

# ALI WORLD

NORTH AMERICA

THE ALI GROUP MAGAZINE

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## HATTIE B'S

HOT CHICKEN

HEATS UP NASHVILLE

## FORT KNOX

THE GOLD STANDARD

IN MILITARY FOODSERVICE

## REEF TECHNOLOGY

THE LATEST IN GHOST KITCHENS







## Welcome to the 10th North America edition of *Aliworld*.

**W**hile many of us continue to deal with the challenges presented by the pandemic, I am heartened by the ways that operators have adapted to this situation. We have seen many foodservice operations turn on a dime to business models based primarily on delivery or takeout. The ghost kitchen model has helped some businesses increase or consolidate their kitchen operations. These, along with many of the other trends that will drive foodservice in a post-pandemic environment, are discussed in our trends forecast and consultant roundtable in this issue.

While the teams at many of our companies have not been able to have face-to-face contact with customers during the pandemic, you may be assured that they were not resting. They have used this time to focus on innovation and new product development, always keeping in mind the needs of our clients. You can read about many of those innovations in this magazine.

We also have some examples of how foodservice operations are surviving — and even finding success — in these challenging times. We'll show you how one couple expanded their dairy business into a profitable ice cream operation.

You'll see how a convenience store chain is finding new ways to serve its customers with an expanding line of takeout food. For a look at truly high-volume feeding, we'll take you to a U.S. Army base. And we have the unique story of a company that's turning shipping containers into ghost kitchens.

On p. 26, we introduce you to the latest winners of The Berti Foundation Scholarships. They are all dependents of Ali Group North America U.S.-based employees, and we are happy to be able to help them further their educational endeavors.

Recently, Ali Group has welcomed two more companies into our family: BGI, renowned for its continuous-churn gelato makers (see p. 80); and Kold-Draft, manufacturer of the machines that produce the perfectly square ice cube favored by many bartenders and mixologists (see p. 24).

As we begin to return to a normal schedule of trade shows and conferences, I look forward to reconnecting with many of you at the National Restaurant Association Show or one of the many other trade shows, buying group conferences or industry events in which Ali Group and its companies will participate in 2022.

Finally, I would like to close with some personal news. Since the previous issue of *Aliworld*, we have lost our guiding light at the Ali Group: my father, Luciano Berti. My father founded his first company, Comenda, in 1963 and led the Ali Group for the next 50 years to become an international force in the foodservice equipment industry. (His full life story appears on page 4.) On behalf of all of us in the Berti family — and all of us at Ali Group — he will be deeply missed. I look forward to continuing his legacy.

Let me convey my sincerest hopes for a prosperous, happy and healthy 2022. Enjoy this issue of *Aliworld*.

**Filippo Berti**

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group

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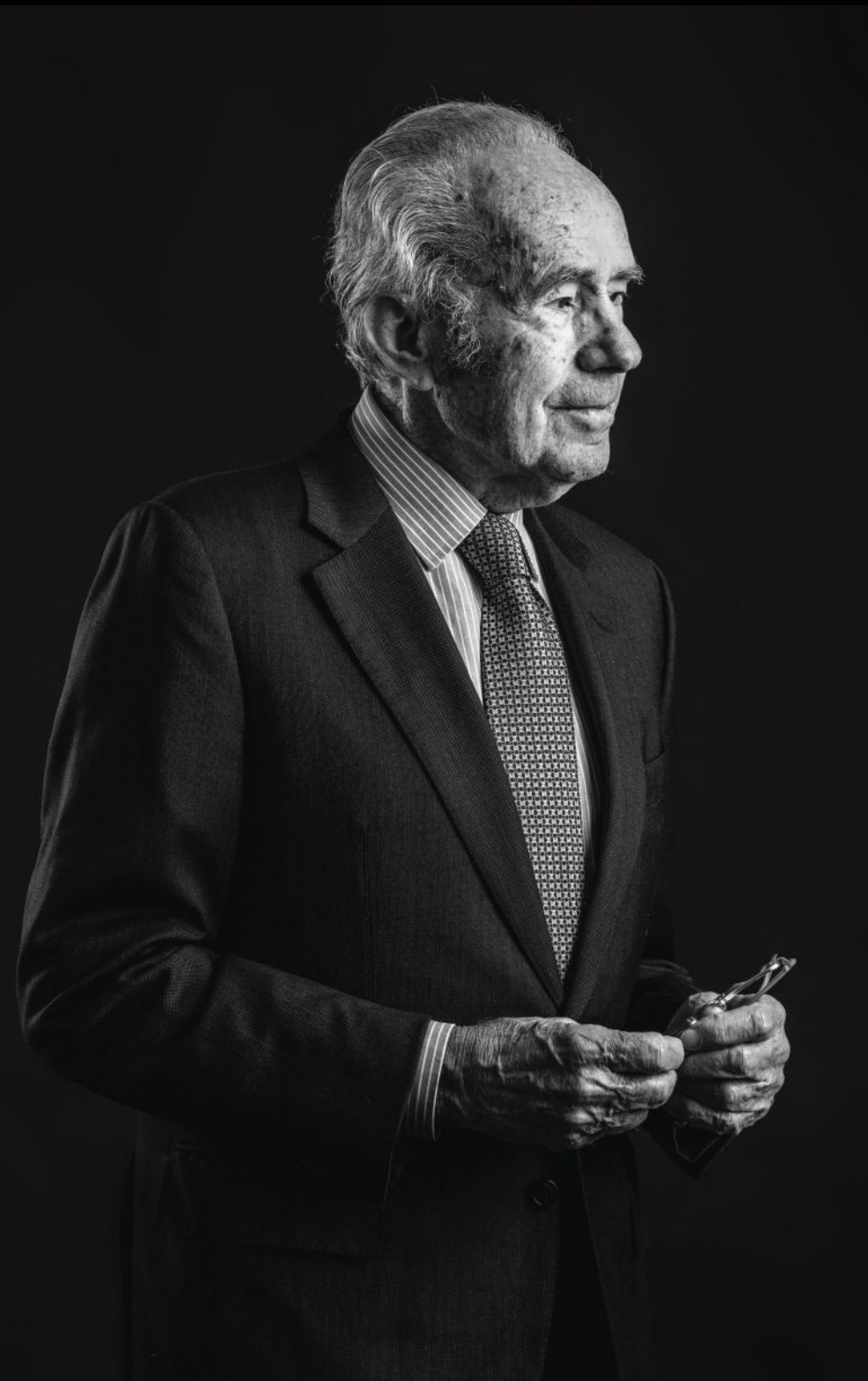
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# LUCIANO BERTI: CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND JOURNEY OF A VISIONARY

**Luciano Berti** (1931-2021) not only founded the Ali Group and turned it into a global powerhouse, he made a profound impact on the foodservice industry and will leave a lasting legacy.



**L**uciano Berti was more than just the founder of the Ali Group — for more than 50 years, he was its heart. He guided the company from its beginning as a warewashing equipment manufacturer in Italy to its current status as a global equipment powerhouse spanning 80 companies with 10,000 employees in 30 countries.

Berti was born in 1931 in Alessandria in the Piedmont region of Italy. Upon completing his general studies in Italy, Berti came to the U.S. in 1954, and studied sociology at Stanford University in California on a Fulbright scholarship. “My degree in sociology was due to intellectual interest,” he said in 2013. “I still have that intellectual curiosity in people.”

Although his professors wanted him to stay and study longer in the States, Berti returned to Italy and received a doctorate in political science from the University of Turin. After a stint in the military and a brief time teaching sociology, Berti was still looking for something more challenging and exciting. He wanted to become an entrepreneur. In 1962, “I put an ad in the Milan newspaper,” he said, “stating who I was and what I wanted to do.” That ad connected him with a manufacturer of commercial warewashing machines. Within a few months, he helped the company become profitable but quickly became frustrated with the firm’s slow rate of growth. He wanted to be his own boss. So, in Milan in 1963, he founded his first company, Comenda, which soon became a major player in the warewashing industry.

When he married his beloved wife Giancarla in 1967, Berti found a partner who would be at his side as his business grew until her passing in 2019. Her dedication to the Ali Group was as strong as her husband’s. In fact, in the early days of the Ali Group, Luciano and Giancarla Berti would attend industry events together, and it was not unusual for Giancarla to travel with Luciano to trade shows to assist him in setting up trade show booths.

In 1972, with the opening of Comenda’s first foreign sales office in Paris, Berti introduced the corporate name ALI (Apparecchiature Lavaggio Industriale,

Italian for “industrial washing equipment”). Berti moved to the U.S. seven years later, when the company purchased Champion Industries, its first North American acquisition. That began a period of continued growth for the Ali Group through the 1980s and 1990s, as it acquired a number of major foodservice equipment manufacturers around the world. In 1994, the Alicontract division was established, offering unique turnkey projects worldwide, including products, installation and assistance for clients across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

### Driving Force

The Ali Group’s dynamic growth continued throughout the next two decades, with important acquisitions, such as Beverage-Air, Ice-O-Matic, Metro and Scotsman, giving the company a leadership position in a number of foodservice equipment categories. The Berti legacy was strengthened in 2003 when Luciano and Giancarla’s son Filippo officially joined the company.

Luciano Berti was also the driving force behind *Aliworld* magazine, which published its first edition in Europe in 2012 and in North America in 2015. From its very first issue, he was deeply involved in the magazine, reading both editions cover to cover and giving his input before they went to press.

In 2016, at the National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago, Berti received the inaugural Industry Icon award from *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies (FE&S)* magazine. This ceremony was a prime example of just how much he enjoyed talking with people. His acceptance speech was scheduled for 2 minutes...and turned into more than 10 minutes, with the crowd totally engrossed throughout and giving him a standing ovation at the end. At that same event, Filippo Berti was named Chief Executive Officer of the Ali Group.

Under the direction of Luciano and Filippo Berti, the Ali Group continued its growth into the 2000s, broadening its reach and acquiring such major manufacturers as Edlund and Rancilio Group.

From the very beginning, Luciano Berti believed that the Ali Group companies would thrive if they were allowed to operate as separate, individual units — even competitively, in some cases. “Brand managers have always enjoyed ample autonomy in the decision-making process with the intent to develop an entrepreneurial spirit,” he said. The growth of the Ali Group has proved his theory correct over time.

Luciano Berti would remain Chairman of the Ali Group until his passing. But with the company now in the capable hands of his son, he had more time to enjoy some of his leisure interests, such as reading, sailing and spending vacations with his six grandchildren. He and Giancarla were involved in a number of charitable and philanthropic pursuits, including the Carnegie Hall Society, Inc., The Metropolitan Opera, The Guggenheim Museum, the Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation and the Friends of Fondo per l’Ambiente Italiano (the National Trust of Italy). The Bertis were also both deeply involved with organizations that supported the arts and sciences, through their founding of the Fondazione Berti in Italy and The Berti Foundation in the U.S. They were especially proud of The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program, which helps children of Ali Group employees pursue their educational dreams.

Today, the size and strength of the Ali Group stands as a testament to Luciano Berti, as the brands that make up the Ali Group are recognized worldwide for their performance, reliability and innovation. “My father was truly the heart and soul of the Ali Group,” said Filippo Berti. “He never lost his love for the business, but more importantly, he never lost his love for people. I look forward to continuing his legacy.”





Luciano and Giancarla Berti (pictured, far left) leave a lasting legacy, continued by son, Ali Group Chairman and CEO Filippo Berti (pictured left).

# 01

## Cover Story



# Hattie B's Spreads the Love

This growing concept offers an authentic Nashville hot chicken experience that includes Southern sides, desserts and chewable Pearl Ice from Ice-O-Matic.

**N**ashville hot chicken is having a moment. Hot chicken chains are popping up from coast to coast, and there are recipes for everything from hot chicken pizza to egg rolls to deviled eggs and even hot chicken-flavored desserts.

While this enthusiasm is great for hot chicken restaurants, plenty of Nashvillians would say these offerings don't equal an authentic hot chicken experience. For that, they say, you need to go to Nashville — or at least go to a restaurant with Nashville roots, like Hattie B's Hot Chicken.

The family-owned concept, which regularly makes appearances on lists of Nashville's best hot chicken spots, was founded

in 2012 and today has eight restaurants in four states, with plenty more in planning. While growth is certain in Hattie B's future, the company's hometown roots are central to what it serves and how it does business.

"We're from Nashville. We're proud to be a torchbearer for Nashville hot chicken. Our menu is nice and tight and really built around perfect Nashville hot chicken, grandma-approved Southern side items and desserts, and awesome cold beverages. We keep it simple," says Brian Morris, a chef by training and Vice President of Culinary, Learning and Development for Hattie B's.

For Morris, being a hot chicken torchbearer means more than just serving great hot chicken, though. It also means providing guests with a great Nashville hot chicken experience, whether they're in

Tennessee, Georgia or beyond.

While there are plenty of different authentic hot chicken experiences, Hattie B's take is built on love — love for the food the restaurants serve, love for its employees and especially love for its guests.

### But First, the Food

Like all good hot chicken concepts, Hattie B's offers a variety of heat levels — six, to be specific. These range from spice-free Southern fried chicken to Shut the Cluck Up. For the record, that's one step above Damn Hot. Even the hottest of Hattie B's chicken isn't hot for hot's sake, though.

Some restaurants that specialize in spice turn their food into a challenge to be conquered by adventurous eaters. Meanwhile, flavor and craveability end up as afterthoughts. As a result, some guests come in just to test themselves. Pass or fail,





Lattie B's

HOT CH

ICE COLD



they probably won't come back if they didn't actually enjoy their meal.

Hattie B's Hot Chicken takes a different approach. Order one of the restaurant's high heat levels and "your next 30 minutes will be a little different," says Morris, but Hattie B's wants even its hottest chicken to taste not just spicy, but good. *Darn good*, in fact.

"Our chicken is savory. It's sweet. It's herby. It's multidimensional. It's crunchy. It's craveable," says Morris.

Matching the chicken is a list of sides designed to deliciously offset the heat of the chicken. Creamy sides include coleslaw, red skin potato salad and especially the black-eyed pea salad with a vinegar-based dressing. "Many people don't realize this," Morris says, "but acid cuts heat like magic."

The menu is rounded out with desserts in the tradition of Southern hospitality, including banana pudding and peach cobbler.

Then there are the drinks. The hot chicken eatery's beverage selection includes canned and bottled beers, batch craft cocktails and soda — many cooled with chewable Pearl Ice® from Ice-O-Matic's Gem2006 Pearl Ice Maker, dubbed the Pearlstorm™.

For Morris, chewable ice isn't just a choice — it's part of the local culture and a truly craveable ingredient. "It's a nostalgic thing for a lot of folks, especially in the South," he says. "We love connecting to the benchmarks of a smell or flavor or texture that we remember from childhood. Around here, all of us grew up chewing on ice at Little League or at the drive-in or at the local meat-and-three or cafeteria. That is the best ice."

### "In the Juice"

Great food and great drink (with great ice) represent only part of the Hattie B's Hot Chicken experience. Their teams work hard to provide the best guest experience. At its best moments, says Morris, a restaurant can be busy but firing on all cylinders operationally,



### 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**

while the energy and atmosphere give the place a great feel and vibe.

To Hattie B's employees, this is known as being "in the juice."

Being in the juice starts with the soundtrack, made up of playlists created by Hattie B's father-and-son founders, Nick Bishop Sr. and Nick Bishop Jr. These playlists, dubbed Senior's Soul and Junior's Jams, lean into classic Motown, funk, hip-hop and R&B.

"From the moment you hit the line, you are hearing something you might not have heard in a while," Morris says. "All of a sudden, your hips are moving, your neck is moving and your back is moving. The line is moving so fast, and all of a sudden, you're inside. You are connecting with other people who are grooving on that same thing."

As guests get closer to the line, they'll see a fast-moving, hardworking team that is having a good time. Once it's time to order, the team can walk guests through the menu and help them find the right food and heat level.

The interaction isn't all business, though. Hattie B's employees are allowed to be playful with customers. Guests who order Shut the Cluck Up chicken, for instance, will take some good-natured teasing about their choice. It's always done from a place of love, though, Morris says. The goal is to create a connection and allow people to feel recognized and valued.

Once a customer sits down, though, the real

pampering begins. The goal is for guests to not have to get up once they're seated. A roving team on the floor can help guests with everything from another drink to napkins to extra food to full carryout orders.

### Getting to Juicy

A great customer experience like the one at Hattie B's doesn't just happen, of course. The restaurant works hard and invests in a company culture that can be "juicy."

This starts with their approach to employees, especially the team members in their restaurants. On the small scale, Hattie B's practices whole-house tip share. This, states Morris, encourages everyone to participate in the guest experience and benefit from it in real time.

On a larger scale, the company has created a generous benefits package for its employees, from headquarters staff to those on the front line. Everyone gets paid time off, health insurance and a 401k. This is not just good for employees — it's good for business.

**"For us, trying to be in the juice as much as possible so we can deliver that full-value experience really does hinge on great people and great product partners like Ice-O-Matic."**

**Brian Morris**  
Vice President of  
Culinary, Learning and  
Development





Brian Morris,  
Vice President of  
Culinary, Learning and  
Development with the  
Ice-O-Matic Pearlstorm.

### Simply Delicious

What makes Nashville hot chicken so special? In the case of Hattie B's Nashville hot chicken, it's simply a combination of traditional ingredients painstakingly prepared. A "make-at-home" recipe provided to The Food Network by Hattie B's shows how these ingredients come together to make this taste-tingling treat. While it can't duplicate the essential fun of the Hattie B's experience, it does provide some insight on how this Nashville culinary classic is constructed.

First, the chicken is dry-brined — in other words, coated with salt and pepper and chilled for up to 24 hours. Then, it's dipped in a combination of milk and eggs with a touch of Louisiana hot sauce, and dredged in flour. The chicken is next fried in hot lard or oil. Finally, it receives a brush-on coating of spices, including cayenne and paprika, to give it its essential red color and fiery flavor. A dill pickle slice on top provides the classic finishing touch.

“We have to be able to help our team members eliminate that daily life stress so it is not an all-consuming doom loop, a spiral or a forever middling experience where they feel like they are treading water,” Morris says. “Some of the wisest operators I know understand the only way to deliver a great guest experience is to pour into your team.”

Being in the juice, of course, also requires an equipment package that can deliver on its promises. “That is a huge part of us being juicy,” says Morris. “If we do not have operational systems and the right equipment in place and great training, we will never be able to get to the experience [we want to offer]. For us, trying to be in the juice as much as possible so we can deliver that full-value experience really does hinge on great people and great product partners like Ice-O-Matic.”

In the case of Hattie B’s chewable ice, the road to a solution took a few detours prior to Ice-O-Matic entering the picture. Morris says they experimented with another chewable ice product but encountered major issues with dispensing and equipment reliability. The company had actually decided to abandon chewable ice and go with a standard cuber — until it started working with Ice-O-Matic.

One of Hattie B’s requirements for its ice maker is high volume. The Pearlstorm, Morris says, produces all the ice a busy hot chicken joint needs — about 2,000 pounds per day. Morris says they set the Pearlstorm as their hard

spec for all openings going forward, as well as for all legacy stores when the time for a new ice maker comes.

Because Hattie B’s uses so much ice, they opted for a single maker in the back of the house along with a bin that can hold the half ton produced each night. Team members then load the ice dispensers using buckets carried from the back of the house. From there, Pearl Ice is dispensed without issue.

In back, the machine is always hard at work, but in a small footprint, since the Pearlstorm is only 2.5 feet wide. “We are always footprint starved. Floor space is hard to come by at Hattie B’s. To be able to do that much output in basically 3 feet by 3 feet, bin included, is just nuts,” Morris says.

Not only does the Pearlstorm meet the volume and dispensing needs of Hattie B’s, but Ice-O-Matic’s machines have been reliable and the customer service from the manufacturer “incredible,” Morris says. “Not only did they find the right equipment, but they also helped us find the right service and leasing partners that could help us scale around the country. That was just massive to be able to lean into that crew and through that relationship to really have a red-carpet experience,” he continues. “You’ve got to have a great support team, not just great equipment.”

The appreciation flows both ways. “Ice-O-Matic is proud to work with a reputable and growing brand in Hattie B’s,” says Dolly





Fiedelman, CFSP, Regional Sales Manager for Ice-O-Matic. “Being able to provide them with the Pearl Ice they love in the beautiful spaces they’ve designed has been very exciting, and we look forward to being a part of their journey for years to come.”

