

# ALI WORLD

NORTH AMERICA

THE ALI GROUP MAGAZINE

ISSUE 12 | JANUARY 2024

**OCTANE COFFEE**  
DELICIOUS COFFEE  
SERVED IN A FLASH

**YALE UNIVERSITY**  
A HISTORIC  
DINING HALL  
IS REBORN

**THE SAINT LOUIS CLUB**  
AN ELEGANT, UPSCALE CLUB  
GETS A NEW KITCHEN







# Welcome

to the 12th North America edition of *Aliworld*

I trust that you are doing well and that your businesses are prospering. This issue of *Aliworld* is a celebration of the resiliency and innovation of all aspects of the foodservice industry. While we still face significant headwinds — such as the difficulty in finding and keeping skilled labor — the outlook for the industry is brighter than it has been in several years.

In this issue, we have again tried to provide you with useful information and success stories to help you run your operation more efficiently. First up is a roundtable of foodservice consultants who provide their views on what they see as the biggest trends affecting the industry. I think you'll find their views thought-provoking and interesting.

In our cover story, we show you how a nearly 60-year-old private club moved into a new space and, despite some installation challenges, now has a kitchen that provides maximum efficiency for the kitchen crew. The other stories in this issue will give you a taste of how Ali Group companies are working in all the various segments of the foodservice industry. You'll see how a Cuban immigrant couple turned their love of food into a thriving bakery operation. We'll show you how a state-of-the-art coffee stand in Wisconsin is delivering freshly made coffee drinks in just seconds — all made by machines, with no human input. And you'll be impressed by the story of how Yale University revitalized an early 20th-century dining hall for today's student population.

I'd also like to point out the story on the winner of this year's Metro Kitchen Storage Makeover. It's an inspiring story of how one pizzeria and brewery

is giving the disabled community a safe and welcoming place to work and eat.

It has been more than a year since the Welbilt group of companies joined the Ali Group. I am proud to say we have seen more and more of our companies working together to offer our clients the most complete foodservice equipment packages available anywhere. And with distribution and service in more than 150 countries, we are the only foodservice equipment company capable of providing complete turnkey solutions anywhere in the world.

I'd also like to take a moment here to congratulate six of our companies who are celebrating important anniversaries in 2023 and 2024. Delfield celebrates its 75th year in business, while Friginox and OEM turn 50 years old. Inducis, Koldtech, and Kromo are all celebrating their 25th anniversaries. All these companies have found success by listening to customers and delivering solutions to help them run their businesses better.

I was delighted to reconnect with so many of you at the various trade shows and industry events over the past year, including Sirha Lyon in Lyon, France; the NAFEM Show in Orlando, Florida; and HostMilano in Milan, Italy. I hope to have the opportunity to see many of you at upcoming events over the next year such as Sigep in Rimini, Italy; INTERNORGA in Hamburg, Germany; the National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago; and FHA-HoReCa in Singapore.

On behalf of myself and all of us at the Ali Group, my best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2024. Enjoy *Aliworld*.

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





4

# 01

- 4 The Saint Louis Club Gets a Dream Kitchen**  
An elegant private club gets an equally elegant and efficient kitchen.

# 02

## Trends

- 10 Consultants Dish on Today's Topics for Tomorrow**  
Four consultants predict upcoming trends.



14

# 03

## People

- 14 A Man with Many Sides**  
Erik Nommsen's unique perspective on the foodservice industry.
- 18 The Berti Foundation Awards 10 Scholarships to Deserving Students**  
Helping today's scholars reach tomorrow's dreams.



52

# 04

## Success Stories

- 24 Sweet Dreams Come True**  
Vicky Bakery is serving traditional Cuban-style sandwiches and pastries.
- 28 Invested for the Long Term**  
How Burlodge works with healthcare operations to serve efficiently.
- 32 Bravo Wins Raves with Frozen Desserts**  
Carpigiani helps Bravo Gelato produce a wide range of frozen treats.
- 36 Serving Students Creatively**  
Aurora Public Schools take the food directly to students.
- 40 Creating Consistency to Stem Costs**  
Flyers Pizza is using Edlund scales to portion product consistently.
- 44 A Fair Game**  
At Ashley Lynn Winery, frozen wine slushies are a hot item.
- 48 At Yale, a 1901 Dining Hall Reopens**  
A stunning vintage dining hall gets a modern update.
- 52 A Solution Accommodates Plant-Based Product**  
Angie's Epicurean finds success with plant-based frozen desserts.
- 56 13 Million Gallons of Water — and Endless Amounts of Ice**  
Montgomery Whitewater combines water sports action with casual food.
- 60 Sandwiches, Colorado Style**  
The Yampa Sandwich Company brings the flavors of Colorado to its sandwiches.
- 64 Rockwell's Café and Bakery's Need for Speed Leads to an Automated Solution**  
A bakery produces high volumes of product easily with Moffat ovens.
- 68 Selling Time...and a Great Cup of Coffee**  
In literally seconds, Octane Coffee delivers freshly brewed coffee — without human interaction.
- 72 On the Menu: Hot Dogs, BBQ, Cold Drinks...and Axes**  
A barbecue chain combines delicious food with the wild sport of axe throwing.



72

# 05

## Innovation

- 76 Delfield Helps Fulton County Schools Serve Students**  
Serving hot or cold food is easy with Delfield® FlexiWell® food wells.
- 78 1,000,000 Slices of Pizza...and Counting**  
This busy Las Vegas pizza stand depends on its Lincoln® ovens to produce perfect pizza.
- 80 Doing Good...and Making Good Pizza**  
An inspiring pizza restaurant and brewery receives a major kitchen makeover.
- 84 Six Ali Group Companies Celebrate Anniversaries**  
Celebrating years of successfully serving their customers.



24

# 06

## Events

- 86 Ali Group Party at HostMilano a Stellar Success**  
A gala party welcomes attendees to the international trade show.

# 07

## Ali Group

- 90 Around the World**  
News roundup from Ali Group companies.
- 94 Our Companies**  
Ali Group companies around the globe — and the sectors in which they operate.
- 96 Your Global Partner**  
Ali Group contact information around the world.



# 01

## Cover Story

The elegant Saint Louis Room ready for an evening's service.

When it moved into a new space, the chef got to create his ideal kitchen, including two island suites from **Montague**.

# The Saint Louis Club Gets a Dream Kitchen

**W**hen it comes to private clubs in St. Louis, the Saint Louis Club is on top. It's hosted celebrities, senators,

Supreme Court justices and more than one president over its nearly 60 years.

These luminaries, along with Club members, haven't played a single round of golf or game of tennis at the Club. No one has lounged by the pool or enjoyed a spa day. In fact, as a city club (as opposed to a country club), the Saint Louis Club doesn't offer any of that.

What does it offer? What makes the Saint Louis Club stand out?

Beautiful spaces and amazing food and drink — the type of food and drink that people look forward to at the start of the day and talk about when the night is over. "We are known for our food," says Kelly Standing, the Club's Director of Innovation, Marketing and Membership. "We have the deepest, most carefully curated wine cellar with 16,000 bottles

and 34 of the best chefs you will find. Our goal every day is to make the Saint Louis Club the best part of every visitor's day."

With about 900 current members, some back-of-the-napkin math shows the Saint Louis Club has been the best part of someone's day millions of times since it opened its doors in 1964. That's a record of success few organizations can match.

By 2020, though, the Club's facility was showing its nearly six decades. While it was still a beautiful space, there was a pastry oven from the 1960s that was on its last legs, pipes that would burst every couple of weeks and a failing HVAC system that was beyond a permanent fix. All these issues made it harder for the Saint Louis Club to offer a flawless experience.

"If you planned a wedding in July or August, we could get everything right in terms of food, and the decor could be spectacular. But you'd look across the room and you'd see the mother of the bride fanning herself with a menu. We couldn't stay where we were," Standing says.

Fortunately, when the time to move came, the Club didn't have to go far. A new building had opened literally across the street from its home on Forsyth



Saint Louis Club Executive Chef Mathieu Lefebvre





The Corner Bar  
at the  
Saint Louis Club

Boulevard, and the Saint Louis Club was able to take over the structure's entire third floor. The Club announced the move in March 2022 and opened in its new space in April 2023.

### A Dream Space

Though it's only been open less than a year, the Saint Louis Club's new location has been a hit. The operation has 10 private event rooms; a bar; a casual-dining brasserie with around 140 seats; and

a fine-dining operation, the Saint Louis Room, with 80 seats. Reservations for the restaurants and private event spaces fill up fast, and Club members give the space rave reviews.

A key part of this success, of course, has been the new location's new kitchen. Measuring nearly 8,000 square feet, it has separate areas for events, casual dining and fine dining, all filled with high-end, high-performance

equipment. It is in many ways a dream space. And the dreamer, in this case, is the Saint Louis Club Executive Chef Mathieu Lefebvre.

Lefebvre worked with foodservice consultant Michael Glore, President of Dennis G. Glore, Inc., to create the Club's new kitchen. In the casual- and fine-dining areas, the centerpieces are two nearly identical island suites from Montague, an Ali Group company.

Montague is far from the only equipment from Ali Group companies used by the Saint Louis Club in its new location. The operation also has microwave ovens from ACP Inc., an Electro Freeze frozen ice cream machine, Metro shelving, smallwares from Edlund, a Kold-Draft ice machine in the bar, and Scotsman ice makers and bins in the back of the house.

The design/procurement phase of the project

showcased one of Montague's strengths: its willingness to work with customers to get them what they want, when they want it. This effort started with Glore working with Lefebvre to develop the equipment lineup and sketches. They then presented the sketches to Montague. After some back and forth,

the final drawings were developed. Montague was even able to work out some of Lefebvre's more complex requests, including plumbing around a structural pillar to accommodate pot fillers on an island.

According to Glore, one of the biggest challenges of the project was simply

the timing. There were only about 12 months between the initial sketches and the actual opening of the new facilities. Recognizing the challenges presented by supply chain issues, Montague worked with the designer and the operator to hit this schedule.

"In today's world with supply chain issues and whatnot, we were able to get the suites pre-ordered and make sure we were in the queue with Montague so there were no delays getting it here and getting it installed," says Glore.

This timely service helped the Saint Louis Club celebrate the opening of its new location in style: The first major event in the space was the Club's Order of the Crown Dinner, its most exclusive, highest-end event of the year.



Two Montague cooking  
suites help the Saint Louis  
Club produce delicious  
food for its members.



Lefebvre, who was born in France and has cooking experience all over the world, raves about the food the suites helped produce that night and for every meal. “I knew exactly what I wanted and was one of the lucky ones who got to design his own kitchen. A lot of people go their whole life without getting to do that. The kitchen is beautiful. The Montague suites are extraordinary. Everyone from the industry who has been in there is amazed by it,” he says.

The suites, Lefebvre says, help produce consistent — and consistently outstanding — food. There are appetizers like Wellington of New England scallops and Canadian lobster with caviar champagne sauce. The menu also includes entrées like filet mignon with foie gras and black truffle sauce, and desserts like a Grand Marnier soufflé with crème anglaise and powdered sugar.

The Saint Louis Club, of course, served such outstanding dishes well before it moved into its new space. The Montague island suites, though, allow people in the kitchen to work more efficiently, especially with the operation’s French brigade-style approach, where every chef has a dedicated space and role.

“The other place was crowded, especially at times like Mother’s Day and Easter when we’re doing 400 or 500 covers,” Lefebvre explains. “Everybody was working all over the place. Now we have room to work with. We have ovens

everywhere; we have stoves everywhere. It’s more flexible, the efficiency is better, and it’s brand-new, so they work better.”

**New Ways to Make a Guest’s Day**

Producing outstanding food is the baseline for a new kitchen at a place like the Saint Louis Club. True to the Club’s unofficial mission, this new facility helps the Club find new ways to be the best part of its guests’ days.

A prime example is a Chef’s Table dining experience. The new kitchen’s design includes a small room partitioned by glass inside the kitchen itself. Here, parties of up to six people can get an up-close look at the workings of the Club’s fine-dining kitchen. With a minimum bill of \$1,000 per reservation, this offering has been a hit with the Club and its foodie members, Lefebvre says. “People can see us cooking in front of them. There is the big Montague logo right in front. The whole suite is shiny and nice and clean. People love it.”

Achieving this sparkling look throughout the kitchen was no small task. One of the biggest challenges, in fact, reaches all the way up to the ceiling, in the form of a load-bearing pillar. This pillar sits in the middle of the space — and in the middle of one of the new cooking suites.

To prevent the sore-thumb effect, the design team and the Saint Louis Club decided to integrate this pillar into

the suite’s design as much as possible. Getting the pillar’s dimensions exactly right, then, was essential. Montague not only relied on measurements from the general contractor but also sent one of its own staffers into the new building to assess the situation.

“We had a technical person in the field swing by to do some measurements,” says Jim Bennett, Director of Services for Montague. “He identified exactly where that column was going to be and discussed it with the construction folks. They figured out that they were

going to put a stainless-steel siding on that pillar. When we came in [for the installation] we had the exact size of the pillar, and we knew the exact spot it was going to be. We built the entire suite to encompass that column.”

That wasn’t the only challenge of making the suites both beautiful and functional. While Lefebvre wanted the suites on a curb, both for appearance and for cleanliness, the building owner would not allow it. Instead, both suites had to be on legs. That meant installing more than a dozen pieces of



The Bistro West is one of the Club's event spaces.



The new kitchen’s design includes a small room partitioned by glass inside the kitchen itself. Here, parties of up to six people can enjoy the Chef’s Table dining experience.



equipment, all with at least four legs, across more than 6 feet of width and more than 20 feet of length, all to within an inch of perfectly level.

And this had to be done twice.

Once that was complete, Montague fabricated clip-on stainless-steel panels that form a skirt around the base of the suites to give them the look Lefebvre wanted and to support cleanliness.

The form and function of these suites is so on point, in fact, that Lefebvre is penciling in another option to the Saint Louis Club’s experiences in the form of hands-on cooking classes. Previously, the Club held cooking demonstrations where guests could watch chefs prepare a meal, which they could then enjoy with two wine pairings. The equipment lineup, though, just wouldn’t allow for actual classes.

With the new, more spacious kitchen and the Montague suites, says Lefebvre, chefs could easily oversee a group of Club members as they try their hand at high-end cooking. “These cooking suites are 25 feet long. You can put four or five people on each side, and everyone can do their own little thing. Everyone can talk with each other and see what the others are doing,” he says.

Such a cooking class — working under the eye of an expert chef to make a gourmet meal — would undoubtedly be the high point of anyone’s day.

And that’s just what the Saint Louis Club wants. With a beautiful new venue and a showplace kitchen that produces outstanding food and is an attraction itself, the Club is on track to make millions more memories in the years to come.

**BRAND WATCH**



Established: **1857**

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

**20+**

The Montague 24/7 heavy-duty range supports cooking:

**24 hours, 7 days a week**

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



# 02

## Trends

# Consultants Dish on Today's Topics for Tomorrow

**W**e've lived through a lot. The pandemic and post-pandemic world has taught us a lot. One thing's for sure: Today's all about tomorrow. And when it comes to foodservice design, it's all about future-proofing concepts.

There are various ways to future-proof concepts: Choosing flexible designs that make room for constantly changing menus and consumer preferences. Leveraging technology and systems to make operations more efficient in the long run. Thinking through equipment choices and designs that remain resilient during labor and supply chain shortages.

We gathered four top foodservice consultants to talk about how these issues impact their designs, equipment choices and more. So pull up a seat and join in on the conversation — in their words.

### On Sustainability and Electrification

**Q:** Sustainability is a topic that's heating up once again. How do you approach that topic with clients these days?

**TS:** I don't just ask my clients, "What does sustainability mean to you?" but also make sure to look at the bigger picture: "What are your overall mission, vision and goals for this facility?" Sustainability hasn't changed all that much — it still involves a lot of the same topics that we've always talked about, such as water conservation, energy conservation, health and wellness, and food recovery. But the bigger piece that's been "newer" in the past couple of years is decarbonization, accountability and equity. Most simply, to me, sustainable design is just smart design.

**Q:** While some states and municipalities are regulating all-electric kitchens for new-build projects, not everyone is on board, and for various reasons. The "all-electric kitchen" has sparked much debate. What's your view on the subject?

**TS:** Depending on where you are at in the country, it might not make sense to go all electric,

but rather, take more of a mixed-fuel approach. It's much easier to work with electric for a new build than to convert an existing kitchen. We did a study with a progressive university about five years ago where we worked with one of their graduate housing kitchens, a smaller kitchen, to understand what it was going to take to convert the operation from gas to electric, and then apply those lessons to other projects on campus. Ultimately, we found that in some instances, the best solution for an existing building might be to keep its gas infrastructure and change out to high-performance gas equipment.

For many operators, all-electric kitchens fit in line with their sustainability goals. But on the other hand, there's also the conversation that existing buildings don't have to be all electric — we can have high-performance gas equipment and can still significantly reduce carbon footprint. The curveball is that more and more studies are coming out about the health and safety concerns with gas equipment. So the conversation and debate continues.

**Q:** How do you help clients navigate the training — and, in some cases, retraining — piece of switching to more electric equipment?

**JC:** As far as electric equipment, as a general rule, I've been fine with it. I've always specified electric over gas when it came to tilt skillets, fryers and, in some cases, combi ovens — simply for the efficiency on the first two. But if your area allows it, I still believe in gas equipment for other types of cooking. You're still going to have chefs today who are going to walk by and want to see a flame. You have guests in the restaurant who want to see the action. So, definitely, there's a need for balance right now if that's an option.

**TS:** The other issue is retraining staff on how to use induction ranges versus gas if there's been a switch. What's really important is to have conversations with the chef and culinary team. In some instances, we've even set up training events for chefs, either at a manufacturer's location or a rep's location. And a lot of utility companies now have all-electric kitchens. Using these spaces can help chefs make the change. As a result of these training events, they're familiar with how to execute their menus and they feel more confident. There's one project we did with a college in the Northeast where they even ordered some of the equipment — a combi oven and an induction range —



**SR: Scott Reitano,**  
Principal, Reitano Design Group



**JC: James Camacho,**  
FCSI, CSI, President, Camacho Foodservice Design and Consulting



**PE: Pamela Eaton,** FCSI, LEED AP BD+C, Project Manager/Design and Operations Consultant, NGAssociates Foodservice Consultants, Inc.



**TS: Tarah Schroeder,** FCSI, LEED AP, Vice President, Ricca Design Studios



before construction started so their [culinary] team could get familiar with how to cook on it. I thought that was really smart. But it would also be helpful if training on electric equipment started even further back, at the culinary school level.

## On Employee-Centric Design

**Q:** Another part of today's sustainability discussion focuses on making kitchens more comfortable work environments, with a renewed focus on the health and wellness of the staff and team.

**PE:** Some of the benefits of electrification and the push for electrification are to reduce the carbon footprint and use of fossil fuel, but what we're finding is that it also can create a much nicer environment to work in because it's significantly cooler. We have a much more renewed focus on indoor air quality — enhanced ventilation and electric and ventless equipment can help with that.

I think [a better work environment] is a huge advantage [for operators] to try to tempt people back to the workforce, but a culture shift will be important here, too. People have this image of Gordon Ramsay's kitchen, and no one wants to work in Gordon Ramsay's kitchen today. So the question is how to sell the profession and the whole mindset around being in foodservice. I feel like we need a reset in the U.S., and we need to train the customers and, to some extent, the managers to be nicer. We need to create a positive, comfortable place for people to work in, and certainly the physical environment plays

a big part of that. We are also always looking at ergonomics and how we can help someone do their job in 10 steps or less to make things more efficient and compact so everyone has their place to work. This also includes multifunctional pieces of equipment and multifunctional areas where [staff] can easily move from one task to another. Smart shelving is also a big part of this — finding ways we can put more things within arm's length.

**TS:** Recruitment and retention is hard in every industry, and especially for foodservice employees, so we have to design spaces that create a better employee experience. I've been designing with this in mind for a while — 10 years ago, I was giving a presentation to a client and said I wanted to put windows in the kitchen and even in the dish room because this is a hard job, and the least we can do is try to offer some natural light and a little view. Afterward, I had two chefs come up to me and give me the biggest hug because they're like, "Oh, my gosh, no one thinks about the dishwashers." So if we're thinking about recruitment and retention, we absolutely need to think about creating a better employee experience in the kitchen.

## On Flexibility and Future-Proofing

**Q:** How do you build in flexibility for shifting consumer preferences, new menu influences, fluctuations in labor and staffing, and more unknown changes the future will bring?

**PE:** It's all about designing areas that can be easily

modifiable. This can be difficult from a consultant's point of view, especially if we're doing work before an operator or chef is on board. If all we've got is a developer to talk to, and we don't even have a real menu yet, how do we design for the future? Maybe it's that we don't have too many things bought up front. Maybe it's not getting too specific with the equipment in the space. Someone could very well come in and say two years ago when you wrote the program for this place, that looked great, but now we want to serve this new cuisine that has just hit the stage, which means I now need a specific piece of equipment. Right now, there's a lot of "crystal balling," so to speak. For that reason, we need to designate at least some easily modifiable areas of the kitchen. One thing that I've always liked and that I've used when trying to future-proof is the use of utility walls. You have a stainless framed wall, and not in a constructed wall, such that you can just remove a panel and change the location of an outlet or water connection. It's not necessarily that quick and easy, but it's certainly faster and easier than tearing out drywall. And then, of course, you need to make sure that you use electricians and engineers when making the changes. You want to meet your code requirements but also go a little beyond that. The good news is equipment is becoming more efficient so electrical loads are actually coming down on a lot of pieces. So we're able to make room for more equipment in the future because we're becoming more efficient with the pieces we currently have.

**SR:** At the school level, we're seeing a constant desire for customization. But the customization piece of it doesn't have to be all the way down to bread and the meat. It could be today's sandwich is turkey or ham, so here you go, and then the student (or maybe it's a staff member at a hospital) can take that sandwich and add or ask for the toppings and condiments they want. You're not completely cooking to order, but it's all fresh, and you're offering options and choices. And maybe it's the same refrigerated prep table or salad bar-type setup used every day but with just different ingredients, depending on the menu for the day or for that station — whether it's Mexican or Asian or Indian or sandwiches or salads.

## On the Labor Issue

**Q:** We saw a mass exodus of workers in the foodservice industry during the pandemic, and many haven't returned. Leveraging design and equipment innovations can certainly help with that. What's your strategy?

**JC:** I work with a lot of country clubs, and they have employees who have been there for a long time. But there's also the need to have equipment that is faster and that can do multiple items. The tilting skillet in the kitchen, in my opinion, has always been one of the most versatile pieces of equipment. And now you have ones that can do pressurized cooking, and in some cases, you can cook two different types of food in one unit. I also like the versatility of multi-cook ovens. These units allow room

for four or five pans, but each one is in a separate area. The consistency these ovens offer is also key, and that helps with the labor issue.

**TS:** Servery design significantly changed as a result of the labor issue. Before the pandemic, everyone wanted micro-restaurants with distinct concepts, but that can be hard to staff. And you don't want an empty station just sitting there. You want to design the servery so that employees can flow between concepts really easily. You want to design them so they still feel like separate concepts, but the staff can work multiple stations at once if need be. And then you need to be able to pivot between full- and self-serve if need be, depending on staffing. It's more about flexible equipment to handle changing menus rather than making each station too specific.

