directly from the washer and air-dry with virtually no extra steps involved.

The cookline is just a few steps away from the dish

BRAND WATCH

METRO

Founded: **1929**

Products: **30,000+**

metro.com



(Top left and right) A Metro C5 9 Series heated holding cabinet saves steps from the cookline to the serving line.

(Bottom right) A MetroMax Q Top-Track overhead shelving system increases efficiency and storage.



Kitchen Manager Susan Ulrich loads cans in the new first-in, first-out system.





area, and one of the biggest changes occurred here with the installation of a top-of-the-line Metro C5® 9 Series heated cabinet. Previously, kitchen staff would prepare food and transfer it to the roasters, which were then carried to the service line. With the C5's pass-through design, food can be prepared, portioned into standard pans and loaded directly into the cabinet from the cookline side. The servers can simply use the door on the other side to move the pans to the service line, eliminating the need for carrying hot pans or crockpots through the kitchen. Behind the cookline and next to the sink, a MetroMax® i Drying Rack can now be used for temporary or permanent storage of pans and other utensils. A Metro Super Erecta® roll-under shelf was installed underneath the sink to keep chemicals safely away

from food products. Above the sink, a Metro SmartWall holds detergent and scrub sponges, which had previously been stored in plastic tubs. It also provides convenient, out-of-the-way storage for larger pots and pans. **Serving Up** The service line underwent some of the most significant changes of the installation. The roaster system was jettisoned in favor of a 24-inch-by-60-inch surface-mounted Metro Super Erecta Hot Heated Shelf and standard-size steamtable pans with lids. With a maximum temperature of 200 degrees F, the shelf can keep the pans at a safe, consistent serving temperature long enough to get the school through a typical meal service. Although the solution is not a standard application for heated

Metro MightyLite insulated carriers make serving food off-site easy and safe.

shelving, it proved to be a very creative and budget-friendly option that eliminated the need for costly built-ins or heated wells. Additionally, Metro's design and development lab developed a gently sloping sneeze guard to keep students safe. The new serving line system "takes food safety, child safety and cafeteria worker safety into consideration," says Zambetti. With the new setup, the cafeteria staff no longer need to stand on a wooden box or risk arm burns from hot pots set on a platform.

Under the serving counter, Metro Super Erecta mobile prep carts provide a safe space to hold the pan lids during active service times. Additional supplies, such as disposable plates or trays for teachers who want a meal to go, are also stored there.

Making Storage Sensible After more than 30 years with no updates, the storage room — once used to store the school band's instruments — was ready for a total redo. The wooden shelves were banished from the storeroom and replaced with a MetroMax Q Top-Track® overhead shelving system. The system has mobile units that roll easily to allow maximum usage of the space and features MetroMax Q removable mat shelving. Carts can be loaded in the active aisle. A can rack system allows easy access to #10 cans and ensures proper "first in, first out" usage of canned goods. Along the walls of the storeroom, MetroMax Q shelves conveniently store dry

ingredients. Lesser-used items can rest securely on top of the shelves, with no risk of falling. Food produced by the kitchen for outside entities, like the LCSSU, needs to be easily and securely transported. For that, the school received two sets of strong, lightweight Metro MightyLite™ insulated top-load food carriers with dollies. Staff can rotate the sets, so while one is out doing its job of holding food, the other can be refilled and ready to go.

The Big Reveal Once the installation was completed, the final step in the process was to bring in the kitchen team to show them the changes. Upon seeing the makeover, the kitchen team was enthusiastic about the new storage options and more efficient workflow. One of the kitchen team members said, "I grew up in this school. I have so many memories of the girls tripping off that step. This is so different...this is incredible." O'Donoghue agrees: "They knew they had problems; they just didn't know how to fix them. I really think this is going to create a big change and more positivity."