### Growing With Care

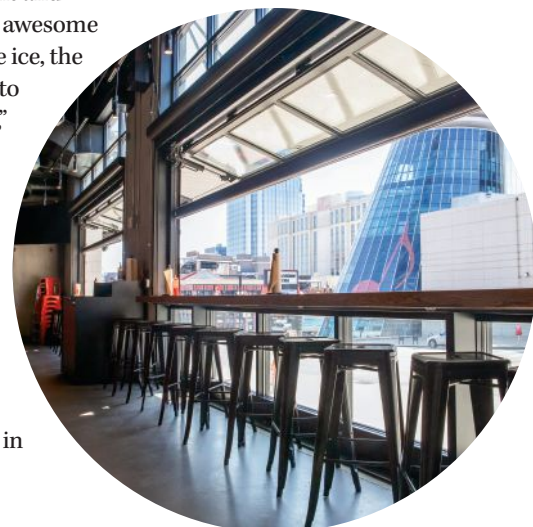
With one more piece of great equipment in place, Hattie B’s is preparing to speed up its growth rate. You won’t see massive growth numbers coming out of Hattie B’s, though. The company isn’t looking to make a quick score through franchising.

Instead, Hattie B’s intends to remain all company owned and intentionally limit its growth to make sure it can offer the kind of hot chicken experience that has people lining up around the block in Nashville. That means finding and investing in the right equipment, processes and, most important, people to carry the hot chicken torch to new places.

“The faster we can grow our incredible team at Hattie B’s and pour into them the right tools and development and technologies like this awesome Ice-O-Matic chewable ice, the faster we will be able to scale that experience,” Morris says. “That is what we are working really hard on behind the scenes — grading the road of operational challenges, pouring Teflon over all of our movable parts so we can spend more time in the juice.”

**“Some of the wisest operators I know understand the only way to deliver a great guest experience is to pour into your team.”**

**Brian Morris**



02

Trends

# BIG SOLUTIONS

TO CONQUER MAJOR  
CHALLENGES





**N**ew coronavirus variants sweeping the globe continued to introduce new swings of change, from reinstated mask mandates to vaccine booster shots and more, in the latter half of 2021. As such, businesspeople in all foodservice segments have had to stay on alert and respond to ongoing challenges, including labor shortages, supply

chain delays and longer lead times, to name a few. After all, what doesn't destroy us makes us stronger, right?

That's precisely the attitude that foodservice consultants have had to adopt. Consultants help clients respond to changes — this often means coming up with new, more innovative solutions to meet ongoing needs.

Here, a quartet of foodservice consultants shares their thoughts and ideas on helping operators navigate a sea of unique challenges in terms of design and more.

### **CHALLENGE:** Ongoing labor shortages

### **SOLUTION:** Flexible equipment, technology, innovation

According to a 2021 Joblist report that surveyed 30,000 people, roughly 38% of former hospitality workers are not returning to the industry and are instead seeking different work settings (52%), higher pay (45%), better benefits (29%) and more schedule flexibility (19%). More than half of these workers who are in search of other work say that no pay increase or incentive would make them return to their old restaurant, bar or hotel job, according to the report.

As a result of this mass exodus from the industry, operators face having to produce the same or even increased volumes of food with less staff. "There seems to be a three-legged stool — clients want to be able to balance cost, variety and quality so nothing suffers," says Sojo Alex, Senior Associate, Envision Strategies (MAS). Clients "just can't find the people to staff their different locations."



Sojo Alex,  
Senior Associate,  
Envision Strategies  
(MAS)

In the higher education segment, in order to tackle these labor shortages and financial issues while still meeting customer satisfaction levels, Alex's clients are going back to more enhanced — and advanced — master and strategic planning. Clients "are saying, 'Let's go back to figuring out how many [foodservice] locations we actually need and how to distribute different dining locations across campuses,'" she says. In some cases, these new master plans might reveal a different approach to foodservice than in years past, with more small dining footprints spread across a wider geographic area and a much more specific cost estimation for equipment.

Design-wise, the response to labor shortages directly impacts equipment selection in the sense that equipment of the future will need to do more in less space. "When we talk about the equipment of the future, we talk about maybe three or four pieces that can do the job of five or six pieces," says John Radchenko, FCSI PP, President, Van Velzen + Radchenko Design Associates Ltd. "Versatility, flexibility, the ability to change — these will continue to be very important."

Orlando Espinosa III, Principal, Orlando Espinosa + Associates, LLC, says he sees more interest in advance food preparation equipment, such as sous vide machines, cook-chill items and other hot-holding solutions to be able to produce more food with less staff while maintaining quality. Customers "still



John Radchenko, FCSI PP,  
President,  
Van Velzen + Radchenko  
Design Associates Ltd.

want food that's 'made fresh for me in front of me,' but everything behind the scenes needs to be as economical as possible," he says. "The question is how to pre-stage or pre-cook some items so that the final assembly is in front of the guest and the food still tastes fresh."

Laura Lentz, Design Principal, Culinary Advisors, agrees, noting that her clients also want pieces that are the most flexible. "There is greater value placed on products that can do more, like blast chillers that can also be slower cookers or thawing cabinets. Some of these products were out there; they were pricier in the past, but suddenly, [my clients] find them more appealing," says Lentz, who jokes that she's been daydreaming about the day a refrigerator could also be a heated cabinet. "But why not? I hate to wax philosophical, but much like the Depression, there is a lot of good innovation that could end up coming out of COVID."

On that note, a silver lining of the pandemic is that whatever technological advances — and adoption of them — that were occurring in the past have sped up dramatically. "In the past, technology was an afterthought, but that has been tipped on its head, and now technology is at the forefront of design," Lentz says. This most often becomes the case when it comes to online ordering, delivery and takeout. She's had more clients implement kitchen display systems, adding printers and generally making sure that pickup areas can handle volumes two or three more times the size than was previously the case — with less labor overall.

**CHALLENGE:**  
**Fewer customers in general**  
**SOLUTION: More flexibility in design**

Another huge industry change caused by the pandemic that could have lasting impacts on the foodservice consulting community is the fluctuation of populations — at restaurants, of course, but also at offices, universities and other places where foodservice happens.

More people are working from home now, and at the university level, Alex says, there has been uncertainty as to the number of students returning to campus in 2021 and possibly in the future. Fortunately, Alex says her higher-education clients still see good numbers of matriculating students, which translates into a need for more dining. Of course, what those dining options look like will change some.

"Many campuses still prefer a larger serverly option because that's where they have community, but there is a greater need for more grab-and-go options if students don't have time to sit and eat at the main dining hall," Alex says. "There needs to be some more convenient options that can also be accessed with a meal plan as well."

Alex and her team study Wi-Fi and other traffic pattern data to help determine how large serveries or operations need to be and how students use spaces. "If you have a seat count of 300, but people are only using 100 seats at lunch, then that shows that there's a problem with food quality or people don't

have time to be there," she says. "If you have 300 seats but 800 people swiping their meal plan cards, that shows that they're not staying to dine in and you need a bigger space or more locations." Zeroing in on data like this, she adds, will only be more important in the future in order to stay within budgets and maximize revenue streams.

The B&I community has continued to deal with slow return-to-work plans. "Operators are having to deal with fluctuating numbers in terms of employee participation; in the past, what was a fixed number now varies per day," says Espinosa. As a result, serverly designs will need to give operators the ability to close stations not in use. At the very least, he says, each station's design should be flexible enough to cook multiple menu items during various dayparts.

Grab-and-go, remote ordering and separated pickup areas will be more integral parts of B&I serverly design moving forward. "Operators need to offer the ability [for customers] to get their food made to order or to order ahead and pick it up or have it delivered if they don't have time or there are crowds," Espinosa says. All this takes a lot more planning and decision-making up front.

"The foodservice designer and operator really have to work hand in hand," Espinosa says. "It behooves consultants to educate the client as much as possible and make all the appropriate recommendations so everyone is in full agreement before construction begins. In the past, operators walked a very fine line between profitability and disaster; everyone would love to build a huge, beautiful facility and simply open the doors." But, he adds, with changes to the economy in general and with the ebb and flow of the workforce, that's not the case, and operators need to weigh various situations and considerations ahead of time even more so than before.

**CHALLENGE: Longer lead times**  
**SOLUTION: Building more time into plans and managing expectations**

Foodservice designers were feeling the pinch of longer lead times brought about by various supply chain-related challenges.



Orlando Espinosa III,  
Principal,  
Orlando Espinosa +  
Associates, LLC

As a result, some projects were put on hold for longer periods of time and only recently have begun to ramp back up. “Costs are rising some because of supply chain issues, and now, as consultants, we’re dealing with time to bid being stretched out for two to three years,” Alex says.

Other issues slowing construction time are last-minute design changes and uncertainties about the future. “Another change is payment; I’m finding companies are holding onto payment longer, especially schools,” says Radchenko. This causes additional project delays.

Lentz has also had to adjust her schedule to accommodate project delays. “For the type of work we do, we typically have a longer planned-out range,” she says. Still, “we sometimes have to dive deeper and look into the source of the problem. It could just be something as simple as a miscommunication or something that’s related to the supply chain.”

Lentz has found that manufacturers are more likely to reach out directly to her or communicate more directly if there are any supply chain issues, and this has helped her be able to hold spec.

**CHALLENGE: Fewer in-person meetings**  
**SOLUTION: Leverage virtual technology, strategize in-person meetings when needed**

One thing the pandemic has taught many of us is we are more adept at using virtual communication than we might have thought.

This has even been the case for foodservice designers, many of whom travel regularly to meet with clients and complete walk-throughs. But ongoing travel restrictions and budget issues have reduced the number of in-person meetings that many consultants have traditionally had. “At one point, I was on a video call almost every day, and sometimes even on three calls a day,” says Radchenko.

Though Radchenko says he misses all the face-to-face time, he has been able to save costs by using various technology-enabled project management tools, and he’s more strategic about when he schedules in-person meetings. “Seeing a walk-through on video and not being able



Laura Lentz,  
Design Principal,  
Culinary Advisors

to physically walk through and touch the equipment definitely has its challenges,” he says.

Lentz has also been working more remotely. “We as a firm are still working to figure out the right formula,” she says, and that involves less frequent but more detailed calls and conversations. “It’s been nice to be able to go back to sites and review issues in person; trying to scan floors for a floor drain is really hard to do on Zoom,” she adds.

With canceled trade shows and rescheduled conferences, Lentz has also appreciated email blasts and other online communication from manufacturers, media outlets and others in order to stay on top of new equipment and changes in the industry.

**CHALLENGE: Balancing efficiencies with hospitality and the overall experience**  
**SOLUTION: Tailor designs to the needs of specific industry segments**

Especially after a long string of lockdowns and reduced in-person contact, people crave hospitality and connection. This is especially the case at the university level, says Alex, because students often need those connections in order to handle the pressures of school while not near their immediate families. “Students have been so isolated and want contact more than ever,” she says. “Sometimes the cashier or person serving the food might be the only person the student talks to.”

As a result, while cashless, self-checkout and grab-and-go all have their places in a college and university foodservice setting, they’re not and should not be the be-all and end-all.

Alex says her clients “are very interested in creating community, and that’s often done through foodservice.” To drive home this point, she recalls one story a client shared about a student who was experiencing suicidal thoughts. Because the student talked to the same foodservice manager every day, this person was able to get some very necessary help. Foodservice “goes beyond slapping food on people’s plates; in this case, the dining hall should feel like your kitchen at home because that’s the only ‘family’ you have around.”

Another significant design change that relates to the experience of hospitality is the expansion of outdoor dining in all segments. What began as a trend among independent restaurants during indoor dining shutdowns continues as an important feature at other foodservice operations. “Spaces that have outdoor dining areas are much more attractive now, and that’s definitely translating into noncommercial design,” says Lentz.

There are also wider gaps between what type of experience customers want in different segments. Whereas college students might crave higher levels of hospitality for reasons mentioned earlier, hospital and corporate workers have less and less time to go into a large server and wait for their food, and have a greater need for easy ordering, pickup and delivery.

“At the same time, while employees might want remote pickup, healthcare serves the general public, and they have visitors who don’t have an office to go back to,” Lentz says. While this hasn’t necessarily impacted the size of serveries in design, it has changed up formulas or percentages of what space is reserved for in-person dining and what’s reserved for takeout or delivery.

Consultants tend to have a wide-angle view of sweeping changes in the industry as they work with many different types of operators and can spot trends from miles away. Though the pandemic created a lot of immediate challenges for operators, these consultants show us that lingering issues are becoming more permanent fixtures that will impact their work — and likely spur continuing innovation in both equipment and design. Hopefully this will become yet another silver lining.



# The On-Site Experience

## Redefined to Meet the Moment

**D**uring the pandemic, largely empty cafeterias, cafés and serveries gave many on-site foodservice operators two things they often lack: access and time. Access to facilities that, pre-COVID-19, maximized operating hours to keep staff, students, patients and/or visitors fed and happy morning, noon and night. And time to critically reassess operations, to create new strategies for meeting customers where they are now that many aspects of daily life — including how they use foodservices — have changed.

For these operators, just as for commercial restaurateurs, flexibility and adaptability have been watchwords. And for many, the recent disruption has spurred redefining of the guest experience in ways that not only meet customers where they are, but also do so in the face of tough budget, labor and supply-chain shortages. App ordering and pickup stations, expanded grab-and-go, ghost kitchens and virtual brands, take-home family-style meals and meal kits, reimagined serveries, online cooking and nutrition classes, and enhanced safety and sanitation standards quickly became mission critical to many in the on-site hospitality world. And just as for commercial restaurants, technology has been widely embraced as both a survival tool and a defining driver of the guest experience, enabling rapid advancements in speed of service, convenience and efficiency.

At Jacksonville, Fla.-based insurance company Florida Blue, part of the Guide Well family of companies, foodservice programs over the past two years took a decidedly digital turn to all mobile app- and kiosk-based ordering. Damian Monticello, Director, Enterprise Hospitality & Event Services, says the new systems offer the same type of convenience, speed and contactless



**“Now, the emphasis has expanded beyond the four walls of the dining venues.”**

**Damian Monticello,**  
Florida Blue

benefits that customers have become accustomed to elsewhere during the pandemic while also boosting operational efficiencies. A big challenge, he adds, has been to make the necessary shifts to these more transactional modes of operation while still maintaining experiential aspects of foodservice and hospitality.

“A couple of years ago, the way that we thought about guest experience essentially encompassed the time they were inside the café space. From the moment they

entered, it was about how the space looked, the way the stations were designed, the food offerings and presentations, the interactions with staff from ordering through checkout,” Monticello notes. “Now, the emphasis has expanded beyond the four walls of the dining venues. The experience starts when they’re using a phone or desktop app to place their orders remotely, before they ever actually come down to a café. Is that experience enticing and easy to navigate all the way through? Are we hitting all the touch points and getting them the information they need in ways that also communicate a personal touch? When they do come to the space, is the pickup area inviting and easy to navigate? Is everything ready on time and properly packaged? Is the food at the correct temperatures, and are sanitation protocols followed and visible? All of those must-haves are still there; it’s just that the process we’re using has shifted from face-to-face interaction to remote and digital.”

With full return-to-office plans still on hold as of early fall 2021, Florida Blue’s main action-station-style café remained largely shuttered, with just mobile order and pickup in effect for the

relatively small percentage of employees on-site.

But even when more robust daily populations return and traditional serveries reopen, Monticello says digital ordering will continue. Customers expect it now, and the shift nets significant operational benefits. Top among those is speed of service and reduced crowding as customers no longer need to queue up to place orders, wait at stations and pay. “We’re now cooking everything to order, much like a typical restaurant does,” Monticello says.

Florida Blue has also introduced new menu concepts, leaning into the virtual brands trend that gained traction during the pandemic. With its foodservice management partner, the insurer developed multiple new online-only menu concepts that Monticello expects will remain so even when the café fully reopens. “Instead of streamlining during this time, we’ve been able to add more menu concepts and items,” he says. “That’s because we’re able to produce them with a smaller staff without having to have each station set up separately in the café. We can have the same five or six

cooks producing everything on the menu, regardless of what concept it’s coming from. In doing so, we’ve been sharply focused on working with our supplier to ensure that we’re effectively cross-utilizing SKUs between concepts and that there’s consistency among ingredients and/or preparation styles.”

## **Mobile Ordering, Grab-and-Go Meet the Moment**

UNC REX Healthcare, a Raleigh, N.C., hospital whose foodservice program serves 450 to 500 patients daily, is pivoting some of its retail programs toward digital only as well. Ryan Conklin, CEC, Director and Executive Chef, Culinary and Nutritional Services, says by the third quarter of 2021, the hospital planned to complete conversion of one of its retail markets into a ghost kitchen that only fulfills orders placed via mobile app or kiosk. Essentially a virtual food hall, the operation will feature a selection of menu concepts developed in-house. One confirmed early on was Stevie Ray’s Pizza, which features New York-style pies.



“We’re excited about it for a couple of reasons,” says Conklin. “Our customers will be able to simply order ahead on the app, get notified when their food is ready and come to pick it up, saving them a lot of time. But we’re also excited because we’re opening this up to the outside community. So, you might order from Stevie Ray’s through DoorDash or Uber Eats, but it’s coming from our hospital. We see a



**“We see a lot of opportunity to serve a customer base we didn’t have before.”**

**Ryan Conklin,**  
UNC REX Healthcare

lot of opportunity to serve a customer base we didn’t have before, and we expect at least 15% to 20% sales growth via this virtual food hall.”

Conklin says another channel being embraced with more creativity and strategic attention is grab-and-go.

“We’re very proud that our patient room-service program hasn’t changed or suffered at all during the pandemic. We’ve worked hard to make sure of that,” Conklin notes. “But our retail operations absolutely had to change. One of the strongest things we’ve done

is to reinvent who we are as a retail market. Grab-and-go had never been a big part of our program, but when we suddenly had to close venues that previously focused on self-serve and action stations, we had to come up with new ideas to generate revenue and keep people fed and happy. We took cues from places like Whole Foods Market’s high-end grab-and-go and prepared meals, and we reconsidered vending. We now had the time to develop those programs and change the dynamic. It has spurred a lot of innovation that might otherwise not have happened or that might have happened much more slowly.”

To physically accommodate and showcase new grab-and-go items, beverage inventory in a large existing cooler in REX’s main dining facility was streamlined to make room for food, and additional merchandising coolers were purchased to handle the increased volume of prepackaged food items. A new partnership with a local restaurant spotlights vending as a grab-and-go solution as well, bringing that option to locations throughout the hospital to ensure quick and easy access for employees. The restaurant partner handles preparing the food and stocking the machines, and the hospital shares in a percentage of vending sales.

### **Keeping the Customer Satisfied**

Martha Rardin, Director of Nutrition and Dietetics at Hendricks Regional Health in Danville, Ind., adds that in many respects, while the pandemic forced programmatic and operational changes targeted

toward speed, convenience and efficiency, other aspects of the customer experience have not changed — namely, continued commitment to quality, guest satisfaction and taking care of employees. That unwavering focus during Rardin’s 42-year career in healthcare foodservice saw her honored in the fall of 2021 with the AHF’s 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award.

At Hendricks, the foodservice team serves 1,000 patient meals per day and prepares meals for the county senior center and the Meals on Wheels program. Headlining the hospital’s retail program is The Copper Grill, a scatter-style cafeteria. That facility had resumed normal operations as of last fall, once again offering its popular self-serve salad bar and reintroducing nondisposable service ware, for instance. But its 150-seat dining room, typically full during pre-pandemic lunch periods, remained largely empty as employees continued to opt for grab-and-go, according to Rardin. “Speed and convenience were important before, but they’re even more important now,” she says. “Healthcare employees are stretched so thin. Every department is short-staffed, and employees are working longer hours with shorter breaks to get back to patient care quicker. Grab-and-go is the best solution for them.”

With Delta variant surges putting extra pressure on staff during the fall of 2021, Rardin’s team planned to reintroduce prepared take-home family-style meals. Popular during the early days of the pandemic and at holidays, she says the meals are designed to provide high-quality, convenient family



**“Speed and convenience were important before, but they’re even more important now.”**

**Martha Rardin,**  
Hendricks Regional Health

meal solutions for employees, particularly overstretched nursing staff members.

As for Rardin’s own department, labor issues remain top of mind there, too. Always challenging, they’ve become even more so over the past two years, and she’s worked to implement labor-saving strategies. Through creative menu reengineering, for instance, she was able to eliminate a foodservice production staff position for weekend and evening shifts.

“The labor shortage is going to drive most of our decisions for the next few years,” Rardin predicts. “Many people don’t want to return to work at all or want to continue to work remotely. But we can’t do foodservice remotely, so we’re all looking for solutions. Is it equipment? Technology? Is it food manufacturers coming

up with terrific products that just require heating up? Is it packaging that fits perfectly into expanded grab-and-go programs? We're looking for any solutions that help us cut labor without sacrificing quality or guest experience."

## No Going Back

The pandemic-induced demand for change and innovation hit the higher education market hard as well. As campuses quickly emptied out, foodservice programs had the proverbial rug pulled out from under them. Since then, many have introduced new offerings and updated experiences.

Eric Cartwright, CCC, Executive Chef, Campus Dining Services at the University of Missouri, says that despite obvious challenges endured over the past couple of years, being forced to adapt and innovate has netted positive changes. Many of those target speed, operational efficiency and technology, while others help to maintain the type of experiential connections with students that campus dining works so hard to create.