**SR:** We're seeing the concept of distributed dining that's so popular in the K-12 school arena being applied to other segments. We're looking at what we call heat maps to help plan where and when food gets served. For example, where are people, and at what times of the day? What if we brought the food closer to them? What if there was an outpost over here? Those kinds of things are great in a workplace environment, too. We're looking at the concept of basically a ghost kitchen, if you will, for the main kitchen, and then recognizing there are different areas throughout a facility or campus where there's an opportunity for different types of foodservice. The idea is that you cook the food to 80% in the ghost or

commissary kitchen, hold it to temp during transport and then use speed equipment to finish the product wherever it goes. Or you cook the product and blast-chill it and transport it cold to the various outposts for retherming in a small ventless combi oven. So you might only need that and some refrigeration or a small freezer at each outpost. Cold- and hot-holding is becoming a bigger category than it's ever been.

## On Today's Technology

**Q:** We're seeing more forms of robots hitting the market, but are your clients asking for them? Do robotics help with the labor issue?

**PE:** I still feel like price and space are the biggest issues to contend with when looking into [robotics]. You might be able to easily source a filler machine for pastries and dumplings, but it's \$160,000, so what's the return on investment? If you have potentially a 24/7 demand for the piece, maybe it's worth it, but determining ROI is so important. For some operators, [robotics] makes sense to fill major gaps in labor. The more challenging part for consultants, however, is about being able to understand the value to the client. We have to inform them of the reasons they may want to consider [robotics] so they can decide if they make sense. We have to educate ourselves to help our clients get past the initial sticker shock. Remember, there used to be sticker shock with combi ovens.

Years ago, I was in Europe, and we toured a site with a robotic soiled dishware handler. The staff would remove the trash and cups

as the trays moved down a conveyor. The silverware would then be pulled up by a magnet and dropped on a rack, then the trays went into a contraption they nicknamed a "hedgehog" that would flip the tray upside down and distribute the dishes — the small plates went here, the bigger plates went there, the bowls there. They would be loaded into rack machines via a gravity feed, and everything came out separated and stacked at the clean end. The unit cost over \$1 million USD, but, given the cost of labor (salary plus benefits) in Europe, it had an ROI of 18 months.

**Q:** Technology seems to be affecting almost every segment in its own way. What does the future hold for the industry?

**TS:** The connected kitchen, among other advancements, is the future of equipment and technology. It's all about equipment management, food safety, energy management, data analytics. The promise is more effective and efficient operations. The challenge is what information do operators really need because you could analyze everything if you wanted to. And the technology must evolve to make data more digestible for operators and to support a common language between equipment manufacturers. This concept has been in the works for many years, and recent breakthroughs in AI and IoT will make this a reality in the near future.

**JC:** We're seeing the benefits of automation and robots in large-scale campus projects. It's easy to install a salad-making robot or other

vending-type piece away from the central kitchen where it's a self-contained unit with all the ingredients and you just hit a button and it makes a salad or bowl or sandwich for you. This is a great addition for a campus where it might take employees 10 minutes to walk from one end to the other, but they want something quick and fresh for lunch.

## On the Next Generation of Foodservice Consumers

**Q:** It sounds like we have a lot to learn from school foodservice at the moment — including learning more about the next generation of foodservice consumers. Tell us more about that.

**SR:** Bringing the food to where people are is the expectation of Gen Z and, right behind them, Gen Alpha for sure. Convenience is also important. We're always looking at walk-out technology at other marketplace, satellite venues where you can roll in, grab something fresh and roll out. We need to understand our audience, know more about Gen Alpha. They're the first group of truly digital natives; most are born in or after 2010, the same year that the iPad came out. In the research we've been doing, the kinds of things they're looking for are a perception of fresh, control of the plate, customization, time to socialize, flexible serving spaces, healthier options. This is the main generation at the K-12 level, but they're going to grow up and will determine the foodservice preferences in other segments for the future.



# 03

People

## A Man with Many Sides

**S**ome executives know about the operations side of a company, while others

know the numbers side. But very few have extensive knowledge of both of those important areas. Erik Nommsen, Chief Executive Officer of Ali Group North America, is one of those rare people who has experience on both the financial and the management sides of the business. That provides him with a unique perspective to move the company forward.

Nommsen grew up in California and attended Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, graduating in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in business management and concentration







in accounting. His first real management job was with a waste disposal and recycling company as Controllor and later Director of Finance. “That’s where I started to get more of my operational experience,” says Nommsen. “We were tasked with operational duties. They viewed the controllers as not only finance but operational leaders as well.”

Nommsen entered the foodservice industry when his next job took him to a dish machine manufacturer, where he started as Controllor and then moved up to the General Manager position. In 2008, he moved from California to North Carolina and joined Champion, an Ali Group company, where he served as President for six years. After a two-year break to work in another industry, he

returned to Champion in 2016 as President. The following year, Nommsen transitioned to become President of the Ali Group North America – Refrigeration Division, which comprises Beverage-Air and Victory Refrigeration. From 2019 to 2023, he served as President of Scotsman Ice Systems. In 2022, he assumed the additional role of Chief Executive Officer for Ali Group North America.

Nommsen says that extensive work history has influenced his management style. “A diverse work history allows you, me or anyone else the opportunity to view businesses in a different light than solely from a financial or operational standpoint.” His jump from the Refrigeration Division to Scotsman, with their differing distribution systems, showed Nommsen

how his management style had to be flexible. “Each of the companies is slightly different,” he says. “There is no single approach to lead and manage that works for each.” And he believes that same leadership and management theory extends to people. “Some people have different strengths than others. A key is to understand what those strengths are and to help people take the next steps, both career-wise and within the business.”

That type of management style works well for the Ali Group, Nommsen says. Unlike many corporations with a top-down management style, each company in the Ali Group is run as a separate business unit. That was a management technique established by Ali Group Founder Luciano Berti and has been a major

factor in the company’s success. “We’re all tasked with running these businesses as if we’re an entrepreneur,” Nommsen says. “We look for leaders who want to take ownership and responsibility of the businesses and take them to the next level.” The entrepreneurial spirit works well for customers in the long run, he says. “Who is better able to make new product development decisions and product enhancements in each individual business unit than someone who is one-on-one with the customers they serve?” He sees his role with the companies as more a director than a dictator. “My job is to be a mentor to these businesses, to guide them in the direction they need to grow the business. But we don’t dictate how they have to do that.”

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Despite all the bumps and bruises the industry has endured during the pandemic era, Nommsen remains cautiously optimistic about the state of the foodservice industry. “To say that it’s been a crazy three years is an understatement. But for the most part, I think we are now moving back to a normal work environment. As we saw in the last 18 to 24 months, supply chain issues were huge. Customers were placing orders 6, 9 or 12 months out just to try to get in line. This is now behind us,” he says. “And the travel and dining sectors still remain robust, which adds to the bright picture. When the industry opened up again post-COVID, I don’t think anybody expected the massive boom and spike of everybody wanting to get back out there. But going out to eat is something we as Americans like to do.”

On the other hand, Nommsen sees the popularity of takeout and delivery remaining strong, fueled partly by the increased adoption of these services during the pandemic. “It has definitely established itself as part of our world now. We’ve all gotten more used to ordering food using food delivery apps such as Uber Eats, Grubhub and DoorDash, and it just shows up. During the pandemic, many of our companies — like our clients — had to quickly pivot to adapt their business models to handle increased takeout and delivery, so our companies really need to understand what takeout and delivery mean for our customers.”

Automation — whether in the form of robotics or artificial intelligence — represents

another trend worth watching, per Nommsen. “Robotics is certainly becoming a larger portion of our business, and artificial intelligence is now becoming a larger part of our world,” he says. “As we continue to see wages increase and it becomes more difficult to locate qualified candidates for particular positions, these types of solutions will become more prevalent.”

As Nommsen sees it, the real value of robotics will come from automating those jobs considered tedious, time-consuming or just not cost-effective for humans to do. “We are already seeing some operators, especially in the QSR segment, who are adopting robotics because there are some tasks that can be done better with robotics than we currently do,” he says. “However, there are numerous tasks that a robot cannot perform as efficiently as a human, so we need to find where it fits.” He envisions a gradual timeline for adoption of the automated processes: “Will we see mass adoption in the next 12 to 24 months? No, I believe it will be slower, as clients assess their businesses — what works for them and what doesn’t.” Manufacturers are valuable partners in that process, he believes.

**“Remaining true to who you are, being humble, and just continuing to work hard and do the right things is really the true measure of success.”**

“As manufacturers, it is our responsibility to evaluate these types of solutions, collaborate with our partners and customers, and provide them with products and value that contribute to the success of their businesses.”

Besides the labor challenges, Nommsen sees the rapid rise of interest rates and the overall tightening of the money supply available to businesses as another issue operators are currently facing. “Some of your more mom-and-pop type locations may face a stronger headwind as money tightens in the system and interest rates rise,” he says. “Although this will cause some reassessment of the viability of larger projects, and potential delays on projects,

I do not expect we will see a significant decrease in demand for the products and solutions we provide. It does, however, imply that we must continue to be quick to adapt and listen to our partners in order to provide the most value-added solutions possible.”

**A Focus on the Customer**

Nommsen’s long and varied history with the Ali Group has shown him the importance of keeping a strong focus on customers. It is critical, he says, “no matter how successful you are, [to remain] true to the guiding principle of how we run our businesses, and treating our employees and customers with respect.”

Humility is essential, Nommsen says, and that’s a trait he sees exemplified by Ali Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Filippo Berti. “Filippo has taken Ali Group to a level that is just unbelievable, and he’s still the same person that he was when I got to Ali Group. I saw this with Luciano Berti as well. I’ve learned that no matter how big you become and how successful you are, remaining true to who you are, being humble, and just continuing to work hard and do the right things is really the true measure of success.”

**Life in the Real World**

Erik Nommsen isn’t the only Nommsen currently in the foodservice business. He has two daughters, the younger of whom is still in college. But his older daughter currently works for one of Ali Group’s refrigeration companies. “She definitely enjoys our industry,” he says. “She’s very excited about learning more. She is somebody I expect to be in the industry for a very long time. That is one commonality among many of us in this industry: Once we are in, we never leave.”

When Nommsen finds time to relax and get away from the office, he likes to spend it in the outdoors fishing, hiking and camping. “Sometimes it’s really nice to be somewhere where you don’t have cell reception and you just get some downtime,” he says. “Those things provide me with clarity and help balance out my life.”



THE BERTI FOUNDATION

# The Berti Foundation Awards 10 Scholarships to Deserving Students

In partnership with The Berti Foundation, the Ali Group is once again pleased to announce the recipients of its fifth annual round of college scholarships. The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program supports dependents of Ali Group North America U.S.-based employees. The Berti Foundation is named for the founder of the Ali Group, Luciano Berti, and his wife, Giancarla, and promotes education and the arts.

“With the addition of the Welbilt® group of companies to the Ali Group and the correspondingly large number of highly qualified applicants, I authorized the committee to increase the number

of awards from 5 to 10 for the 2023-2024 scholarship year,” says Filippo Berti, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group. “We hope the scholarships help these students reach their full educational potential.” The Foundation additionally renewed the scholarships of 11 students who received the awards in previous years. To date, a total of 40 students have received educational support from the Foundation.

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 year’s group of scholarship winners represents a wide range of academic disciplines, from education to psychology to engineering. Each of these students has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. The scholarships were awarded to the following students, representing seven Ali Group companies:



**Daniel Abikphi**  
*Parent:* Friday Abikphi (Delfield®, a Welbilt brand)



**Makinley Brannen**  
*Parent:* Christopher Brannen (Frymaster®, a Welbilt brand)



**Maly Cha**  
*Parent:* Yee Cha (Ice-O-Matic)



**Naly Cha**  
*Parent:* Yee Cha (Ice-O-Matic)



**Ethan Nasution**  
*Parent:* Daniel Nasution (ACP Inc.)



**Olivia Nasution**  
*Parent:* Daniel Nasution (ACP Inc.)



**Henry Ngo**  
*Parent:* Huey Ngo (CMA Dishmachines)



**Brenna Owens**  
*Parent:* Robyn Jefferson (Beverage-Air)



**Zayin Spearing**  
*Parent:* Randall Spearing (Beverage-Air)



**Jason Tlatenchi**  
*Parent:* Jesus Tlatenchi (Metro)





Daniel Abikphi  
Midland, Mich.

**Intended school:**  
Central Michigan University,  
Mount Pleasant, Mich.

**Major/course of study:**  
Computer Science

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
The thought process of how codes and binary are used to create something from nothing, and also how it has affected the technology development of our world, made me really intrigued to study computer science.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
Five years from now, I see myself working as a computer programmer and also, if possible, working for the United States military science team.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My role model is my dad because he is so determined to the point that it affects the people around him positively. He's always hardworking, always studying to know more and always challenging himself that he can do better. I plan to challenge myself on my educational pathway.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
The achievement I am most proud of is being a second-year wrestler senior year of high school. I challenged myself that I could do better and proved that I can do better by getting a lot of medals from many tournaments, winning a match against a more experienced wrestler and making my way to team districts.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Hardworking, inquisitive, determined.



Makinley Brannen  
Shreveport, La.

**Intended school:**  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**Major/course of study:**  
Kinesiology

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
As I did competitive cheer for 10 years, I injured myself multiple times. It also ended in me going to physical therapy. I grew to love the study of the movement of the body because of my experiences at physical therapy.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
In five years, I see myself attending physical therapy school in Baton Rouge, La.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My parents are my role models because they always push me to do my best. I strive to have the dedication they have always had.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
I feel one of my biggest achievements in high school was maintaining a 3.8 GPA on a 4.0 scale. I maintained this on top of honors classes, advanced placement classes, numerous clubs and organizations, and working a job outside of school.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Organized, dedicated, empathetic.



Maly Cha  
Westminster, Colo.

**Intended school:**  
University of Colorado Boulder

**Major/course of study:**  
Business

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
Whenever I was free from studying or finished up my classwork early, I would go to YouTube and search up café videos. Their drinks and pastries looked so delicious, which made me think of opening a business to create those treats.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
Hopefully opening a business up to create a safe place where anyone can come in to enjoy their pastries and drinks.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My role model is my cousin because she has always been supportive with my crazy ideas and anything I want to do.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
An achievement I am most proud of is writing a five-page research essay for my culture class. I had never done anything like that before and wasn't sure of the outcome, but it was a good learning experience to have.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Kind, respectful, friendly.



Naly Cha  
Westminster, Colo.

**Intended school:**  
University of Colorado Boulder

**Major/course of study:**  
Engineering

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
I think what made me interested in this course of study is the inventions that every engineer can make and how they can be useful in the real world.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
I see myself working for a company.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My role model is my twin sister because she has always been my biggest supporter when it comes to my studies and decisions.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
An achievement that I am most proud of is passing my college algebra class. The class was difficult because I never took any other classes like that.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Reliable, kind, patient.



Ethan Nasution  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Intended school:**  
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

**Major/course of study:**  
History Education

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
When I was younger, I had some really good teachers in late elementary school and middle school who sparked my love for history. I enjoyed my history classes so much that I would dive deeper into topics such as the ancient world and the two World Wars. I would not have the love for history that I have today without my great teachers.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
In five years, I hope to be a history teacher that inspires kids to enjoy history like my teachers before me because today, most kids find history boring.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My role model is my grandpa because he is a deeply caring man who strives to do what's right even when it is not the easiest.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
Being a first-generation four-year college student on one side of my family.

**Describe your personality in three words:**  
Loyal, optimistic, thoughtful.



Olivia Nasution  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Intended school:**  
University of Northern Iowa,  
Cedar Falls, Iowa

**Major/course of study:**  
Graphic Design

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
I took some graphic design classes my junior year of high school. Senior year, I got the opportunity to design a lot of T-shirts, posters and other things, which helped spark my love for designing.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
I see myself finishing my degree and hopefully being a graphic designer for a major sports team.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My role model is my high school graphic design teacher because he taught me everything I know and has always inspired my creative mind and taught me to think outside the box.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
I am most proud of taking the lead in directing and choreographing my high school show choir my senior year.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Kind, strong, motivated.





Henry Ngo  
Fountain Valley, Calif.

**Intended school:**  
University of California, Berkeley

**Major/course of study:**  
Business Administration and Data Science

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
I've always taken an interest in entrepreneurship, and starting my own business has always been a personal endeavor. I've also gained an immense appreciation for data science after I encountered personalized music statistics and suggestions on Spotify's Wrapped and Discover Weekly platforms.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
After college, I hope to work at Spotify as a data analyst/consultant to help develop new algorithms to help listeners discover new music. I'd also like to gain exposure to the film and live entertainment industry, as well as save up to finally turn my own business into a reality.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My parents are my role models because they are my living embodiment of the American dream. They are selfless and hardworking go-getters, and I wouldn't have the opportunities I have today without their sacrifices.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
Getting admitted to UC Berkeley. It showed that with enough diligence, attending a top university and fulfilling my family's dreams was possible.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Spontaneous, ambitious, creative.



Brenna Owens  
Lexington, N.C.

**Intended school:**  
Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C.

**Major/course of study:**  
Criminology

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
I've always been fascinated by how the criminal mind works and how to prevent crime. I love to read, watch and listen to everything about true crime and how the case unfolds from beginning to end.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
I see myself training with law enforcement to become a crime scene analyst or a detective, gathering evidence for criminal cases, and continuing to grow personally and professionally.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My role model is my mom because she has shown me to never give up and to always be positive and understanding of others.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
I'm most proud of the hard work and never giving up so I could graduate from high school and get into the college that I wanted.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Kind, smart, creative.



Zayin Spearing  
Walston, Penn.

**Intended school:**  
Penn State DuBois

**Major/course of study:**  
Computer Science

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
I was interested in how coding can be wisely used. There is so much to apply coding to, and I wanted to use that to help people worldwide. I also like to challenge myself in computer science. I did that by essentially having to learn another language in the world of coding.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
In five years, I see myself working for a tech startup company and trying to make a name for myself in the industry of computer science.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My brother is my role model because he has accomplished a lot in life and paved a path I can follow. He is an architectural engineer and has shown me that with hard work, you can achieve anything.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
The achievement that I am most proud of is competing in Brazilian jujitsu tournaments. I have put a lot of time into practice, and getting better and preparing for the tournaments is the most I've ever been challenged, physically and mentally. All of that preparation has made me a better person.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Determined, caring, creative.



Jason Tlatenchi  
Wilkes-Barre, Penn.

**Intended school:**  
Misericordia University, Dallas, Penn.

**Major/course of study:**  
Medical Psychology

**What got you interested in that course of study?**  
Many things have persuaded me to go into medical psychology, but if I had to pick one, it would be the way that outside experiences such as trauma affect the way someone thinks and behaves, and how it affects them fitting into society. I would get this overwhelming feeling of joy and achievement just seeing one person improve their overall mental well-being.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**  
I see myself at the top of my graduating class at Misericordia University, and then pursuing my doctorate in medical school after that.

**Who is your role model and why?**  
My parents have played a big part in shaping me and encouraging me to be my best self. Since I was a child, my parents would always push me in classes that I wasn't trying hard enough in, instilling this work ethic that will stay with me for the rest of my life. They have always believed in me and helped me prove to myself that I can truly succeed and achieve anything I set my mind to.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**  
Being part of the National Honor Society. Being at the top of my class, along with other hardworking individuals, was such an honor.

**Describe your personality in three words.**  
Fun, energetic, positive.

THE BERTI FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: IN NUMBERS

2018-2019  
Inaugural academic year for the Berti Foundation scholarships

40  
Students who have received educational support from the Berti Foundation

14  
Ali Group North America companies represented to date by scholarship winners' parents/guardians

12  
States represented to date by scholarship winners

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

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

43  
Applicants for scholarships in 2023

11  
Scholarships renewed in 2023 for previous winners

“We hope the scholarships help these students reach their full educational potential.”

Filippo Berti  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group



# 04

## Success stories



Barista Olga Lora Solano shows off some of Vicky Bakery's delicious treats.

**W**hen Antonio and Gelasia Cao arrived in Miami from Cuba in pursuit of their dreams, the couple didn't realize the food truck turned small bakery

they would eventually open in the Hialeah neighborhood would become one of South Florida's most popular bakeries.

The Caos had fled Fidel Castro's regime in 1968, years after falling in love and getting married while working at La Vencedora, one of Cuba's most famous bakeries. "[Antonio] has always said that this has been his dream come true — to own a successful Cuban bakery," says Lola Hernandez, Director of New Business, Vicky Bakery Franchising.

In the beginning, Vicky Bakery was selling wholesale to food trucks for local factory workers, Hernandez explains. The success of that operation gave them an appetite to open a permanent retail outlet. "Soon after, they were able to buy a former laundromat and open their first brick-and-mortar location in 1972," she says.

Today, South Florida residents know Vicky Bakery for its famous *pastelitos* (sweet pastries with guava paste as well as savory ones with meat or cheese) based on a family recipe passed down from "abuelito and abuelita" (grandpa and grandma). And over time the menu expanded to include other Cuban pastries like *croquetas* (croquettes), *empanadas* (turnovers) and *tequeños* (cheese-filled breadsticks), as well as a variety of breads, cakes, *cafecito* (Cuban coffee), breakfast croissants and pressed sandwiches. Yes, the Cubano sandwich, with or without *croqueta*, is a huge hit, but Hernandez favors the *pan con bistec* (bread with Cuban steak). And then there's the rum cake she can't live without — not to



mention a torrent of mouth-watering cakes, cheesecakes and dessert cups.

Despite its growth, though, Vicky Bakery remains a family business; Antonio and Gelasia's children helped expand the bakery's reach to 22 locations by mid-2023. Hernandez and Mauricio Romero, the company's Chief Executive Officer, now work together to lead the business as the company continues to look for new expansion opportunities.

Romero represents the family's third generation to lead Vicky Bakery and assumed his position in May 2023. His career in restaurant franchise leadership spans nearly 40 years; most recently, he served as Fractional Chief Operating Officer of LA EEBI, a franchise business consulting firm that works with a range of restaurants in the fast-casual, quick-

service and full-service verticals. Prior to that, he served as President of Operations for Fransmart, which launched franchising for such restaurant brands as Five Guys, QDOBA, The Halal Guys, and Vapiano. Romero also served as Divisional Vice President of Operations for Five Guys in the western U.S. and Canada, where he oversaw 72 franchisee groups with 656 restaurants.

"I feel very blessed and fortunate to be here," says Romero, who points to the quality of the product, the familial culture of the business, and the enduring, strong support of franchisees as the main reasons why Vicky Bakery has remained so successful.

Hernandez is not a blood relative and her background is in finance, but she's a self-described "Cuban girl raised

# Sweet Dreams Come True



in Miami” who grew up eating at Vicky Bakery. “I practically had the logo tattooed on me, so when this position opened up, I felt I was destined to apply,” she says. She’s worked side by side with the Cao family to grow the various elements of the enterprise, from the commissary to the franchise operations, communications, marketing and more.

Vicky Bakery planned to have 34 locations by the end of 2023. While franchising was something the family

always viewed as a potential growth vehicle, true efforts in this area started in earnest in 2021 and have catapulted ever since. “We have contracts coming in every day,” Romero says.

Prepping for the Future

Such rapid expansion led the bakery to add another commissary as well as upgrade its equipment package to enhance speed of service and meet its throughput goals.



The commissary also helps facilitate product uniformity across all locations and can help pave the way for franchising one day. “In 2017, we opened up our first commissary in Medley, Fla., and that’s where we produce all of our pastries and all of our breads,” Hernandez says. “We’re one of the only USDA [certified] bakeries in South Florida.”

Years ago, cooking happened at each of the locations, but now, with that uniformity in mind, most of the bulk cooking, baking and prep occurs at a commissary kitchen. Everything is blast-frozen and then delivered to the stores, where it is rethermed and finished off, Hernandez says.