The makeover is helping Ulrich run her kitchen more smoothly. "We especially love the SmartLever shelves," she says. "We know where everything's at because it's right in front of us now. We don't have to go to the cabinet and look for it and dig for it." "In workflow and efficiency — that's where the big win is here," says Zambetti. "When they go into their dry storage room, they can find everything. We take all these options and put that into imaginative solutions. People say Metro is shelving, but Metro is productivity and workflow."

Effective portioning is essential for a foodservice operation, but it's particularly important for chain operations such as pizza restaurants or sandwich shops. Customers want to know they're getting the same amount of meat or other toppings from one pizza or sandwich to the next, and no customer wants to be shorted on any ingredient. Portioning also has a significant effect on an operation's bottom line, as putting too much of any ingredient on a pizza or sandwich can quickly cut into an operation's already tight profit margin.

So the scale undoubtedly has become an important part of any kitchen or prep line. But most scales today have one big problem — the cord. Cord failure is a major problem with scales, and with so many sharp instruments in a kitchen setting, it's easy for the cord to get cut accidentally. And since space is an issue in every kitchen, finding the right location for a scale with a cord can sometimes present a problem.

Cut the Cord Edlund's R&D team, along with Sales and Marketing, works closely with end-users to identify their day-to-day challenges and develop designs that

increase efficiency by combining the speed and accuracy that is necessary in high-volume operations. After listening to customers, Edlund developed an intelligent, convenient solution: two new Bluetooth® Wireless Digital Pizza/Specialty Scales. They're the first and only cordless pizza/specialty scales available today. Since there's no cord to worry about, the scale platform can now be positioned where it's most convenient for the operator — for example, directly on the prep line — while the display can be wall mounted for easy reading. The extra-large bright red LED display can be read from across the room.

The Edvantage® wireless scale allows the user to program up to 10 preset values. It gives the operator visible feedback when the preset portion is over or under the programmed amount. That helps save labor costs and reduce overages.

Both models are easy to operate — the Bravo!™ model has just two buttons. If desired, they can also be used as traditional wired scales. A 10-inch-by-10-inch platform is supplied with the scales; a 12-inch platform is also available. For resetting the scales quickly, there are optional front-mounted and foot-operated tare buttons.

Precise Portioning with New Wireless Scales from Edlund

The Edlund Wireless Digital Scales are a smart solution to portioning problems, says David Sebastianelli, Senior Vice President of International Sales and Marketing for Edlund. "The ongoing labor issues in our industry have increased the demand for products that directly respond to the unique needs of today's operator.

The new Bluetooth portion-control scales, available in both the programmable Edvantage brand as well as the simple two-button Bravo! version, eliminate the risk of cut or shorted wires, while still offering the flexibility of wiring 'on the spot' to ensure that stores will never be without a critical cost-saving tool on busy nights."



BRAND WATCH



Founded:
1925
Distributors and dealers worldwide:
850+
Product SKUs:
300+
edlundco.com

Eight Ali Group Companies Celebrate Anniversaries

In 2022 and 2023, five Ali Group companies — Belshaw, Bongard, Cleveland Range, Mareno and Metos — commemorate their 100th anniversaries, while three more — Grandimpianti ILE, Olis and Wexiödisk — celebrate 50 years in business.

Belshaw

Belshaw was founded in 1923 in Seattle, when founder Thomas Belshaw wanted a more sanitary and efficient way to produce donuts than traditional hand-made methods. Thomas' son, also named Thomas, took over operation of the company in the 1950s. (To keep things in the family, Thomas' wife Yvonne ran the advertising department.) Over the years, the company expanded beyond donut machines into the production of other bakery machines, such as fryers, ovens, mixers and depositors. In 2007, Belshaw became part of the Ali Group family of companies. Today, Belshaw may be best known for the Donut Robot®, a precision donut-making machine that allows one person to produce more, and better quality, donuts than standard frying.