With students forced into virtual learning mode in 2020, for example, Cartwright launched a series of online cooking demonstrations livestreamed from his home kitchen. Designed to stay connected and give students a "taste of Mizzou" wherever they happened to be, the series drew thousands of viewers. When students returned to campus, the demonstrations were expanded to include the option of purchasing ingredient kits at a campus retail location so they could cook along with the chef.

Cartwright says his team, which operates three all-you-

care-to-eat (AYCTE) dining facilities and more than 20 retail outlets across campus, has also made program shifts designed to deliver the level of variety that students actually want versus what the culinary crew guesses they want, enabling streamlining and simplification of many menus. Some self-serve features, such as salad bars, are back in action, while others, including continental breakfast stations in the AYCTE facilities, have been permanently modified to enhance sanitation and ease of monitoring.

Other changes have shifted Mizzou Dining toward more transactional styles of operations. While available to a limited extent for several years, for instance, mobile ordering has been expanded to more units, and some have converted to 100% mobile-order operations. Students can place their orders via mobile app or computer and schedule specific pickup times.

Technology is also helping to streamline operations and improve consistency. At a grill station in one facility, for instance, text messaging replaced pagers to notify customers when their orders were ready. At the same time, the order pickup process was modified.

"We did this to avoid handing pagers back and forth," Cartwright says. "But once we did, we realized changing this part of our operation was something we should have done years ago. When we switched to a text-based notification system, we simply placed orders with the receipt stapled to the bag in the window and let the customer find their own. It seemed like a minor transition, but the amount of time it freed up for the staff person who was handling that part of the transaction was monumental. Historically,

the pinch point in that operation was the pickup transaction with the customer. We've eliminated that pinch point."

Experientially, Cartwright adds, not much was sacrificed in this example. "The experience was you coming up and handing me a pager, me looking at you and saying, 'OK, great, let me get that for you,'" he says. "There was nothing especially powerful about that. Sometimes we overthink and feel like we have to have that face-to-face interaction. Yes, there's value in that, but it's really about quality versus quantity interaction. If it's not actually meaningful to the guest, we're no longer hesitating to make these types of changes."

While Cartwright adds that pagers are being reintroduced, the new pickup system remains in place. As with several other impactful changes made during the pandemic, he says, "There's no going back."

That applies to menu streamlining and re-concepting in the AYCTE facilities as well. In one, for example, a cook-to-order stir-fry station that was popular but slow, and therefore relatively low-volume, was converted to a build-a-bowl-style Indian concept. "Instead of us cooking it to order just for you, we're building it to order," Cartwright says. "We're able to do small-batch preparation of a lot of the components, which speeds service at the station and enhances consistency. But we also maintain face-to-face interaction and keep control and customization in the customers' hands. Those are elements of the experience that they really value."

In another station, where freshly grilled fish is offered as a protein topping, the

need to reduce wait times and congregating at the station during the pandemic led to replacing the station's charbroiler. Salmon is now pre-grilled in the back of house and finished in a rapid-cook oven at the station. "We can mark the fish in small batches ahead of time on the charbroiler and reheat it quickly to order," Cartwright says.

Overall, Cartwright foresees continued movement away from individual cook-to-order stations and toward more batch cooking for build-to-order and finish-to-order service. Doing so reduces labor needs, and while less actual cooking is done at the stations, open views into production kitchens can still provide the energy and appeal of scratch cooking. By embracing customer-facing technologies as well as state-of-the-art equipment technologies, Mizzou Dining, he says, will continue to evolve the customer experience in win-win ways.



**"If it's not actually meaningful to the guest, we're no longer hesitating to make these types of changes."**

**Eric Cartwright**  
University of Missouri

03

People



# The Ali Group Welcomes Kold-Draft

Long renowned for its top-quality ice machines, Kold-Draft International is now one of the Ali Group companies. Kold-Draft is famous for its perfectly square cube, a favorite of many bartenders, mixologists and patrons.



**T**he history of Kold-Draft® begins with its founding in 1920 as a manufacturer of water pumps. In 1955,

the company introduced its first automatic ice machines. With a unique “upside-down” horizontal evaporator, the machines were the first to produce consistently perfect, large square ice cubes. For the next 50 years, Kold-Draft produced only full-size ice machines. In 2016, the company introduced its first undercounter machine, and now, its SC201 undercounter model is its best-selling machine. Today, Kold-Draft offers a full line of both undercounter and freestanding machines in a variety of sizes to fit any beverage operation.

### Art Meets Science

The ice-making technology in Kold-Draft machines has been called “the perfect balance of art meets science.” Unlike vertical evaporator systems, the Kold-Draft horizontal evaporator system eliminates impurities that can affect ice texture and flavor and produces pure cubes that melt more slowly.

The 1.25-inch square cubes produced by the Kold-Draft system are larger than cubes from traditional ice makers and are the only true cube shapes in the industry. That size and shape help maintain carbonation and

won’t dilute drinks as quickly as other cubes.

The pure, slow-melting Kold-Draft cubes have long been a favorite with bartenders and master mixologists, and the machines have built a loyal following. In 1999, author and mixologist Dale DeGroff, who has been called “King Cocktail,” told *The New Yorker* magazine, “There’s only one type of ice I’ll tolerate. That’s a big cube made only by a Kold-Draft machine.” With the increased emphasis nowadays on artisanal drinks — and the importance of quality ice in those drinks — Kold-Draft ice makers have become an invaluable tool for mixologists in bars, restaurants and other venues with craft cocktail programs.

Jeff Biel, Vice President of Marketing and Product Development for Scotsman/Kold-Draft, says that this is a win-win for customers. “End users will see the world-class quality that the Ali Group is known for in everything from technical and customer service to manufacturing and the sales channel.”

“We are very pleased to welcome Kold-Draft into the Ali Group,” says Filippo Berti, Ali Group’s Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. “The Kold-Draft acquisition is strategically important to our Group as it strengthens our position as a leader in the global commercial foodservice industry. This provides us with one of the industry’s most unique and well-known ice shapes and further enhances our portfolio in the ice machine segment.”

## BRAND WATCH

**KOLD-DRAFT**
[kold-draft.com](http://kold-draft.com)

Kold-Draft produces first automatic ice machines

**1955**

Undercounter model introduced

**2016**

Purity level of cubes produced in Kold-Draft machines

**99.9%**

Length of each side of a perfectly square Kold-Draft cube in sq. in.

**1.25**

## THE BERTI FOUNDATION

# Eight Students Receive Berti Foundation Scholarships

**“The determination and leadership shown by these students, especially during these challenging times, is truly inspirational.”**

**Filippo Berti**  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,  
Ali Group

In partnership with The Berti Foundation, the Ali Group is proud to announce the recipients of its third annual round of college scholarships. **The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program** supports dependents of Ali Group North America U.S.-based employees. Named for Ali Group founder Luciano Berti and his wife, Giancarla, the foundation promotes education and the arts. More than 30 students applied for the 2021 scholarships.

In 2021, the Foundation renewed the scholarships of 9 students who were awarded scholarships in previous years. So far, a total of 23 students have received educational support from The Berti Foundation.

“The determination and leadership shown by these students, especially during these challenging times, is truly inspirational,” says Filippo Berti, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group. “We see these scholarships as a way of supporting our employees and their children. We are happy to contribute to their educational success.”

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 U.S.-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 seven Ali Group companies:



**Abigail Enos**  
Parent: Nicholas Roy (ACP)

**Skylar Etherington**  
Parent: Michael Etherington (Aladdin Temp-Rite)

**James Gunning**  
Parent: Lisa Gunning (Beverage-Air)

**Robert F. Lee IV**  
Parent: Robert F. Lee III (Scotsman)

**Matthew Macaluso**  
Parent: Charlene Macaluso (Metro)

**Patricia Salazar**  
Parent: Fernando Salazar (American Dish Service)

**Sarah Salus**  
Parent: David Salus (Metro)

**Destiny Syharaj**  
Parent: Keophouvang Syharaj (Edlund)





**Abigail Enos**  
Ames, Iowa

**Intended school:**

Iowa State University,  
Ames, Iowa

**Major/course of study:**

Horticulture

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

My interest in horticulture was cemented by my first job at a garden center.

**What would you like to do after college?**

Plants are grown on all seven continents, so there is no lack of jobs. One of my dreams is to work with a mutual aid group to grow produce to distribute to the community. I imagine myself running a greenhouse where people can come and learn and leave with some fresh, local, organic produce.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

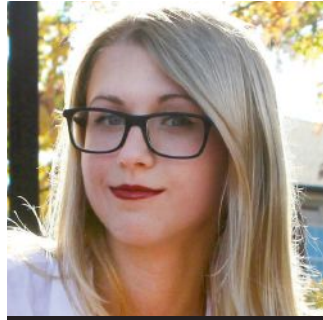
Grad school is a strong possibility. Although a lot can change in five years, one thing is for sure: I will still be working around plants.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I am a direct descendant of William Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield of the infamous Hatfield and McCoy feud.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be and why?**

Tenacious. I have always been self-driven and motivated.



**Skylar Etherington**  
Hendersonville, Tenn.

**Intended school:**

Tennessee Tech University,  
Cookeville, Tenn.

**Major/course of study:**

Music Education

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

I knew that I wanted my job to be one that I would love doing for the rest of my life, and I was drawn to music at a very young age. I was inspired by the passion of my music teachers, and it sparked my interest into teaching the next generation of musicians.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

After I graduate, I would love to teach a middle school band and give private lessons.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

I see myself as a successful music teacher, with a possible master's degree, helping students realize their passion in music.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I was the first female to make my high school drum line on snare drum in 19 years.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be and why?**

Driven. Even when I was knocked down by others, I never stopped trying.



**James Gunning**  
Strattanville, Pa.

**Intended school:**

Clarion University of  
Pennsylvania, Clarion, Pa.

**Major/course of study:**

Business Management

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

My parents owning their own businesses, my business classes in high school, and the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) club I participated in in high school.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

Earn a good-paying job along with gaining on-the-job experience in running a business.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Potentially owning my own business, preferably in my hometown.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I own a 1953 Ford 600 tractor. I work on it and use it mainly as a hobby and sometimes for odd jobs.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be and why?**

Passionate. I feel that I am very passionate towards all aspects of my life.



**Robert F. Lee IV**  
Denmark, S.C.

**Intended school:**

University of South Carolina,  
Columbia, S.C.

**Major/course of study:**

Business Management

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

I went to Business Week at the University of South Carolina a couple of years ago. We spent a lot of time learning about business and how businesses work.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

I would like to gain experience about how to manage a business so I can eventually start my own one.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

I see myself five years from now working for a business, gaining management experience to eventually start my own business.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I completed a 28.3-mile hike in one day. I started just before daylight and finished before dark.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be?**

Hardworking.



**Matthew Macaluso**  
Inkerman, Pa.

**Intended school:**

King's College,  
Wilkes Barre, Pa.

**Major/course of study:**

Physician Assistant

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

I became interested in the Physician Assistant program when I was spending a lot of time in the hospital after my Ewing's sarcoma diagnosis.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

Physician Assistant working with pediatrics.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Graduating and looking for the position that suits me best.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma in my sophomore year of high school. I had surgery to remove my right hip. In these types of surgeries, they don't put a replacement in. I learned to walk again with only one hip.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be and why?**

Determined. I made it through every obstacle life threw at me in the last few years. I walked across the stage on graduation night without any assistance, even though many thought I would still be depending on crutches at that point.



**Patricia Salazar**  
Kansas City, Kan.

**Intended school:**

Baker University,  
Baldwin City, Kan.

**Major/course of study:**

Criminal Justice

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

Ever since the beginning of high school, I have always been interested in criminal justice. Coming from a city where crime frequently happens, especially to those around my age, it has made me feel as if I need to strive to make a difference.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

I would like to travel the world as well as find a job that pertains to my degree.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Graduating college and continuing to prosper in my career and overall as a person.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I am a first-generation college student, which plays a big role in my motivations and goals.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be and why?**

Passionate. Once I set a goal for myself, I work hard to accomplish that goal and keep pushing myself until I do.



**Sarah Salus**  
Shavertown, Pa.

**Intended school:**

Misericordia University,  
Dallas, Pa.

**Major/course of study:**

Nursing

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

I have always been interested in the medical field, and nursing is the perfect fit because I enjoy helping others.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

I would like to get a job as a nurse or become a travel nurse.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

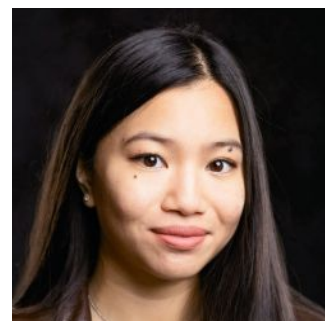
I see myself traveling while also continuing to help people and learn new things.

**What is one fact about you that's interesting or different?**

I have a twin brother, who is also in school to be a nurse.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be and why?**

Determined. I am very motivated and work hard to set myself up for success.



**Destiny Syharaj**  
Winooski, Vt.

**Intended school:**

Skidmore College,  
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

**Major/course of study:**

Business and Psychology

**What got you interested in that course of study?**

I've seen those I love endure the struggles of mental health.

**What would you like to do after you're out of college?**

My career goal is to spend my time working with BIPOC individuals. Community is a value important to me. I would love to open a mental health clinic with my business and psychology major. I understand the hardships and mentally draining obstacles that can result from struggles with cultural and ethnic identity.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Traveling fascinates me, and I enjoy the presence of many people. My dream is to live life to its fullest and go to all the destinations that I can.

**What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?**

I taught myself to read Thai at the age of 12. I'm fluent in Laotian, Thai and English.

**If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be and why?**

Explorative. I am always open to new ideas and have a high tolerance for ambiguity.

# 04

## Success Stories



# REEF TECHNOLOGY AND METRO

A Parking Lot That's More Than a Lot

This is not your ordinary ghost kitchen. Not like there's anything ordinary about ghost kitchens — the delivery-only restaurants have exploded since the first wave of the pandemic when indoor dining shut down.

Indeed, Euromonitor estimated that these delivery-only restaurants could create a \$1 trillion global opportunity by 2030. In the U.S. alone, there were about 1,500 ghost kitchens as of last July, and that number was expected to grow.



A REEF  
Neighborhood  
Kitchen ready  
to be used.

Convenient Metro shelving helps keep things organized.



Designed essentially like commissary kitchens, these spaces allow brands to produce multiple menus for delivery-only purposes. Operators like ghost kitchens because there's no need for pricey front-of-the-house space, they can use all the high-volume equipment they want because the spaces tend to be larger, and they can even set up shop in warehouse-like areas near highways and main thoroughfares to give easier access to delivery drivers. Most of these companies also rely almost exclusively on online ordering for a highly efficient, highly accurate and hands-free solution.

Consumers say they like ghost kitchens because they can pick and choose from a variety of menus, and families and multi-person households can order off multiple menus for one delivery. The bottom line is that ghost kitchens allow consumers to enjoy what is often chef-driven or higher-quality food delivered conveniently (and freshly) to their doorstep.



REEF Technology is one of the latest companies to jump on the ghost kitchen bandwagon, but its model differs from other similar businesses. Most notably, REEF builds its kitchens in shipping containers that the company then positions in vacant parking lots.

Sounds crazy, right?

Not really, when you look at what is now a \$700 million company that started solely as a parking app startup back in 2013. Just prior to and primarily during the height of the



REEF's fleet of robots can efficiently deliver products to customers.

pandemic in 2020, REEF pivoted to think of new, unconventional uses for traditional spaces, such as parking lots, many of which were empty during lockdowns. Plus, with people commuting to work less, there was more space sitting idly by in parking lots. Today, REEF has 5,000 locations in more than 20 markets nationwide and says it puts its partnering companies within 5 miles of 75% of the U.S. population.

"REEF is a platform that helps partners grow by transforming urban spaces into community hubs to knit people and businesses together," says Mason Harrison, Head of Communications for REEF.

The company sets up its container-based services, which include offerings in healthcare, foodservice, grocery and retail, in empty parking lot spaces in the heart of urban developments. REEF has also invested in self-driving electric robots to deliver products directly to consumers within three-quarters of a mile of certain ghost kitchen locations, which Harrison says helps cut down on labor, traffic and pollution.

"If you think of it, parking lots are ideally suited for dealing with traffic and different types of commercial vehicles to offer micro-fulfillment in neighborhoods within that last block where

people live," Harrison says. "We like to promote the idea of the 15-minute city — the idea of having all of the critical services, supplies, jobs and other necessities all within a 15-minute walk. The need for this on-demand economy really accelerated during the pandemic."

Containers have been set up to house COVID-19 testing and other healthcare services as well as to sell fresh produce and other grocery items. The company's biggest growth vehicle, however, is REEF Neighborhood Kitchens, a growing fleet of container-based kitchens that can accommodate four to six brands and can have up to 20 people working while only taking up about four to six parking spaces. These extremely modular and flexible spaces, Harrison says, can be 100% catered to specific brands in terms of equipment selection and layout, and they're often mobile so REEF can move them as necessary. REEF assembles many of the kitchens in Austin, Texas, and then transports them around the country as necessary.

REEF also assumes responsibility for staff training, quality control and more. In fact, all workers in the kitchens are REEF employees trained by the company's internal culinary team. The company now has more than 15,000

**“We had to think of some new solutions to help them get as much as they possibly can in this tight space; every inch counts.”**

**Lauren Noreika**  
National Strategic Accounts Manager,  
Metro

employees. “This is a great way for food brands to expand their businesses, reach more consumers and get more exposure,” Harrison says. “The biggest single cost for any new food business is commercial real estate, followed by labor.” These kitchens help solve those issues by driving revenue in a smaller footprint and with less staff.

One prominent REEF success story is Man vs Fries, a Bay Area pop-up which has grown into a national brand with plans to expand to more than 100 locations. “REEF really helped this virtual brand scale quicker than going the traditional brick-and-mortar route,” says Harrison, who adds that the Miami-based company also has partnerships with many local restaurants in that city and started a restaurant development program with \$1 million committed for local brands to scale on REEF’s platform.

REEF has also built partnerships with fast-growing brands Umami Burger, Krispy Rice, Milk Bar and Juice Press. Most recently, it has begun partnering with national brands, including Wendy’s. Through an agreement signed with REEF in 2020, the chain announced it will open 700 ghost kitchens over the next five years in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. The idea behind the partnership was to lower costs for prospective franchisees, REEF execs have said.



## Space Challenges

The biggest challenge with opening ghost kitchens in shipping containers is the tight, compact space — a far cry from the expansive commissaries of their competitors. That said, REEF had to look for innovative solutions to make the most out of its 10-foot-by-20-foot spaces.

While all kitchens are designed to meet the specific needs of each restaurant brand, REEF Neighborhood Kitchens works with manufacturers to create different components that are “extremely flexible and modular,” Harrison says. That could be a combination of grills, fryers, flat-top griddles, rapid-speed ovens and more. Considerations in terms of propane use and use of ventless technology also come into play.

Another way REEF Kitchens fit more into smaller spaces is through a partnership with Metro® to install multifunctional, highly customizable and — best of all — vertical shelving to house all the kitchen utensils, packaging supplies, pot storage and other necessities. Some kitchens also feature Metro heated holding cabinets to hold food ready for delivery.

Lauren Noreika, National Strategic Accounts Manager for Metro, says her team worked with REEF to customize a proprietary arrangement of its SmartWall® Shelving system, such that any new location can easily open a box and set up shop without having to reinvent the wheel each time. This has certainly come in handy amidst REEF’s explosive growth. “We really had to nail down a process to meet their deadlines as they become more aggressive in the national account chain restaurant space,” Noreika says.

Many of the kitchens feature a food makeline for sandwiches, burgers, pizzas and more, so Metro shelving was installed over those lines to hold all the to-go packaging containers, boxes, bags, utensils and other supplies. There’s also room for labels, staplers and other supplies needed to completely close up to-go bags or boxes so they are not tampered with during delivery.

“We had to think of some new solutions to help them get as much as they possibly can in this tight space; every inch counts,” says Noreika, who notes that the team at Metro even had to reconfigure its proprietary shelving for REEF to do away with the post that needed to go into the ground to the left of the food makeline — to save on that 1 inch of space — and instead “tie” the shelving to the wall while ensuring the system is secure and won’t flip over.

There is also Metro SmartWall Shelving positioned above the three-compartment sinks.

“We use a grid system that attaches to the wall directly above the sink and features accessories like prongs positioned at different angles, hooks and baskets to hold pots, pans, tongs and other utensils,” says Noreika. “The prongs are for squeeze bottles used for sauces that can be washed and turned over to drip-dry directly into the sink.”

An epoxy coating on the shelving helps prevent mold and bacteria buildup in wet and humid spaces. “It’s a great way to keep everything clean but also acts as a storage solution,” Noreika says.