The stores receive two local deliveries weekly. Staff assemble sandwiches with strict adherence to recipes and procedures; everything is fried according to set times and temperatures. “We’re looking to eventually team up with distributors to carry our product, which will allow us to go nationwide in the near future,” Hernandez says.

The shift toward using a commissary kitchen impacted Vicky Bakery in other ways. “Because fewer stores are producing our products on-site, we were able to reduce our equipment list quite a bit,” says Hernandez. The chain’s equipment investment has evolved, though, to include higher-tech, multiuse and faster-speed pieces to expand production capabilities.



That’s where Yanel Machin from Chernoff Sales, a manufacturers’ rep firm, and Lawrence Parks, Chef and Sales Director, East at ACP Solutions Inc., came in. “Yanel helped us get in the door to help Vicky Bakery expand,” says Parks. “He was born in Cuba and came [to Miami] as a boy, staring at the plate glass windows of the bakery with all the pastries.”

Indeed, like Hernandez, Machin’s relationship with Vicky Bakery goes way back. “I’ve been watching this chain since I was a little boy; I left Cuba in 1980 on the Mariel Boatlift with my mom — that was the only time Fidel Castro let us leave and come to the U.S.,” says Machin, who has spent the last 27 years with Chernoff Sales. “When we came here, there was not a lot from Cuba, but there was Vicky Bakery. I remember my mom telling me, ‘You see those pastries? Those are from our country, and they taste just like what I had when I was a little girl.’ That really stuck in my head; when you come from another country and you find something from where you come from, it’s so comforting.”

Machin spent years trying to get in with the bakery to show them the ACP XpressChef® MRX 2 high-speed ovens (with the panini press attachment) that he just knew would be perfect for the growing chain. He says they “can produce up to 2,000 sandwiches on a Friday night.”

Adds Parks, “The biggest challenge for them was a consistent and fast version of making paninis like the Cubano.”

In addition to authenticity, consistent food quality and speed of service remain of the utmost importance for operators like Vicky Bakery. “When you go to a traditional Cuban shop and you want a pressed Cuban sandwich, you’ll watch the person put the sandwich on the press and literally stand over it using body weight to press down on the bread,” Machin adds. “The whole process takes three to five minutes depending on the sandwich, and even then, the meat is never as hot as you’d like.”

With the Amana Commercial® microwave ovens and XpressChef MRX2 ovens (with panini accessory) in each store, however, the user can simply place the sandwich inside the unit, close the door, press the pre-programmed Cuban sandwich button, and open the door just 35 seconds later to a perfectly pressed,

hot sandwich with completely melted cheese. “And Vicky Bakery is able to do this exactly how they want it across multiple locations,” Parks adds.

This came about as the result of several rounds of tests at Chernoff’s test kitchen, after which Machin and Parks worked together to swap out the bakery’s labor-intensive, multiple panini presses for the ACP ovens. Each store now carries one or two of the rapid-cook ovens, which use a combination of microwave radiant heat and fans to cook the sandwiches in record time.

Plus, the ovens measure only 14 inches wide, so they take up far less real estate than the eight or nine panini presses previously used. “They’re also certified-ventless pieces, so they don’t require a hood, and they come with their own Wi-Fi so it’s easy to plug in your recipes and train staff,” Parks says. In addition, Vicky Bakery can use the ovens to prepare various other sandwiches on the menu as well as heartier breads and even to warm up desserts in just seconds.

Another advancement at the store level was an upgrade to Beverage-Air undercounter refrigeration. Products can go straight from the freezers to the refrigerators on the line to thaw and then from the rapid-cook ovens to the customers’ hands in minutes. In addition to these pieces, Hernandez says the new Vicky Bakery store prototype’s equipment list includes two griddles, two fryers, a standing rack oven, a 10-foot freezer, a 9-foot cooler, a sandwich prep station and a three-compartment sink. There’s also an espresso machine for Cuban coffee specialties like *café con leches* and *cortaditos*.

The commissary’s gotten an upgrade as well. “We’ve had to increase freezer storage to be able to maximize [throughput and variety] at new stores,” Hernandez says. “We’re now a round-the-clock, 24/7 production area.”

At the heart of the commissary sits a custom-made Italian cooking suite “specifically made for us to make our pastries,” Hernandez says. “We had to go with custom-made because there were specific things that we couldn’t really find the traditional pastry lines to do for us.”

Of course, there’s a suite of production baking equipment like mixers, but there are also more combi ovens to replace

more standard double-rack ovens because they can cook breads as well as meats and even desserts. “That’s the whole point of having all the production done at the commissary level; you don’t have to purchase things like mixers or work with a lot of raw material at the retail level because everything comes to you already made,” Hernandez says.

The commissary also powers Vicky Bakery’s catering operation, which includes packs of pastries and sandwiches for pickup for parties and office lunches. “We use third-party affiliates to deliver our catering products,” Hernandez says.

In addition, Vicky Bakery has used the commissary as a beta testing site for new equipment, such as Amana Commercial microwave ovens and XpressChef MRX2 ovens. Hernandez says the company’s eyeing additional commissaries to expand production. Still, “we’re very much a family-run company,” she says. “We want to be known as an affordable neighborhood lunch place where you could go if you bumped into a friend while walking down the street and want to enjoy a coffee and pastry or lunch together. We’re a Cuban bakery that’s not just for Cubans; we’re here for everyone.”

BRAND WATCH

AMANA  
COMMERCIAL  
MENUMASTER  
Commercial  
XpressChef

Established:

1947

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

1967

Manufacturing:

ONLY

Manufacturer of commercial microwave ovens fabricated and assembled in the USA

acpsolutions.com





# Invested for the Long Term

Burlodge believes in a highly personable and practical approach to client relationships. “There’s an openness that we maintain with our clients,” says Burlodge North America President Paul Gauntley.

In an era when business relationships are increasingly defined solely by the bottom line, some organizations are more invested in the loyalty and long-term benefits of active collaboration. Take Burlodge Canada’s

relationship with Trillium Health Partners, which spans more than 25 years. Trillium oversees three hospital sites in Mississauga and West Toronto, Ontario, and provides a full range of acute care services for a highly diverse community.

The success of this ongoing connection is thanks to the active partnership that has evolved between Burlodge Canada and long-time Food and Nutrition Services Managers Gina Carvalho of Mississauga Hospital and Carol Steffler of Credit Valley Hospital, who have worked with Burlodge Canada for over 25 years.

Every day, these food professionals confront a tide of challenges. Most are modest, some are major, but whatever the scale of the interactions, they typically adhere to those ideals codified in the Burlodge tagline: Together, We Work.

### The Work Beyond the Words

Promises, intentions, assurances — every equipment provider is quick to furnish them upon making a sale. But words only have so much traction. Tangible action is what matters, and it’s a defining quality of Burlodge relationships.

Producing state-of-the-art equipment for today’s high-pressure industrial kitchen environments is one part of the puzzle. Standing behind that equipment and supporting clients at every juncture is the difference, according to Paul Gauntley. “I’m never afraid to lift a rock to find out what’s beneath it,” he says.

When it comes to client service, challenges come with the territory. The response is what matters — and that take-action approach is

deeply embedded in Burlodge’s culture. “There’s an openness that we maintain with our clients,” says Gauntley. “They know that we’re there with them.”

### Hands-On Know-How

Steffler oversees a decentralized retherm system that uses unit kitchens where the food is heated. Her operation has been equipped with multiple generations of Burlodge equipment, including the Alphagen and Novaflex, before recently adopting the RTS system.

For each implementation, the Burlodge team has been at Steffler’s side to develop the plan and work alongside her team for as long as it takes to get everyone trained and the system up and running. “There was really no one else that did what the Burlodge carts would do,” she explains. “They helped us through the inevitable challenges that come with any change.”

Most company training is limited compared with Burlodge’s on-site activities, especially for those equipment providers who rely on third-party dealers to handle sales. Their after-sales support is rarely sufficient. Burlodge prides itself not only in the close collaboration, but it also tends to hire from within the food industry. That hands-on experience is indispensable.

“They know the industry, and they’ve operated in the industry,” says Carvalho. “That’s invaluable because they can speak to staff with a level of, ‘Yes, I’ve done that.’ A lot of other companies have not worked in here.” For problem solving, that experience immediately places Burlodge one step ahead.

### Empower the Client

One of the common systems adopted by the Trillium locations has been the B-Lean tray assembly, a flexible, pod-based work cell system that can be quickly configured and customized into a variety of formats.

During installation, Burlodge worked with Carvalho’s staff to create



**“I’m never afraid to lift a rock to find out what’s beneath it. There’s an openness that we maintain with our clients. They know that we’re there with them.”**

**Paul Gauntley**

Opposite above: Carol Steffler, second left, appears alongside members of her management team.

Opposite below: Gina Carvalho, second left, together with members of her management team.





With operators everywhere struggling with staffing shortages, Burlodge equipment enables Trillium Health Partners to do more with less.

a space that could accommodate the assembly of 700 trays per meal period. Physically equipping the space was one factor, but the way in which Burlodge inspired employees to contribute made a difference.

“My staff learned from Paul’s team,” Carvalho points out. “They explain; they teach. For me, it empowered the staff. It takes a huge amount of pressure off me as a manager to have that kind of expertise transferred to the staff. And the staff respect that.”

For Steffler, it was the capacity to do more without adding more costs or extending mealtimes that resonated. “B-Lean tray assembly solved a big problem because healthcare budgets are limited,” she says. “Now we’re serving 200 more patients than we did a few years ago, from 340 to 540, in just a nominal amount more time. The efficiencies from the B-Lean system meant that we didn’t have to add extra assembly staff and could continue to feed patients at their usual mealtimes.”

**Optimizing Staff Resources**

Operations everywhere continued to struggle with maintaining staff levels, which meant foodservice managers welcomed any opportunity to do more with less. That’s been the advantage of the BCloud HACCP remote monitoring and reporting system. This technology revolutionizes fleet control as managers can now program everything from a

**BRAND WATCH**



Countries in Burlodge’s network:

**50**

Exclusive partners:

**14**

Distributors:

**25**

Meals served per day on Burlodge equipment:

**4 million+**

**[burlodgeusa.com](http://burlodgeusa.com) (USA)**  
**[burlodgeca.com](http://burlodgeca.com) (Canada)**



**A Commitment to Connection**

These situations all speak to the bigger ideals that Burlodge brings to the table.

“If you’re wondering about a solution, then it’s good to call them,” says Steffler. “They have eyes and ears with connections in institutions across the country, and they’ll talk about the issues.”

Gauntley reiterates the importance of being able to draw on the company’s experience and knowledge. He points to his “Five Cs” philosophy to guide healthy relationships.

- Topping that list is client service. “Clients know when they contact us that they’ll access a group of people working very hard to make sure their needs are met.”
- Communication. “You can never overcommunicate.”
- Commitment. “For me, that’s the promise that we will fulfill our obligations. That’s integrity.”
- “Creativity, which speaks to how innovative we can be and ensures that we’re never complacent.”
- “Finally, courage. The courage to be a leader and try something new and to do so with conviction. If there’s a risk to that, clients understand courage is essential to move forward.”

Combined, those ideals encompass that “together, we work” sensibility. It’s not just a tagline — it’s an aspiration and a guiding principle that finds expression in a multitude of ways, every day.

Burlodge teams with healthcare providers to make patient feeding fast and efficient.





# Bravo Wins Raves with Frozen Desserts

Bravo Gelato discovers **Carpigiani equipment** can accommodate all its frozen dessert needs.



**S**ince his first job at Dairy Queen when he was just 13 years old, Christie Hauck has been passionate about sweets.

"The Dairy Queen shop owner said we could eat all the ice cream we wanted because in two to three weeks, we'd be sick of it," Hauck recalls. "I took him up on his offer, gained 20 pounds, developed a severe case of acne and realized I was a 'sugarholic.'"

This might have been an unfortunate tale for many, but it propelled Hauck into a lucrative career. In 1985, he founded The Christie Cookie Co., a cookie and frozen yogurt shop that, at one time, was the largest seller of the frozen confection in Tennessee. "It was my first venture into the food business, and I was thinking, 'This will last forever,'" he says. "Then, a few years later, premium ice cream moved in; Häagen-Dazs opened stores, then Ben & Jerry's, and the pendulum shifted as everyone rushed to those shops. That was around 2000."

Seeing the writing on the wall as frozen yogurt shops began to dwindle as more consumers sought more indulgent premium ice cream desserts, Hauck started to explore other frozen dessert opportunities. This is when he met Malcolm Stogo. The creator of Ice Cream University, who is also known as the Godfather of Ice Cream, Stogo also serves as a consultant for Carpigiani, an Ali Group company.

Stogo's role in Hauck getting into the gelato business began early on when the pair took a trip to Italy for the international gelato convention. "I stumbled across Malcolm's name in 2000, and when I met him, the first thing he said was, 'We're going on a gelato tour in Italy in three weeks, and you have to go,'" Hauck recalls. "It was the biggest convention you can imagine, and I felt like I died and went to ice cream heaven. If it weren't for Malcolm, we wouldn't be in this business."

Not only was Hauck overwhelmed with the amount of freshly made gelato he saw throughout the convention floor, but he was incredulous when he learned that there are more than 40,000 gelato shops in Italy. "I was seeing stars after that trip," Hauck says. "It's a different world. I couldn't get enough of it, and I wanted to bring gelato to Nashville."

So in 2003, Hauck opened the first Bravo Gelato in the Green Hills area of Nashville. Its extensive menu includes more than 20 Italian flavors ranging from Cappuccino, Amaretto and Mascarpone to Donatella, Tiramisu and Biscotto. It now consists of 6 types of vanilla, more than 12 chocolate and coffee gelato varieties, 60 American/Southern flavors, 24 fresh fruit gelatos, 14 liquor flavors, 5 savory varieties and close to 60 sorbets.

After attending the convention and doing his research, Hauck knew that his equipment pursuit would start and stop with Carpigiani. "The name was everywhere, and everyone at the convention had Carpigiani equipment, so we knew it was the only brand we would use," he says.

Stogo was an instrumental partner and assisted Hauck in selecting the Carpigiani equipment that would create the gelato

**"We had been selling our gelato to restaurants and hotels around Nashville over the past 20 years, but after COVID, we got more serious with the wholesale side."**

**Christie Hauck**  
Bravo Gelato

Bravo Gelato's retail location at the Opryland Hotel.







Bravo Gelato depends on Carpigiani machines to produce its gelato and on a unit from Victory Refrigeration to store it.

base and unique flavors. “Christie has done well with flavors; he uses Italian flavors for gelato, and many are made from scratch with a customized gelato base,” Stogo says. “He has a dairy make his gelato base from scratch, which few do; he puts his passion for the product out front.”

Hauck’s first machine was an LB 502 G 20-quart batch freezer, which he describes as “a workhorse that is still running 23 years later.” The original equipment’s technology heats and batch freezes mixtures to produce almost any type of frozen dessert, including ice cream, gelato, sorbet, sherbet, frozen custard and water ice. “Ironically, at the same time, we told the folks at Opryland about our gelato and they offered for us to move into their closed candy/gelato location.” Hauck agreed and also agreed to purchase their Carpigiani 37-quart

LB 1002 G RTX, its largest batch freezer model at the time.

That unit is still in operation almost 20 years later. “We haven’t stopped using it,” Hauck says. “Both Carpigiani batch freezers are workhorses that have had no problems; we would never buy another brand.”

Hauck also worked out a deal to open Bravo Gelato kiosks in three major Nashville malls. “We decked out the kiosks with marble countertops, and I bought the finest equipment — Carpigiani gelato equipment, an espresso machine, everything top of the line,” he says. “Those were wonderful days when we had a lot of retail exposure. We were named the Best Nashville Ice Cream in 2003 and the Gelato Shop of the Year from Gelato University in 2016.”

After having as many as 25 Christie Cookie stores (before closing the chain) and about a half dozen Bravo Gelato outlets,

Hauck added the Goozy Dessert Bar & Café to his portfolio. “My daughter used to say anything that was ooey-gooey was ‘goozy,’ and that’s where the name came from,” Hauck says. “We had a couple of locations that had a dynamic menu with sweet and savory items, including our gelato.”

When COVID hit, like many in retail, Hauck had to make some hard decisions. He closed the Goozy cafes and all of the Bravo Gelato locations, with the exception of the Opryland Hotel site. “At the hotel, 95% of people are from out of town and familiar with gelato, so we sell a lot of it there,” he says.

Bravo Gelato went back on a growth trajectory following the pandemic, but this time, it was in wholesale rather than retail. “We had been selling our gelato to restaurants and hotels around Nashville over the past 20 years, but after COVID, we got more serious

with the wholesale side,” Hauck says. After partnering with foodservice distributors Sysco, U.S. Foods and PFG, Bravo Gelato is now sold in about 100 restaurants in and around Tennessee.

In the last year, a major Nashville restaurant requested ice cream rather than gelato. “We decided to make ice cream and not fill it with air; the restaurant liked it, and we liked it, so we started making it,” Hauck says. “It has more butterfat and less air, and it’s incredible.”

And the best part: Hauck is able to use a hardening cabinet made for Carpigiani by sister company Victory Refrigeration for both the gelato and ice cream. The unit hardens the product faster and provides enhanced storage capabilities, which enhances the product’s quality.

The Carpigiani by Victory Ice Cream Hardening Freezer Model ICH-1D is a two-half

door top and bottom freezer unit with fast pulldown temperatures. It is capable of operating at -25 degrees F (-31.67 degrees C) to -15 degrees F (-26.11 degrees C). Adaptive defrost both reduces energy consumption and ensures consistent temperatures.

This large-capacity hardening freezer will hold sixteen 3-gallon tubs or twenty-four 2½-gallon tubs. The space-saving, two-compartment vertical design ensures faster freeze down and better temperature control as warmer products are introduced to the freezer.

“We just bought a brand-new Carpigiani LB 1002 G RTX batch freezer and will continue making ice cream the gelato way; it’s beautiful, the best thing,” Hauck says.

“Christie was always making gelato, then decided to make ice cream, and our equipment can do both,” says Carpigiani

North America President Penny Klingler. “Product that comes out of a batch freezer is a bit warmer than serving temperature for frozen desserts. When making ice cream or gelato, it is put into a hardening cabinet to freeze it to a point where it’s stable and lasts longer before it’s put into dipping or display cabinets.”

Stogo agrees that the Carpigiani equipment works as well with ice cream as it does with gelato. “The world thinks of Carpigiani as a gelato — not an ice cream — maker,” he says. “But its batch freezers and cabinets work well with ice cream, and this proves the equipment can do anything.”

Hauck has learned a great deal in his food ventures. “I got into the cookie business a bit later than Mrs. Fields, so I realized the importance of being on the front end of the movement; I wanted to capture the gelato market in Nashville before it hit,” he explains. “That

was 20 years ago, and gelato didn’t hit like the frozen yogurt or cookie trends. However, it is still the best frozen treat on the planet.”

“Many gelato makers end up doing it the cheap way and do not follow through with real gelato experience,” Stogo says. “Bravo Gelato has been around a long time and always has used Carpigiani equipment.” He adds that Hauck recently purchased new equipment as the wholesale business expanded. “Bravo Gelato has a really good story, and Christie has been a great promoter of Carpigiani equipment. He has proven that the equipment works for both gelato and ice cream.”

After producing his gelato for more than two decades, Hauck still attends the convention in Italy where it all started. “And we are on our way to grow again, and Carpigiani has been instrumental in our expansion,” Hauck says.

## BRAND WATCH



Commercial branches:

8

Service centers worldwide:

500

Distributors worldwide:

180

[carpigiani.com](https://www.carpigiani.com)



# Serving Students Creatively

**S**hannon Solomon has a big job. As Director of Nutrition Services for Aurora (Colorado) Public Schools, she oversees the foodservice operations of 63 schools with an enrollment of nearly 40,000 students. That means her schools serve an average of 23,000 lunches and 13,000 breakfasts every day.

According to Solomon, school foodservice directors face many of the same issues that commercial operators do. "Staffing, budget...you could check all those boxes," she laughs. "In K-12 foodservice — or the K-12 restaurant industry, as I call it — you find the same challenges that you do in any restaurant. But the other thing is that you have the ever-changing palate of your customer, which is a student. And you have the same clientele every day, so how do you write the menu to meet the needs of your customers? How do we continue to reinvent ourselves to be innovative and meet the kids where they're at?"

## Going Where the Kids Are

Solomon takes that challenge literally, and her schools take the food to where the students are. They serve students from grab-'n'-go carts in the hallways, classrooms, and school entrances and exits — wherever they may be. And if students are outside, the food will go outside, she says. "We've bought electric vehicles with wings that open up on the sides that we can put in our courtyards at the high schools. So we can almost be like a mini food truck."

To feed students during summer vacation and other school break times, Aurora Public Schools partners with the City of Aurora Parks and Recreation Department to take

Former  
Commissioner  
of Education for  
Colorado Katy  
Anthes chats with  
Aurora Public  
Schools students.



three “food buses” to parks, pools, rec centers and other community events. “They’re not food trucks. They’re really a mobile foodservice,” Solomon says. “We fill them up with delicious, nutritious food at the nearest school or our production kitchen.”

Another program that recently opened at two of the high schools in the district is drive-through foodservice. Kiosks have been installed outside the schools. One side is for walk-up service; the other is for drive-through service in the traditional fast-food style.

To better serve its students, Aurora Public Schools is in the midst of renovating its production kitchen. This is a two- to three-year undertaking, Solomon says. “The reason that we’re going to do more commissary production is that we want to be more agriculture-based, so we can do local foods and more

culturally based foods. Our menus will reflect our customers, and we can appeal to their palates and their requests.” To accomplish that, she says, production will have to be more standardized, thus the need for a central location. “In doing those kinds of intricate recipes, it’s much easier to control when you do it in a production kitchen. When we send it out, you have 63 different teams making one recipe. We want the same product across the board at all 63 of our sites.”

Cooking Consistently

Even after the production kitchen opens, rethermalization and other tasks will still need to occur at the individual schools. For that reason, Aurora Public Schools has turned to new Convo-therm® combi ovens to replace outdated steamers and ovens. Nikki Escalante, Director of K-12 and Healthcare at The

Redstone Group, an independent manufacturers’ rep firm, says that Aurora Public Schools’ interest in working with combi ovens goes back about five years. “We got them an oven to test in their bakery, and from there, they tested it for a couple of years,” she says. The “ground crew” — Aurora Public Schools kitchen managers and chef-supervisors — tested a number of combis from different manufacturers, putting them through their paces.

The winner: Convotherm. “They really like that we have KitchenConnect®, where they can push menus and check what’s going on in ovens,” says Escalante.

Solomon agrees about the usefulness of KitchenConnect. “You can plug in your recipes from one main place and then send it out to your other locations,” she says. “So when you hit ‘lasagna,’ that oven will be able to cook our recipe. It makes it easy

for our frontline operators.” This unique system not only allows operators to push recipe updates across a number of equipment sites, but it also lets them monitor kitchen equipment to prevent downtime, ensure food safety and manage energy costs.

Rachel Keith, Area Vice President – West for Welbilt®, says that although the partnership between APS and Convotherm has taken a while to develop, it has been mutually beneficial. “It can take years to fully understand a district’s specific needs and pain points,” she says. “It’s been awesome to be a part of it and build relationships along the way.”

APS also uses equipment from a number of other Ali Group and Welbilt® brands, including Cleveland™ steamers and skillets, Delfield® reach-ins, Edlund can openers, Metro heated cabinets and shelving, and Scotsman ice machines.