belshaw.com

Bongard

In 1922, Oscar Bongard founded his company in Alsace, France, with the primary purpose of repairing and maintaining bakery ovens that had been damaged during World War I. The company soon began manufacturing ovens and in the 1950s, Bongard expanded and built a factory in Holtzheim, France. Bongard's innovations in oven-making followed, such as the 1967 introduction of the Cervap oven with its innovative steam tube system, and its first rotary rack oven in 1975. In 1985, Bongard began offering a full line of bakery equipment, including mixers and freezers. The revolutionary Paneotrad® process for separating and shaping pieces of dough, and limiting flour dust emissions was introduced in 2006. One year later, the Ali Group purchased Bongard from the AGA Foodservice Equipment group.

bongard.fr

Cleveland Range

Although Cleveland Range™ officially started in 1922, its roots go back even earlier: to 1847, as part of a retail operation, the Born Range Company, which manufactured the "French Steel Range." After separating from Born Range and becoming an independent company focusing on the production of steam-cooking equipment for foodservice, Cleveland Range chalked up a number of "firsts," including the first stainless steel oven construction, the first high-capacity convection steamer and the first pressureless convection steamer. It currently offers a wide range of products, including steamers, combination steamer-ovens, kettles, braising pans and specialty ovens. Cleveland Range became part of the Welbilt® portfolio of companies in 1989, and Welbilt was acquired by the Ali Group in 2022.

clevelandrange.com



Mareno

Mareno was founded in Turin, Italy, by Domenico Gribaudo as Gribaudo Domenica Cucine. In 1962, the Gribaudo family moved the company to a small town called Mareno di Piave in the Veneto region and changed the company name to Mareno Industriale. With the name change

came a refocusing of the company's direction entirely to production of professional foodservice equipment. In the 1970s, Mareno created internal divisions dedicated to marine kitchens (Mareno Marina) and prefabricated or field kitchens (Mareno Pre-fab System). In 1996, Mareno was acquired by the Ali Group. Today, Mareno makes a complete range of equipment for the professional kitchen, including blast chillers, refrigerators, modular cooking units, dishwashers and glasswashers, self-service cabinets and cook-chill systems.

mareno.it



Metos

The company that would eventually become Metos was initially established to produce small items, such as metal buttons for soldiers' uniforms. It then moved into producing kitchen equipment. During World War II, it shifted its efforts to producing military equipment for the war effort. After the war, Metos was once again a major manufacturer of kettles for foodservice. In the 1960s, the company created a unit to offer kitchen planning services. It soon expanded abroad, opening a subsidiary in Sweden and purchasing a

Norwegian company. In the 1970s, to capitalize on the growth of luxury cruise ships, Metos opened a separate marine department. During an economic downturn in the 1990s, Metos merged with a competitor to form Hackman Metos. In 2004, the Ali Group acquired the Hackman Group and its Metos subsidiary.

metos.com



Grandimpianti ILE

When it comes to best-in-class laundry equipment with intelligent technology, thousands of users trust Grandimpianti ILE. From its headquarters in northern Italy, Grandimpianti ILE has introduced a

long string of advances in its equipment, including an electromechanical timer in 1984, complete electronic controls on its washers in 2001 and a keyboard-programmable laundry control the following year. In 2016, Grandimpianti ILE introduced the sophisticated Wavy advanced control system on its machines, which allows complete machine management through an icon-based interface and remote operation by Wi-Fi. Grandimpianti ILE became part of the Ali Group in 2000.

grandimpianti.com



Olis

Founded in Italy in 1972, Olis produces a full line of top-quality, high-performance kitchen equipment, including gas ranges, bratt pans, fryers, fry tops and grills. The brand is known for its traditional craftsmanship, especially in the area of stainless steel. Many of its current products are 4.0 Ready, meaning that they can take full advantage of being connected to a cloud system. This allows for remote control, data collection and monitoring of operations. A proud member of the Ali Group since 2004, Olis continues to live up to its motto: "We innovate cooking."