If ghost kitchens seemed like the wave of the future just a year ago, REEF’s innovative solutions for last-mile delivery in small yet efficiently designed spaces show us just what the next wave of truly local food might look like.



## BRAND WATCH



Founded:

**1929**

Products:

**30,000+**

**metro.com**



**How  
Tasty  
Donuts  
Gambled  
on Gelato  
and Won**

**B**eware the three J's. Donut shop owners know the months of January, June, and July can see lower traffic patterns (thanks, New Year's diets and summer travel).

While Tennessee-based Tasty Donuts has rarely struggled with sales at any point in its 13 years due to a loyal customer base and strong brand identity, it still faces some challenges. Most recently, however, the team dove headfirst into artisan gelato making, which drew a quick and explosively positive response that they admit they didn't see coming.

Since opening in June 2021, "sales have been off the charts," says Tony McInnis, Founder and President of Tasty Donuts and Tasty Scoops & Sweets. "We see about 282 gelato transactions a day."

McInnis says that his management team initially wasn't sure how well it would be received, so they opened Tasty Scoops & Sweets as its own concept in an 1,800-square-foot space directly opposite from the donut shop in Ooltewah, Tennessee's Cambridge Square — all just in case it bombed. Now that they know it's a success, he says they plan to bring both brands together in the future (more on that in a bit).

The decision to venture into gelato was because of its higher-end appeal. "We always thought it would make sense to offer some kind of frozen dessert, so when that opportunity arose, we did some market research and decided to go with gelato because it's known for its artisan style," McInnis says. "Gelato fits that bill for us much more than a hard scoop or soft-serve ice cream in the eyes of most consumers, at least in our part of the country."

Below: Tony McInnis making some of his famous donuts.

Bottom: Fresh donuts await their icing and topping.





Cool and creamy gelato fresh from the Carpigiani machine.

That said, the team was not about to just purchase bags of premade gelato mix, dump them into a basic batch freezer and call it a day. Just like the whopping 120 different varieties of donuts baked fresh every morning in all three Tasty Donut shops (two in Tennessee, one in Georgia), the gelato would need to be made in-house and from scratch. That started with getting the right equipment and training to create a top-of-the-line product.

McInnis researched various equipment makers but ultimately settled on Carpigiani because of its strong, full-scale training and implementation program and reputation for reliable equipment. The partnership with Carpigiani didn't come out of the blue for another reason: Tasty Donuts has been a longtime customer of Ali Group's Belshaw Adamatic donut-making equipment since opening the first store in Chattanooga, Tenn., in 2009. The company's three locations all feature Belshaw fryers, proofers, conveyors and semiautomated donut lines that can pump out 90 dozen fresh donuts an hour.

The next step in the gelato concept development involved McInnis bringing his three other managers to Chicago in January 2021 to participate in Carpigiani's week-long Gelato University program.

When they got back, they installed a Carpigiani Pastomaster machine, which is a 3-foot-by-3-foot mixing, churning and hot treatment unit used



to heat the gelato base. The heat treatment and micronization process takes about 2 hours and creates a creamy, stable and safe base "in order to ensure the full absorption of solids, just like if you're mixing sugar in a glass of water," says McInnis. The drawn-out process also helps ensure consistency and shelf life (the latter of which is not as important to Tasty Scoops due to demand, McInnis says).

Next comes the flavor-mixing stage. Staff pour the base into 5-gallon containers, where "gelato gurus" mix in fresh fruit, pastes, chocolates, candies and more to create different flavors. "We then let everything age again in the walk-in cooler overnight, [for] 12 to 18 hours," McInnis says.

Staff then transfer the mixes to the Carpigiani batch freezers, which literally blast the liquid mix in a freezing chamber for 10 minutes to turn it into gelato. Once frozen, staff scoop the gelato into a

## BRAND WATCH



Commercial branches:

**8**

Service centers  
worldwide:

**500**

Distributors  
worldwide:

**180**

**[carpigiani.com](http://carpigiani.com)**



**McInnis researched various equipment makers but ultimately settled on Carpigiani because of its strong, full-scale training and implementation program and reputation for reliable equipment.**

30-pan freezer display case for serving. One batch of base is enough to make about 20 pans of gelato, per McInnis.

“What you see in the display case took three days to get there,” McInnis says. A slower, more meticulous process than a prefab alternative, sure, but McInnis says that’s precisely what makes the gelato taste so great — and so high quality.

So much goes into the actual production of the gelato that the Tasty Donuts team decided the entire design of the Tasty Scoops & Sweets store should revolve around it. A large glass window offers customers a peek into gelato making and the equipment in the back. Customers can even see into the process from one of the 50 total seats inside and outside on the 1,000-square-foot patio.

A “melty wall” resembling different-colored gelato flavors melting down adds to the whole motif. Even the brand name Carpigiani bolsters the artisan appearance. “We have customers ask, ‘Is that Italian?’ And they are very intrigued,” McInnis says. “We’re all about being transparent.”

Each day, Tasty Scoops & Sweets offers 30 different flavors, including standard, rotating and seasonal ones, and 12 sorbet options for dairy-free customers, including the area’s large Seventh-Day Adventist population.

The staple flavors include stracciatella (milk or vanilla flavored with chocolate shavings), chocolate, Mexican vanilla, crema whiskey, strawberry, a kids’ flavor like cotton candy or brightly colored bubble gum, a cookie flavor (such as cookies and cream, cookie dough or cookie butter), Italian lemon cookie, and at least one candy bar-inspired creation (such as TWIX®, HEATH® or Goo Goo Cluster®). At press time, the gelato gurus were developing a SNICKERS® flavor. Other popular flavors that have caught customers’ eyes on the shop’s Instagram account have been The Elvis with peanut butter and bananas, Jolly Rancher Cherry, Lavender Chai Tea, Maple Bacon, Strawberry Mojito and more.

Another popular flavor has been the New Orleans-inspired Bananas Foster. “To make this flavor, you need to light the brandy on fire to burn off the alcohol, and

people love watching the process; they literally call us and ask when we’re going to be making it so they can come and watch,” says McInnis.

McInnis says the entire team has the most fun coming up with new flavors. “We work with our Gelato University chef for ideas, communicate with other gelato shop owners, and we take requests from customers,” he says. The shop even has a wish board featuring these suggestions, and the team had already come up with more than 300 flavor ideas in just half a year of development.

John McCabe, Executive Sales Consultant for Carpigiani, applauds the Tasty Donuts program. “Tony is a smart, sophisticated businessman,” says McCabe. “When he wanted to add gelato to his donut business, he invested in taking his key management to a custom course with Carpigiani’s Chef Baron in Vernon Hills, Ill. He was able to use our equipment and learned how to make delicious gelato. We were able to recommend the right equipment for his production and refrigerated cases for his display. This training and our equipment is allowing him to have a successful, growing business.”

“We never say, ‘This is the best way we can do this; we have it all figured out,’” McInnis says. “Everyone who works in the shop is required by us to go through some sort of formal training at least once a year.” In 2021, a main supplier for gelato paste products put on a class for the Tasty Scoops leadership team at its facility, and sent a rep to work with employees at the store for five days.

Now that the team knows the concept works, McInnis says, “We hope to roll out the gelato to other Tasty Donut stores. Our plan is to put it under the same roof at all of our locations in the future.”

Until then, everyone’s still enjoying the sweet life.





# IT'S PRIME TIME FOR FOOD AND FUN

**W**hen folks who live around Springfield, Ore., seek good food, a great beer selection and fun times, they head for the Prime Time Sports Bar & Grill. It combines the high-tech excitement of a sports bar with the ambiance of a neighborhood pub.

## A True Neighborhood Establishment

Prime Time Owner and President Rich Hickam's career in the industry goes back to his first job out of high school: selling restaurant equipment. That career lasted for about five years, and by 1983, Hickam found himself involved in the family business of operating taverns. Twelve years later, a large building that had previously housed an all-you-can-eat buffet went on the market in Springfield. Hickam

and his family bought the location and opened the 150-seat Prime Time Sports Bar & Grill in December 1995. Hickam says the sheer size of the building made it perfect for this type of restaurant. "Our building is better designed than most for being a sports bar because our ceilings are 18 feet tall [with] open beams," he says. "So we have room for very large, very nice TVs...and a lot of them. It gave us a very good shell to work with."

Hickam keeps the family tradition going at Prime Time with daughter Lindsey Shew and stepson Jason Martorano serving as General Managers. Martorano says the neighborhood atmosphere of the place makes it popular. "We're a working-class neighborhood, and we're truly a neighborhood pub," he says. "As great as we do the sports bar thing, we don't have any sports teams here, so [University of] Oregon football is it for the most part."

## BRAND WATCH



Founded:

**1950**

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

**208,000**

**[americandish.com](http://americandish.com)**

Martorano says the food served at Prime Time is as much of a draw as the sports bar atmosphere. “We started out with some simple things — burgers and whatnot — but over the last 25 years, it’s grown into a full restaurant,” he says. The menu leans heavily on comfort food items, such as burgers, wings, and fish and chips. “We’ve got a big following for our prime rib on Fridays. We’ve been doing a fantastic job with that.” The grilled finger steak is one of Prime Time’s specialties — and one of its biggest sellers. To make it, “we take a good steak, tenderize it, cut it into little strips, flour it and fry it on the flattop grill.”

Of course, a sports bar wouldn’t be a true sports bar without a selection of beers, and Prime Time keeps about 30 varieties on tap. While the taps carry some of the traditional brands such as Coors® and Budweiser®, Prime Time tries to keep an emphasis on craft brews, Martorano says, because “there’s a zillion craft breweries.”

To keep business going when the pandemic hit, Prime Time instituted a to-go beer program. “I think there’s a market for it for sure,” Martorano says. “And it’s a way to pick up a little revenue. People come in, have a burger and beer, and then take a four-pack or six-pack to go.” The bar sells beer in growlers and also keeps a stock of can/bottle products for customers to take home and enjoy. “I’ll try to buy a case or two of packaged products of the specialty beers I have on. So if they like it on draft, and they don’t want to deal with growlers, they can just grab some cans to go. It works pretty well.”

## Dependable Dish Machines

A restaurant that serves craft beers will dirty a lot of dishware and glassware, so it needs a dishwasher that can stand up to a lot of hard usage. For Prime Time Sports Bar & Grill, that’s a conveyor dishwasher from American Dish Service (ADS). The restaurant chose a conveyor model because “we needed to do volume [washing] efficiently,” says Martorano. “The energy savings was part of it as well. Our sewer prices kill us, and we were going through a lot of water.”

Hickam explains that when they bought the building, there was already an ADS dish machine installed. “It was a used machine at the time; it was already old,” he says. “We ran that thing, and it just never failed. It worked right up until we decided to put in the conveyor. I found that to be very impressive.”

Martorano likes the way ADS machines perform, year after year. “We’ve had a glasswasher from ADS since I started here, and that thing is still running



Left: An undercounter dishwasher from American Dish Service (ADS) keeps the bar stocked with sparkling clean glassware.

Below: An ADS conveyor machine does the heavy lifting in the back of house.

strong,” he says. “We wash a ton of glasses, and it never fails. I highly depend on that.”

“Rich, Jason and the rest of the crew at Prime Time Sports Bar & Grill are great people to work with,” says Keith Bowers, Oregon Chemical Division Manager at Bargreen Ellingson Foodservice Supply & Design in Eugene, Ore. “We’ve had a great working relationship with them for several years now, and we’re glad to be part of their success story. We look forward to helping them continue this success in the years to come.”

“American Dish Service is honored to have built loyalty with clients, such as Prime Time Sports Bar & Grill,” says Sonya Gossard, Director of Sales, American Dish Service. “These clients seek out distributors like Bargreen Ellingson when updating current American Dish Service models and replacing competitors’ products. We are proud to partner with clients across all segments of the business to provide products that deliver.”





# TEA FOR TEXAS (AND EVERYWHERE ELSE)

**T**exas is the land of wide-open spaces, cowboy boots and the Alamo. Soon, however, iced tea may become part of that list —

at least if HTeaO has its way. As this rapidly growing chain expands beyond its Texas roots, it's making iced tea a hot seller.

The chain was the brainchild of Kim and Gary Hutchins, owners of a casual burger and sandwich restaurant called Buns Over Texas, which opened in 1989 in Amarillo. During the economic downturn of 2008-09, the restaurant added six flavors of iced tea in order to help boost flagging sandwich sales. "We started selling it by the gallon," says HTeaO CEO and Co-Founder Justin Howe, Kim Hutchins' son who joined the company in 2019. "When the market took a dip,

we were able to buy some prime real estate that was very difficult to get.”

When Buns Over Texas built a restaurant on this new Amarillo property, the company added a 1,200-square-foot section that sold only iced tea and named it Texas Tea. Using data and sales information gathered from the first location, the Hutchinses opened a second, stand-alone Texas Tea outlet, also in Amarillo, in 2012.

Howe considers the second store a prototype the company used to develop and refine the concept further. “We built the supply chain infrastructure. We started to manufacture all our key flavor profiles, and we turned all our key flavors into real broadleaf tea,” he says. With the research and product development complete, Texas Tea opened a third iced tea-only location in Midland, Texas in 2013. But with a broader audience in mind, this store was given a new name: HTeaO.

“We wanted to be confident [we had] a nationwide brand,” Howe says, and he and his team considered the HTeaO name to have greater opportunity for national growth. But as a nod to its Lone Star roots, the HTeaO logo still features a map of the state and the phrase “Born in Texas 2009.” (The two Amarillo units remain under the Texas Tea moniker.)

As HTeaO grew in popularity, the chain positioned itself for the next logical step: franchising. By 2018, the chain had all the legal requirements in place and awarded 21 franchises in its first month. Currently, HTeaO has 40 units in 13 states, including 4 company-owned locations. Pursuing an aggressive franchise strategy, the chain expects to open 40 more units within the next few years and has more than 200 additional units in development.

HTeaO prides itself on helping franchisees through the build process, says Curt Pohlmeier, Vice President of Project Development. Since many of its franchisees are first-time owners, HTeaO provides guidance to ensure a successful buildout. After the franchisee signs a lease, “we basically target five key elements: hiring an architect, getting a set of





plans, getting a permit, hiring a general contractor and securing a certificate of occupancy. We are a coach, a guide to incoming franchisees through their build process,” says Pohlmeier.

Drive-thru lanes play a major role in HTeaO’s success. Howe says the idea to have a drive-thru lane came from the success his mother and stepfather had with their drive-up lane at Buns Over Texas. The drive-thrus deliver solid business for HTeaO, Pohlmeier adds, with the best-performing stores in the chain doing half their business in the drive-thru lane.

### **All About the Flavor**

One of the most notable things about HTeaO is the size and variety of the menu. At any given time, guests can choose from 24 flavors of iced tea on the

menu, including half sweetened and half unsweetened. Those flavors range from the prosaic, like unsweetened regular or green tea, to the creative — Sweet Mango Fresco or Unsweet Georgia Peach. To top off the drink, customers can add a 2-ounce portion of fruit at no charge. The chain also partnered with the Truvia® brand of stevia-based sugar substitute on Sweet Zero, a no-calorie, no-sugar iced tea. The popularity of sweetened versus unsweetened tea depends on the location, says HTeaO Chief Marketing Officer Spencer Perkins. “As we start to penetrate more urban markets, we are seeing a heavy push toward unsweet and Sweet Zero flavors. Traditionally we see a 75% sweet, 25% unsweet [sales mix],” he says.

The menu also features seasonal flavors, says Perkins,

with selections changing quarterly. “We have a team dedicated to product innovation,” he says, with root beer and strawberry passion being two of HTeaO’s recent seasonal offerings. However, Perkins says, flavor ideas often come directly from guest feedback. “We respond back to every guest message and always keep track of what guests are requesting.”

Like everything else in Texas, the portion sizes at HTeaO are big. The smallest cup the chain offers holds 20 ounces; the largest is a whopping 50 ounces. HTeaO also sells bottled water in sizes up to 5-gallon bottles. Those large sizes actually led to the chain installing sliding doors in its stores. “When someone places an order for 5 or 10 gallons, or an order for 2 cases

of water, we have to load it in someone's car. We need to be able to access the drive-up lane," says Howe.

To accompany its tea, HTeaO sells a variety of healthy snack items, as well as coolers and tumblers for on-the-go drinking. For customers who might not always be near an HTeaO outlet, the chain offers 8- and 16-count packets of tea sachets for home brewing in such popular flavors as Coconut Black Brew and Blueberry Green Brew.

### Perfect Ice for the Perfect Iced Tea

Besides the innovative flavors of tea that HTeaO offers, another element plays a crucial role in the chain's success: its ice, made in Scotsman ice machines. "Ice is so important to our brand. I like to think of it as the big three: tea, water and ice. That's our brand. Who wouldn't prefer to have a cold glass of tea or water with a big mound of ice?" asks Pohlmeier.

Scott Ebbert, National Accounts Sales Manager for

Scotsman Ice Systems dealer Central Restaurant Products in Indianapolis, feels the quality tea and quality ice present the perfect pairing. "The tea is amazing," he says. "It sounds really crazy that iced tea could stand alone and sell by itself, but once you have the tea, it's absolutely fabulous. And the nugget ice is key to everything they do. Anybody who loves drinks loves the soft nugget ice. It's chewable, it lasts longer and it just makes the drink better."

**"Ice is so important to our brand. I like to think of it as the big three: tea, water and ice."**

**Curt Pohlmeier**  
Vice President of  
Project Development,  
HTeaO





Bill Carr, Food Service Sales Manager at Scotsman Ice Systems distributor Duncan Supply Company, Inc., in Indianapolis, agrees. “HTeaO is such an exciting brand to work with, and their team’s passion comes through in their excellent product and store presentation. The combination of nugget ice and the flavors of the HTeaO products is a perfect marriage,” he says.

“At every HTeaO location, you’ll see crowds of people inside or in the drive-thru lane, waiting to try the many flavor options available,” says Ken Harris, Scotsman Ice Regional Sales Manager. “The tea at HTeaO is truly second to none, and The Original Chewable Ice® is the perfect complement to this fine tea. Duncan Supply and Central Restaurant Products have done an excellent job keeping up with this

fast-growing chain, and Scotsman is happy that we’ve helped play a role in their success.”

Scotsman Ice and HTeaO have a long history as Scotsman ice machines have been in all Texas Tea and HTeaO stores since the very beginning. “They’re the best,” says Howe. “We’ve had locations where, when our New Store Operations team arrived, the ice machines were a different brand. We made them replace them all.”



The Scotsman ice is so popular with HTeaO customers that the chain now sells it in 10-pound bags to go. That decision was driven by customers, who want to keep their drinks tasting fresh, says Pohlmeier. “If you want premium water, tea and ice, we’ve got you covered.”

### Heading North

The HTeaO management team realizes the current perception of iced tea is that it’s a Southern drink and for that reason is pursuing what Howe terms an “I-40 strategy.” Almost all of the HTeaO units now operate in the part of the U.S. that falls south of Interstate 40, the highway that starts at the Pacific Ocean in California and traverses the country almost perfectly horizontally until reaching the Atlantic Ocean in North Carolina.

That wide swath of the country includes the Southwest, Texas, the Deep South and Florida — all prime growth targets for the chain.

But Howe understands that to cross that I-40 line heading northward, HTeaO will have to increase its offerings to attract iced tea-hesitant Northerners. And while it will still focus primarily on iced tea, newer units will feature coffee and other cold drinks. Three units already serve coffee, but Perkins says it’s not a major change to the HTeaO concept. “Tea is what makes us unique and who we always will be,” he says.

Howe agrees. “We’re not becoming a coffee shop by any means; we’re just offering a different option in the morning,” he says. “We will be in every state in the U.S. before it’s all said and done.”

### BRAND WATCH

**Scotsman®**

Machines installed worldwide:

**1,000,000+**

Tons of Scotsman flake 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**



# Amish Hospitality Welcomes Visitors

**W**hen Midwesterners get in the mood for some real old-fashioned food and hospitality, there's a good chance they

head for a restaurant or inn operated by Dutchman Hospitality. Since 1969, the company's restaurants have served delicious food based on the traditions of the Amish and Mennonite communities.

## Starting Out

In Walnut Creek, Ohio, in 1969, local businessman Emanuel Mullet, his daughter and son-in-law, and family friend Dan Lehman opened a 75-seat restaurant in a converted hardware store. The homestyle menu was such a success with local residents that in 1979, Dutchman opened a restaurant in Sugarcreek, Ohio. A unit in Sarasota, Fla., followed six years later. In 1992, Dutchman Hospitality opened its first hotel, the 52-room Carlisle Inn Walnut Creek. The company has continued to expand and now owns a total of six restaurants, three inns and a theater.

The heart of Dutchman's success is its devotion to the values and traditions of the Amish and Mennonite communities in which the company was founded. "The Amish and Mennonite people live in strong communities in which hospitality is not only preached but practiced," says Dutchman Hospitality Public Relations Coordinator Vikki VanNatta. "Sharing meals around a table is an important part of maintaining strong family connections and friendships."