Convotherm combi ovens are part of a major production kitchen overhaul at Aurora Public Schools.



“We can’t forget that kids are the best customers to have because they’re the ones that are taking over this world in the future.”

Shannon Solomon

Kudos

Shannon Solomon’s dedication to her students is more than just a profession — it’s a passion. And that passion has not gone unrecognized. In 2023, she received the Top Achiever – Operator award from *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* magazine. In the article honoring her award, Assistant Director of Nutrition Services Katie Lopez cited how even state

auditors “could see what matters most to Shannon — that they could see the love and care in the staff for feeding kids.”

Much of Solomon’s success can be credited to the fact that she builds a strong team, says Todd Boule, Vice President of Sales for Convotherm, who has worked with Solomon and her crew. “She’s got amazing people,” Boule says. “It’s an environment where her team

is set up for success. They’re able to look at and challenge the status quo to provide the best for the kids.”

To show how Solomon’s renown has spread, Escalante describes an episode from the 2023 School Nutrition Association show held in Denver. Her rep group hosted a party for school foodservice personnel before the show. Party attendees from outside the Colorado area were coming up to Escalante and

asking, “Is that Shannon? Can we meet Shannon?” “It’s like I know a celebrity,” Escalante laughs. “It’s fun to watch her engage with other people about what she has going on and why she does it.”

Solomon truly believes that her work is serving a higher mission. “We can’t forget that kids are the best customers to have because they’re the ones that are taking over this world in the future,” she says.

BRAND WATCH



Introduces combi oven technology:

1976

Number of combi oven product models:

69

ConvoSense, the world’s first combi oven with AI-powered, fully automated cooking, introduced:

2020

convotherm.com



# Creating Consistency to Stem Costs

Flyers Pizza's addition of Edlund scales not only ensures staff consistently apply the same amount of toppings to each pie but also **helps control food costs.**

**C**ontrolling food costs in this day and age has never been more vital for foodservice operators. When a restaurant is employee-owned and run by the founder's children and grandchildren, the importance of controlling expenses such as food costs takes on a whole new level of importance.

That is the case for Flyers Pizza & Subs, a Columbus, Ohio-based chain owned by its founding family, the Ulreys, and its employees. Founder Wayne Ulrey purchased Tonni's Pizza in 1976, changed its name to Flyers Pizza & Subs in 1992, and the operation recently opened its 10th location. The central Ohio chain's leadership team includes Ulrey's sons, Scott, Co-President and COO, and Mark, Vice President, in addition to Doug May, who serves as Co-President and CFO. Dave Ulrey serves as Flyers' in-house General Contractor in charge of facilities and new builds.

Flyers is known for its specialty pizzas, which include The Bomber with provolone, pepperoni, Italian sausage, ham, salami, onion, mushroom and green pepper; Meatza Pizza with roasted garlic, pepperoni, Italian sausage, ham, salami and provolone; and Sriracha Southwest with marinated chicken, roasted peppers and onions, provolone, pepper jack, cheddar, cilantro and a drizzle of Sriracha ranch. Carryout and delivery account for the bulk of Flyers' business, and 9 out of its 10 locations include pickup windows.

Proper portioning of meats, cheeses and other ingredients plays a critical role in the success of any pizza restaurant. This leads to product consistency, which resonates with guests, and the ability to better control food costs, something of the utmost importance to the operators. And this is where Edlund's EPZ-20 scale comes into play.





“We focus on making sure our pizzas are exactly the same from one order to the next,” says Scott Ulrey. “So, the scale is one of the most important pieces of equipment in our kitchens.”

During the dinner rush, which runs between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., the scales are in constant use. Each store has five scales for portioning sauce, cheese, toppings and appetizers. “We also use them for pre-bagging starters like boneless wings as well as for cheese used on garlic bread and breadsticks,” says Mark Ulrey. “This makes sure our food costs are what they should be in order to be profitable since that is only possible if we hit our specs.”

Because Flyers’ locations are all high volume, scales tend to get abused by staff. “Every once in a while, we find a scale that looks great, but inevitably we beat it up,” Scott Ulrey says. “Then when we need to replace it, we find out the scale is no longer available.”

This meant Flyers’ IT Director would spend too much time fixing and modifying old scales to get them back into circulation. “It caused a bottleneck as well as created another full-time job just to repair the old scales,” Scott Ulrey says.

The chain reached out to its equipment rep Frank Rivelle, Territory Manager with Zink Foodservice, a manufacturers’ rep firm based in Columbus. Rivelle then connected the Flyers team with Ohio native Corbin Holliday, Director of Business Development for Edlund.

Since the chain utilized other Ali Group company equipment, including items from ACP, and Welbilt’s Frymaster® and Kolpak®, the team was familiar with its high-quality units. “We brought Corbin into a store and showed him the scales we had, discussed the pluses and minuses, and described how we had to alter the equipment to fit our needs,” Scott Ulrey says. “He said we shouldn’t have to alter the scales ourselves; this was something Edlund would take care of.”

After Holliday spent time in Flyers’ restaurants observing and taking notes, he worked with his team to develop 3D modeling of a scale that could best meet Flyers’ needs. “The folks at Flyers were using a scale that wasn’t suitable for their needs and sought a reliable partner to customize the equipment to fit their operations; that’s where Edlund came in,” says Holliday. “We measured the scale they had been using, then designed, built and ultimately provided a custom solution.”

After testing three variations in its stores within a month, Flyers chose Edlund’s EPZ-20 scale. The NSF-certified, stainless-steel model reads in pounds, ounces or grams. It has a large platform that measures 12¼ inches by 12½ inches with a 20-pound capacity.

**“This makes sure our food costs are what they should be in order to be profitable since that is only possible if we hit our specs.”**

**Mark Ulrey**



The scale was modified with a custom bracket to hold a monitor. “Edlund took it to their engineering team, and they did exactly what Flyers wanted,” Rivelle says. “Edlund created a customizable bracket to make sure it held the monitor in place without getting in the way of making the pizza. The EPZ-20 fit perfectly due to how well it is manufactured and the reliability factor. It is very consistent in terms of portion allotment.”

“Edlund attached a neck to the base of the scale so the reader board is always in the vision of the person making the pizza,” adds Mark Ulrey. “This way, you’re always looking at that scale during use.”

According to May, this ergonomic design ensures that the user is not constantly having to lift their head up and down during use. “It was a big plus that Edlund was sensitive to a company

our size to make equipment alterations,” he says. “We received great customer service.”

Most important, using these scales helps Flyers control food costs, manage food waste and develop a more consistent product. In addition, since pizza restaurants are high-volume operations, Flyers needed a company that would stand behind its equipment; Edlund’s service program was an important attribute for the growing chain.

The EPZ-20 scales have received the seal of approval from Flyers’ employee owners, and the management team appreciates the speed and accuracy of the equipment. “Edlund scales are the best in the market in terms of durability of the equipment, preciseness and reliability,” Rivelle says. “Flyers’ team knows the equipment will work every time they come in to open the pizza shops.”

## BRAND WATCH



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



Proper portioning with Edlund scales helps Flyers Pizza & Subs ensure product consistency.





In early 2023, Ashley Lynn Winery in Waterloo, N.Y., was voted the second-best winery in the Finger Lakes region of New York state by FLX Finest, a program where consumers rate the best businesses in the area. And it's well-deserved recognition.

Ashley Lynn is not a newcomer on the Finger Lakes scene. It began in 1929 as an apple farm making apple wines for family and friends and over the years has expanded to become a full-scale winery. In 1999, Ashley Lynn opened its farm stand in Mexico, N.Y., and in 2003, Leon Hurlbut and his brother Craig decided to try something different: wine slushies (wine, juice and ice) at state fairs.

# A Fair Game

Ashley Lynn Winery sees huge business with summer wine slushies.



"We'd seen other people doing it on a much smaller scale and thought it would be a good idea," says Leon Hurlbut. "And we started with apple-based wines, so it was a little different and unique; we always do things our own way."

The brothers and their father, Leroy, started small, with "a junky old ice cream machine that we converted," says Leon Hurlbut. But it worked, and the brothers ran a wine slushie booth at The Great New York State Fair, which is held annually at the end of August. "We had quite a bit of success so knew the next year we'd have to do something more," he says.

A year later, the Hurlbuts rented two machines from someone on Facebook to offer the slushies at the fair. "They weren't incredible, but we had success," says Leon Hurlbut.

That second year, as well as running a booth at the state fair, the Hurlbuts also decided to wholesale their product to a vendor who made slushies for them at the Sterling, N.Y., Renaissance Festival. At that fair, they noticed the vendor was

using an Electro Freeze 812 high-capacity slush freezer, and they knew that's what they needed.

The Hurlbut brothers met with Jerry Browning of Specialized Equipment in East Syracuse, N.Y., and bought an Electro Freeze 812. The brothers were ready for the 2005 state fair. "They'd been doing some wine slush but didn't have a company that could support them the way they needed to be supported," Browning says. "They had had a number of machines, but they wanted to have all the machines from one company who could also provide consultations."

The relationship built gradually. "We were helping the winery support the equipment they had with the understanding that as they needed more equipment, they'd purchase that through us," Browning adds.

The winery initially approached Browning because the machine it was using for the slushies couldn't keep up with demand. "When you get out into these fairs, you need volume because you've got a line of people and need more

capacity," Browning explains. He recommended the 812 "and they never looked back," he says.

That third year, sales "absolutely went up," says Leon Hurlbut. "We could keep up better with the demand at a busy event as the 812 slushie machines freeze product in a very short amount of time — about seven minutes." These machines, he says, "were the right size, easy to use, on wheels, upright, self-feeding, so we set them up to automatically feed with a little float valve from an ice maker. It was very slick."

They are also easy to operate and don't require a lot of maintenance. After use, they need to be disassembled, washed, rinsed, sanitized, air-dried and then reassembled. As the machines get a bit older, Browning gives them a deeper clean from time to time.

In the early years, Ashley Lynn Winery attended five or six fairs a year, but by 2014, it started having a presence at fairs across New York state. It now attends 60 to 70 events per year — such as state fairs, county fairs, wine events and car shows,

Refreshing wine slushes are especially popular in summer.

## BRAND WATCH



Established:

**1929**

Sold the first soft-serve ice cream machine:

**1946**

Current number of models:

**40+**

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



Electro Freeze machines help Ashley Lynn Winery keep up with the high demand for their wine slushies.



mostly in the summer months. In the winter, it offers slushies at some wine and chocolate events. “They are using very high-capacity machines to keep up with demand,” says Victoria Campbell, President, H. C. Duke & Son LLC (East Moline, Ill.), maker of Electro Freeze. The winery, she says, “created their own market, and people look forward to this at the festivals. They’ve created a demand, and our local distributor does business with the other wineries because of the niche Ashley Lynn has created.” “When we used those machines, we thought, ‘These things are awesome; these are exactly what we need,’” says Craig Hurlbut. The brothers also loved

**Ashley Lynn Winery uses a range of Electro Freeze machines. Here’s the rundown:**

**The 812 and the 812H, an updated design.**

**The 877 and the 876 machines: wine slush machines.**

**The DH10, a countertop twist slush/frozen cocktail machine (though this one has since been discontinued by Electro Freeze and is no longer available). They use this for wine slush.**

**The G202 and G203 machines (also discontinued): two- and three-bowl granita slush machines. “This is what they started with but quickly outgrew these machines due to demand,” says Browning. “They still use these for small events.”**

**The CS700 and 77WS, high-capacity milkshake machines for wine shakes.**

the customer service they received from Specialized Equipment. “When it came together, we knew this was the right fit,” he adds.

**Keeping Up With Demand**

Ashley Lynn Winery continues to use the Electro Freeze 812 and the 812H (a newer version) slush freezer. The fact that these units come on wheels only enhances their appeal. “We’re constantly moving them,” says Leon Hurlbut. In addition, he points out, the 812 units don’t take up a lot

of space; the winery can line up the machines next to each other and stack them, which makes it easier to transport the equipment to the fairs.

The 812 machines are also key to the winery keeping up with long lines at the fairs since they are fast freezing. “At festivals, a lot of the day, you sit there for nothing, then the people come in and you need to make this stuff quick. You have a small window of opportunity. If you can’t make it fast, you can’t make money,” Leon Hurlbut points out.

Each fair is a different size, with the New York State Fair being the largest; for this event, the winery uses all 30 of its 812 and 812H machines, spread over five booths it operates. At a small fair, it might only use two machines at one booth. At large events, Ashley Lynn also wholesales its product to other vendors, who sell the slushies and pay a percentage of sales back to the winery, along with a fee for using their equipment.

Typically, the winery offers two flavors of slushie, but it will make more available at bigger events — five at the state fair, for example. The most popular flavors include blackberry sangria, raspberry, blue raspberry, strawberry, peach and applejack.

Over the course of the fairs, thousands of customers enjoy Ashley Lynn’s slushies, and there’s typically a line for the drinks when they open at 10 a.m. “But it gets busier at night and when the concerts are going,” says Leon Hurlbut. “People drink them all day.” The slushies cost \$10 to \$15, depending on size, which ranges from 10 ounce to 28 ounce, with the latter being most popular.

**Shake ‘n’ Take**

The shows aren’t the only place the winery sells slushies. It also serves them at its farm stand and its winery in Waterloo. “Approximately 80% of people who visit our Waterloo location get a wine slushie while they are there,” Leon Hurlbut says. There are usually three flavors available, and the winery switches them up every week. The drinks aren’t the only draw — during the summer, the winery also offers food and entertainment in its pavilion,

including cider donuts in the fall. It uses a Donut Robot® from Belshaw, also an Ali Group company, to prepare the donuts.

And, three years ago, the Hurlbuts started offering wine shakes at Waterloo. “It was Jerry’s idea,” says Leon Hurlbut. The winery has two shake machines — the CS700 and 77WS — and uses them to make the drinks that are wine and ice cream blended together. Ashley Lynn also serves the shakes at the New York State Fair.

“The wine slush has been very popular in central upstate New York for about 15 years now,” says Browning, “but the wine shakes are new. We collaborated on that and did a taste test, and they slowly rolled that out and it’s been successful.”

The winery started with the shakes because it had obtained a used piece of Electro Freeze equipment, which Browning pointed out was for regular shakes. “They hadn’t thought about doing wine shakes because the slushies were so popular,” he says.

So, Browning began experimenting with the wine/ice cream/milk ratios to get the right consistency, thickness and flavor. “I knew their formula for the wine slush, so I did a similar formulation. We tested product, and it was fairly quick. They were pretty happy right from the start,” Browning adds. After the Ashley Lynn winery team sampled the beverage, they took off with their own recipes and have been creating new ones ever since.

Slushie sales are probably twice as much as the shakes “because we’ve had our slushies around for so many years, a huge majority of our customers know they love them,” says Leon Hurlbut. “The shakes are a

relatively new item for us, but they are quickly gaining popularity.”

**A Range of Machines**

Ashley Lynn also uses Electro Freeze’s two-bowl and three-bowl machines (the G202 and the G203), which take around an hour to freeze the wine. These work well for the Waterloo winery and small events. The benefits of these units are that they keep the product visible and require less power.

“I’m not sure anyone has as many machines as Ashley Lynn,” says Campbell. “They just roll the machines in and out of the truck for the events. They hook them straight up to kegs on autofill, so it’s quite impressive when you see them. They line up all of the machines parallel to the counter; the customers can see them, and the server turns around, fills the cup and hands the slushie over.”

The past 24 years have been a great time to be in the wine slushie business, and the success of Ashley Lynn Winery serves as delicious proof of that fact.

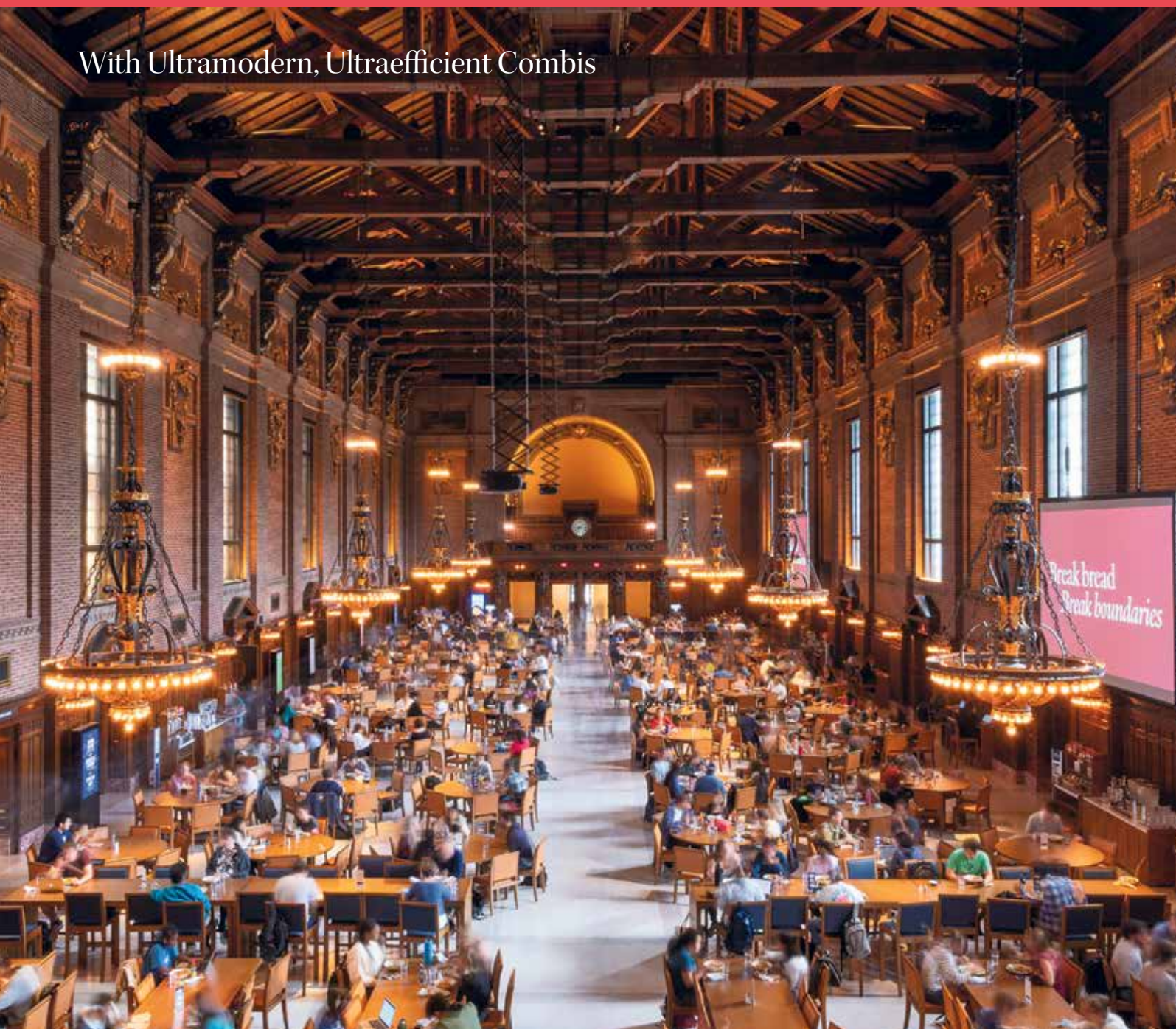
The Ashley Lynn Winery team is ready to serve their customers.





# At Yale, a 1901 Dining Hall Reopens

With Ultramodern, Ultraefficient Combis



Everyone involved with the Yale Schwarzman Center renovation at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., eventually

comes around to the same pop-culture comparison when asked to describe it.

“Harry Potter-esque,” says Matthew Auck, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Eloma, an Ali Group company that has provided stacked high-production combi ovens for four different production kitchens.

“I call it Hogwarts,” says Chuck Livoli, Managing Partner at JMT Reps, the manufacturers’ representative firm that worked on both installing the Eloma ovens and training the staff to use them for optimal efficiency.

Indeed, it’s easy to imagine magical owls flitting among the six oversize iron chandeliers hanging from the painted hardwood trusses 66 feet over the main dining hall, or secrets lurking behind the original brickwork and dark wood paneling. But the stunning Beaux Arts-style hall, part of the Commons and Memorial Hall Bicentennial complex built by the legendary Carrère and Hastings at the beginning of the 20th century, is now served by the very latest equipment to cater to 21st-century needs.

After a three-year closure, the radically remodeled Yale Schwarzman Center reopened in 2021 with a new mission to bring together students from the university’s multiple divisions — to “build on the strengths of our colleges and communities to inspire engagement in ways we can only begin to imagine,”

Left: The expansion of a historic existing building to create the Yale Schwarzman Center included moving, renovating and expanding many foodservice components. The renovations and restorations preserved the building’s historical and architectural integrity while creating efficiencies for and connecting various spaces.

as Yale President Peter Salovey said in 2020. Looking back in 2022, when new food venues opened, Salovey praised the center as a place where “undergraduate, graduate and professional school students can gather to share ideas and connect with friends and classmates ... to relax and get to know others from all parts of campus.”

## A Wide Range of Options

The 13,000-square-foot dining area of the central hall, still known as the Commons, with seating for up to 1,000 at long wooden tables, retains its period grace. But it now offers fare from 20 action stations in an adjacent 7,000-square-foot servery equipped with several finishing kitchens. Branded kiosks include Lotus (Asian foods), Pasta e Basta (pasta, obviously), Rostir (roisserie and roasted meats and vegetables) and Rooted (vegetarian and vegan options).

The main dining hall serves meal plans for students and faculty, who swipe their cards at each station, as well as retail customers, who pay at credit card kiosks; no cash is accepted. At night, the hall can double as an impressive catering venue, so the facility also includes a dedicated catering kitchen.

The center’s lower level — once used for coal storage — is now known as The Underground and houses lecture rooms, theaters, two additional dining options (morning-to-late-night coffee-and-snacks venue Elm & Ivy and an intimate pub called The Well), a small convenience store and four production kitchens.

## Eloma Equals Efficiency

The Yale Schwarzman Center was developed to serve many goals — unite campus communities, cater to global culinary preferences, provide impressive catering options — but underlying all of them was a focus on production efficiency.

## BRAND WATCH



Established:

**1975**

Eloma USA launched:

**2007**

Global reach, in number of countries:

**65+**

**eloma.com**







Efficient, space-saving Eloma combi ovens in the servery.

“Menus were developed and assessed to minimize equipment run times, and a robust training process was developed to ensure employees fire up and fire down equipment when not in use to reduce unnecessary energy consumption,” says Daniel Flynn, Yale’s Director of Asset Renewal and Special Projects, who was intimately involved in both installation and staff training.

To help meet the project’s efficiency and energy goals, foodservice design consultant David Chislett of Ricca Design Studios, working with Robert A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA), specified Eloma combi ovens for the production kitchens. The ovens were sourced from Singer Kittredge (a division of Singer Equipment) with installation overseen by project consultant John Roche.

Those production kitchens (the four lower-level kitchens and the catering kitchen) each feature a double stack of boilerless electric combis: a 10-11 (10-pan) unit and a 6-11 (6-pan) oven. The double stack provides far more versatility to cook multiple items simultaneously than a single large combi would. The highest possible output in the most compact space

possible is another key advantage of these ovens, Auck says. “Our full-size combis have the smallest footprint in the industry,” he says. And in the lower level of a building more than a century old, with low ceilings, “We were able to meet Yale’s needs on the height requirements, not just the footprint configuration.”

In addition to the stacked combis for the production areas, Eloma was specified for several additional combis for the finishing kitchens attached to the food court servery.