olis.it



Wexiödisk

Wexiödisk, which specializes in the production of dishwashers and warewashers, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022. It was founded by Roland Carlsson, Göte Ericsson and Lennart Johansson, all of whom had experience in the production of catering equipment. From the beginning, their goal was to provide reliable, best-in-class dishwashing machines with low operating costs and excellent cleaning performance. Wexiödisk invests significantly in product development to maintain its value to customers through a technologically advanced, competitive range of products. In 1999, the Metos Group acquired all the shares of Wexiödisk, and Metos became part of the Ali Group in 2004. Today, Wexiödisk is the leading supplier of dishwashing equipment in Scandinavia, and also distributes in Japan, Australia and other countries.

wexiodisk.com



50 YEARS

100 YEARS

06

Ali Group



Niko Romito (top) is the chef behind several high-profile restaurants and creator of the iconic Bomba Niko Romito (below).



Classic Ice Cream at an Upscale Hotel

Chef Niko Romito is the mastermind behind several outstanding restaurants in Italy, including the three-Michelin-starred Reale in Castel di Sangro. He has invested a significant amount of time learning what makes the perfect ice cream or gelato, which are mainstays on his menus. “A great gelato is a matter of taste and texture. I usually work around a single main ingredient to extract the flavors in a

purified and intensified way,” he says. His creativity has put ice cream not only on the dessert menu but in the main courses as well. For example, the vegetarian menu in his restaurant begins with a green pea ice cream, served with a drop of extra virgin olive oil. “The goal is always to enhance the ingredient,” he says. “We have worked on creating water-based ice creams, thus preserving texture and softness.”

At his vocational school, the Accademia Niko Romito in Abruzzo, Romito has partnered with Carpigiani to educate students in the production of classic frozen desserts. “For me, Carpigiani is the leader in the ice cream field, so we signed a partnership that entails a lot of research on how to continue improving the ice cream,” he says. In addition to his restaurants in Italy, Romito has had a working relationship with the

Bulgari Hotels & Resorts chain since 2017. With restaurants open in Bulgari Hotels in Europe, the Middle East and Asia — and North American locations planned — he intends to bring his uncompromising vision of Italian cuisine to diners around the globe. “I want clients who enter the Bulgari Hotel and eat at Il Ristorante Niko Romito — whether in Moscow, China, Dubai, Paris or anywhere else in the world — to walk out feeling they have been to Italy, even if they’ve never set foot on Italian soil,” he says. carpigiani.com



Rendisk Helps Keep the Maldives Beautiful

Located in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives are home to more than 150 resort hotels, which welcome more than a million visitors each year. With climate change putting the islands at risk of flooding, the Maldives government has established a sustainable waste management plan and an ambitious goal to reach net zero emissions by 2030.

Rendisk is working on a project in the Maldives to help tackle the garbage and food waste that is currently being disposed of in the waters surrounding the islands. “An enormous amount of organic waste is created in the kitchens of the hotels, in combination with the leftovers from hotel guests, and dumped into the sea — with all the consequences that has,” says Art Huisjes, International Sales Manager for Rendisk.

Rendisk developed a solution for one resort that consists of individual buildings that house several kitchen areas. Guests’ leftovers are collected in two waste locations, where it is ground and the residue transported to a central collection unit. The residue is dehydrated to produce a dry mass. “The dry mass is used as fuel



in their own energy plant to generate energy for the resort,” says Huisjes. “This completes the green cycle.” rendisk.com





Perrys of Eccleshall can add £5 a kilo on retail sales for their aged meat products, thanks to the Williams Meat Ageing Refrigerator.



Dry-Aging Meat to Flavor Perfection

Steak lovers know that for optimal flavor and texture, dry-aging is a must. Butchers know that too, which is why Arthur Howell installed a Williams Meat Ageing Refrigerator in his butcher shop in the coastal town of Wells-next-the-Sea in Norfolk, England.