The family-style menu reflects those traditions with its emphasis on "Amish

kitchen cooking." Besides the family-style tableside buffet, menu favorites include noodles (made in traditional Amish-Mennonite fashion), chicken and a variety of pies.

The chain takes its dedication to its communities further than just its food. The art and décor in the Dutchman Hospitality restaurants and inns celebrate the traditions of quilting and handiwork. Its two Carlisle Inns in Ohio were built by a local Amish contractor who was also "our primary contractor for many of our renovations and remodeling projects within our restaurant segment," VanNatta says. Even the mattresses in the guest rooms are made by a local Amish firm.

The Ohio Star Theatre at Dutch Valley, located in Sugarcreek, represents another important part of the company's activities. Customers at the Dutchman Hospitality inns and other hotels in the area were looking for evening entertainment since "most of the local shops closed at 5 p.m.," says VanNatta. "With the increasing number of hotel rooms in the area, it made sense to add a form of evening entertainment."

Before he came to Dutchman Hospitality, company President Mike Palmer had been involved in opening a theater in Shipshewana, Ind., another tourist and recreation area based around an Amish community. "Mike had a vision for a theater here in Ohio's Amish Country," VanNatta says. In 2017, the theater opened. Catering to a clientele primarily made up of Baby Boomers, the theater features a variety of musicals, Christian-based entertainment and '60s and '70s rock tribute bands.



## BRAND WATCH

**Belshaw.**  
**Adamatic**  
History Group

Founded:

**1923**

Distributors worldwide:

**75**

Number of countries with  
Belshaw donut-making  
machines:

**123**

**belshaw-adamatic.com**



## Success with Donuts

Dutchman Hospitality's bakery program is a deliciously important part of its menu. For lunch and dessert, guests can choose from an extensive selection of breads and dinner rolls to accompany the homestyle food. Dessert options center on pies: fruit, cream and meringue. The breakfast menu features traditional favorites like muffins, bagels and cinnamon rolls.

Dutchman also offers a wide selection of donuts, produced on Belshaw equipment. "Donuts have been an integral part of our bakery for years," says Mike Miller, Vice President of Operations for Dutchman Hospitality. "Fans come from all over the state and surrounding areas due [not only] to the quality, but also the massive size of our donuts."


A tempting array of flavors also makes these donuts big sellers. "Our most popular is our caramel creamstick long john, followed by the chocolate and vanilla varieties," says Miller. "Some other fun varieties include our maple creamstick topped with crispy bacon bits, and pumpkin creamsticks with cream cheese icing filled with a pumpkin-spiced vanilla cream/Bavarian cream mixture."

The donut program has done so well for Dutchman Hospitality that the company expanded it into a wholesale operation, says Miller. "We received many requests from business owners around Columbus


to sell our donuts in their markets and convenience stores," he explains. "What started as an effort to meet demand resulted in excellent marketing and visibility for our brand throughout central Ohio. When someone buys a Der Dutchman donut at their local market, oftentimes they make a quick road trip to rural Plain City to see where the donuts are made, get one fresh from the bakery, and then also experience our warm hospitality in the dining room."

Dutchman Hospitality relies on a variety of Belshaw equipment to produce its donuts, including a cake donut depositor, proofer, fryer and high-production icer. A jelly injector from MONO and a spiral mixer from Esmach round out the equipment lineup. Palmer headed up a team that looked at several types of donut-making machines before settling upon Belshaw. "Overall, the donut maker has performed quite well," he says. And when service has been needed, "their service department has served us well. We have been able to access key folks within the Belshaw organization for guidance and assistance when needed."

"Dutchman Hospitality has had great success with the C6-24 line," says Stephanie McDowell, Customer Service Manager at Belshaw. "Adding this machine to their business has helped with labor and consistency. They have been an awesome customer of ours and are excelling in the donut business."



Long johns roll off the Belshaw machine and will soon be iced.



Hundreds of donuts are produced daily for the Dutchman Hospitality restaurants and for retail sale.



# Creating a New Image

Thanks to a refrigeration reboot, El Pollo Loco increased its flexibility and capacity while reducing equipment costs.



**C**osta Mesa, Calif.-based El Pollo Loco was conceived in a small restaurant in Guasave, Sinaloa, Mexico, and brought to Los Angeles' Alvarado Street in 1980.

Today El Pollo Loco operates 480 restaurants in six states: California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Texas and Louisiana. The menu centers on its fire-grilled chicken, which the chain marinates on-site. A skilled grill master cooks the chicken for about an hour using open-flame broilers. The culinary staff then incorporates it into 8-, 10-, 14- and 16-piece family dinners with such sides as broccoli, beans, rice, corn, mac and cheese, and coleslaw. Other menu options include street tacos, burritos, tostadas, bowls, salads and cinnamon churros. El Pollo Loco even offers a fit menu that includes keto meals, along with vegan burritos and several types of salsa.

"The idea for our concept is LA (Los Angeles) Mex," says Brian Carmichall, El Pollo Loco's Chief Development Officer. "We like to say our brand was born in Mexico and raised in Los Angeles. It's traditional Mexican food with a California twist. El Pollo Loco's meals are served in an exciting and better-for-you way."

When El Pollo Loco recently unveiled two new prototypes to meet the demands of the chain's off-

premises business, it included design changes to both the front and back of the house. The first new format includes a takeout window, dual drive-thru and parking lot spaces for curbside pickup customers. Rather than incorporating a dining room, this design limits seating to an outdoor patio space. The chain's second new prototype combines indoor dining with limited seating and a large patio that encompasses garage-style doors for an indoor-outdoor atmosphere. This version also features dual drive-thru lanes and parking lot spaces for curbside pickup customers. Both designs include a mobile order area that holds food in cubbies for pickup.

With the new prototypes online, El Pollo Loco's site square footage now ranges from 1,500 for the drive-thru-only format to 3,200 for the full-serve, on-premises dining locations. The new image and prototypes not only highlight the star of the menu — the chicken — but also create a better guest experience. "It is more important now than ever to have flexibility in our prototype designs," Carmichall says.

In the past, the chain depended on custom fabricated equipment, which included refrigeration, to withstand the rigors of its back-of-house environment. Not only do the kitchens contend with high volumes, but they also experience high ambient temperatures from grills. The new prototypes not only add flexibility due to wide-ranging kitchen sizes and layouts, but they



also reduce costs and add the necessary storage capacity.

"To accomplish this, we needed to go with a durable roll-in, plug-in refrigeration solution to accommodate our more varied kitchen designs and footprints," Carmichall says. "And our goal was to have a flexible equipment package across the board, regardless of the location's size."

As part of that effort, El Pollo Loco's team reached out to TriMark Orange County,

a kitchen designer, builder and equipment procurement firm with offices in Irvine, Calif., to discuss its options. It quickly became apparent that Beverage-Air, which has been an equipment provider to El Pollo Loco throughout its 45 years in business, had the perfect options for its various-sized sites.

"Beverage-Air's equipment always fits our needs well," Carmichall says. "The company makes solid, durable equipment at a fair price, and this hit a sweet spot for us [with the new prototypes]."

In addition, Beverage-Air was able to provide a wide range of refrigerators and freezers to fit with the flexibility of El Pollo Loco's plan. "This gave us the opportunity to slot in as many refrigerators as we needed, no matter what the layout," Carmichall says.

TriMark Orange County has serviced El Pollo Loco since 2004, the year the chain began outsourcing its kitchen design. Diane Lyons, Senior Designer of TriMark Orange County, has assisted the chain with its equipment needs in the past. "I have been working with Brian and Dan Milojevich (El Pollo Loco's Director of Facilities) for many

years," Lyons says. "The chicken preparation process has evolved and it has been my pleasure to work with this knowledgeable team."

El Pollo Loco specified Beverage-Air's Hydrocarbon Series solid door refrigerator and freezer and two-drawer undercounter refrigerators. All units include electronic controls and an interior thermometer to ensure temperature consistency. The chain's new package also includes Beverage-Air's Horizon Series top-mount reach-in refrigerators and freezers, part of the Hydrocarbon Series.

For ease of food prep and assembly, El Pollo Loco utilizes Beverage-Air's stainless-steel eight-pan sandwich prep table with a removable 17-inch polyethylene cutting board.

The biggest benefit of these products is their ability to hold temperatures more consistently in



### **Beverage-Air was able to provide a wide range of refrigerators and freezers to fit with the flexibility of El Pollo Loco's plans.**



El Pollo Loco's interior design reflects its Mexican heritage.



**“We’re hard on our equipment, so anything we pick for our restaurants has to be very robust.”**

**Brian Carmichall**  
Chief Development Officer,  
El Pollo Loco



a kitchen that features prominent use of open-flame broilers.

“Beverage-Air’s product lines have matched up well with the unique needs associated with El Pollo Loco’s menu and service style,” says Erica Motes, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Ali Group North America – Refrigeration Division, which includes Beverage-Air. “Finding the right solutions for El Pollo Loco was a true team effort between TriMark, manufacturers’ rep group Lund-Iorio and Beverage-Air.”

While El Pollo Loco stores its chicken in walk-ins, it uses refrigerators and freezers to hold all other perishable ingredients. “The Beverage-Air units hold everything cold that goes into burritos, bowls, tacos, tostadas, etc.,” Lyons says. “This includes cheese, lettuce, pico de gallo, cold sauces, corn, onions, cilantro, guacamole, avocados, etc. These coolers also store backup pans of many of these items.”

All Beverage-Air’s refrigeration systems utilize environmentally friendly and energy-efficient R290 refrigerant that meets all regulatory standards.

“They’re using two styles of undercounter refrigerators, one with drawers and one with a door, and using a worktop freezer as well as a two-door reach-in freezer. In addition, some of El Pollo Loco’s prototypes are using reach-in refrigerators as well in rolling out their L.A. Mex prototype,” Lyons says. “Beverage-Air products have been great for El Pollo Loco as these units are available for us, priced well, [are] a great value and hold temperatures reliably.”

Custom refrigeration was El Pollo Loco’s go-to in the past due to its tolerance in high ambient temperatures. “With open broilers cooking chicken constantly, a lot of heat is generated in the kitchen,” Carmichall says. “Much of the refrigeration equipment on the market doesn’t do well in that environment, so we had to go with brands that could operate in those conditions. These Beverage-Air units maintain temperatures even in our high-ambient [temperature] kitchens.”

Carmichall adds that durability and reliability are

other big benefits of these lines. “We’re hard on our equipment, so anything we pick for our restaurants has to be very robust,” he says.

Lyons adds that the chain benefits from additional local support from Lund-Iorio, which is available to assist El Pollo Loco and TriMark if any issues arise. “Beverage-Air has been a constant for El Pollo Loco for many years and remains a company the chain continues to use and rely on,” Lyons says. “The company’s products allow El Pollo Loco to get the job done no matter the kitchen size and the placement in the restaurant.”

“As someone from the same area as El Pollo Loco, I was a fan of the concept before getting a chance to work with the company. After working with El Pollo Loco for a bit, I came to realize the people are just as good as the food,” says Scott Lund, Principal at Lund-Iorio. “Everyone from supply chain to operations to research and development to facilities and all points in between are true professionals. Together, it makes working with this chain so much fun.”

## BRAND WATCH



BEVERAGE-AIR

Established:

**1944**

Products:

**1,000+**

Product series:

**31**

Product categories:

**10**

**beverage-air.com**



# A Right-Sized Solution

**L**ocated in the southeast Iowa town of Donnellson, Hinterland Dairy was established as a milk producer

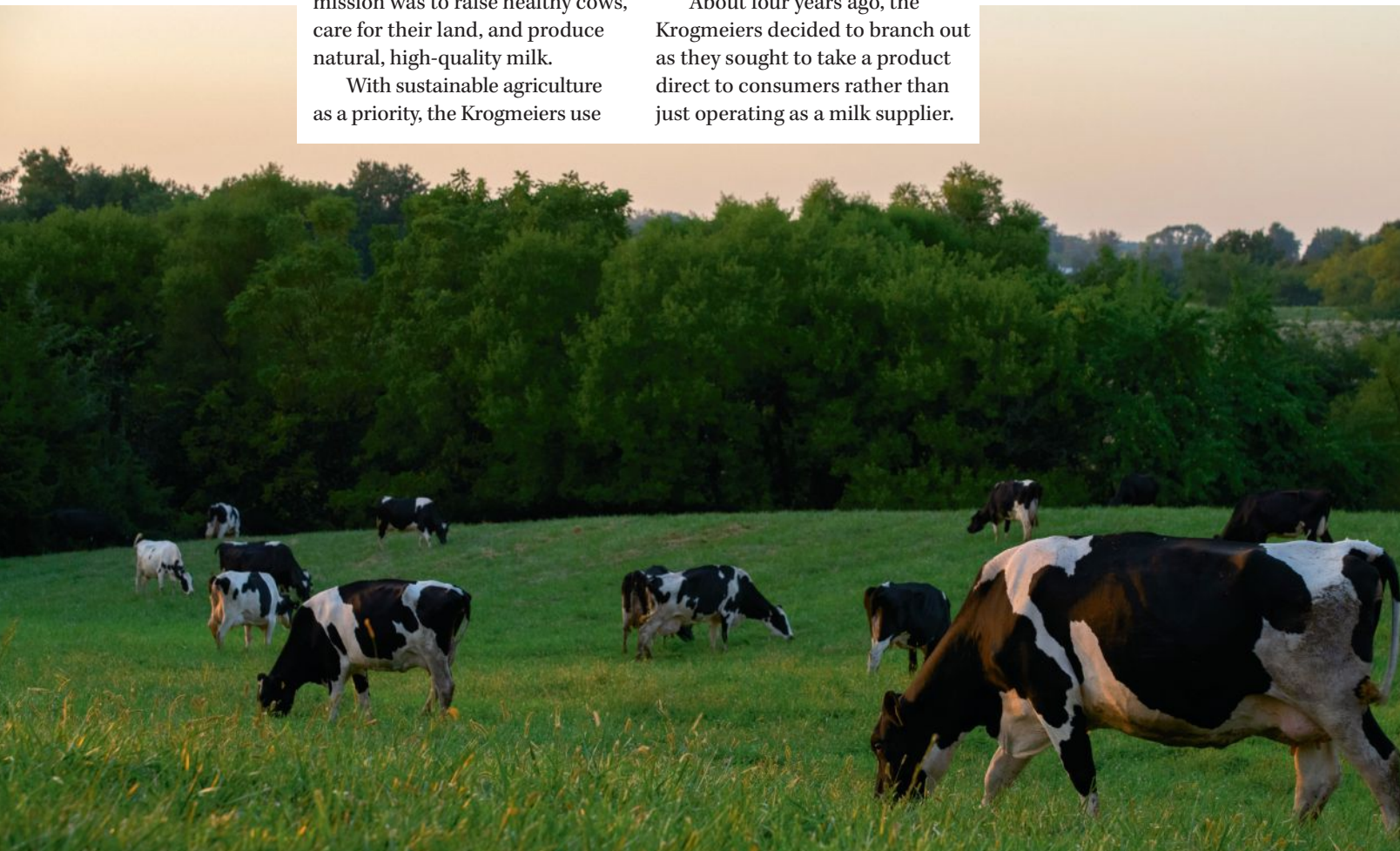
back in 1978. Owners Ralph and Colleen Krogmeier operated their 400-acre farm not just as an occupation, but a way of life. Their mission was to raise healthy cows, care for their land, and produce natural, high-quality milk.

With sustainable agriculture as a priority, the Krogmeiers use

the farm's non-GMO crops to feed Hinterland's 160 Holstein and Jersey crossbred cows. Land stewardship efforts include the growing of cover crops, no-tillage planting and diverse crop rotations. Heifers graze the rolling pastures, and after they have their first calf, they become part of the milking herd. The farm uses no preventative antibiotics, and they do not treat the cows with rBST, a laboratory-made growth hormone.

About four years ago, the Krogmeiers decided to branch out as they sought to take a product direct to consumers rather than just operating as a milk supplier.

A batch freezer enables a local dairy to easily expand its operations.



### BRAND WATCH



Established:

**1929**

Sold the first soft-serve ice cream machine:

**1946**

Current number of models:

**40+**

**electrofreeze.com**



Colleen Krogmeier and daughter Shannon and their Electro Freeze batch freezer.

“My husband and I have been in the dairy business a long time and always wanted to take product to consumers and control the price,” says Colleen Krogmeier. “We decided to venture into cheese making.”

They began by doing their research, traveling across the country and visiting small creameries. The goal was to find out what these dairies liked to do and what they avoided in their operations.

After building a cheese plant

on their own over a span of two years, the Krogmeiers’ operation produced its first batch of plain curds in July 2019. Soon, its offerings expanded to include cheddar cheese curds in plain, Wild Buffalo, Fiery Fiesta, and Garlic and Herb Cheddar flavors; fresh quark, a German spreadable cheese; The Brooks Place Alpine Cheddar; and Happy Jack, a take on traditional Monterey Jack.

“It has gone very well,” says Krogmeier. “We are only selling our products to the local

community, and everyone has been very supportive.”

The response was so positive that the couple wanted to expand its offerings with the goal to attract even more people to its farm store. As a dairy, the Krogmeiers knew the wide appeal of ice cream would be the perfect addition.

To better educate herself on ice cream production, Colleen Krogmeier enrolled in a premium ice cream course through the University



**"People told us the machines were workhorses and simple to use."**

**Colleen Krogmeier**  
Owner, Hinterland Dairy

of Wisconsin, Madison and attended notable ice cream maker Steve Christiansen's Scoop School in Chesterfield, Mo., just outside of St. Louis.

Ralph also did his homework, speaking with people in the industry to determine what brand of equipment would work best.

"Electro Freeze's name kept coming up in our research," Krogmeier says. What's more, Colleen had seen Electro Freeze equipment in use at the University of Wisconsin and

Scoop School. "People told us the machines were workhorses and simple to use. Then we found out its factory was in the Quad Cities, only two and a half hours from us. So, Ralph made the call to Electro Freeze in early March of [2021]."

The Krogmeiers worked with Electro Freeze's Inside Sales and Marketing Manager Mark Holden, who gave the couple a tour of the plant and introduced them to the staff. "This is a boutique industry, with people making money

doing creative things like the Krogmeiers," Holden says. "It was a new experience for us to work with a small but growing family-owned business like Hinterland Dairy that was branching out into ice cream."

Holden was impressed that the couple had done extensive investigative research before choosing Electro Freeze as its equipment option. "Ralph and Colleen did their research ahead of time and came up here pretty well schooled," Holden recalls.

“They wanted to see if how we do things matched what they discovered during their research. They knew what they were talking about when they came here and were great to work with.”

Holden answered all the Krogmeiers’ questions and was prepared to fully support the couple in their new venture.

The Krogmeiers chose Electro Freeze’s model B12E large-capacity batch freezer, which produces ice cream, gelato, sorbet, Italian ice and sherbet. “The Model B12 batch freezer is water-cooled and a simple, basic machine that offers variable control if the Krogmeiers want to expand to offer additional products,” Holden says.

After conducting several trials, the Krogmeiers began making ice

cream in July 2021. “Prior to this, we had two Electro Freeze reps come down to check the machine and run several batches to make sure everything was working well and make sure we knew what we were doing,” Colleen Krogmeier says. “Then Mark called afterwards to follow up and see if we needed anything. We’ve been very happy with the service we have had with Electro Freeze.”

Electro Freeze provides training at its facilities as well as machine setup at the customer site. Once the machine is in place, distributors or technicians are dispatched to ensure the equipment is running properly and the refrigeration system is working. They then walk users through the unit’s operation in detail, including how to clean the

machine and keep it sanitized.

“When it comes to training on our equipment, we provide an extensive recipe book that shows what products can be produced, including a step-by-step guide on how to make the product and information on volume,” Holden says.

Hinterland Dairy currently offers chocolate and vanilla ice cream flavors, packaging the dessert in 6-ounce cups with a lid. “This makes it easier for us to serve customers as we only have one person manning our retail store at a time,” Krogmeier says. “This way, we can easily take our product to



Colleen and Shannon fill up cups with freshly made ice cream.



other retail outlets, like farmers markets.”

Although the Krogmeiers are aware that they are using Electro Freeze’s Model B12 batch freezer with only a fraction of its capabilities, it is the simplicity of the machine that appealed to them. This is because the couple is just ramping up its ice cream offerings. “Last week, we made ice cream on two different days. On the first day, we made 260 cups, and the next day, it was 130,” she says. “I like this unit because it’s very simple to operate and clean, and it’s easy to put the dasher and blades in myself. It’s also very dependable.”

Krogmeier adds that she realizes the batch freezer is capable of so much more, but due to a shortage of labor and not selling large quantities wholesale, the B12 is perfect for their needs.