Eloma’s steam technology serves as one differentiating point for its combi ovens. “We do ours a little differently,” Auck explains. “Normally in a combi, you would just drip water onto the fan inside the cavity, which then flings the water against the heat exchanger. If it’s cold, some of the water doesn’t turn into steam. With ours, we heat the water before it goes into the cavity, so there’s less cooling of the heat exchanger and not as much water runoff. That means we have a higher percent of steam generation per unit of water and a better atmosphere inside the oven.”

Several other Eloma features help enhance labor efficiencies. Take, for

example, the combi ovens’ automated cleaning. “All you have to do is push a button, walk away, and in the morning, you come back and your oven is clean,” Auck says. And boilerless combis save staff time since they don’t require the amount of descaling and deliming that a combi with a boiler would need, he explains.

The Learning Curve

Yale students come from all sorts of backgrounds and from all over the world, they’re savvy diners, and quite a few of them have dietary restrictions. So creating the best and most varied menus possible at the Schwarzman Center took a great deal of thought and research, including student surveys and taste tests. “It’s all about supporting our community,” Executive Chef David Kuzma says. “After months of research, development and testing, we’ve put together menus that we are confident will become fast favorites.”

Fulfilling those menus calls for top performance from the entire suite of kitchen equipment — especially the combis. “There are fryers and rotisseries out front that show action cooking, but the combis supply the servery areas

with all the nonaction items,” Auck says. “They’re doing everything, from rice to vegetables to meats, to support the dining halls and feed the students.”

The fact that today’s combi ovens are programmable also helps with menu consistency. “Once a recipe has been developed and saved, all you have to do is hit a button,” Auck says. The complicated part, obviously, is creating the recipes.

Auck, a trained chef, says he worked with Flynn and the entire Yale Hospitality culinary team to develop recipes and train staff to make the best use of the Eloma combis: “I went over the units with the staff, showed them how to preprogram specific recipes into the unit so that it could automatically preheat, cycle between recipe settings, and precool.” The preheating is important, Auck notes, because it significantly reduces total cook time and energy usage. And precise temperature and moisture control throughout the cooking process allows cooks to do delicate jobs like

“blanching greens so that they come out bright green and al dente, not looking like a pile of goo,” he notes.

Auck showed Yale Hospitality staff how to program multiple-step recipes, such as the way to make roast chicken “nice, plump and juicy” by beginning

with a steam cycle and then moving into convection mode to create a crisp, browned skin. And he demonstrated how to use the oven to slowly roast meats overnight for use in the deli or carvery, so that “you don’t have to pay staff to sit there and watch it.”

“The cooks were amazed,” Auck says. “They didn’t know they could do stuff like that. Dan Flynn and the culinary team took to the oven quickly and saw that it was very simple to use. Now, as masters of it, the core staff will be able to teach new cooks when they come in, year after year.” A training video supplied by Eloma makes the job of ongoing training even easier.

Livoli is playing an ongoing role in training and checking up on the combis in the Schwarzman Center, returning to campus on a monthly basis.

Equipment Efficiency

Yale’s dealings with Eloma are part of a larger relationship with a number of Ali Group and Welbilt® companies. In addition to the Eloma ovens, the Yale Schwarzman Center features Champion dishwashers in the upstairs and downstairs kitchens, Frymaster® fryers with filters, Merrychef® speed ovens, Delfield® drop-in hot and cold wells and Garland® induction warmers.

“Yale likes to use the same names of

equipment manufacturers in all of its kitchens and serveries,” notes John Roche of Singer Kittredge. Equipment durability and longevity are key reasons for Yale to purchase Ali Group products, he adds.

“Our relationships with manufacturers are not transactional, but more of a partnership,” says Yale’s Flynn. “Consistent specifications across our portfolio are important for staff training, preventive maintenance, parts availability, predictable performance, warranty administration and overall cost of ownership. We consistently evaluate our equipment specifications and often work directly with manufacturers on improvement for the end users.”

Yale Hospitality in the Spotlight

Yale’s new Schwarzman Center redevelopment and its menu offerings are distinctive enough and impressive enough to have drawn national attention. In May 2023, the project received *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* magazine’s 2023 Facility Design Project of the Year Award. And later that year, Yale Hospitality received a Loyal E. Horton Award from the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) for the Schwarzman Center’s catering program. Rachel Fine, Executive Director of the center, took the occasion to look back. “We are extremely proud of the Schwarzman Center, which sparks joy and provides connection day in and day out in the lives of our students and university community members,” she said. “From our opening appreciation event to the culinary activities, arts and culture offerings, watch parties, dance parties, and dialogues that have taken place since, the Schwarzman Center is consistently bringing people together, lifting spirits, feeding souls and building community on campus.”

In a lower-level production kitchen, double-stacked Eloma combi ovens (right), along with a six-burner range, a griddle and fryers, support production for all foodservice platforms in the Schwarzman Center.







**Angie's Epicurean** found a fit for producing its novel vegan dessert.



Angela Fernandez

**T**hanksgiving dinners can be a time of reflection and gratitude, but in the case of Dylan Finger and his wife, Angela Fernandez, Thanksgiving 2017 sparked a business idea.

"We went to a family Thanksgiving, where my wife, who is a Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef, brought a vegan chocolate mousse; she was vegan at the time," says Finger, Angie's Epicurean's Co-Founder. "We were looking for something we could do together."

Although Finger is a real estate developer by trade, with a history in franchising, he was interested in starting another food venture. "The main reason I came to the U.S. was to bring Sweets From Heaven, which is a South African candy company we made public, to the United States," Finger explains. "We used soft-serve machines in the stores back in the '90s that were rented."

It was around 2017 when the couple visited a market in the U.S. that was selling plant-based soft-serve ice cream made with almond milk. "There was a huge

line of customers, but Angie and I tried the ice cream, and it was just okay," Finger says. "We came back weeks later and saw the same long line, so I told her we should try to make ice cream. My wife is very talented, and when I see her creating food, she is in her element."

Finger and Fernandez officially launched Angie's Epicurean in January 2018. The couple then started testing and reading up on the science of ice cream: binders, fat and emulsifiers. The challenge was replacing dairy with plant-based ingredients without using sugar. "We basically turned our dining room into a lab," Finger says. "It was a lot of trial and error. We tried different options, like date syrup, and much of it was a disaster. Angie had all these superfoods and ingredients; some were good, some turned the product icy. Then she got better and better."

As Finger and Fernandez learned more about the industry and suppliers, they continued with R&D until they perfected the product. "She refined the recipe, and we decided to create [not just a business] but a brand," Finger says.

The result was a plant-based ice cream brand that could accommodate kosher, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, soy-free and non-GMO diets. Flavors include the traditional vanilla, chocolate and strawberry, then veer off into the signature mango lassi, passion fruit and basil, and cappuccino. Sauce options vary by location and range from the quintessential caramel and strawberry to condensed milk, guava and date syrup. Toppings range from sprinkles to cacao nibs to gummy bears and even rose petals.

The couple found a boutique marketing firm that had worked

on another vegan concept to assist with their story, message and artwork. "It was expensive but important," Finger says. "While testing and creating the brand, we needed to figure out how to bring it to market."

Finger, having been involved with many brick-and-mortar stores throughout his real estate career, was wary of spending thousands of dollars on a store, hoping it would work. "I didn't want to take the risk," he says.

It turned out he didn't have to. Finger leveraged his relationship with a successful fellow real estate developer in Miami who owned a quarter of the city's Wynwood Arts District. The formerly dangerous, industrial neighborhood had been transformed into some of the priciest real estate in the country. Part of the property included the Mana Wynwood Convention Center, which was formerly an industrial warehouse.

Finger saw opportunity with the venue's shows and events but wanted to start with a mobile concept. "We needed something we could move around to take advantage of events and capitalize on access," he says.

The couple felt that traditional food trucks didn't match the upscale brand they sought to create. They also considered building out a restaurant in a shipping container, but didn't like that option, either. "Because our brand was European, we looked at what that continent was doing with mobile ice cream," Finger says.

Finger and Fernandez came upon vintage trucks from France that were being used for fast food in the United Kingdom. With further research, he discovered a British company that restored old trucks for exactly the use the couple was planning.

# A Solution Accommodates Plant-Based Product







Carpigiani machines lined up and operating at Angie's Epicurean's production facility.

"So we planned a trip and drove from London to seven different places, including Wales and the border of Scotland," Finger recalls. "The last place we found outside London was the one that worked. They had done an incredible job restoring vintage trucks."

The couple ordered a restored vintage box truck and had it shipped to the U.S. They then found a company in the States that could build it out with electrical connections, windows, lights, air conditioning and equipment. "I did my rounds to check out food truck builders in south Florida and found a place to do it really well," Finger says. "This company worked on

trucks for the military. They were not cheap but were really good. They designed the entire truck, building it out in six months."

As the truck was being imported and built out, the couple started researching different ice cream equipment. Due to the very compact footprint, this was easier said than done. "It was when I was looking for dipping cabinets that would fit that I met John McCabe of Carpigiani," Finger says. "He educated us on the company's many equipment options."

McCabe, Executive Sales Consultant at Carpigiani North America, an Ali Group company, met with the couple about developing the business. As the truck was being built out, he helped Finger and Fernandez create the display case and provided insight on equipment that would work best for the brand.

Later on, the company would find new production space.

"We found the [production] space from someone I worked with

who owned 70 properties in downtown Miami; one was an old food hall from the '80s that used to be a sandwich shop," Finger says. "It was a 250-square-foot space with a counter and tiny back of house. We renovated the electrical and plumbing in order to put the Carpigiani Maestro machine there."

Angie's Epicurean integrated Carpigiani's Maestro batch freezer, which provides more than 40 programs for creating gelato, pastry, ice cream and chocolate. The machine's compact size was ideal for the mobile operation. Available in three sizes, the machine's high-efficiency technology provides up to 30% water consumption and electricity savings compared with other batch freezers. It also has Hot-Cold-Dynamic Adaptive technology to automatically recognize the quantity and type of mixture. This modulates the cold and hot gas, which optimizes the heat exchange during the freezing cycle. This technology also avoids potentially burning the product during the processing cycle.

"This is a very efficient batch freezer that efficiently heat treats base mixes, which extends the shelf life of ice cream when it's displayed," McCabe explains.

For making its mixes, Angie's Epicurean also chose Carpigiani's Pastomaster pasteurizer, which is not only easy to use and manage but also comes with an exchanger pump for high micronization

of fat globules. This ensures a creamy and stable product. The equipment provides easily managed



minimum filling levels with no risk of mix burning. It also has pastry functions for producing toppings and inclusions.

When Angie's Epicurean opened in December 2019 with the food truck and small production space, it was an immediate success. "The minute we opened, sales were booming," Finger says. "Because I knew from prior experience with Sweets From Heaven that toppings were a great profit margin, we offered superfood toppings with the vegan, gluten-free and plant-based ice cream. Our challenge was that if we blindfolded you, you wouldn't know it was vegan, and we achieved that."

Unfortunately, a short time after the brand launched, COVID reared its ugly head. "We thankfully didn't have a brick-and-mortar store at that time, so when the pandemic hit, we looked at the big picture," Finger says. "We were focused on building the brand and creating local awareness."

When things began opening up in October 2020, the couple was approached to operate a six-month pop-up store at a mall. Then a real estate developer friend suggested a truck location in a West Palm Beach, Fla., spot. "It was a prime location in a square, and we were so successful there that we ordered another truck so we could park one there permanently, with another mobile truck designated for event requests," Finger says.

Because they were dealing with vintage trucks, there were issues along the way. For example, due to the strong power requirements for refrigeration, a bigger generator was needed. "It was a bit of a logistical nightmare, with trucks breaking down and tow trucks involved," Finger says.

The couple took a trip to South Africa, where they came

upon an ornate Italian ice cream cart outside a restaurant. "It was super busy, but we did some sleuthing to see who the equipment manufacturer was, and it was Carpigiani," Finger says. "We ended up buying one of the carts, rebranding it and incorporating a topping station that is also a freezer from the company."

"He is using Carpigiani's customized Il Carrettino Classic ISA display cart for several locations and special events," McCabe explains.

The couple also incorporated Carpigiani's compact ISA OneShow Free Gelato Case on the side of the truck.

After debuting the rebranded carts, the concept began taking off. This led to Finger and Fernandez being approached by hospitality service provider Centerplate, a Sodexo company, which handles foodservice for the Miami Beach Convention Center and a number of U.S. stadiums, including Miami's Hard Rock Stadium.

This in turn led to Angie's Epicurean's mobile activation at the Miami Open, 2022 Miami Grand Prix, annual Miami Swim Week, Latin Grammy Awards and other events. Its other mobile cart was available for weddings, showers and corporate events.

Angie's Epicurean has since worked with such established brands as Hublot, Breitling and Instagram. It was also selected by the University of Florida's MBA program for its graduate students to perform an entrepreneurial growth study as part of their final exam. "We received so many inquiries for events, so we ordered more Carpigiani machines to keep up," Finger says. "We were getting double booked on weekends, doing pop-ups at malls and activations.

We'd spend six to eight months at some locations."

The business eventually outgrew its 250-square-foot production space, so the couple began looking for something bigger, preferably a commercial kitchen that needed minimal changes. "Luckily, we found a 2,000-square-foot bakery that received a \$1 million renovation in 2017," Finger says. "It had similar branding to Angie's; the company made vegan cupcakes for Whole Foods and was moving to a bigger facility."

Finger and Fernandez instantly fell in love with the space, but it had already been leased to a taco company. When this business had issues with the zoning codes, the couple was able to negotiate a lease with favorable terms.

This enabled the business to expand into wholesale. In addition to three Florida locations in Miami, West Palm Beach and Aventura, it will now provide distribution to supermarkets from Orlando to south Florida. "This brand is innovative and growing. The product is fantastic, and they do a great job marketing," McCabe says. "It's an ongoing partnership working together as they continue to grow."

At press time, Angie's Epicurean was in the process of opening its main kitchen to expand production to hotels, resorts, supermarkets and restaurants.

"Dylan and Angie will be purchasing the large Carpigiani LB 1002 G RTX Batch Freezer to expand their production in their new production facility," McCabe says. "Angie's Epicurean goes all out; they know how to market and spend a lot of time on the branding and promotion of their premium products, and it shows."

**"Our challenge was that if we blindfolded you, you wouldn't know it was vegan, and we achieved that."**

**Dylan Finger**





If you build it, they will come. This “Field of Dreams” epiphany guided the development of Montgomery Whitewater — an outdoor adventure destination centered on whitewater rafting and kayaking — as well as its food and beverage program. The rural cornfield in the Kevin Costner film seemed like an inauspicious place to build a professional-grade baseball field. But once the cropland was plowed over and a baseball diamond was carved in its place, the ghosts of dearly departed baseball legends started to materialize and play ball. Word got out, and carloads of spectators came by the hundreds to bear witness.

Likewise, Montgomery, Ala., situated alongside the sluggish Alabama River, at first glance was an unlikely place to build Class II-IV rapid-water channels in a bid to attract paddlers of all skill levels, from curious newbies to hard-core athletes. Before Montgomery Whitewater’s grand opening in July of 2023, the city never would have sprung to mind as a mecca for whitewater paddle sports. Nevertheless, developers and city officials bet the farm, so to speak, that the 120-acre outdoor recreation center — which was built in an undercapitalized “opportunity zone” and will add rock climbing, zip lining, ropes courses, and hiking and biking trails in later phases — would lure not only outdoor enthusiasts from far and wide but also incentivize employers to set up shop in Montgomery and dangle the rec center as a recruitment carrot.

As the \$90 million project moved from concept to completion, however, the idea that “if you build it, they will come” applied as much to the on-site restaurant, Eddy’s, as it did to the venue as a whole — perhaps even more so.

It should be noted that the popular phrase is a misquote. “If you build it, *he* will come” is the actual line from the movie, with “he” referring to the lead character’s long-dead baseball idol. Of course, Montgomery Whitewater is looking to attract people — plural — and live ones at that. And what we know for sure about living, breathing folks is they get hungry and thirsty.

# 13 Million Gallons of Water — and Endless Amounts of Ice

Paddling is thirsty work. A new man-made whitewater rafting park requires constant production of vast quantities of ice to keep up with beverage sales.

## Dress Code: From Drippy Splash Jackets to Dapper Sportscoats

Paddlers will want sustenance when they get off the water. That’s a given. But from the outset, Eddy’s was intended to draw lunchtime and after-work diners as the park is located near the downtown business district and right next door to an Air Force base. These particular patrons have no plans to get wet or break a sweat. In fact, it’s anticipated that only 2 out of 10 park guests will ride the rapids, even when the park is filled to capacity.

With broad appeal in mind, Eddy’s — an eddy is a gently swirling river current that gives paddlers a respite from the raging rapids — was designed to fit in with the overall look and feel of Montgomery Whitewater, but it also had to stand on its own as an attraction. The design and execution of the retro camp-themed restaurant evolved as owners began thinking of Eddy’s as both a destination and a doorway for folks who come for the food but get a taste for adventure once they’ve witnessed the action through the eatery’s picture windows or from its outdoor patio bar, Eddy Out.

“All the seating is oriented toward the exterior, so you get a spectacular view of the rapids while you’re dining,” says Mimi Williams, a Senior Project Architect at Liquid Design, the Charlotte, N.C.-based firm that designed Eddy’s and other buildings on the property.

Perched in the restaurant, people might be content to spectate — or they might feel compelled to take the plunge and explore what else the park has to offer.

“We definitely use Eddy’s as a hook to get people out here,” says Megan McKenzie, Partner at Southern Whitewater Development Group, the developer and operator of Montgomery Whitewater. “You don’t need to convince people to eat and drink. People will say, ‘Oh, there’s a new restaurant in town,’ and they’ll come and check it out. And if we get them out here, they’re sold on it. They see how they can use the space kind of like their own backyard. We have families who come out here with a deck of cards and a picnic blanket. We’ve got kids who meet here to trade Pokémon cards. Our goal is to build a community of people who enjoy outdoor recreation.”



Neither Rome nor the Restaurant Was Built In a Day

“If you build it, they will come” applied to Eddy’s in a big way. But how, exactly, should the restaurant be built? From the start, developers knew that Eddy’s had to be in a prime location, right at the park’s entrance for visibility and accessibility. But plans for just about every other aspect of the restaurant — the layout, the menu, the equipment specifications — kept evolving to accommodate the kitchen’s many functions and the park’s projected growth.

“Our restaurant serves a bunch of purposes: One, it’s a sit-down restaurant, but since it is operating in a park atmosphere, it’s also a commissary for grab-and-go food kiosks that we’ll keep adding as we grow,” says Jeffrey Gustin, Project Manager at Southern Whitewater Development Group. “We also have a conference room, and the kitchen caters all the events held there.”

The menu includes everything from fast-casual to fine-dining options, complete with fancy cocktails. A milk-clarified margarita takes its name from the Continental Divide’s National Scenic Hiking Trail, known for its stunning views of the Milky Way. “We’re an outdoor lifestyle center, so we want to promote healthy eating, but at the same time, we have to serve a lot of people,” says McKenzie, adding that Eddy’s continues to “fine-tune” its menu.

Like whitewater rafters, the folks charged with the task of designing and equipping Eddy’s learned to expect the unexpected. They did their best to anticipate unseen challenges around every bend. They changed tack as needed.

Someone who relished the challenge was Neil Ross, who designs, builds and equips commercial kitchens for Bresco, a restaurant supplier based in Birmingham, Ala. Ross considers himself more of a factory builder, metaphorically. “I said, ‘Guys, we’re designing a factory for you, and your factory’s product is your menu and the type of foodservice you provide. So, straight out of the gate, you need to describe the concept in as much detail as you possibly can, knowing that things can

change,’” says Ross. Without this blueprint, he explains, “We can’t build a factory that supports your product.”

The blueprint was unclear. Or, to extend the whitewater metaphor, the current kept shifting. Still, in the first of three phases of development, “we kind of oversized stuff and made it flexible and scalable enough to be able to handle future demand,” says Ross, adding that the cooking suite has “absolutely everything” — griddles, charbroil grills, fryers — to support a versatile and evolving menu.

Eddy’s equipment package also includes products from other Ali Group and Welbilt® brands, such as a Cleveland tilt skillet, a Delfield® custom modular chef’s counter and expediting counter, an Edlund receiving scale, a Frymaster® electric fryer and Moffat Turbofan double-stacked convection ovens.

Ice, Ice Baby

Montgomery Whitewater is one of just three recirculating whitewater parks in the U.S. Dave Hepp, Montgomery Whitewater’s General Manager, applied lessons learned from his time at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, N.C. “That project started with a smallish food and beverage setup, and then over the years, it grew to be massive,” he explains. “They did way more catering than they thought they were going to do and hosted these huge events.” On such occasions, the grounds were dotted with food tents and beer troughs, and food and beverage service had to “balloon up,” overtaking the original kitchen and necessitating an expansion.

With Eddy’s purposefully “overbuilt” to meet future demand, attention then turned to the production and distribution of ice. “We know there will eventually be kiosks spread around the grounds and maybe another beer garden,” Ross says. “I don’t know what the build-out schedule is, exactly, but we had to plan on transporting ice to remote bars and kiosks. We talked about the need for massive amounts of ice at any given time. When there’s an event going on, obviously demand is going to be even higher.”

Believing that an Ice-O-Matic

icemaker was the “obvious” choice for a number of reasons, Ross asked his son Heath for a specific model recommendation. The younger Ross is a Product Manager at Ice-O-Matic, based in Denver, and he advised his dad to install not one but two 48-inch Ice-O-Matic CIM1446 machines — one kitchen-based and one remotely based — to keep up with demand during peak season. Each machine makes more than 1,500 pounds of ice every 24 hours.

The CIM1446 makes a half cube, the most versatile ice type, says Heath Ross: “It can be used for soft drinks; it can be used for cocktails; it can be crushed without damaging your blender; it can be used to chill drinks in coolers; it’s even been used for chilling soup in food prep — stuff like that.”

“Another reason I recommended this machine is just because of how easy it is to clean,” Heath continues. “Generally speaking, all ice machines get gross, but this is the easiest-to-clean ice machine on the market. For regular cleaning, all you have to do is remove the front panel from the machine, and you have access to all the components that need cleaning. No tools needed.”

These removable plastic components are dishwasher safe. A splash of descaling and sanitizing solution and a push of a button initiates a two-phase deep-cleaning cycle. An LED display indicates when it’s time to clean the machine and connects with a mobile app to run diagnostics.

Because kitchen staff are more than capable of cleaning the Ice-O-Matic CIM1446, the machine — which Heath describes as a “workhorse” — offers a swift return on investment compared with brands with warranty terms that require authorized service agents to de-gunk their icemakers.

Since its grand opening not too long ago, Montgomery Whitewater’s stakeholders have seen the “Field of Dreams” prophecy come to fruition: “If you build it, they will come.” And if you ply them with tasty food and plenty of icy beverages, they will stick around for a spell.



The Ice-O-Matic model CIM1446 machine helps keep Eddy’s stocked with fresh ice.