Although dry-aging is a centuries-old process, it has some drawbacks. Unstable temperatures can cause contamination on the meat, which in turn creates mold. That must be trimmed off or discarded, reducing the meat's overall yield. The Williams refrigerator solves those problems. It operates at the optimum temperature of range of 1 to 6 degrees C (34 to 43 degrees F) and humidity of 60% to 90% to ensure the meat matures perfectly without risk of contamination.



Besides aging meat to perfection, the refrigerator adds a touch of drama as customers can actually see the aging process. "It was important to make sure the unit looked fantastic," says Malcolm Harling, Sales and Marketing Director at Williams Refrigeration. "We recognized that whether it was to be purchased by a butcher or restaurateur, it had the potential to be a real talking point for their business."

Howell agrees. "Customers like theater, things that stand out and are different," he says. "The Williams Meat Ageing cabinet certainly delivers. It looks great, and it looks after the meat really well. There's no doubt it's had a positive impact on business."

williams-refrigeration.co.uk



Fresh Food a Hit at Italian Grocery Chain



An Italian supermarket chain, Il Gigante, is finding success by providing its shoppers with a variety of fresh foods made on-site. Il Gigante, which has more than 60 stores across Italy, sells thousands of products, both food and nonfood. The stores feature cafés, bakeries, patisseries and "gastronomy corners," selling everyday products made from scratch. The chain faced a challenge, however, in getting fresh products out to stores that lacked an on-site kitchen.

"The goal was to give smaller stores the possibility of selling fresh products made by us, even if they didn't have a production corner," says Andrea Brunu, the chain's Technical and Purchasing Director. "When we focused on this objective, we realized that we needed to have a central kitchen for the preparation and cooking of meats and baked goods to be delivered to our stores."

Enter engineering and contracting firm Grandimpianti, which specializes in turnkey projects for the Italian market. It assisted with the design

and supply of a centralized, connected kitchen located near Monza. Grandimpianti supplied equipment from several Ali Group brands, including Ambach, Aurea, Comenda, Hiber, Lainox and Mareno. The kitchen automates a number of previously manual processes, thus helping reduce human error and improving safety. By optimizing performance, the connected kitchen creates cost and energy savings, also reducing environmental impact. "The goal was to be able to remotely monitor the use of the machines and also have the ability to control recipes and cooking times," Brunu explains. "Obviously, having better control of the appliances contributes to having greater control of energy consumption." The overall results are excellent, he adds. "We are able to fully exploit ovens and blast chillers, even for vacuum and low-temperature cooking, and the quality results are excellent."

grandimpianti.it



Dining Elegance in the Algarve

The Vistas restaurant, located in the Monte Rei Golf & Country Club in the Algarve region of Portugal, is renowned for its contemporary Mediterranean cuisine. “Seafood is a big part of what I cook,” says Vistas Chef Rui Silvestre. “We are 10 minutes from the sea, so we serve lobster, clams, mussels. My grandmother is from India, my mother from Mozambique, and I balance those influences with local cuisine.”

The country club itself differs from most other resorts, notes Ricardo Manuel, group CEO at the NX Hotelaria design company. “It is a very different kind of resort, with luxury villas that are owned or rented, and you can only enter the restaurant if you are a resident or member of the club.” From its huge balcony, the restaurant provides sweeping views of the golf course, the nearby forest and, on the horizon, the sea.

A major kitchen renovation last year gave the Michelin star-winning Vistas restaurant the type of setup it deserves. The kitchen, which previously had served three restaurants, has been redesigned with an exclusive new open space just for Vistas. For a kitchen that would match Silvestre’s creativity, Manuel turned to Rosinox. “We specialize in creating new concepts for kitchens, and we knew

Rosinox shared our vision for creating new solutions,” he says.