“We knew Electro Freeze had a great reputation, but during the demo, we saw an older machine that was still working that proved it was great quality,” she says. “We also were impressed with the plant, how they make everything on-site and the people working at the company.”

It is also the support after the sale that counts, which is something Electro Freeze takes pride in. “We’re here all the time if customers have questions on where to get products, flavorings or how to do things,” Holden says. “I always tell folks, ‘We’re here, call us, and if we don’t the know answers, we’ll get them for you.’ If they do have issues with a machine or a part wears out, our service techs are here on the phone, taking care of everything they need. We cover the whole gamut.”



# Efficient Cleaning Enhances Foodservice Program

**W**hile some convenience stores continue to test the foodservice waters, Kwik Trip has been successfully navigating these currents for nearly two decades.

“Since 2002, when we established our foodservice program, we focused on ready-to-eat items and did that well,” says Paul Servais, Retail Food Service Director for La Crosse, Wis.-based Kwik Trip. “Breakfast sandwiches, cheeseburgers, hamburgers, soup, pizza and other items were prepared and heated in the store. This was our program for many years, and it was simple to execute and didn’t generate a lot of dishes.”

This changed in the last couple of

years, as the c-store chain’s team focused its time and attention on developing and rolling out its signature fried chicken offering as well as a proprietary take-home meal program.

Raw chicken is brought into the stores, then hand-breaded, deep fried and sold as bone-in pieces and jumbo tenders. It also sells crispy chicken sandwiches, barbecue and Buffalo wings, and freshly baked rotisserie-style whole birds. Servais estimates current company-wide chicken sales total about \$3 million a week.

Kwik Trip also offers about 16 take-home meals at its stores that are delivered fresh daily from its KT Kitchens facility in La Crosse. Ten are considered core items that are always on the menu. Best-selling meals include fettuccini Alfredo with grilled chicken, beef stroganoff, meatloaf with mashed potatoes and gravy, chicken

bacon mac and cheese, and spicy chicken penne.

The chain is also testing various limited-time offers to determine what items sell best. Examples include mini manicotti with Italian sausage, chicken teriyaki with brown rice and peas, and steak ranchero burritos with Spanish rice.

“We may purchase enough product to produce 100,000 meals,” Servais says. “This way, we can work through our inventory. If we sell through it all in three weeks and it’s a winner, then we gear up and make it permanent.”

Both the chicken and take-home meal program have taken foodservice to a whole new level for this c-store chain with roughly 800 units spread across Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

“These two new initiatives took us a couple of years to put together, but now we’re enhancing both programs with more menu items, and we built a new plant to ship meals to sell in our stores,” Servais explains. “We never stop evolving our menus. There are core items that have been around since we became serious about selling food in 2002, and the rest of the menu is in constant motion. We listen to our coworkers and guests.”

While testing the program from February through May





Both the chicken and take-home meal program have taken foodservice to a whole new level for this c-store chain with roughly 800 units.



**“What drew us to Champion’s equipment was its heat recovery and efficiencies for our kitchens.”**

**Ali Van Dalen**  
Store Engineering  
Senior Category  
Manager,  
Kwik Trip

2019 to see what additional foodservice equipment was needed, Kwik Trip’s team quickly noticed it was generating a higher number of dishes that required washing. “There was immediate recognition to the fact that we tripled the number of dishes used in our kitchens, so we needed a solution for quick cleaning,” Servais says. “We then looked at labor constraints and considered how we could address these and stay efficient.”

At that time, dishes at most Kwik Trip locations were cleaned by hand in three-compartment sinks. Over the years, however, some of its café stores implemented undercabinet dishwashers. “In my experience, the undercounters did a good job of washing bar glasses, of which we had none,” Servais jokes. “We knew, unless we went with a larger commercial-quality dishwasher, we’d be wasting our time.”

Not only did the increase in dishes create a labor issue, but by using three-compartment sinks and hand-washing dishes, there was no extra space for drying. Also, with Kwik Trip moving more into foodservice and growing that side of the business, increased volume was anticipated, specifically for its fried chicken. Thus, in the summer of 2019, the search began for a dishwasher that would best fit Kwik Trip’s needs.

“What drove our decision was the need at retail,” says Kwik Trip’s Store Engineering Senior Category Manager Ali Van Dalen. “We hadn’t

looked at warewashers until we decided to go a new direction with our chicken program, which was a huge undertaking we began rolling out in 2018 and are just now finishing up.”

Kwik Trip’s team thoroughly vetted equipment manufacturers, and chose to meet with three vendors. “We brought everyone in and worked with our electrical and engineering teams before choosing Champion,” Van Dalen says. “What drew us to Champion’s equipment was its heat recovery and efficiencies for our kitchens. With our focus on being green, we knew this was the right machine for us.”

What helped seal the deal was the fact that some of the chain’s project managers knew Champion Industries by reputation and decided to bring them into the conversation. “They knew about Champion’s equipment and its quality, then took us down that path,” Servais recalls. “When we met with their team, it didn’t feel like a salesman stop; rather, they came into our stores, dug in, then determined our needs and how they could help us. It’s about developing relationships and partnerships as well as a high level of service, and that relationship formed very early on.”

The chain was specifically looking for a high-temp dish machine to increase wash results and decrease drying time. It also required a ventless machine so it would not have the added expense of installing a hood for this piece of equipment.

Finally, the unit needed to be tall enough to accommodate pots and pans. Kwik Trip moved forward with Champion’s DH-6000T dishwasher with ventless heat recovery and condensate removal.

The DH-6000T does not take up a large footprint, which is key for the convenience store segment. “The benefits include a better wash quality and faster dish drying,” Servais says. “Champion’s dishwasher dries automatically and sanitizes with high heat, reducing labor in the kitchen. We want to employ people, but there’s no one to hire right now, so any time you can put in a piece of equipment to save labor, it’s a good thing.”

Kwik Trip quickly found that the dishwasher accommodated all its dishes from chicken production, including parts from the sifter table as well as baking and cooking pans and utensils. “When I’m in the stores working with teams, I tell them if an item is dishwasher safe, it goes in the dishwasher,” Servais says.

Initially, the plan was to install Champion’s dishwasher in only new builds. “Dishwashers require specific water specs, so this was our first dabble to make sure our kitchen water was up to spec and ensure the machines ran properly and maintained the quality of warewashing we require,” Van Dalen explains.





A space-saving, efficient Champion machine makes quick work of warewashing at Kwik Trip.

After experiencing a significant reduction in labor, though, Kwik Trip decided to install Champion's warewasher in every new store and remodel, as well as in any locations it acquires. "This was initially going to be just a new store opportunity, but with the feedback and significant labor reduction, we are dedicated to putting this warewasher in every location possible," Van Dalen says.

The responsiveness of Champion, in particular Allen Hasken, Vice President of New Product Development and New Business, solidified Kwik Trip's decision to partner with the company. "This is new equipment for us, and Allen has really helped work through our questions," Van Dalen says. "He not only made the sale, but helped us through the rollout, worked with our construction team and provided information on maintaining the machines."

Champion also provided videos for staff, detailing how to operate the equipment. In addition, Champion worked with Kwik Trip's service staff, so in the event equipment issues arose when the units were outside of warranty, the chain could handle repairs in-house. "We designed the DH-6000T machine for up time and made it easier for Kwik Trip's internal staff to service the machines," Hasken says. "When we first met with Kwik Trip, we shared with them our ability to help and support them as if they were one of our independent service people. Because they have an internal service network, we

keep them up to speed and train them to service their own machines once they are out of warranty. They appreciated our flexibility to work with their internal service team as a machine is no good if it's down."

Over the long term, all of Kwik Trip's new stores and rebuilds will include Champion's DH-6000T dishwashers. "Champion's Allen Hasken is spectacular; I would buy anything from him," Servais says. "If my people call me, then it's a big problem, and that rarely happens. When it does, Allen gets ahold of that store and walks them through the issue; the relationship is spectacular. I value the partnership between us and Champion. When there is a problem, they will fix it. They have lived up to that."

In addition to Champion, Kwik Trip uses products from Ali Group company Metro to help keep things flowing in the back of the house. These products include Metro's mobile work tables as well as its wall-mounted and mobile shelving.

"We are really happy with our decision and look forward to expanding our relationship with Champion and Ali Group," Van Dalen adds.



**BRAND  
WATCH**  
**Champion®**

Founded:  
**1890**

Distribution  
warehouses  
across North  
America:

**5**

**championindustries.com**

# FORT KNOX FOODSERVICE GOES FOR THE GOLD

**S**ay the name “Fort Knox,” and the first thing that comes to mind is a cartoon image of a huge bank with gold bars piled sky-high in front of it. But there’s another Fort Knox, in Kentucky, adjacent to the Treasury Department’s Bullion Depository, which stores the U.S. gold reserves. The “other” Fort Knox is a U.S. Army installation that serves a daytime population of about 25,000 soldiers and civilian employees.

The fort, which was established more than 100 years ago, serves as a home to a number of major military commands, including U.S. Army Human Resources Command, U.S. Army Cadet Command and U.S. Army Recruiting Command. Training represents one of the base’s main functions; during the summer months, approximately

10,000 cadets, supported by about 5,000 cadre, come to Fort Knox for the Army’s largest annual training event, Cadet Summer Training.

## A Day in the Life

As with any military installation, it’s a major undertaking to feed all the soldiers and civilian workers at Fort Knox, and that’s one of the responsibilities of Installation Food Program Manager/Contract Officer’s Representative Dana Womack. As liaison between the Army and the base’s foodservice contractor, Womack oversees 11 dining facilities at the fort, each with its own prep and serving area. With the cadet training and external units (such as the National Guard) coming on base to train, she has a constantly fluctuating population to feed. “Fall or winter are our slow seasons — if there is such a thing as slow,” she says.

A typical day for Womack can start as early as 4 a.m., “and that just consists of me confirming head counts or any external units

that need field feeding,” she says. If a group of soldiers in the field needs feeding, those meals normally ship out between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. After that, she conducts inspections. “I’ll get with my quality assurance evaluators to conduct any inspections that need to be done. That’s just making sure that the equipment is serviceable [and if] any repairs need to be done,” Womack says. If the equipment can be serviced, she contacts the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) on the base, which handles repairs pertaining to electrical and plumbing issues. If the equipment can’t be serviced, “I would then go to my warehouse to make sure we can do a one-for-one swap or get more equipment if necessary,” she says.

Then, “I may or may not have lunch,” Womack laughs. “Typically, I don’t.” Her afternoon is often filled with meetings, the first of which is with DPW to track



**“I’m passionate about what I do, so it’s not work for me.”**

**Dana Womack**  
Installation Food  
Program Manager/  
Contract Officer’s  
Representative,  
Fort Knox



During peak periods, as many as 15,000 soldiers and cadets are served in Fort Knox's 11 foodservice facilities.



## Following Orders

The equipment ordering process for the military goes through the Defense Logistics Agency, or DLA. “We are the Department of Defense’s largest combat support agency, providing the warfighter worldwide logistics support,” says Dean Schoendorfer, Integrated Supply Team Chief for the food equipment branch of DLA. Schoendorfer is based in Philadelphia and works with the Subsistence Supply Chain, which provides support “for military all over the world, from individually packaged meals for soldiers’ rucksacks to ships’ galleys to full-service dining facilities on military installations,” he says.

Individual military installations initiate equipment requests and route them through the DLA for fulfillment. It’s the responsibility of the installation to monitor its equipment. “They have to track the life cycles, maintenance and service of their equipment,” says Schoendorfer, as well as notify the DLA when a replacement becomes necessary. The DLA then processes the equipment order for the base. In all applicable categories, equipment must be ENERGY STAR®-certified. To earn the ENERGY STAR, equipment must meet strict energy efficiency criteria set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or the U.S. Department of Energy.

To Schoendorfer, the DLA serves a higher purpose than just providing equipment. “We think we contribute to the quality of life and morale of servicemembers across the globe,” he says. “If they require a griddle assembly and we don’t have it, they’re not eating pancakes that day — or anything else. So, we think every order we receive is important. That’s really our mission — to support the warfighter.”

necessary repairs or discuss any other pressing issues with equipment. Womack’s next meeting “is more food-related. I’ll get with the contractor, and we’ll discuss any issues they might be having on a foodservice level — any customer complaints or any ideas that can improve our processes,” she says. After that, she briefs the chief of supply or Director of the Logistics Readiness Center on any issues that have come up. Finally, she might drive around the installation to see if any type of cosmetic improvements need to

be made to the dining facilities. “It gets pretty busy, but I love it,” she says. “I’m passionate about what I do, so it’s not work for me.”

### On the Menu

For the most part, the food offerings at Fort Knox duplicate those of an average restaurant. “The typical warfighter appreciates a replica of what you would find at a civilian restaurant,” Womack says. Much of the Fort Knox menu revolves around a 28-day cycle, she says, and because it is a training center, foodservice

keeps an emphasis on the military services’ Go For Green® nutrition program. Based on the traditional traffic light colors, the program labels foods by nutritional quality, performance enhancement and sodium content. Foods with a green label are denoted as “eat frequently”; yellow and red labels less so.

However, that doesn’t mean that special meals are off the menu. A holiday meal might center on a special item like steamboat round of beef. Special menu nights may feature a cuisine such as Italian or soul food. Womack describes a special meal served remotely to soldiers at the end of a 12-mile ruck march, a comparatively fast march done with a full pack load. To celebrate the completion of the exercise, the soldiers “got steaks, they got eggs, they got grits and orange juice...and this was in a field,” she says. “It is prepared in our dining facility. Then it’s picked up and sent out to them so they can have at it.”

And like many commercial operations these days, two of the foodservice facilities at Fort Knox also offer typical prepackaged grab-and-go choices such as sandwiches and chips.

### Facing Challenges

While military foodservice and commercial foodservice can differ greatly at times, Womack says she faces some of the same challenges commercial operations must address, such as the labor shortage. Even though the foodservice operation at Fort Knox is contracted out, it has still been difficult to retain workers, especially during some of the peak times on base. “The challenge lies in relying on the

local populace to fill seasonal roles,” she says. “You have to compete with [a quick-serve restaurant] who might be paying \$16 an hour.” That quandary can be frustrating as Fort Knox, like all military installations, is part of a greater community. “How do I contribute to mission success while still contributing to lives around here?” Womack asks.

In the same way that supply chain issues have forced some commercial restaurants to rethink their menus, military foodservice has had to make some adjustments. Womack

points to the 2021 hacking and temporary shutdown of a major beef supplier as an example of how the military can be affected by supply chain disruptions.

“We took a hit on that,” she says, “because it affects what we can offer the soldiers.” She imagines the average soldier asking, “Why am I having chicken every day?” She turned that short-term problem into a longer-term plan. “It forced us to have a contingency plan,” she says. “What does it look like from a foodservice perspective to have those contingencies in place? It was a good learning curve.”

## BRAND WATCH

# VICTORY

Established:

**1945**

Products:

**800+**

Product series:

**22**

Product categories:

**9**

[victoryrefrigeration.com](http://victoryrefrigeration.com)



### Keeping Cool

When Fort Knox recently found it needed to replace some of its refrigeration units, the process started with a Military Internal Purchase Request (MIPR), says Eric Thornton, vice president of government sales for supplier Citisco, a Boelter company. “In order for that MIPR to get populated, they do market research,” he says. “The government wants to make sure that what they buy fits into what they’re working with. When I got the MIPR, they asked us, ‘Can you look and tell us what would work best?’”

Along with evaluating the fort’s specific refrigeration needs, Thornton also determined what company could deliver the necessary products and “who was offering the best value. I had to take all those things into consideration,” he says. His recommendation: Victory refrigeration and freezer units.

But this would be no simple installation. There were nine buildings that needed new refrigerators and freezers, and some other kitchen equipment was needed as well. “That meant that the coordination and the actual staging of the equipment was critical,” Thornton says. As there was no room on base to store all the new equipment, he and his team basically had to organize nine separate installations. “It was a challenge,” he admits. Since each building had different items to be installed, “we had to pull the equipment that was going into each building and set up the shipping for that equipment so that our



installers could work on a particular building.” Once one building was finished, the process began again for each successive building.

The team at Victory Refrigeration helped Thornton and Citisco complete the installs on time. “I have a great relationship with Victory,” he says. “Erica [Motes] and her team were fantastic. Everything was spot on.”

“We hope Victory Refrigeration has helped the foodservice operation at Fort Knox achieve their goals,” says Erica Motes, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Ali Group North America – Refrigeration Division. “Everyone in our organization, from the executive offices to the assembly lines, is proud to have our equipment in Fort Knox. We have a number of

veterans in our workforce, so it’s very exciting to be able to assist the military in feeding our troops. We feel privileged to be part of the project.”

The Victory units are helping Womack serve her warfighters. “We rely on reliability,” she says. “When you’re talking about feeding up to 20,000 soldiers, we have to make sure we have the equipment to support us.”



**“When you’re talking about feeding up to 20,000 soldiers, we have to make sure we have the equipment to support us.”**

**Dana Womack**



The image shows the interior of a candy store with a strong vintage theme. On the left, a large stack of red and white balloons sits atop a display of various candies in bags and wooden barrels. A wooden staircase leads to an upper level. The walls are covered with numerous vintage signs, including 'U.S. Post Office', 'ROYAL CROWN COLA', 'RAINBOW', and 'ICE CREAM'. A red fire truck, labeled 'HISTORIC CREAMERY CO. 1909 OLD VILLAGE MERCANTILE', is parked on the right side of the store. The floor is made of polished wooden planks. The overall atmosphere is warm and nostalgic, evoking a sense of a bygone era.

# A TRIP BACK IN TIME (with Coffee)



Stepping into the Old Village Mercantile in Caledonia, Mo., is like stepping back in time. Its two floors are packed to the rafters with antiques, toys, novelties and good things to eat. This “rich piece of history,” as Owner Nina Gilliam calls it, is an

authentic general store in a circa-1909 building. It’s perfectly suited for its surroundings, as the village of Caledonia has been designated as a historical district by the U.S. Department of the Interior, and 33 houses or other buildings in the area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The building originally housed the McSpaden Golden Rule Store, which was typical of the many small mercantile stores that dotted the American landscape in the early 20th century. As the population became

more urban and suburban, many of these small general stores closed and stood vacant for years or were converted for other uses. “When we purchased the building, it had been closed for over two decades,” Gilliam says. In 2001, she and her husband restored the building and opened the Old Village Mercantile.

Walking the wooden floors of the store, one can’t help but be astounded by the amount of merchandise and antiques on



Nina Gilliam,  
Owner of  
Old Village  
Mercantile





Coffee made by a Rancilio espresso machine is an essential (and delicious) part of the Old Village Mercantile.



display. Advertisements for nostalgic products such as Kayo chocolate drink and Sunbeam bread line the walls of the store. Every single inch of floor or counter space seems to be covered with memorabilia — or with the 600 varieties of candy and fudge the store carries. Take the stairs up to the second floor, and there's a wide selection of antiques for sale.

Gilliam says that it's not just the merchandise that attracts people to Old Village Mercantile. There's an emotional draw, too. "There's something that keeps [people] coming back," she says. "They're drawn to the building and the history, and they keep coming back for the things that are inside and how they feel. You can put the same merchandise in a brand-new building, and it's not going to have the same feeling." Now that the store has been open for more than 20 years, it has reached two generations of customers, she says. "We've been here long enough where [people who] came in as little kids or babies — now



they're bringing in their babies. It's become family tradition. It's really neat."

In an area with many attractions for out-of-town visitors, the Old Village Mercantile serves as a major draw. It's open year-round, closing only on Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Gilliam says the store draws an average of 50,000 visitors annually and has had visitors from all 50 states and 27 different countries.

### Coffee's Ready

Along with the packaged candy and fudge, the Old Village Mercantile also has a coffee bar and ice cream station. Gilliam's husband, a coffee lover, was part of the reason for setting up the coffee bar. Back when the store first opened, the nearest cup of decent coffee was an hour's drive away, she says. So, they established their own coffee bar inside the store. In typical Old Village Mercantile style, guests can now choose from a mind-boggling selection of more than 50 varieties of coffee, ranging from traditional blends to flavors like Chocolate Bananas Foster and Cranberry Kreme.

A few years ago, the coffee machine at Old Village Mercantile started breaking down, piece by piece. "It was just one thing after another. It was like a car you keep fixing and then you finally buy a new one," Gilliam says. She asked her equipment supplier, The Bean Doctor in St. Louis, to suggest a new machine. Chris Hanson, Owner of The Bean Doctor, recommended she switch to a Rancilio espresso machine.

"We serviced Old Village Mercantile's previous machine for three years and finally convinced

her to upgrade to the Classe 5,” says Hanson. “We recommended this machine highly due to its reliability, consistency and support.”

The Bean Doctor has been a valuable partner with Rancilio for years, says Chris Gittens, Rancilio Group North America Regional Sales Manager. “They are the preeminent service and equipment company for the St. Louis market,” he says. “We work as a partnership. Chris really goes out of his way to do the right thing.”