BRAND WATCH



Established:

1952

Machines shipped annually to more than 45 countries:

40,000+

Product SKUs:

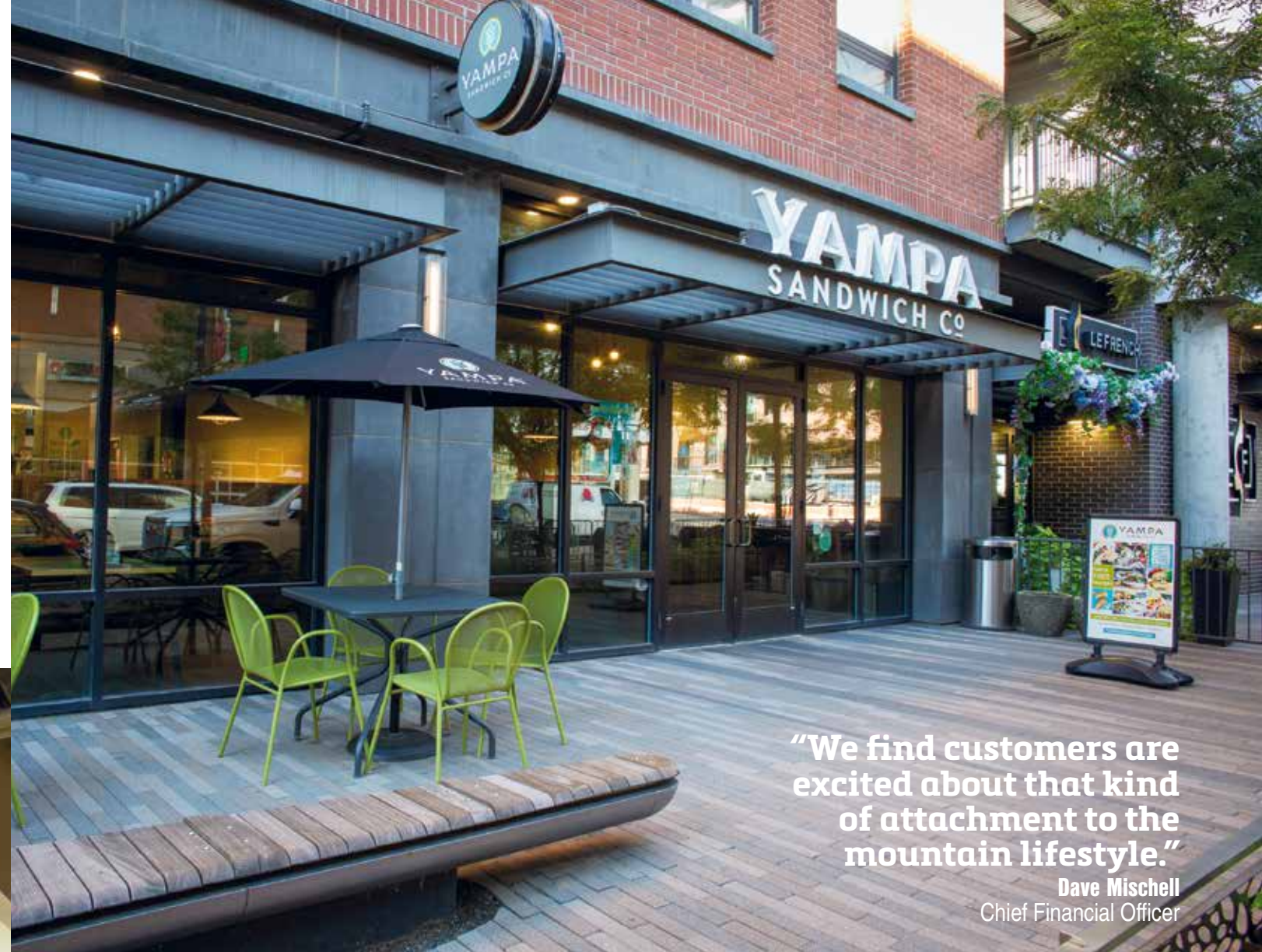
250+

iceomatic.com



# Sandwiches, Colorado Style

An up-and-coming chain warms up to its outdoor theme by serving fresh, hot sandwiches made with fresh ingredients.



**"We find customers are excited about that kind of attachment to the mountain lifestyle."**

**Dave Mischell**  
Chief Financial Officer

**W**hen you hear the word "Colorado," you almost immediately think of an outdoor lifestyle: hiking in the mountains, hitting the slopes or biking along a wooded trail. The up-and-coming Yampa Sandwich Company chain seeks to capitalize on that outdoor theme by serving fresh sandwiches with quality ingredients.

## Rustic Beginnings

The Yampa story begins in 1999 in Steamboat Springs, Colo., when a pair of high school friends from New England, Peter Boniface and David Pepin, reconnected over their shared love of

backcountry skiing. Finding a lack of healthy, creative sandwiches in the area, the two opened their own sandwich shop, called Back Country Provisions. "They catered to a lot of outdoor guides, fly-fishing guides, river rafting guides, Sno-Cat operators, snowmobilers, the whole works," says Yampa Sandwich Chief Financial Officer Dave Mischell. "So that's where the original name started." That one sandwich shop soon grew to three.

In 2010, Mischell called Boniface and Pepin and inquired about opening a store in Denver. "They said, 'Well, we want a partner,'" laughs Mischell, "and six months later, I was open with my first one." Mischell's single unit also became three within a short time, and in 2019, he says, "we decided to join forces to turn this into something bigger" — and he bought into the company. At that point, they rebranded



Back Country as Yampa Sandwich Company in honor of the Yampa River that runs through Steamboat Springs.

Yampa currently has eight stores throughout Colorado. While the existing Yampa units are all corporate-owned, the chain has set its sights on franchising, with a goal of 30 units (both corporate-owned



and franchised) by 2030. The initial expansion plan includes more stores in Colorado, with Arizona, Texas and Utah the next areas for growth.

Even as it expands, Yampa intends to keep the outdoor lifestyle branding, says Mischell. “We find customers are excited about that kind of attachment to the mountain lifestyle,” he says. The décor carries the theme through the Yampa Sandwich stores, which feature custom topographic maps in all its locations. “It’s kind of a signature design piece for us,” Mischell says. And even the sandwich names — Bushwhacker, Trailhead and Lost Creek, to name just a few — reflect the chain’s Colorado roots.

Starting from Scratch

Yampa Sandwich prides itself on using fresh, top-quality ingredients (meaning no additives, chemicals, pesticides, hormones or antibiotics) in its sandwiches and making everything from scratch. “Our mission statement even talks to this,” Mischell says. “The first part is to care as much about the food we prepare as the people who eat it. Our aim is to provide fuel for your adventures.”

Part of that goal means sourcing local ingredients whenever possible. For example, its bread products are made by a bakery in Denver, and Mischell says the chain is investigating



BRAND WATCH

MERRYCHEF

Designed first microwave ovens:

1950

First combination oven launched:

1968

High-speed ovens launched:

2000

merrychef.com



The Merrychef connex oven helps Yampa Sandwich produce delicious sandwiches like the Cuban (previous page), the Reuben (top right) and the BYO Pulled Pork (bottom right).



sourcing its greens from a hydroponic grower. And since Yampa has developed strong relationships with its suppliers, it has been able “to keep costs down and not really pass on too much of a [price] differential to our customers,” he says.

A quick glance at the Yampa menu shows that its ingredients go beyond those found in the traditional sandwich shop, with such items as roasted eggplant, Gorgonzola cheese and sauerkraut showing up in its sandwiches and salads. It’s a point of differentiation for the chain, says Mischell. “We believe that using unique

ingredients provides interesting flavor and texture profiles that ultimately result in a more enjoyable meal. It’s a menu that reflects more of a sit-down restaurant but in a QSR format,” he says.

Sandwich Prep Made Easy and Fast

To prepare these delicious, upscale sandwiches, Yampa Sandwich Company relies on the connex®16 high-speed oven from Merrychef®, a Welbilt® brand. The chain discovered the connex oven in a sort of roundabout way, according to

Alfred Laurie, Territory Sales and Marketing Rep for Colorado and Wyoming for The Redstone Group, an independent manufacturers’ rep firm. In 2018, Yampa asked Laurie to recommend some new sandwich prep tables to replace its existing units, and he recommended tables from Delfield®, another Welbilt brand. “I was able to speak to the quality and total cost of ownership that Welbilt brands provide and eventually earned orders for a new fleet of prep tables,” Laurie says.

By the early 2010s, Yampa was selling more and more hot sandwiches, and the ovens the chain used at that time were slowing production. So Laurie suggested Yampa look at the connex16.

The connex16 oven is only 18 inches wide, and it has the smallest footprint and largest cavity of any comparably sized oven available today. Its full 16-inch cavity width allows Yampa to produce more efficiently, Mischell says. “We were able to actually increase our throughput because we could add an extra sandwich in there,” he says. The oven allowed Yampa to do more than just heat up sandwiches and melt cheese, he adds. “We discovered other ways we could use that piece of equipment in our operations to make things more efficient, especially on the prep side of things. We make a lot of things from scratch; for example, we’ll toast nuts and seeds to incorporate into some of our recipes. And we’re looking at ways that we can use the Merrychef to speed up that process instead of using the more traditional convection oven that we’ve always done.” The oven has had other benefits, too, Mischell says. “It’s more powerful, quieter, easier to clean. There’s so many bells and whistles.”

To ensure that Yampa uses the connex16 oven to its full potential, Yampa receives culinary assistance from both the Merrychef team and Laurie’s colleague at The Redstone Group, Chef Steve Progar.

Merrychef and Delfield are just two of the Ali Group and Welbilt brands helping Yampa Sandwich Company. The chain also uses Edlund can openers, Kolpak® walk-ins and Metro shelving.

The partnership between Yampa, Merrychef and The Redstone Group helps Yampa grow while it remains faithful to its roots. Patrick Simon, Director of Sales for Merrychef USA West, says, “Merrychef is excited to partner with such a great company as Yampa Sandwich Company on their growth goals. Yampa has a fantastic business model that we are happy to be a part of and look forward to continuing to support.”

Laurie agrees that Yampa has found the recipe for success, Colorado-style. “They take a lot of pride in their unique flavor profiles and put out a quality product consistently,” he says.





# Rockwell's Café & Bakery's Need for Speed Leads to an Automated Solution

**S**ince its beginnings in 1987 as home to the Original and Famous Chocolate Curl and Fudge Fantasy Cakes, Rockwell's Café & Bakery has successfully expanded to become a destination for signature wedding and custom-designed cakes as well as an all-day eatery featuring gourmet and comfort foods. In addition

to its original Villa Park, Calif., site, Rockwell's opened a second location in San Clemente, Calif., in 2018. Rockwell's is well known in the area for more than its menu as it supports community events, local schools, Villa Park's Rotary Club, Women's League and City Council as well as the Make a Wish Foundation.

"I grew up in this town and with Rockwell's," says Juli Beltran, Rockwell's Café & Bakery's Chef and Manager. "It was a little bakery in a strip mall among the orange groves."

Current owners Bill Skeffington and his wife, Laurie, who purchased Rockwell's in 2012, expanded the operation to include not just a bakery and café but also a bar.

"We're a busy business in a small town, and people come here from all over," says Beltran. "We see three or four generations come in here and say we did their parents' or grandparents' wedding cakes. We offer all types of baked goods, including cakes, pastries, muffins, cookies, eclairs, cheesecake and pies; everything sweet, we do in the ovens."

The signature cakes are the bakery's bestsellers, but everything across the board sells well, according to Beltran. This includes custom cakes and cookies to order, along with wedding cakes. Birthday cakes represent another specialty. "We have a chocolate box cake that is like a Ding Dong on steroids; it's a 4-inch box cake covered in chocolate ganache," she says. "We also sell a lot of pastries, including Danishes and muffins, in the morning."

When Beltran took over as bakery manager, Rockwell's was utilizing a rotating oven that roughly measured 8 feet by 10 feet. "We called it 'The Beast,'" she recalls. "It was an old-fashioned oven that was great for cooking bread and pizza. We could use it for baked goods, but it took a lot of time, and we're a very busy bakery."

In addition, staff working the oven had to stand shoulder to shoulder in the kitchen due to the oven's size. They also were constantly rotating the food cooking in the oven to ensure consistency. If this

wasn't accomplished in a timely manner, items would burn. And it was common to have a steak cooking next to an order of cookies.

"Our business has tripled since I've been here, so I told Bill and Laurie we needed new convection ovens," Beltran says. "Not only was the rotating oven cooking unevenly, which necessitated us keeping constant watch on the product, but the heat would sometimes drop, rise or stop altogether. Because employees had to keep checking on the product being baked, overtime was ridiculous."

Kyle Rinker, Regional Sales Manager, National Accounts, at Moffat, an Ali Group company, saw all these issues firsthand when he went on a visit to Rockwell's with Foodservice Equipment Agents, Moffat's independent manufacturers' rep, who serve the area. Both realized there was opportunity for a change and suggested Rockwell's check out what Moffat had to offer.

At that time, Rockwell's was planning to relocate its production bakery since it had basically outgrown its first Villa Park location. A second facility dedicated to the bakery production was necessary to keep up with the high volume.

"We had to move the bakery as we were sharing the kitchen with the restaurant; everything was compacted, and we had no room," Beltran explains. "We found space across the parking



Fresh, hot baked goods coming out of the Moffat oven.

lot from our Villa Park site and decided to use a golf cart fitted with racks to transport our baked goods when needed."

Prior to the new bakery being completed, Beltran and the Skeffingtons had been looking at different oven types. Bill Skeffington suggested Beltran visit Moffat to check out the E35T6 Turbofan Convection Oven, so she took her bakers to the company's facilities to test-drive the units.

"Just looking at them, the oven was totally configured differently than a typical convection oven," Beltran recalls. "With these ovens, the narrow side of the pan goes in first, so they don't take up as much room inside. And when we were baking, it was like night and day. The product looked great,



“The product looked great, tasted great and the cooking time was cut in half at least, so we were getting items out in a timely manner.”

Juli Beltran,  
Chef and Manager,  
Rockwell’s Café &  
Bakery

tasted great and the cooking time was cut in half at least, so we were getting items out in a timely manner.”

Beltran admits that the hardest part was convincing Bill Skeffington, who was set on using an old-school oven, to switch things up. “I get it — he’s used to baking at a slower pace with a gas oven, but it just wasn’t conducive with today’s cook times,” she says. “I need it to work fast.”

Rockwell’s purchased six Moffat E35T6 ovens and stacked them to create a wall of ovens that can easily keep up with its production needs for high-end desserts and pastries. “Moffat is great! We trained with Kyle at their facility for two or three hours,” Beltran says. “When we were set up and ready to go, they answered all our questions and

addressed any issues, which were quickly fixed.”

Beltran adds that Rockwell’s old-school bakers were used to the gas oven, so she wasn’t sure how they’d do with a digital oven. “When we took them to Moffat’s facilities to work with the new oven, and they saw how fast it was, they picked it up so quickly,” she recalls.

Because Moffat was involved early on in the construction phase, the company was able to work with Rockwell’s as the construction drawings were being developed. This meant the facility had the proper utilities and ventilation to support the ovens. There was makeup air within the building, but no vent. “Ventilation was a huge thing, and the fact that Moffat’s E35T6 convection oven is certified ventless was huge,” Rinker says. “The city signed off on the units for this reason.”

Traditional ovens require a bigger investment; by going ventless, Rinker estimated that Rockwell’s would realize considerable cost savings.

While other ovens measure 36 inches wide and require 6 inches of clearance on each side, Moffat’s ovens, which measure 9 inches linear by 6 feet front to back, need minimal space yet provide more throughput.

“We were also able to add two more ovens due to the smaller size,” Beltran says. “With other oven brands, only four would fit.”

Rockwell’s opted for the touch-screen E35T6. “It was great for them to incorporate the touch-screen version as cooks could program recipes,” Rinker says. He adds that not only has there been significant labor savings since pans no longer need turning during the cooking process, but consistency is also enhanced.



Cookies are just one of the specialties at Rockwell’s.



### 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)

Moffat Turbofan ovens replaced a massive gas-powered oven in Rockwell’s kitchen.

“My bakers are ecstatic,” Beltran says. “These ovens are quiet and so much faster than the rotating units. They incorporate timers and do everything for you. We don’t have to set timers to rotate pans or babysit; we can get more done.”

Beltran adds that, in addition to being easy to use, cleaning at the end of the week is simplified; cooks just run the steam feature, and when the oven cools down,

the interior can be easily wiped clean with a cloth.

“Since we’ve been using these ovens, I’ve been getting so many more positive responses from our customers than ever before,” Beltran says. “They are saying our cakes are so moist, and we’re getting a great response from people who’ve had our cake at a party who are coming in to order their own cakes.”





# Selling Time... and a Great Cup of Coffee



Adrian Deasy,  
Founder and CEO



## An Innovative Idea

Octane Coffee is the brainchild of Adrian Deasy, Founder and CEO, who studied mechanical engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Engineering runs in his family: Both his father and grandfather were also engineers. Deasy says he's always been passionate about robotics: "I've always had a knack for it. I used to do a lot of competitions back in the day. I won a bunch of state titles and placed nationally."

The genesis for Octane Coffee came when he and a venture capitalist friend were walking through an automation show at Chicago's McCormick Place in 2017. They passed a coffee stand with a huge line stretching out in front of it. Deasy commented to his friend, "Their coffee is OK; their marketing/branding

is great. But the customer experience sucks. Why haven't they automated this with robots yet?"

The friend then spent three months researching the feasibility of an automated coffee shop. After the research was complete, Deasy got a call from him. "Hey, that robot coffee shop idea you came up with? You should do that. I'll put in the first \$50,000."

The challenge of developing a robotic coffee delivery system was almost the least of the problems Deasy had to address. For example, local authorities had no idea how to classify Octane Coffee under zoning and building regulations. "It is not a restaurant. So then what is it? Is it a mobile food truck? Eventually, what we figured out is that the closest definition of what we're

**Y**ou may think your local coffee shop can make your regular brew fast, but chances are, it doesn't happen anywhere near as fast as it does at Octane Coffee in Waukesha, Wis., where 30 seconds or less is the average pickup time.

From a distance, Octane's stylish, modern, red, white and black design might look like any other neighborhood coffee place with a drive-through lane. But when you get closer, you see the location has no doors or windows. In fact, there's no one inside. Octane Coffee delivers its coffee robotically to drive-through customers.





The Best Coffee for the Fastest System

Every customer at Octane Coffee gets a true artisan coffee. Octane partnered with Stone Creek Coffee, a Milwaukee-based chain of nine upscale, sophisticated coffee shops, to supply it with beans. Stone Creek and Octane represent two different sides of the coffee equation: While Octane serves quickly, Stone Creek provides a place where customers can linger over its farm-to-cup coffees.

But Stone Creek Managing Director and Co-Owner Eric Resch says that both types of clients want a good cup of coffee. “We share that in common,” he says. Stone Creek technicians worked with Adrian Deasy at Octane to ensure that their coffee would be delivered with peak flavor. “It was important to me — because of the quality we deliver in our retail stores — that he was able to deliver a similar quality, although with totally different equipment in a totally different time frame,” Resch says. “We were able to work in partnership with the Egro equipment and Adrian to make it work at a very high level.”

That successful partnership means that even though Deasy and Resch are both in the business of selling coffee, there’s not a trace of competitiveness. “We’re friends; we help each other,” Resch says. “We want each other to succeed. We don’t see ourselves as competitors in any way, shape or form.”

doing is a vending machine,” Deasy laughs. With that classification, he went to the city to get a building permit. “And the joke was — you don’t need a building permit for a vending machine!”

Putting It Together

Another hurdle was finding a coffee machine that would work with Deasy’s internal systems

and produce great coffee. “We had deep discussions with all of the major super-automatic [coffee machine] manufacturers, and almost all of them rejected our need to connect to their equipment with a computer to trigger a coffee to be made,” he says. But then he discovered Egro. Not only did Egro have machines that produce high-quality



Robotic arms take the brewed coffee and move it to the delivery window for pickup.

coffee, but he also discovered that the company would partner with him on a custom development project to allow his system to communicate with its coffee machines.

After almost three years of development and testing, all the pieces of the Octane Coffee System came together, and the first Octane Coffee had its grand opening in summer 2023 in Waukesha, about 20 miles west of Milwaukee. The kiosk is built to serve up to 400 drinks per day without any human intervention or restocking. Like many other coffee

concepts, the service begins with an app on which the customers place their orders. But the similarities end there. “Our mobile ordering app tracks the customer’s location so we can line up their drink production to occur two to three minutes ahead of their arrival,” Deasy says.

A small computer at the Octane Coffee kiosk collects the orders, distributes the work to other machines and schedules the order in which drinks are produced. The drink production, including customization requests, is handled by four Egro coffee machines: two each of the Egro One and the Egro Next. “We have one robot inside the cell that acts like a cup-handling unit,” Deasy says. “It grabs cups

and shuttles them to the correct Egro machine.” After the Egro machine brews the coffee, the robotic arm picks up the cup and moves it to be lidded. Octane built a custom lidding and labeling machine that not only installs the lids on the cups but can also print personalized customer messages, such as “Haven’t seen you in a while! Welcome back,” directly on the lids. Upon completion of the coffee order, the arm picks up the cup and moves it to the pickup window, where the customer scans a QR code they received at the time of the order. The window unlocks, the serving platform rotates to deliver the drink, and the customer has their order — all in the space of about 30 seconds after scanning the code.

Octane has held to its 30 seconds or less delivery promise, Deasy says, and often beats it. “It is comically fast. Watch somebody pull up, and if they’ve done it before, they beep and they grab their drink. They literally are driving off in less than 10 seconds,” he says. He does wonder sometimes if he might have created a monster, citing a recent Google review. “Somebody gave us four stars the other day, saying: ‘The first coffee I ordered was instantaneous. My second coffee, I had to wait one minute. Four stars. I’m thinking, where else on planet Earth can you get this?’” he laughs. (Even Octane’s logo — a combination letter O and coffee cup with cartoon-style speed lines coming out of it — implies quickness.)

And this all occurs with no human on-site. “We stop



The customer receives a QR code at the time of ordering that releases the order for pickup.

“Egro have been amazing partners for a bespoke project like ours.”

Adrian Deasy

by once a day to restock it with cups, lids, beans, syrups, milk and juices. We do the standard Egro cleaning routines. And then we get out of there,” Deasy says. The Octane Coffee stand has a production capacity of about 400 cups daily, so all supplies are restocked to a capacity of 800 cups to handle any dispensing or equipment issues and to aid with reliability and redundancy.

The Octane Coffee business model actually benefited from the changes that rocked the industry during the pandemic, Deasy says. When the Octane team started research in 2018, “we thought we were going to have to drag customers into our vision of the future with app-only ordering — no lobby, no bathrooms and no employees on-site,” he says. The changes brought on by the pandemic actually made customers much more open to hands-off service, he says. “Now the customer is trained and sometimes demands that type of service interaction when ordering their coffee,” he says.

and advanced milk system. Like every Egro coffee machine, the One and Next deliver consistently delicious coffee, cup after cup after cup. “Their reliability has been great,” Deasy says, “and the drink quality is top-notch.” Just like the machines, Egro service is top notch, too. “Egro have been amazing partners for a bespoke project like ours,” he adds. “We know we have unique requests and demands for machines that were never designed to run in a system like we’ve built, but they’ve been very willing for us to push the limits of their hardware and software to help us deliver our fully automated customer experience.”

The Egro team is excited to be part of the Octane Coffee concept as well. “We are thrilled to support an innovative concept like the one Adrian has created in Wisconsin,” says Andreas Willhoff, Midwest Regional Manager for Rancilio Group North America. “I think we are only just starting to see what Egro super-automatic machines are capable of, and our commitment to Adrian and Octane Coffee will help us progress the technology in incredible ways.”