The cooking island designed for the kitchen combines a gas solid-top range, an electric fryer and even a charcoal oven that can double as an open grill. It also features a salamander grill and chrome planchas. The island has to handle a variety of cooking tasks as up to 12 people can be working in the kitchen at the same time. The island’s white, brown and gold color scheme matches the decor of the restaurant. Unlike the modular systems so popular today, this is a fixed island. “It is not a modular range that can be changed as needed,” says Giuseppe Politi, Export Manager at Rosinox. “He is married to this cooking island for life, which is why we had to get it right the first time.”

It was an eight-month process from the initial design phase to final delivery of the island, but the wait was worth it, says Silvestre. “When we started designing it, I asked for everything I needed,” he says. “I wondered if it was even possible. I don’t know how they did it. I wouldn’t change a thing. It was exactly what I wanted, everything went well and I am very happy.”

rosinox.com



Merrychef Helps M&S Grow Café Business

The cafés located inside Marks & Spencer department stores in the United Kingdom provide a welcome break for weary shoppers, offering a variety of food and beverages. To produce its entrées, sandwiches and desserts, M&S has relied upon Merrychef® since it opened its first in-store café in 1998.

“Our relationship with Welbilt® has enabled us to work closely together to maximize the equipment potential for use in our environment and ultimately improve the service our customers receive,” says Sam Watts, Café Operations Manager at M&S. “For example, working on cooking multiple products in the oven, together, has enabled us to reduce wait times for our customers. ConneX gives us the combination of fast cook times, a clearer user journey and the ability to instantly update menu files through Wi-Fi.”

Although Merrychef’s relationship with M&S started small, it has grown since that first oven was installed. “It started with one or two pieces of equipment, then it grew,” says Colin Lacey, Vice President and Managing Director for Merrychef. “Once you’ve got the customer, they will come back to you if the support is right and you make a difference to their business.”

merrychef.com



Classic Italian Flavors in Emilia-Romagna

The Emilia-Romagna area of northern Italy is renowned for its cuisine. When Andrea Fumagalli opened Osteria Via Emiliana in the town of Monza, he wanted to capitalize on, he says, “the knowledge of my mother and my aunts of Emilian origin — true custodians of tradition. Together with them, we have educated the guys who work in the kitchen today and handed down ancient flavors.” His menu reflects what he calls “the beating heart of Italian gastronomy” and features classic Emilian cuisine such as pasta, flatbreads and dishes from the Apennine mountains of Reggio Emilia. Much of the menu has a traditional feel to it. For example, all his pasta is handmade and left to dry on tea towels, and one of his specialties is the *polpetta della Nonna Emma*, or Grandma Emma’s meatballs.

When creating his kitchen, Fumagalli turned to Proxy, a brand synonymous with Italian design. Working with Proxy partner Pico Service, he chose a gas cooker that fit his needs precisely. Pico Service, he says, “immediately appreciated what we were looking for in our restaurant. In addition to helping us with the initial project design, they advised us what to use for our daily work — for example, the possibility of having more configurations of gas cookers.” The Proxy equipment helps Fumagalli produce food consistently and quickly yet with the authentic flavor that has made his restaurant popular. The equipment “makes your work much easier and more fluent,” he says. “At peak times, we can count on quick and easy tools. Staff can face the challenges of the most intense service periods with serenity.”

proxy.alibelluno.it



Delicious pasta prepared on a Proxy range.

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A GLOBAL LEADER

Ali Group is the largest, most diversified global leader in the foodservice equipment industry. An Italian corporation founded 60 years ago, the engineering heritage and traditions of several of its companies stretch back more than 100 years and include some of the most respected names in the industry.

Through its subsidiaries, the Ali Group designs, manufactures, markets and services a broad line of equipment used for commercial food cooking, preparation and processing. With 75 manufacturing sites, over 14,000 employees in 34 countries and 113 brands, it gives life to the most extensive product portfolio in the industry, operating in every hospitality and catering sector.