And the Rancilio Classe 5 Tall espresso machine was exactly the right solution for Old Village Mercantile. It features intuitive brew group control buttons and accommodates cups up to 5.7” tall. Programmable buttons allow for automated or manual dosing control. Most important, it makes great coffee. “Our staff has said it’s easy to use and the coffee tastes so much better,” says Gilliam. And customers feel the same way about the Rancilio machine. “People are so excited to see the coffee bar because they come from all over the country to see the store and travel a long way. They need their coffee to keep going!”

**Back when the store first opened, the nearest cup of decent coffee was an hour’s drive away.**

### Keeping Things Cool

The inspiration for the ice cream station at Old Village Mercantile came from Gilliam’s grandparents, who owned a drugstore in Iowa during the Great Depression. Like most drugstores at that time, it had a soda fountain, and she wanted to recreate that experience. “We wanted to create our own flavors with the best possible ingredients,” she says. Old Village Mercantile started making ice cream about five years ago with a used batch freezer. Like the store’s old coffee machine, the batch freezer started showing signs of wear, and in 2021, Gilliam purchased a new Electro Freeze batch freezer. “We make handmade artisan ice cream with our Electro Freeze batch freezer,” she says. “My ice cream maker says it makes the ice cream faster, fluffier and we get an extra pan of ice cream out of it.”

For cool treats, there’s ice cream made in an Electro Freeze batch freezer.



## BRAND WATCH



USA office opened:

**1999**

Acquired by Ali Group:

**2013**

Number of service providers:

**800+**

[ranciliogroupna.com](http://ranciliogroupna.com)





**M**ost people want the freshest food when they go out to eat. Whether it's a burger made to order or just-baked bread, fresh food simply tastes better. And freshness represents just one of the reasons behind the enduring and ever-expanding popularity of Handel's Homemade Ice Cream. Since 1945, this chain has been making ice cream fresh daily to the delight of millions of customers.

### From Humble Beginnings

The Handel's story begins in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1945, when Alice Handel began making ice cream in a corner of her husband's gas station, using fresh fruit from her garden and her own personal recipes. That sideline blossomed into a full-fledged ice cream shop, and a few years later, she moved the shop into a larger building. The shop became so popular with locals that the city officially recognized its street location as Handel's Court. Alice Handel retired in 1985 and sold the business to Leonard Fisher, currently Handel's Chairman. Shortly before her passing in 1987, Handel's opened a second location. "Then we started thinking about franchising," Fisher says. "But franchising is a very difficult thing. We wanted to go in very slowly." The chain has kept a conservative policy toward franchising and now has 70 units systemwide, with stores stretching from California to Texas up into the Midwest.

# Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Made Fresh Daily at Handel's





What distinguishes Handel's from many other ice cream shops is the fact that "we make our ice cream fresh every day at every location," Fisher says. "The ice cream doesn't get made in a manufacturing facility and then shipped to each location." All of Handel's ice cream, he says, is used within a few days of being made. "We don't have ice cream sitting frozen somewhere in a 20-below hardening cabinet, and then bring it to the proper dipping temperature. We make it every day."

Making the ice cream fresh daily yields flavor and consistency benefits, Fisher claims. Ice cream that's manufactured in bulk and then stored can sometimes be colder and harder than optimal for full flavor, he says, likening ice cream's flavor development to that of cheese. "Cheese at room temperature is much better than cheese out of the refrigerator

because there's time for that full flavor to come out. You can taste it," he says. And oftentimes, ice cream that is produced for bulk storage has a stronger flavor than freshly made. True flavor, Fisher says, "should come to you, not hit you in the face. Because if it hits you in the face, it's usually artificial. If it's smooth, it's creamy...it comes to you in time [and you say,] 'This is really good and not artificial.'"

The way ingredients are added to the ice cream provides another point of differentiation for the chain. For example, Handel's uses whole cherries, not chopped pieces, in its ice cream. For these and other mix-ins, Fisher says, "We don't put it in the machine as it's being made. We add it to the ice cream as it's being ejected from the machine. So you have all those identifiable pieces."

Flavor variety is a big part of Handel's popularity, says Jody Nerone, Vice President of

**Making the ice cream fresh daily yields flavor and consistency benefits.**

Franchise Development. "We have about 16 to 20 standard flavors at every Handel's location across the country. That allows us to rotate anywhere between 28 to 32 flavors per location," she says. The chain takes regional taste preferences into consideration and features special limited-time-only flavors as well.

While the bulk of Handel's flavors leans toward the traditional favorites — vanilla, chocolate, butter pecan — the chain will take the occasional foray into wilder flavors. Fisher recalls the time his brother suggested the chain offer a raspberry jalapeño ice cream to capitalize on the popularity of Mexican dishes. The ice cream was served with a side of corn chips so customers could dip the chips in the spicy ice cream. "It was a nice mixture of sweet and spicy," says Nerone.

Although the flavor was quite popular, Handel's had



Handel's Vice President of Franchise Development Jody Nerone shows off the Handel's menu board.

to discontinue it when their supplier for raspberry sauce went out of business. "I tried to duplicate it with different companies, but I couldn't," Fisher says. "So that's one we might bring back."

## The Key to Success

Handel's has never strayed from what made the company popular in the first place, says Nerone. "We are still using a lot of the original methods and recipes [from] over the last 76 years. It's allowed us to give our customers a consistent flavor and texture of ice cream."

An integral part of that success has been Carpigiani ice cream freezers. In the 1980s, Fisher realized it was time to replace the machines Handel's had been using — some of which dated back to the 1920s. The first machine he looked at didn't pass muster with the company's toughest critic. "Alice was still alive at the time, and she didn't

like it," he says. "She felt it just didn't make the ice cream the same way. I tried a few others when I came upon Carpigiani. I was really impressed with that machine."

Handel's has a close partnership with the Carpigiani team. Carpigiani manufactures a unique model of batch freezer specifically for Handel's by integrating specific design features to attain the quality of product Handel's Ice Cream has been known for since 1945. "I think [Carpigiani] sales and service teams have always been fantastic," says Nerone. "They're brilliant, very knowledgeable. We have conversations and updates on a regular basis. Carpigiani is a company we truly feel we have a relationship with."

"High-quality, fresh product made daily is Carpigiani's DNA," says Penny Klingler, President, Carpigiani North America. "Being able to partner with a

company like Handel's is like a match made in heaven. I have been so impressed with not only their attention to quality, detail and planning but also how they support their franchisees. Communication is key in any partnership, and Jody has been instrumental in ensuring our teams stay connected with future plans and growing needs. Handel's truly has a great recipe for success. It's Carpigiani's pleasure to serve their growing needs."

As the Handel's operation grows, consistency of product from one store to the next is critical. And that's what the ice cream chain gets from the Carpigiani machines. "It's one of the things that allows customers to experience the same ice cream at different locations in the country," Nerone says. "It's one of the big reasons why the machines are such a big part of our lives and are so important to us."



# Good Times and Good Food Reign at Ontario Sports Bar

**W**hen customers come into the Bricks & Barley Restaurant and Sports Bar in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, to enjoy craft beer and wood-fired pizza, they see a modern, comfortable environment. What they don't see is all the work that went into converting a rundown building into a popular local gathering place.

The Bricks & Barley story starts with two neighbor families, the Spiones and the Eymanns, who lived near each other in the small Ontario town of Virgil. The families bonded over a love of good food and drink. Along with a third family, the Frendos, they decided to open a restaurant in nearby Niagara-on-the-Lake, a popular tourist area renowned for its many historic buildings. The area also is home to the Shaw Festival Theatre, various wineries and many minor league sporting events.

Finding a suitable location for the restaurant was a challenge, but the families finally decided upon a large building with a unique past for what would become a restaurant. "It sits on about one

acre of property," says Co-Owner John Eymann. "It started out as a garage, then went to a garage with gas station, then to a tractor supply store." The building underwent a few more incarnations and additions, bringing it to a total of 7,000 square feet. In the mid-2000s, some buyers acquired the building with a plan to turn it into a mini-mall of seven retail outlets. When one of the buyers passed away unexpectedly, the plan halted and the building sat vacant for another decade. "When we purchased it in 2017, the only thing in there was raccoons," Eymann says. "Over that 10-year period, the roof decayed and basically rotted away, which left gaping holes in the roof. And we had big bushes and trees growing inside."

After a year and a half of major renovations, the Bricks & Barley Restaurant and Sports Bar opened in January 2019. Eymann classifies the restaurant's customers into three major groups. Locals who come in for lunch or dinner several times a week make up the first and largest group. Tourists are the second group; as the Niagara-on-the-Lake area "receives over 3 million tourists a year, capitalizing on even 1% of that helps us out," he says. Finally, since Bricks & Barley sits just in front of a sports complex, "we get a little bit of that action as well, especially pre- or post-hockey."

To feed its hungry customers, Bricks & Barley has a menu that combines the traditional sports bar fare with the eclectic. Alongside the traditional wood-fired pizza choices such as pepperoni and margherita, the menu includes the Canadian, topped with tomato sauce, mozzarella, mushrooms, bacon, pepperoni and shaved peameal (or back

Authentic wood-fired pizza is one of Bricks & Barley's craveable specialties.



bacon, as it's known outside Ontario). As might be expected, the late-night snack menu features calamari and pretzel bites but also poutine and deep-fried cheese curd clusters. And unlike many other sports bars, Bricks & Barley sources some of its vegetables from local farmers. To accompany the food, the restaurant offers a wide range of brews and ciders — both traditional and craft, Canadian and American — and a complete wine list as well.

### Clean and Ready for Service

One thing that Bricks & Barley has in common with every other sports bar is that it uses glassware and dishware — and a lot of it. That means a lot of glassware and dishware to keep clean. To handle that task, Bricks & Barley relies on a Moyer Diebel rotary-type glasswasher in front of house and a ventless door-type machine in back of house. Eymann says that the Bricks & Barley team discovered Moyer Diebel in an unorthodox fashion. “They’re located close, in Jordan Station,” he says. “That’s only a 10- or 12-minute drive up the highway. They have a huge sign out front, and it’s like, ‘What’s Moyer Diebel?’ You look into it, you discover what they produce, and it’s a no-brainer. It’s going to be that company.”

The Moyer Diebel machines have been tough enough to withstand the heavy usage they get

**The Moyer Diebel machines have been tough enough to withstand the heavy usage they get at the restaurant.**

at the restaurant. “We are a very busy restaurant, probably the busiest in all Niagara-on-the-Lake — and there’s a lot of restaurants here,” says Eymann. “So we work them hard, and we demand a product that can uphold our demand, and the glasswasher has been phenomenal. As for the big dishwasher, it goes pretty much nonstop from 11:00 a.m. to midnight every day. It’s been great.”

The service Eymann receives from Moyer Diebel matches the machine quality. “I can call one of the representatives, and he’s always there for us,” he says. “If we need a technician to come out and look at the dishwasher for any reason, they will set it up. So it’s all been great.”

Scott Cherevaty, President of Champion Moyer Diebel Canada, says the company is proud to be a part of the Bricks & Barley story. “Because of their popularity, Bricks & Barley goes through large amounts of glasses and dishware every night. We’re glad that Moyer Diebel can help them serve their customers efficiently,” he says.

Another Ali Group company, Ice-O-Matic, provides Bricks & Barley with a constant supply of fresh, clear ice from a durable 500-pound icemaker. “It works hard,” Eymann says. “It’s providing the entire restaurant plus behind the bar with ice. It’s been a really good machine.”



A tough, dependable Moyer Diebel door-type dish machine helps out in the kitchen.

**BRAND  
WATCH**

**MOYER  
DIEBEL**

Established:  
**1945**

First  
conveyor-type  
dishwashers:  
**1958**

First  
undercounter  
dishwasher:  
**1977**

Acquired by  
Ali Group:  
**1989**

Number of active  
glasswasher installations  
throughout North America:  
**50,000+**

[moyerdiebellimited.com](http://moyerdiebellimited.com)

# 05

## Innovation

# BGI: Innovation in Gelato



**B**GI is one of the newest members of the Ali Group family but has a long tradition of producing top-quality continuous-churning gelato machines. With a variety of machine sizes available, BGI, part of Ali Group's Carpigiani Group, is putting artisanal gelato within the reach of almost every type of foodservice operation.

As with many other Ali Group companies, BGI has used the past two years to concentrate on new ways of reaching current and potential customers. One unique tactic involves a partnership with an Italian publisher to promote a long-term rental plan.

In September 2020, BGI teamed up with Editrice Zeus, an Italian publisher focused on technology for the packaging and foodservice industries. This program, available only to restaurants and ice cream parlors in Europe — many of which operate with franchising agreements — allows them to use BGI products without committing to payment up front. The offer has been promoted through a variety of social media and a series of online videos. Editrice Zeus provided the database for new customers, who were directed to a dedicated landing page for further details. The promotion has resulted in wider global exposure for BGI as well as the closure of deals worldwide for the company.

### Educating Through Video

BGI has also been connecting with customers by using video chat to replace some of the learning sessions that would normally take place at industry events such as Sigepe. The video chat can be a helpful alternative, especially for customers who might not dig into the operating manual for answers, says Diego Bincoletto, BGI Country Manager America, Asia and Oceania. "Customers tend not to read the manual, and they come up with a lot of questions that are already answered in there," he says. "Using video, we can give more specific information. We had already developed this service to a certain degree, and the pandemic has sped it up."

BGI's machines are all Wi-Fi enabled, allowing their support team to remotely monitor the machines and offer support if needed. And now, as part of the Ali Group, BGI can offer assistance on kitchen layout and recommendations on how its machines can integrate with other equipment. "We take care of our customers before and after the sale, which means giving a lot of suggestions of applications and deployment, and trying to solve any problems they may have. All of this is working well to support customers anywhere in the world," says Bincoletto.

### BRAND WATCH

**BGI** CONTINUOUS CHURNING GELATO MACHINES

BGI is part of Carpigiani Group, whose origins date back to 1944.

## 1944

BGI offers a 1-cylinder countertop model, as well as floor models with 1, 2, 4 and 6 cylinders.

## 1, 2, 4 and 6

BGI has launched a series of 12 videos outlining the main features of its technology.

## 12

[bgitaly.it](http://bgitaly.it)



Ice-O-Matic's new mobile app is useful for both operators and technicians. By using the scan feature in the app, operators can scan the QR code in their machines and get all the information they require

in case a machine needs servicing or to check warranty status.

The Resources feature on the app includes all relevant cleaning, service, parts and technical information for the machine. The app includes videos that show how to do basic cleaning and service procedures. By using the Troubleshooting feature, operators can check problems against an error code index to see if it necessitates a service call or if it can be fixed internally. That alone can save the operator hundreds of dollars in service costs. Or, should the ice machine need servicing, they can tell the technician exactly what the problem is to help facilitate the repair process.

The Ice-O-Matic app is available for both Apple iOS and Android.

### The Safest Ice Ever

For years, operators have been looking for a way to ensure that they always have a safe supply of ice. Now, with the new SafeIce system from Ice-O-Matic®, that's one less thing they need to worry about.

SafeIce provides protection from the top to the bottom of the ice machine. It generates a reactive gas mixture, which binds to and eliminates microbes on contact. The gas, known as photoplasma, is heavier than air and cascades into the bin, sterilizing the

machine from the evaporator plate downward. The end result is ice that's safe and pure.

Additionally, the gas mixture destroys coronavirus, flu and mold within seconds. SafeIce also removes odors associated with poor sanitation and helps prevent the formation of slime, mold and yeast.

Using SafeIce can increase a machine's expected life span by up to 30% while reducing service calls as well.

It has a simple, maintenance-free design, and its bulb can easily be replaced annually by the operator.

"SafeIce is an exciting new offering for operators who expect the best," says Mike Hebden, Ice-O-Matic Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "This small add-on safely sterilizes your machine from the bin up; it's proven to eliminate bacteria, mold and even COVID-19 without compromising the flavor of your ice. Our machines serve millions of people a day. Operators expect their ice machine to produce clear, clean ice year after year. Buying an Ice-O-Matic is peace of mind, knowing you've purchased the best in reliability and ease of cleaning. SafeIce is another assurance to our customers that they are investing in an asset for years to come."

SafeIce is available as a factory-installed unit on selected models or as an upgrade kit for Ice-O-Matic CIM machines.



ice-o-matic.com

# Technological Advances from Ice-O-Matic

# Revamping an Aging Kitchen with a Purpose



**T**eenage boys eat a lot of food. The foodservice team at Harborcreek Youth Services (HYS) knows that; they see it in action as they serve breakfast, lunch and dinner — plus second servings — to 72 male residents aged 10-18 years old every day, including weekends.

While hungry teenage boys are not uncommon, the role food plays for the boys at HYS is unique. The Harborcreek, Pa.-based facility functions as a trauma-focused behavioral healthcare agency that provides both psychiatric treatment and an educational curriculum in line with Pennsylvania public school guidelines, all on a residential campus. Food plays a different role here largely because the students often have a different relationship with food than the norm.

Many of the students arrive at HYS with some degree of food insecurity. “Maybe they have never had enough food in their life, or never had regularity with meals or never had healthy food,” says Amanda Karns, Special Projects Coordinator at HYS. It’s not unusual for new residents to hide food to take it back to their room. “Here, they know they will receive breakfast, lunch, dinner and two snacks every day.” That regularity sets the tone for them that a basic human need will be met — food, she explains, which transitions to stability in terms of emotional safety,

physical safety, psychological wellbeing and more. “It’s all intertwined,” Karns adds. “Food fits into that.”

In essence, the food philosophy at HYS centers on normalizing healthy eating. “We need to make them comfortable with healthy food and regular meals,” says Colleen Daisley, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing, Compliance Officer at HYS. Her role includes overseeing the foodservice program at HYS, working closely with the school’s contract foodservice provider, Metz Culinary Management. With 90% of the kids at HYS on medication, Daisley works closely with the kitchen to find ways to stabilize intake

and monitor how different medications may impact metabolism and nutrition.

The priority at HYS has always been helping the kids. The 115-year-old institution has transitioned over the years from a children’s home (once colloquially known as an orphanage) to a place for troubled juveniles and dependent youth from throughout the state of Pennsylvania to what is now a model agency for comprehensive behavioral health. HYS also transitioned to an independent, self-governing facility in 2021, ending its affiliation with a Catholic charity. While the

ownership and curriculum changed greatly over the years, the kitchen did not follow suit quite as closely.

It’s a common tale amongst foodservice operators of all types: Financial resources tend to gravitate first toward front-facing elements and upgrading kitchen components generally falls to the back burner. When the opportunity to make some changes in the kitchen space arose via the Metro-sponsored Kitchen Storage Makeover contest in *Foodservice Equipment and Supplies* magazine, kitchen manager Bonnie Felton teamed up with grant-writer extraordinaire Karns (staff at HYS tend to wear multiple hats) to enter. Their entry went on to win the contest and garner \$50,000 worth of storage solutions for HYS, which included a kitchen assessment and redesign of the space.

## Metro transforms a dated nonprofit kitchen into an efficient, well-organized workspace.



The main kitchen space, which totals approximately 800 square feet, received a major overhaul with new Metro components installed throughout to improve workflow.

## Innovation



The wet nesting area serves as a place to both dry and store items.



Metro set up the dry storage area with a visual inventory system to help the manager keep items in stock and keep shelves clean. Paper products were intentionally placed close to the kitchen entrance to always be accessible and easily replenishable. A nesting spot was built into the space for easy roll-in delivery of bread items.

Sadly, Felton passed away unexpectedly prior to hearing the facility won the contest. Her influence, however, will never be forgotten. The newly reorganized and refreshed kitchen was dedicated in her honor and HYS plans to add a plaque in the space as remembrance of her dedication to the children and the facility.

While technically employed as General Manager of HYS by Metz Culinary Management, Felton had long been viewed as more than a contract foodservice provider. Indeed, Daisley credits Felton with changing the working relationship with their contract foodservice provider. “It improved a thousand-fold when she became General Manager,” Daisley says. “She had the heart for the kids and winning this contest wouldn’t have happened without her.”

### Transitions

In July 2021 Metz appointed Kelly Blaney the new General Manager at HYS and she quickly formed close connections with the HYS staff. With a background in long-term care, working in a residential facility came with both a sense of comfort and some new challenges, she says. The kitchen, for example, was much smaller and dated compared to previous kitchen spaces she’s worked in.

Receiving the news that a kitchen makeover was about to be a reality naturally got Blaney’s juices flowing on how to improve things in the back



One area of the dry storage room was carved out specifically to keep catering items together. These are placed toward the back since they are used the least.



The new setup along one wall of the main kitchen allows more food access to staff working in this space.

of the house. “Metro asked what I wanted,” she says, “and I was happy to give them a list, but ultimately what I wanted was to take less steps to get the food where it needs to go, and then back through to the dish space. If things are in the proper flow — for example, a prep cooler next to the prep table — you are not walking around the entire kitchen to accomplish one task. Fewer steps equal more productivity.”