For Adrian Deasy, seeing the Octane Coffee system come to fruition is a dream become reality. “This has been a five-year-plus journey from idea to selling coffee,” he says. “We’re thrilled to finally be live and seeing customers’ happy faces when they get their coffee so fast.” He sums up the whole experience as a combination of speed and service: “We sell time...with a great cup of coffee.”

Fast and Perfect Coffee

No matter how fast the coffee is produced, customers aren’t going to buy it unless it’s perfect every time, and that’s where the Egro coffee machines come in.

The Egro One is fully automatic and uses advanced Swiss coffee technology for high-quality espresso extractions. Separate boilers manage the steam and coffee delivery independently. The fully automatic Egro Next features a self-adjusting grinder

BRAND WATCH



Began production of coffee machines:  
**1934**  
Developed the first fully automatic espresso machine:  
**1972**  
USA office opened:  
**1999**  
Number of service providers:  
**600+**  
**ranciliogroupna.com**





**W**hat's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of hot dogs? Maybe it's buns. Or beer. It probably isn't axes — that is, unless you've visited a Crave Hot Dogs and BBQ. More about the axes later.

#### Building on Experience

The husband-and-wife team of Samantha and Salvatore Rincione founded Crave Hot Dogs and BBQ in 2018. Both Rinciones have had extensive restaurant industry experience: more than 15 years' experience for Samantha and over 25 years for Salvatore. "We decided it was time to make a brand that we could call our own and start to build our own company," Samantha says.

After doing market research, they settled on a hot dog and barbecue concept, and the first Crave opened in Georgia. To say it was an immediate success is a bit of an understatement; within a few years, the chain expanded to 20 units, and now stands at 30 units and 9 food trucks.

All Crave units are franchised, and a majority of franchisees — 85%, by Samantha's estimate — are veterans of the U.S. military. Salvatore is a veteran, which helps create a special connection between Crave and the vets. "When they get out of the military, a lot of people need something to do. They need a second career," says Samantha.

"They need to integrate into so-called normal life without being in the military, which is very challenging for a lot of people." Understanding this, Crave established a special program for veteran franchisees to help them integrate into the business. "It's a business where you don't need food experience to run, so they're able to hop in there and run the business effectively."

If customers can't come to Crave, Crave can come to them via food trucks. Crave has food trucks in eight states, which "are basically a Crave on wheels. They have every piece of kitchen equipment our restaurants have," Samantha says. The 22-foot-long trucks service special events or sell from designated city food truck areas. Customers can even request a food truck for their events by booking it on the Crave website. The trucks have proven wildly popular, Samantha says: "A lot of them wind up being booked [for] breakfast, lunch and dinner daily in addition to private events."

#### Menu Mania

The Crave menu has a mind-boggling array of hot dog choices — everything from traditional favorites like a chili cheese dog and a Chicago-style dog to a loaded baked potato dog (topped with tater tots, bacon and cheddar cheese) and a cheesy mac dog (topped with macaroni and cheese, bacon and even more cheddar). The "BBQ" in the name appears on a number of menu items, including sandwiches, tacos,

sliders and a mac 'n' brisket bowl, which Samantha says is one of the chain's biggest-selling items. Crave also sells the barbecue items by the pound for at-home enjoyment. An array of sides and desserts round out the menu. The chain also features a limited-time offer each quarter. "We try to keep it fun and interesting," Samantha says.

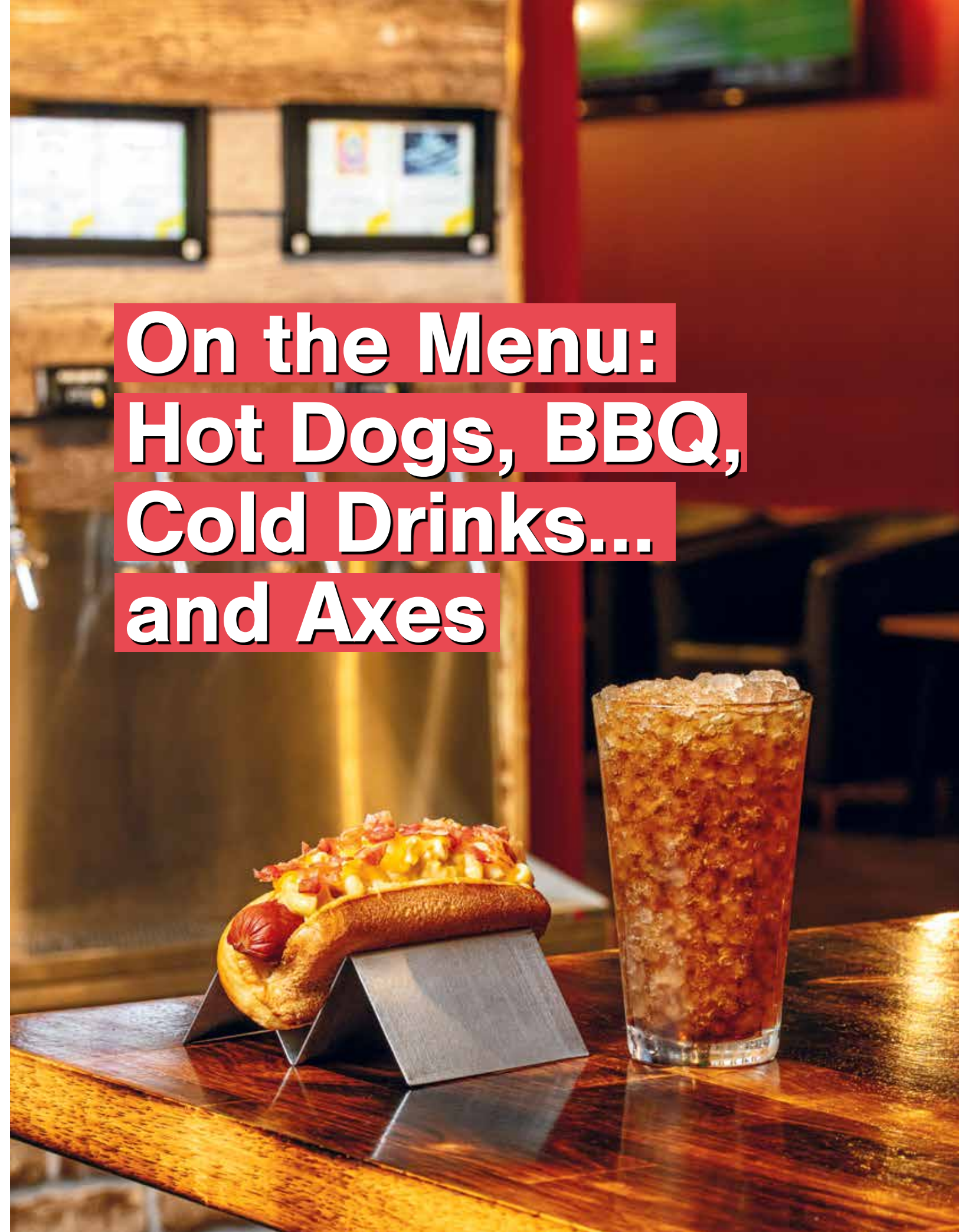
True Crave fanatics can order off the secret menu, says Samantha. "We have a secret menu that only people who vigorously follow us on social media know about," she says. The secret menu features short-term items that don't appear on the regular menu. Customers love it, she says "because they know there's something out there that other people don't know about. It's very fun. A lot of customers really like it, especially the regulars."

Another big draw at Crave is its wall of beer taps. Each unit has between 18 and 32 taps installed in a self-service setup, with touch screens above each tap with information on each brew. Customers load value onto a card, which they then swipe at the tap for their desired drink.

#### Burying the Hatchet

It's not unusual for bars or restaurants to have an entertainment component, such as pinball machines or a dart board. But Crave's entertainment option has really hit the bull's-eye with many customers. "We were looking for something very fun, very interesting to bring people in as an entertainment-type venue,"

## On the Menu: Hot Dogs, BBQ, Cold Drinks... and Axes



**All Crave units are franchised, and a majority of franchisees — 85%, by Samantha's estimate — are veterans of the U.S. military.**



A Metro holding cabinet keeps food warm in the kitchen.



Samantha says. “We did a lot of research and found there are axe lanes that are actually digital. It’s a real wooden board [with] real axes.” In a walled-off area, adult customers can throw the axes at targets projected digitally at the end of the lane. “You can do Connect Four, Kill the Zombie, Tic-Tac-Toe, things like that,” she says. Other customers can stand outside the lanes and watch the axe-throwing fun. All the Crave units opened in 2023 have the lanes, and the chain is retrofitting older units. The axe lanes are such a hit that “the Crave model moving forward will all include axe lanes,” Samantha says.

Choosing the Right Ice

Crave’s equipment supplier, Burkett Restaurant Equipment & Supplies, has been with the chain since company President Jameel Burkett connected with Samantha on LinkedIn. “We started talking, and we hit it off well with Samantha and Sal. We learned about this concept they were developing called Crave Hot Dogs and BBQ,” Burkett says. His company helped the Rinciones equip their first store, and “now we’re doing like 15, 20 stores a year with them,” he says.

So when Crave decided to use chewable ice in its drinks, Burkett made the natural



recommendation: Scotsman. “We were huge fans of nugget ice, and we did a lot of research on different vendors. Burkett said Scotsman was a great option for us,” Samantha says. “After we put in the first unit, it was very successful. So we decided to go national with it.”

But Crave gets more than just great ice from Scotsman — it gets great service as well. “What I like about Scotsman is if they have a recommendation or see room for improvement somewhere, they’ll give me a call. They don’t take their customers for granted,”

Samantha says. “I think they look at their customers and say, ‘How can we improve that customer experience?’ And they work to do that without even being asked. That goes a long way with us here.”

Besides the Scotsman ice machines, Crave also relies on Metro holding cabinets and walk-in coolers from Kolpak®, a Welbilt® company, to keep product cool.

A Bright Future

Burkett sees the growth potential for Crave to be just about limitless. “They’re doing

Crave has a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.

it right,” he says. “We’ve worked with a lot of other concepts that can never get out of the startup mentality. But Samantha and Sal know how to build a franchise business. I think they’ll be in every state in the country in the next five years.”

Ken Harris was previously Regional Sales Manager for Scotsman, and is currently Vice President of Sales at ACP Inc. He agrees that Crave has the right recipe for success. “The concept is interesting and fun,” he says. “I’ve been to several of their

locations and always enjoyed the food and atmosphere. I’m glad their customers love Scotsman’s nugget ice. Samantha and Salvatore are great people, driven and hardworking, and are doing great things to grow the business responsibly.”

The Scotsman ice machine stands ready to deliver popular nugget ice for beverages.



BRAND WATCH

Scotsman

Machines installed worldwide:

1,000,000+

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

12,500

Scotsman ice cubes produced daily worldwide:

6 billion

Crystal-clear ice cubes introduced:

1950

The Original Chewable Ice introduced:

1981

scotsman-ice.com



05

Innovation

# Delfield Helps Fulton County Schools Serve Students



Alyssia Wright, Executive Director of School Nutrition, Fulton County Schools

To be successful today, a foodservice operation needs to be flexible. And that's especially important when it comes to school foodservice. With ever-changing nutritional requirements, fluctuating school populations and challenging labor issues, school foodservice directors nowadays have to be about as flexible as a 1950s vintage Slinky toy.

Few people know that better than Alyssia Wright. As Executive Director of School Nutrition for the metro Atlanta area Fulton County Schools, every day presents a new set of problems that require flexible thinking to solve. And, she says, her equipment has to be flexible, too. "That's very important because the availability of food products changes constantly. Our students' preferences

change, and regulations change. Of course, our labor has changed a lot since COVID and can be very unpredictable," she says. "So the ability to have equipment that is functional to meet all of those needs is extremely critical at this time." As the taste preferences of students change, her equipment must be able to change with those preferences, she adds. "The first semester, students might want subs and salads, but then second semester, they may want hot options such as pizzas, build-a-bowl and spicy chicken sandwiches because it's colder outside." Equipment that is flexible, she says, "allows us to build the menus to fit the students' needs instead of building the menus around our equipment."

Marcy Mathews, Senior Vice President of Business Development for Delfield, says that flexibility is important to every operation, not just schools. "It helps operators 'future-proof' their

operations," she says. Even if operators anticipate they will always use a piece of equipment for just a single application, "that doesn't mean that change doesn't happen. So if you're thinking about your investment in equipment, you should be thinking, 'How can I use this for more than one thing?' That may be switching dayparts. It could be limited-time offerings. Or you just entirely change your menu. Having the ability to incorporate flexibility helps you to ensure that you have 'future-proofed' your operation so that you can serve what you want, where you want."

## Making Service Easier and More Efficient

To build more flexibility into her schools' food programs, Wright is using the FlexiWell® hot, cold and freeze combination serving counters from Delfield, a Welbilt® brand. Her previous serving units served either all hot or all cold items. Now, Wright says she has "the ability to change out the

menu for the day or the menu cycle. The FlexiWell will allow hot and cold options to be offered on the same piece of equipment without our having to convert it by adding ice to the wells."

Delfield FlexiWell food wells provide almost limitless flexibility to serve hot, cold and frozen products at the same time in any configuration, up to six wells. With its intuitive controls, it's simple to turn the unit on or off, or to switch between hold and cold.

FlexiWell food wells deliver labor savings, too — a fact to which Wright can testify. With more than 20 years in foodservice, she can remember when "we had to pour pitchers of water into our serving line, plug them in and wait for them to get hot before we could add food — which had to be done at the beginning of the day. At the end of the day, I had to use a vacuum to suck the water out. It was very labor intensive." Not having to deal with heating water for the wells, she says, "alleviates a good 30 minutes of work just to get our lines prepped for service."

FlexiWell food wells also save space, Mathews says. "In the past, where you may have had a dedicated serving area for hot and a dedicated serving area for cold, you now have the ability to put that all into one piece, reducing your overall footprint," she says.

Wright is also pleased with the way the FlexiWells display the food. "I'm really, really, really big on presentation...how our customers — our students — see the food from the front of the serving line," she says. "Our students eat with their eyes, and the LED lights make the food pop on the serving line. And I can also tell you that we love how the Delfield equipment is easy to clean."

Many of the features Wright appreciates on the FlexiWell came from customer input, Mathews says. Feedback on the design and features of previous models were incorporated into this version to make it even more user-friendly, she says. For example, customers requested a simple, intuitive control that could be operated by almost anyone on staff. "So anyone can walk up to the FlexiWell and understand how to operate it — and not be intimidated by it or have to worry if they've used it properly," she says.

All in all, Wright is looking forward to having increased flexibility — not to mention time and labor savings — with the Delfield FlexiWells. "They will save on labor; they will help with presentation," she says. "I could just go on and on."

## BRAND WATCH

**Delfield**

Founded:  
**1949**

Consecutive years Delfield has received the ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year Sustained Excellence Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy:

**14**

The natural hydrocarbon refrigerant used in Delfield's GreenGenius® system:

**R290**

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



# 1,000,000 Slices of Pizza...and Counting



**T**he 322 Pizza Bar is definitely not your average neighborhood pizza place. First, it's located on the spectacular Fremont Street Experience in Las Vegas, with all its light shows, concerts and attractions. Second, unlike most pizza restaurants, it specializes in slices, not whole

pies. In fact, 322 Pizza Bar Manager Chris Hazelton says only 8 % of his sales come from the restaurant's 18-inch "monster" whole pies; the remaining 92 % are slice sales. Of course, "most people kind of steer away from it when they see a whole pie is \$64," he laughs. And, unlike most neighborhood pizza joints, which serve a local clientele, Hazelton's customers come from all over the U.S. "We get a lot of customers from the Midwest and California. We get compliments all the time from people from New York, Chicago — some of the big pizza meccas — and they love our pie," he says.

The focus on slices has worked well for 322 Pizza Bar, which last year celebrated its fifth anniversary and passed the 1,000,000 mark in single-slice sales. Along with that famous pizza, the 322 menu features Bavarian pretzels and

New York-style chili dogs. And to accompany the food, there's a full bar renowned for its shot specials.

## High-Volume Production Made Easy

At a high-volume operation like the 322, it's essential to have an oven that can stand up to the production

requirements. Previously, Hazelton used a stone conveyor oven to produce his pizzas. "It was a good product in the beginning," he says. "It had these nice brick stones on a conveyor." However, he ran into maintenance issues with the oven. "There's a lot of maintenance issues with stones that break and things

like that. When that happens, it slows down your process," he says. "So, although it was a great product in the beginning, it [was] very maintenance-heavy." The oven also had some operational issues. "We had to throw the pies directly on the stone, meaning we had to slide them off a pan onto the stone. That was a lot of training [for staff]. And your toppings get all messed up," he says.

So a new oven solution was in order. Hazelton had heard that Lincoln would introduce a new oven, the 2424, at a local pizza show. "I don't believe you can buy an oven without testing it first," Hazelton says. "The way the dough performs, the cheese melts and the toppings being properly cooked is everything." So he packed up a cooler with his ingredients and took it to the pizza show to do a test. "After five pies, I knew we needed the Lincoln 2424," he says.

The Lincoln 2424 Aperion® oven is Lincoln's fastest-cooking oven, thanks to its dual blower motors. Independent adjustable top and bottom air controls provide precise heating to all sides of the food, and front-located easyTouch controls make operation a breeze. And its removable door makes the oven a snap to clean.

## Pleasing Customers and Staff

The Lincoln 2424 oven is keeping up with the tough demands of the 322 Pizza Bar and easily producing the 200 pies he sells daily. "The pies come out perfect in one pass," he says. "The consistency is much better

than before." He also says the 2424 oven has made training employees easier. "You don't have to train somebody to toss the pie properly into the oven. The training aspect has dropped dramatically, and the pizza comes out just as good or better without being on a deck," he says.

Hazelton is so pleased with the performance of the Lincoln 2424 oven that he now has three of them. "We're keeping up with our line. We've reduced our labor and reduced the amount of stress during rush hours. And training is less intensive," he says. "All in all, it's way better."

Simon Maple, Lincoln Director of Culinary, says that Lincoln is "very happy with the relationship we've created" with Hazelton and the 322 Pizza Bar. The 2424 oven is a win-win for Hazelton, says Maple. "He's told by customers that the pizza is more consistent. His staff loves the oven because it doesn't put out as much heat as other ovens, and it's easier for them to clean." Maple looks forward to a long association with the 322 Pizza Bar. "We'll be there at the forefront, doing all the things that we need to do to keep this relationship going."

Hazelton agrees, saying that "working with the Lincoln team has been amazing, from the sales team to service and the management team. Everyone has been great. The Lincoln team's been very responsive, and we feel that we've got backup support if we need it. Overall, it was a great investment. We highly recommend the Lincoln 2424."



**BRAND WATCH**  
**Lincoln**

Established:  
**1957**

Number of  
countries with  
Lincoln ovens:  
**45**

Number of pizzas  
cooked daily  
worldwide:  
**500,000+**

[www.lincolnp.com](http://www.lincolnp.com)



Tony Saponaro preps mushrooms in the reconfigured kitchen space. New shelving and worktables streamline preparation and help eliminate clutter.



# Doing Good...and Making Good Pizza

Many restaurants claim to be “doing good” for the community. For some operations, that might take the form of recycling or using biodegradable products. Or perhaps it means they contribute to the local food bank. But it’s arguable that few restaurants do more for the community than Brewability in Englewood, Colo. By giving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to prepare and serve food and drink, this pizza restaurant and brewery serves both the

disabled community and the community at large.

Tiffany Fixter is owner of Brewability, and her background is in special education. After receiving a Master’s degree in Autism Spectrum Disorders from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, she taught for about



Tiffany Fixter

10 years in Kansas City, Mo. Fixter then moved to Colorado where she ran a day program for disabled adults. Upon seeing that the participants were merely killing time doing menial pursuits, she left the program.

After that experience, Fixter came up with the idea of a brewpub of her own. By staffing it with disabled workers, it would be an inclusive place where people with disabilities would feel comfortable. She opened Brewability as an LLC in Denver in 2016 and started serving pizza two years later. The first location was very small and difficult for disabled customers and workers to negotiate, so Fixter acquired the current location in suburban

Englewood in 2019. It seats 99 and has an outside patio that seats an additional 60 patrons.

Despite opening the new location right before the pandemic hit, Fixter has managed to survive and even grow the business, in part due to a dedicated staff of 26 employees, about 90% of whom have some type of disability. “Dedicated” might be an understatement; the staff is so loyal that turnover is virtually nonexistent. Should any employee ever choose to leave, there’s a waiting list of 700 disabled people who want to work for Brewability, Fixter notes.

Brewability is not just a place to get great pizza and

beer; it also offers up a range of entertainment options nightly. “Every Tuesday we do trivia,” Fixter says, “and on Wednesdays we’re going to start doing music bingo. Fridays and Saturdays, I [have] multiple musicians or bands.” To ensure that all her patrons — even those with hearing loss — can enjoy the musical entertainment, she has partnered with a local firm, Feel the Beat, to install a dance floor that vibrates in time with the music. Brewability also serves as a gathering place for the disability community for events both happy and sad. “Unfortunately, in the disability community, people pass [away] younger, and so we’re also a place that gets chosen for celebrations of life,” Fixter says.

With all the concerns of keeping an operation running and the special needs of her staff, organization has not always been high on Fixter’s agenda; in fact, she actually has called Brewability’s lack of organization “one of our downfalls.” Organization, she says, is especially important “for our staff who are blind [or for] people on the autism spectrum. Everything does need to be organized. It can overwhelm our staff when that doesn’t happen.” When she heard about the Metro-sponsored Kitchen Storage Makeover contest in *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* magazine, Fixter thought it might be a good opportunity to improve the workflow and organization at Brewability. As this year’s winner, that’s exactly what happened.

## Getting Organized

An initial walk-through and

assessment discovered several main areas at Brewability that needed organizational help from Metro, the main one being the kitchen/food prep area. “Their prep areas were challenged not only from an access standpoint, but from an equipment standpoint as well,” says AJ Zambetti, Director of Creative & Brand Communications for Metro. “They actually cooked food on a burner on a low shelf. Their dough mixer was on the ground because it was nonfunctioning, and they had to fight with it all the time. So one of our big challenges was to make the area more accessible and efficient to prep pizzas and food, and deliver them to the customer.”

The first step involved moving the dough sheeter out of the back corner of the kitchen area and into an adjoining room called the “dough vault,” which also houses the mixer. The table that held the dough sheeter was removed and a Metro SmartLever™ Work Surface installed in its place. This allowed the induction burner and crepe maker to be moved up to a more convenient level. Rollable carts underneath provide storage and an additional prep area when necessary. A Metro SmartWall™ grid system with shelves and baskets was installed above the refrigerated prep table to provide convenient storage for utensils and dry ingredients. Shelves above the grids make maximum use of vertical space and provide storage for prep pans, dishes and pizza boxes.

In Brewability’s previous workflow, partially baked pizza crusts were removed to a side table which functioned as a combination prep and expediting station. In the

makeover, the expediting station was moved out of the way of production and closer to the pickup window. In its place, the team installed a TableWorx™ work table. An Easy Install Riser System was placed in the center of the table, effectively creating a pass-through between the ovens and the kitchen. Shelves on the riser make a convenient storage place for plates or other often-used items. Another TableWorx table was designated as the expediting station. Since its work surface can be easily adjusted from the top without disassembling, this worktable can serve a range of user heights — an important feature when addressing accessibility concerns.

Finished pizzas waiting for takeout now keep warm in a Metro C5® 3 Series holding cabinet. MetroMax® shelving was installed in the dish area to serve double duty as storage and as a drying rack.