Any time you can reduce steps for kitchen staff, it’s a benefit, agrees AJ Zambetti, Director of Creative & Brand Communications at Metro. He has led the Metro team through the Kitchen Storage Makeover program for the last four years. While every makeover has brought its

own set of challenges, space limitations and improving flow have been mainstays. “There’s often room for improvement when it comes to space optimization,” he says. “Metro first looks to understand the problems the operator is facing, then find the solutions to solve them.”

In the case of HYS, the problems included an older building with legacy items throughout the kitchen and lack of sufficient storage and prep space. It was out with the old, in with the new in the main kitchen space where the cookline sits, with a Metro heavy-duty stainless-steel worktable replacing an old table in the busiest center workspace. Nearby, Super Erecta® Stainless Steel Shelving and a Super Erecta Stainless Steel Utility cart now enable staff to house all large pots and various cooking utensils and common cooking items, such as oil, in close reach of the main cookline. From an efficiency standpoint, that has proven to be a big improvement, Blaney says, as staff have within-arm’s-reach access to what they need on the cookline.

Adjacent to the main kitchen prep space and cookline, the Metro team

created niche stations for the different components that are important to the HYS foodservice team: a defined area that houses all spices and includes a worktop, a custom wall shelving piece that primarily stores smallwares, a gravity-fed can rack to keep product close at hand, and a bakery area that houses items such as mixers.

Directly opposite the bakery station, a new walk-in cooler the HYS team built offered a clean slate for the Metro team and is now outfitted with long-lasting MetroMax® 4 Top-Track® shelving. The addition of the walk-in reduced the number of reach-in refrigerators needed in the main kitchen area from three to one, thus creating more space for the aforementioned prep and food storage in the primary workspace.

In the dish area, staff benefit from the addition of a MetroMax 4 Drying Rack and SmartWall® Shelving to keep things organized and efficient. The wet nesting system specifically was a game-changer as pans go on the rack wet, dry on the rack, and then stay there as the rack is now the storage area. Blaney loves it. “I had the biggest grin when I saw the

drying racks,” she says. “It saves so much time to let the pans dry and store in the same spot. It’s much more efficient.”

The dry storage room, measuring approximately 400 square feet, offered a chance to reconsider the way staff handle deliveries, namely moving to a visual inventory system. That process starts when boxes arrive. “Obviously, when the boxes come in from the delivery process, that’s where the bugs and dirt live,” says Heath Taylor, National Strategic Account Manager for Metro and ESP Pro™ Specialist. “When you put a dirty box on a shelving system, you are just transporting the dirt.”

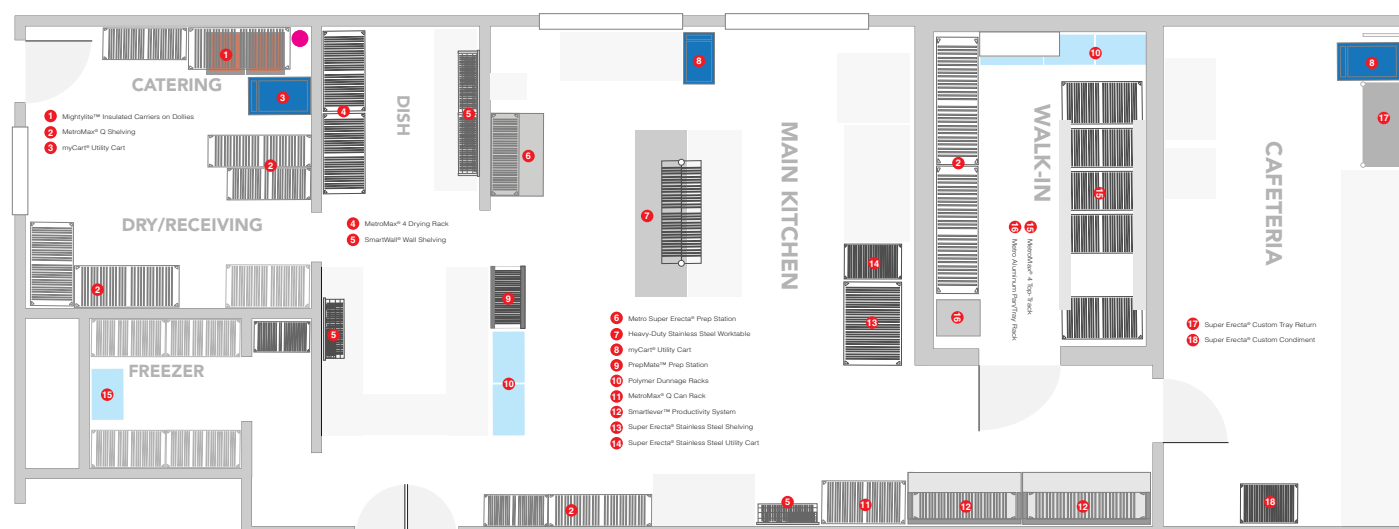
Unpacking the boxes and placing inventory on shelves eliminates the dirt and potential bug problem, Taylor explains, and it in turn creates an easy way for managers to quickly see which items are running low. “When you move to a system where it’s all visual, you know exactly how much is there,” he says, compared with a cardboard box, where if it’s open, the manager would know it wasn’t a full case but would not easily be able to guess the count inside. “Visual inventory is an

**“Ultimately what I wanted was to take less steps to get the food where it needs to go.”**

**Kelly Blaney**  
General Manager,  
Harborcreek Youth Services

easier way for the manager to keep up. Even if it’s not an inventory day, you’d know if you were short.”

The makeover buzz went beyond the walls of HYS to receive coverage by a local Erie television station. The two-part news series walked viewers through the “before” and “after.” Rest assured, the staff at HYS are thrilled with the “after” and say the changes went beyond what they expected. “Having the proper workflow is critical,” Blaney says, who notes that even for the small staff of five, it’s made a huge difference. “Everything’s within arm’s reach now. It saves time and it saves staff energy, which means they can focus more on putting out a quality product. It’s a happier, more cohesive space.”



# Keeping Food Hot and Fresh-Tasting with Moffat

**W**hen unexpected busy periods happen in a foodservice operation — as they do in every foodservice operation — it's impossible to pull fresh, hot food out of thin air. To solve that problem, operators are turning to the new Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L extended hot holding cabinet. It lets them prepare food ahead of time and serve it with confidence during peak demand times.

## Rush Hour

Take, for example, Stephano's Greek & Mediterranean Grill, a fast-casual operation with locations in Las Vegas and Henderson, Nev. "We're known for our kebabs, shawarma and oven-baked chicken," says General Manager Nick Kossayan. He says the Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L helps get Stephano's through rush periods.

During the day, Stephano's uses the Moffat cabinet to store rice and pita bread. But it's during the rush period when it's really put through its paces, Kossayan says. "Chicken kebabs are one of our most popular items," he says. "It takes about 8 to 10 minutes to grill each skewer. At lunch and dinner rush, we cook them ahead of time. With the Moffat, [food has] been staying in there for at least an hour or hour and a half without any change in texture." That saves both time and labor, he says. "People want their food fast. When you get a lunch or dinner rush, every order that takes 10 or 20 minutes to cook adds up after a while. Operation is really easy, and the staff loves it because it's made their job a lot easier during the rush times."

Kossayan adds that the technology in the EHT10-L allows Stephano's "to be ahead of the game and serve the best product we can even though we're busy."

## Chicken Worth Singing About

With locations in San Diego and Chula Vista, Calif., Knockout Chicken is a combination restaurant and karaoke bar, specializing in Korean-style fried chicken. Since it's made with rice flour, it has a lighter and crispier taste than traditional American-style fried chicken. Knockout offers a variety of flavor options, such as Honey Garlic or Sweet 'n' Spicy. Customers can also get their chicken roasted or baked. To keep all that chicken hot, juicy and fresh-tasting, Owner and General Manager Peter Kim uses a Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L. "It's great, and it works very well with my food," he says. He likes the fact that it's "very easy to work with," especially with the current labor shortage. "It helps my crew make [service] easy. When times are like these and [we] can't find people to work, it's very important to use tools like the Moffat EHT10-L to help us survive." He also appreciates the cabinet's small footprint. "It doesn't take [up] as much space as others," he adds.

## Fresh Taste

With the Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L, food that's been held tastes just like it's been freshly prepared. Unlike traditional holding cabinets, there's no degradation of moisture and heat. Because the EHT10-L delivers exacting temperature and humidity conditions, food retains its natural flavor, texture and juices. Specific holding programs mean operators can store favorite food items in the EHT10-L with consistent results, no matter who may be operating the cabinet. It can also monitor specific humidity levels inside the cabinet and alert the operator when food is near the maximum holding time.

Some operators have been hesitant to use holding cabinets because of their size,

but the Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L has a compact 24" footprint and still holds up to 10 half-size trays.

Combine the EHT10-L with the space-saving Moffat E33T convection oven and ventless hood for a complete cook-and-hold center that supports a wide range of cooking applications.

"Finding labor, the cost of labor, ticket times and food wastage can be cost drivers for nearly all foodservice operations," says Kristian Kuh, General Manager, Moffat U.S. "Turbofan's EHT10-L has a proven value proposition offering operators the opportunity to address them by improving ticket times, reducing or reassigning kitchen staff while keeping prepared food fresh and ready to serve and for much longer periods, even two hours plus. Though it is half sized, the EHT10-L can accommodate nearly an entire daypart of an operator's menu and can be used individually or matched with a Moffat Turbofan convection oven as a cook and extended hold station."

## BRAND WATCH



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

9

Number of U.S. states currently using Moffat products:

50

Acquired by Ali Group:

2000

[moffatusa.com](http://moffatusa.com)

### Knockout Chicken

To keep their chicken hot, juicy and fresh-tasting, Owner and General Manager Peter Kim uses a Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L.



### Stephano's Greek & Mediterranean Grill

The Moffat Turbofan EHT10-L helps get Stephano's through rush periods.



# 06

## Ali Group



Undercounter refrigeration and beverage coolers from Williams help The Curragh serve big crowds on race days.



## A Modern Renovation at Historic Irish Horse-Racing Track

The Curragh is a historic horse-racing track in County Kildare, Ireland, that serves thousands of hungry and thirsty racegoers on a typical race day. Over the past five years, it has undergone a complete transformation of its foodservice operations.

"We have everything from à la carte restaurants, casual dining and cafés to a selection of street food and grab-and-go operations," says The Curragh's Head Chef Fergal Nugent. "Making sure we had the right refrigeration equipment to handle all our needs here was vital."

The Curragh selected a wide range of refrigeration products from Williams, including bulk storage modular cold rooms, refrigerators, blast chillers, prep tables, bar refrigeration and wine coolers.

"A multilevel building of this shape has some interesting spaces for catering back of house," says Simon Gillott, Director of Intoto Design Limited, which was contracted to design the project. "The team of engineers

from Williams was able to offer professional and first-class service, working with the challenges and fulfilling all the requirements."

One of the most impressive pieces of the renovation is in the track's Champagne Bar. It's a custom-made wine tower with crystal-clear glass walls and under-rack LED lighting. "The Williams wine tower is a real statement piece in the Champagne and Owners & Trainers bars," says Gillott. "It's a pass-through unit displaying chilled wines and also runs off the chilled water system. This combines a wow factor with practical features."

**[williams-refrigeration.co.uk](http://williams-refrigeration.co.uk)**



## New Kitchen at European Council

Like many governmental buildings, the European Council building in Brussels has to feed hundreds of workers every day. When it came time to update their kitchen and self-service restaurant, the Council contacted consultant Jean-Michel Hendricks. "My first concern was, how can I make the kitchen easy to clean?" says Hendricks. "I showed the client some [designs] with hanging units that had no feet on the floor. They liked that very much."

Since the existing kitchen was only five years old, the client requested that some of the existing equipment be incorporated into the new kitchen. Hendricks turned to Friginox and Rosinox for help. "The challenge from the consultant was to see what we could use of the existing equipment and what we could add to look nice aesthetically and also functionally," says Giuseppe Politi, Export Manager for Rosinox and Friginox.

Designs were approved by the client, but work came to a halt during the height of the pandemic. Hendricks asked the Council if they wanted to reconsider the design given new restrictions on self-service. "I asked, 'Do we stop and rethink the project?' They said, 'No, we will carry on,'" Hendricks says.

With a combination of new equipment, such as a tilting skillet, and reconversion of its existing equipment, Rosinox and Friginox turned the Council kitchen into a functional, modern workspace. "The kitchen looks robust, and the matching between the old and the new has continuity," says Politi. "It is a well-organized kitchen."

**rosinox.com**  
**friginox.com**

Equipment from Friginox and Rosinox makes the kitchen at the European Council highly functional and easy to maintain.





## Mama Roma a Stylish Addition to Rome Hotel Scene

The Mama Shelter collection is renowned for its sophisticated, upscale approach to its hotels. With hotels in cities across the globe in such locations as Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro and Paris, Mama Shelter offers its guests a unique, affordable, design-oriented hotel experience.

One of the group's newest locations, the Mama Roma in Rome, opened in July 2021. The hotel is situated in the heart of the city's historic center. Along with 217 guest rooms, the Mama Roma offers four dining options: the Giardino d'Inverno, offering traditional Italian cuisine; the poolside Giardino d'Estate; a fabulous Rooftop Bar and Restaurant; and an authentic Pizzeria. Additionally, the hotel

can serve larger parties in its two Atelier meeting spaces.

Equipping all these restaurants is a major undertaking, so Mama Shelter turned to Ali Group company Grandimpianti to design all the food and beverage stations in the hotel. Grandimpianti Sales Director Alessandro D'Andrade brought in a number of Ali Group companies to provide equipment: Rosinox and Metos cooking equipment, OEM pizza ovens, warewashing and waste management equipment from Comenda and DIHR, and Scotsman ice machines. The hotel's executive chef had already worked with equipment from Ali Group companies before, so he was aware of their quality. "He was very satisfied

with the equipment. This helped us a lot in choosing and proposing the best equipment," says D'Andrade. Even with tight timelines, the Grandimpianti team delivered on time to meet the restaurants' opening dates in fall 2021. D'Andrade credits this to keeping the lines of communication open between Grandimpianti and the hotel. "We have been able to put together a team of professionals, capable of understanding the requests [from] Mama Shelter and interpreting it in the best possible way," he says.

Mama Shelter has embarked on an ambitious expansion plan, with new properties planned for Bahrain, Dubai, Lisbon and more by 2025. **grandimpiantiali.it**

# A New Vision for China

VIP.com pioneered the online discount retail model in China. Its flash sale site, VIPSHOP, attracts more than 12 million unique users every day and processes an average of 200 orders per minute.

In 2020, the company behind the website built a new global headquarters in Guangzhou, a city in China's Guangdong province. The project consisted of two towers, accommodating more than 10,000 employees and covering an area of almost 140,000 square feet. The facility features a variety of

restaurants and food shops, including a coffee shop, two tea shops, a convenience store, a gelato shop, a bakery, a salad shop and two restaurants. To equip the building's considerable foodservice operations, the company turned to Thomas Lai, FCSI, Managing Director of Trillion Foodservices Planner Ltd. "From the kitchen design point of view, it is hard to say what were the biggest challenges during the project," says Lai. "At the design stage, [we] make sure the whole

kitchen layout is reasonable, workflow is fluent, and that it has a maximum dish-out requirement [that] can satisfy the required quality of service."

Lai has had a long and fruitful partnership with Ali China, so it was not surprising he turned to a variety of Ali Group brands for the project. In partnership with Ali China, he brought in equipment from Ambach, Baron, Egro, Lainox, Mareno, Metos, Metro and Rendisk. "For us, it is a very big project with lots of our brands in it," says Andy Zhang, General Manager of Ali China. Those brands were selected, he says, "based on our cooperative approach and the trust built up by the kitchen contractor and the consultant over many years, as well as the recognition of our brands' quality and service."

Western-style cooking ranges were installed in the kitchen for the restaurants, located on the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor. "I am always impressed with the Italian-made island type

of range," says Lai. "This is why I specified two Italian brands from Ali Group, Ambach and Baron, for this cooking range." Another unusual touch is that the cooking units are powered by electricity, not gas as is traditional. "This is an innovative move," he adds. "Most Chinese cuisine opts to use gas woks more than electric ones. However, for this project, we are glad that Ali Group has so many brands with full-featured equipment to support our design needs."

[info@aligroup.cn](mailto:info@aligroup.cn)



The foodservice operations at VIP.com feature equipment from a number of Ali Group brands.



## Five-Star Hotel Chooses Five-Star Ambach Equipment

Nobu is a name well known to diners. Ever since the opening of the first Nobu restaurant in New York City in 1994, Chef Nobu Matsuhisa has wowed diners with his creative fusion takes on traditional Japanese dishes. Today, there are 47 Nobu restaurants around the world. In 2013, Nobu Hospitality, LLC branched out into hotels, opening its first Nobu Hotel in Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

One of the newest hotels in the chain is the Nobu Hotel London Portman Square, located in the quaint Marylebone neighborhood of London. This 249-room hotel is the second Nobu Hotel in London, following the 2017 opening of the Nobu Hotel Shoreditch.

To live up to the culinary reputation of Nobu restaurants, the Portman Square hotel needed top-notch equipment to furnish its main kitchen, banqueting kitchen and some satellite kitchens. "The kitchens needed to be flexible, powerful and robust to cater for fine dining, events and banqueting, all being orchestrated from the main

kitchen," says Graham Barrie of Graham Barrie Design in Surrey. Additionally, the site had restrictions on power supply and space, he says, "which necessitated a mix of gas and electric appliances and had to fit between and around structural pillars."

The Ambach System 850 line was the perfect solution for the hotel, bringing flexibility and high performance to the various kitchens. Open burners, grills, ovens, fryers and planchas were just some of the Ambach equipment that outfitted the kitchens. "The Ambach appliances are versatile, powerful, robust and simple to use," says Executive Chef Michael Paul. "They give us complete control in the kitchen. They are easy to clean, too, so the team keeps them looking great with minimum effort."

Barrie notes that the Nobu team is very pleased with the end result and with the Ambach equipment, which delivers "great product performance, [is] easy to keep clean and will continue to look great for years to come."

**ambach.com**



Top-of-the-line Ambach equipment at the kitchen at the Nobu Hotel London Portman Square.





## Flexibility Is Key for Christchurch Town Hall Kitchen

After three years of painstaking restoration to repair damage caused by the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, the Christchurch Town Hall performance space reopened in 2019. The facility hosts a wide range of public functions, including meetings, conferences, exhibitions and performances.

Naturally, attendees of those functions need to be fed, and the Town Hall's foodservice facilities were slated for an upgrade. The refurbishment included additional food and beverage facilities, an upgrade to its bars, and various other enhancements.

With so many different types of functions taking place at the Town Hall, the kitchens needed to be highly flexible. So, the facility turned to Moffat to equip its kitchens with a selection of fryers, six-burner cooktops, griddle plates and tilting skillets from Moffat's Waldorf brand.

"There's seamless integration in the kitchen; everything clicks together," says Town Hall's Executive Chef Daniel Shanks. Accuracy in his equipment is important, he says. "You have to have the math done right and have complete accuracy in your cooking, particularly with big events. So, we need constant airflow and consistent temperatures, which this new equipment gives us."

**moffat.com**



Combi steamers from Metos await the stadium's thousands of visitors.



## Olympic Dreams Realized in Helsinki

The Helsinki Olympic Stadium dates back to 1938. Fourteen years after its opening, it was the home to the Summer Olympics. The stadium was recently renovated and reopened in late 2020. It now features an extension and new underground facilities, which nearly double its overall size. The stadium is expected to host more than a million people per year attending entertainment, tourism and business events.

The Compass Group oversaw the renovation of the stadium's numerous foodservice facilities. "There are 41 F&B points with a total of about 160 checkout points," says Sari Salminen, Restaurant Business Manager at Compass Group. Depending on the event, services are managed from the restaurant kitchen or a central kitchen. At non-event times, Compass normally employs less than 10 people at the stadium, but during events, it can have as many as 300 people working to feed up to 45,000 attendees.

Metos was chosen to provide the equipment for the new kitchens. The stadium has a long history with the company, says Petri Nevala, Regional Manager for Metos. "Metos delivered the first installation in 1938 when the stadium was built," Nevala says. With the increased number of kitchens in various areas of the stadium, Metos had to specially tailor some equipment to fit the spaces. And, he adds, since "there are several of the same type of units in different locations, Metos service keeps track of each product by giving each unit a unique service code."

One unique problem that had to be overcome was the fact that the stadium has no actual dining facilities; all food products must be eaten out of hand. Compass Group worked in the Metos test kitchen to optimize the menu since Metos has a wide product range to help them test the possible menu selections.

**metos.com**

# Our Companies



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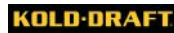
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