One of the issues with Brewability’s kitchen setup has been the mess made by flour during the crust-making

**The staff is so loyal that turnover is virtually nonexistent.**



Alex Randall reads the new Braille labels in the reconfigured storage room.



Madison Sherock removes pizza boxes from a shelving unit placed in a hallway outside the kitchen.



process. Moving that process out of the kitchen and into the dough vault makes the kitchen cleaner and more efficient because the flour is now more contained. The mixer and sheeter, both used in dough production, are now on a new TableWorx table, which is more ergonomic for the crew members. And as an example of its “go the extra mile” spirit, a Metro team led by Vice President of Product Engineering Dave Reppert even repaired the mixer, which had not been working properly.

Shelves above the table store ingredients and mixing bowls. MetroMax rack shelving in the dough vault provides convenient storage for dry ingredients, paper products and #10 cans, and a can rack system makes product rotation simple. An electric can opener, courtesy of Edlund, replaced a much older manual model.

A Place for Everything, and Everything in its Place

Two rooms in the back of Brewability served as little more than “catch-all” rooms. One of the rooms stored everything from toilet paper to soda pop to musical equipment. The second room was nominally an office but “was just a junk room,” laughs Fixter, and was crammed floor-to-ceiling high with papers, boxes and all types of materials. Neither could be used by employees, especially those dealing with sight or movement issues.

In preparation for the makeover, the Brewability



Alyse Morgan gets flour from a bin in the dough vault. Dough-making equipment is now centralized here, along with canned goods on convenient racks.

crew did the proverbial yeoman’s work in moving out the materials and discarding them or putting them in storage. That gave the Metro team a clean slate with which to work. With some SuperErecta® shelving installed, the room actually became useable, not just as a real office but also as an overflow storage area for brewery needs and other items.

The second room also received SuperErecta shelving with the new EZ-ADD shelves, which allow adding or repositioning shelves without dismantling the entire unit. One shelving unit stores front-of-house items, such as canned beverages and napkins, while another holds cleaners and chemicals. A third unit houses the grain used by the brewery, which had previously been stored in a hallway — a problem for customers in wheelchairs or with other mobility issues.

To keep things in order, each shelf is clearly labeled



A new heated holding cabinet keeps pizzas warm for pickup orders.

as to what goes there. The special challenges faced by Brewability employees gave Metro’s Graphic Designer, Ciara Rodriguez, some new ways to think about labeling.

Instead of the usual labels in 12-point type, she designed them with larger text and icons. The area where olive oil is stored, for example, has a label with not only the words



Easily cleanable shelving and trays help bring organization to the brewery room.



Jacob Ruth with the new shelving in the storage room, which keeps grain for the brewery easily accessible.

“olive oil” but a small color graphic of an olive oil bottle. “I wanted really bold fonts, and really bright colors,” Rodriguez says. “If some people are visually impaired here but not fully blind, it might be easier to take a quick glance at an image rather than to read a whole

word. They’re also going to be adding Braille [in addition to] the images, so anyone who is actually blind will be able to figure out exactly where everything is.”

No Stone Unturned

The Metro Makeover reached virtually every area of

Brewability. Metro Max i Plastic Industrial shelving was installed in the brewery to help keep it organized. It can withstand the chemical environment of the brewery and its requisite high-pressure cleaning. In the brewery coolers, new dunnage racks help keep kegs organized and allow for easy cleaning underneath.

An underutilized passageway leading back to the restrooms became the perfect place to store pizza boxes, and a Super Erecta shelf unit now holds a number of them, assembled and ready for use with takeout orders.

A smaller version of that same shelving unit now stands near the cash register to hold Brewability-branded “swag” such as T-shirts and baseball caps.

Less Pain, More Gains

Nikki Escalante, Director of K-12 and Healthcare at The Redstone Group, an independent manufacturers’ rep firm, assisted the Metro crew in the makeover. “I’ve had a lot of fun working with [Brewability] and they’re so great with the staff,” she says. “I think it’s great for the community, and it’s good to see the community support it too.”

BRAND WATCH



Founded:  
**1929**  
Products:  
**30,000+**  
**metro.com**

Ultimately, there were two main goals to accomplish with the makeover at Brewability, says Metro’s Zambetti. The first goal, he says, is to “improve their workflow: how they work and how they process it, enabling them to be a cleaner, better operating kitchen. The second would be efficiency.”

Fixter has already noticed how the changes are improving Brewability’s workflow, particularly when it comes to making the dough. With the equipment now on a workable level, “it’s definitely easier as far the dough mixer [goes],” she says. “My back hurts less.” For someone who, as she readily admits, “struggles with organization,” the changes made by the Metro team have made a big difference at Brewability. “It’s safer, it’s more efficient. The staff is happier.” Beyond that, she says, it will help her staff grow. “Instead of trudging through piles of stuff, they can use the Braille labels to get paper towels or the cleaner they need. They don’t have to depend on us searching for something all the time. I think it’s going to help a lot of our staff be more independent.”



# Six Ali Group Companies Celebrate Anniversaries

2023 and 2024 mark important anniversaries for six Ali Group companies. Delfield celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, while Friginox and OEM turn 50 years old. Inducs, Koldtech and Kromo are all turning 25. Here are their stories.

75  
YEARS

**Delfield**

The Delfield® story begins on the east side of Detroit in 1949, when the company was founded by Paul DeLorenzo and Thomas Springfield. (The name “Delfield” is derived from the “DeL” in DeLorenzo and the “field” in Springfield.) The company grew steadily for 20 years and eventually built a second manufacturing plant in Cadillac, Mich. Over the years, Delfield underwent a number of ownership changes until it finally became part of the Welbilt® group of companies in 1999. Delfield joined the Ali Group when Welbilt, Inc. was acquired in 2022.

Today, Delfield produces a wide range of refrigeration and serving products, and is one of the largest custom stainless steel refrigeration equipment manufacturers in the world.

**delfield.com**



**Friginox**

Friginox was established in Villevallier, France, in 1973, with the goal of producing top-quality professional refrigeration equipment. In 1982, the company produced one of the first commercially available blast chillers. Today, Friginox produces a wide array of reach-in and roll-in refrigerated cabinets, refrigerated counters, blast chillers and shock freezers.

Friginox constantly invests in research and development, using high-quality materials and advanced solutions to meet the ever-changing needs of the foodservice, bakery and confectionery industries. Friginox truly brings “the next dimension of cold” to every food production operation.

Friginox became part of the Ali Group in 2000.

**friginox.com**



50  
YEARS

**Oem**

Oem was founded in Bozzolo, Italy, in 1973, as a maker of pizza ovens. Within a few short years, it was exporting its ovens to other countries in Europe. By 1980, Oem added other pizza-making products — dough mixers, dough dividers, dough rounders and pizza formers — to its product lines.

Today, Oem is recognized as one of the leading producers of pizza-making producers worldwide, selling more than 2,000 ovens and 1,200 pieces of preparation equipment annually. Its products are 100% made in Italy and are exported to more than 80 countries.

Oem became part of the Ali Group in 1996.

**oemali.com**



**Inducs**

Since its founding in Herisau, Switzerland, in 1998, Inducs® has specialized in bringing induction technology to foodservice kitchens. Inducs has always developed and manufactured the key components of its products, bringing Swiss quality and precision to everything it makes.

Inducs makes a full line of tabletop and installed induction appliances, including the unique INSTINCT line of induction grills to bring that “outside-grilled” flavor indoors. As more operations look toward energy-efficient alternatives to traditional cooking, Inducs products are well positioned to capitalize on this trend.

Inducs was acquired by Welbilt in 2013, and joined the Ali Group when Welbilt was acquired in 2022.

**inducs.com**

**Koldtech**

Koldtech® began operations in Thailand in 1998 under the name Welbilt Manufacturing (Thailand) Ltd. Koldtech offers a full range of refrigeration products, from standard upright and undercounter refrigerators to display showcases and wine chillers. The company also manufactures full-size modular panel walk-in coolers and freezers, and can customize its refrigeration products to fit a customer’s particular needs. Under the brand name Thermic, Koldtech makes free-standing and countertop ranges, holding and proofing cabinets and heated plate dispensers.

Koldtech was acquired by Welbilt in 2015, and joined the Ali Group when Welbilt was acquired in 2022.

**koldtech-welbilt.com**



**Kromo**

Kromo is a global leader in the production of dishwashing and warewashing machines. Founded in 1998, it offers the widest range of undercounter and hood-type models, potwashers as well as rack and flight-type machines in the industry — almost 150 models in all.

Kromo products are distributed in more than 120 countries around the world. Besides traditional dishwashing solutions for foodservice operations, it offers specialized equipment for such segments as bakeries and confectioners. Working under the concept of “Your Smart Wash,” every Kromo product is designed to focus on efficiency, labor savings and energy conservation.

Kromo joined the Ali Group in 2004.

**kromo-ali.com**



25  
YEARS



# 06

## Events

### Ali Group Party at HostMilano a Stellar Success

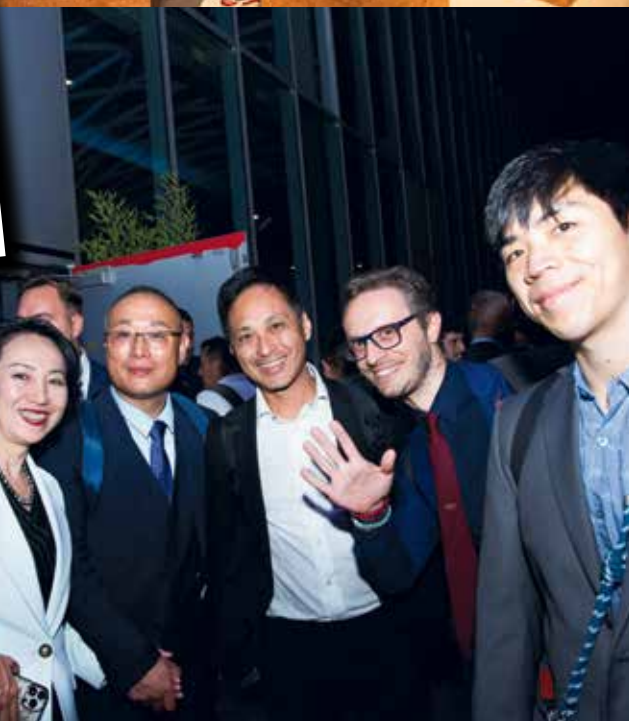
“Global Starts Local” was the theme of the Ali Group party held at the HostMilano trade show and exhibition in Milan, Italy, in October 2023. More than 1,300 guests were treated to a lavish array of food and drink at the Stella Polare conference center. During and after the party, there was musical entertainment to allow attendees to mingle or “let their hair down.”

More than 50 Ali Group and Welbilt® brands exhibited at the show, as did the Ali Group itself. Attendees got to see the latest advances in foodservice equipment to help them do their jobs more easily and more efficiently.

In its first conference since the pandemic, the HostMilano show attracted more than 180,000 foodservice professionals from 166 countries.









# 07

Ali Group



## Keeping Chocolate at the Perfect Temperature



When bakers and chefs need fine chocolate products, they demand Barry Callebaut chocolate. The Barry Callebaut Group is the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products, employing more than 13,000 people around the world in 65 manufacturing facilities and 27 Chocolate Academy teaching and training centers.

At the Chocolate Academy centers, customers come for

training and learning about Barry Callebaut products, and the company's R&D teams test new products before they are launched.

It's essential that chocolate be kept at a precise temperature, says Axelle Jeangirard, Global Brand Manager for Barry Callebaut's Chocolate Academy. "Chocolate is a very sensitive ingredient to work with, so it's important that we can count on equipment that is as high

quality and reliable as our chocolate," she says.

When the company needed a refrigeration partner, it turned to Polaris. "Several years ago, we started our partnership between Polaris and the Chocolate Academy in the U.K. and Greece," Jeangirard says. "And we are delighted to say that our new R&D application lab in the U.K. has also been equipped with the latest Polaris equipment."



"They need the best counters, blast freezers, proofers and cabinets that can guarantee the best end result during all of the production process," says Polaris Brand Manager Davide Renna.

Jeangirard says that not only has Polaris provided the best equipment for them, but it has also helped train Barry Callebaut staff on how to get the most out of the equipment. "Our teams are highly appreciative of

the equipment for its reliability and durability," she says. "We also had the chance to benefit from dedicated training, which helps to ensure that we use all functionalities to their maximum potential."

"We're very proud of this partnership because Barry Callebaut is recognized as a high-quality supplier in its business, exactly as Polaris is in its," Renna says.

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

## Fried Chicken, Indonesian-Style

The Richeese Factory chain of fried chicken restaurants has become a smashing success in its home country of Indonesia. Since opening its first restaurant in 2011, it has grown by leaps and bounds, with a target of 259 stores across Indonesia and Malaysia by the end of 2023. "Our stores have always been busy, and we have experienced huge demand," says Kenny Chong, Chief of Operations, QSR, at Richeese Factory. "We have received many inquiries from operators in other countries who want to franchise our brand."



While not the only fried chicken chain in the region, what sets Richeese Factory apart from the competition is the variety of barbecue sauces it offers, ranging from mild to extremely spicy. Cheese dips are another specialty of the chain.

Welbilt® has been a valued partner of Richeese Factory as it grows across

the region. "We started working with them to supply Frymaster® fryers," says William Fletcher, Vice President for the South East Asia and Australasia Region at Welbilt. "They needed a fryer that could cook consistently each time and deliver the same results. After numerous tests, Frymaster surpassed the competition, and they decided to go with us."

Through the Welbilt connection, Richeese Factory has added other Ali Group brands to its operation, including Carpigiani soft-serve machines, Mareno fry tops and Fabriteel® holding cabinets. Sourcing multiple products through one source was an attractive solution for Richeese Factory, Fletcher says. "We sealed the deal partly because Richeese Factory only had to talk to one person in Malaysia, who delivered the whole kitchen solution within the timeline we had promised."

Ali Group brands will continue to be an important part of the Richeese Factory kitchen as the chain continues its explosive growth. "Our aggressive plans to grow the business in the next three years mean we are looking forward to intensifying our working relationship," Chong says.

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





Executive Chef  
Danny Russo



## Sydney Restaurant Combines Local Seafood and Italian Cuisine



The stylish SALA restaurant in Sydney Harbour is delivering an exciting combination of fresh Australian seafood and authentic Italian cuisine. It features two private dining rooms — one of which has direct waterfront access and a terrace — and a kitchen designed to cater to boat hospitality on the harbor. “We wanted to make SALA special,” says Executive Chef Danny Russo. “It has a position on the waterfront at the end of a heritage-listed wharf in a world-class city. We are giving a modern feel to a historic site.”

SALA has two kitchens on two separate floors. Since Russo is a believer in letting diners see how their food is prepared, kitchen appearance is essential, but performance is more important. For that reason, he selected equipment

from Baron for his kitchens. For instance, SALA uses Baron fryers, which offer precise temperature control. “I want to create great-quality food consistently, and the fryers help with that,” he says. Because SALA is located on the wharf, electric cooking is more practical than gas, so all the Baron equipment is electric.

“I use Baron because I have a good relationship with them,” Russo says. “Many years ago, I used their chrome-top grill, and it blew me away with the quality. Now, that chrome-top grill is always the second thing I place in the kitchen after the pasta boilers.”

“The grills never let us down,” Russo continues. “I can do 150 covers day in, day out, and they still look brand-new. It is all about the details; it’s all about durability.”

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



## An Oasis in the City



In a city renowned for design and fashion, the relaxed, luxurious environment of Milan’s Horto restaurant gives customers a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Located in the center of the city on the rooftop of The Medelan building, Horto provides spectacular 360-degree views of Milan.

Horto bases its serving day around the sun, with breakfast service at sunup, followed by lunch and ending the day with a fine dining service. “We conceived Horto as a cultural project inviting us to reevaluate our relationship with time,” says Co-Founder Diego Panizza. Sustainability is also a major principle of Horto’s operation. The kitchen works only with producers located within one hour of the restaurant and focuses on serving seasonal products.

Grandimpianti was tasked with the design and coordination of the kitchen, based on the desires and specifications of Horto’s Chef Norbert Niederkofler. “We have created a kitchen layout that allows the chef to create his menu based on sustainability,” says Grandimpianti managing director Alessandro D’Andrade. Grandimpianti supplied equipment from various Ali Group companies, including Ambach kitchen equipment, Carpigiani ice cream machines, Comenda washing equipment and Hiber refrigeration. Grandimpianti worked through some major challenges in the Horto project. For example, “the delivery of the equipment was carried out at sunrise, with the help of a mobile crane to bring the machines to the floor,” says D’Andrade.

Panizza says Horto’s relationship with Grandimpianti is one of “mutual trust and respect. They are always present and aiding us in advancing our philosophy.”

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



The custom-built plate is the result of close collaboration with La Piadineria and knowledge of its processes

## Making Dough from Flatbread

The *piadina*, or *piada*, is a thin Italian flatbread made from flour, olive oil or lard, salt, and water. It’s the specialty of La Piadineria, an Italian fast-food chain with more than 350 locations. The La Piadineria stores fill their *piadina* with a wide range of ingredients, including Gorgonzola and Grana Padano cheeses, prosciutto, balsamic vinegar and Nutella. Combining traditional flavor with quick production is a necessity for La Piadineria, says Alessandro Pietroboni, Facilities Management Specialist for the chain. The chain has to combine “the operational efficiency typical of industrial processes with an original artisanal production,” he says.

To produce its delicious *piadina*, La Piadineria depends on equipment from Silko. More than 200 of the chain’s shops all across Italy are outfitted with a full Silko kitchen. “The challenge was to create a customized kitchen block, totally tailored to the customer’s needs,” says Elisa Simoni, Silko Key Account Manager (Italy).


Silko closely studied their production processes and developed a customized cooking station for La Piadineria, allowing the kitchen crews to prep ingredients sequentially and produce *piadini* faster. “The staff reacted enthusiastically to the introduction of the new cooking block,” says Pietroboni. “As well as facilitating the cooking process, it also improved working conditions.”

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





# Our Companies

 COOKING	 REFRIGERATION	 WASHING & WASTE MANAGEMENT	 ICE MAKERS	 BAKERY	 COFFEE MACHINES	 ICE CREAM & BEVERAGE DISPENSE	 MEAL DELIVERY, PREPARATION & STORAGE SOLUTIONS	 CONTRACT, DISTRIBUTION & SERVICE
<div>ALPHATECH</div> <div>AMANA<sup>®</sup> COMMERCIAL</div> <div>ambach<sup>®</sup> You, your kitchen</div> <div>baron</div> <div>BLUE SEAL</div> <div>Cleveland<sup>*</sup></div> <div>CONVOTHERM<sup>*</sup></div> <div>DEAN<sup>*</sup></div> <div>eloma</div> <div>Falcon</div> <div>Frymaster<sup>*</sup></div> <div>GARLAND<sup>*</sup></div> <div>INDUCS<sup>*</sup></div> <div>LAINOX<sup>®</sup></div> <div>Lincoln<sup>*</sup></div> <div>MARENO kitchen solutions since 1922</div> <div>MENUMASTER<sup>®</sup> Commercial</div> <div>MERRYCHEF<sup>*</sup></div> <div>metos cooking solutions</div> <div>MOFFAT</div> <div>Since 1879</div> <div>oem YOUR PIZZA HUB</div> <div>OLIS We innovate cooking</div> <div>PROXY PROFESSIONAL FOR YOU</div> <div>ROSINOX GRANDES CUISINES</div> <div>SILKO</div> <div>SunFire<sup>*</sup></div> <div>U.S. Range<sup>*</sup></div> <div>XpressChef</div> <div>BEVERAGE-AIR</div> <div>Delfield<sup>*</sup></div> <div>FRIGINOX LE FROID PROFESSIONNEL</div> <div>Friulinox REFRIGERATION. EXCELLENCE</div> <div>HARFORD<sup>*</sup></div> <div>hiber COOL EXPERIENCE</div> <div>KOLDTECH<sup>*</sup></div> <div>KOLPAK<sup>*</sup></div> <div>POLARIS<sup>®</sup> BEHIND THE FRESHNESS</div> <div>RDI<sup>*</sup></div> <div>TECNOMAC our technology, your taste</div> <div>VICTORY</div> <div>williams</div> <div>American Dish Service Manufacturers of Most Modern Equipment</div> <div>bi-line Conveyor Systems</div> <div>Champion</div> <div>CMA</div> <div>COMENDA TO CLEAN, WITH CARE.</div> <div>DIHR</div> <div>grandimpianti intelligent laundry equipment</div> <div>HCONVED</div> <div>KROMO</div> <div>MOYER DIEBEL</div> <div>NORDIEN-SYSTEM</div> <div>RENDISK</div> <div>WASHTECH</div> <div>Wexiödisk</div> <div>WMAXX<sup>*</sup> WAREWASHING</div> <div>BAR LINE ICE - MACHINES</div> <div>CRYSTAL TIPS<sup>*</sup></div> <div>ICEMATIC BE COLD WITH STYLE</div> <div>Ice-O-Matic<sup>®</sup> Ice. Pure and Simple</div> <div>KOLD-DRAFT</div> <div>Scotsman</div> <div>SIMAG</div> <div>ADAMATIC</div> <div>Belshaw</div> <div>BERTRAND PUMA</div> <div>BONGARD Always by your side</div> <div>CFI</div> <div>ESMACH</div> <div>MONO</div> <div>PAVAILLER</div> <div>QUEEN</div> <div>CREM</div> <div>EGRO MULTI-FUN BREWELLNESS</div> <div>EXPOBAR</div> <div>PROMAC business coffee machines</div> <div>RANCILIO coffee the World</div> <div>RANCILIO SPECIALTY</div> <div>spengler</div> <div>BGI COFFEE &amp; BEVERAGE MACHINES</div> <div>ICETEAM 1927</div> <div>BiB</div> <div>CARPIGANI</div> <div>ICETEAM 1927</div> <div>cattabriga</div> <div>ICETEAM 1927</div> <div>COLDEUTE</div> <div>Electro Freeze<sup>®</sup></div> <div>McCann's<sup>*</sup></div> <div>Multiple<sup>®</sup><sup>*</sup></div> <div>ICETEAM 1927</div> <div>PROMAC</div> <div>Ice &amp; Beverage Systems<sup>*</sup></div> <div>SERVEND</div> <div>AIR</div> <div>Aladdin Temp-Rite<sup>®</sup> Commercial Food Preparation Equipment</div> <div>AUREA Advanced Food Preparation Equipment</div> <div>burlodge Touchless, 40,000</div> <div>Edlund</div> <div>Krefft</div> <div>merco<sup>*</sup></div> <div>METRO<sup>®</sup> We put space to work.</div> <div>Stierlen</div> <div>temp-rite</div> <div>Ali GROUP 南京立智餐饮设备有限公司 CHINA</div> <div>Alicomenda</div> <div>AliContract</div> <div>Fabristeel<sup>*</sup></div> <div>GRANDIMPIANTI ENGINEERING &amp; CONTRACTING</div> <div>metos kitchen intelligence</div> <div>metos marine</div> <div>MILLER'S VANGUARD</div> <div>SERVICELINE Catering &amp; Refrigeration Equipment Sales Est. 1989</div> <div>WELBILT<sup>®</sup> FITKITCHEN<sup>*</sup></div> <div>WELBILT<sup>®</sup> KITCHENCARE<sup>*</sup></div> <div>WELBILT<sup>®</sup> KITCHENCONNECT<sup>*</sup></div>								



# YOUR GLOBAL PARTNER

**Ali Group Global Headquarters**

Via Gobetti, 2a | Villa Fiorita  
20063 Cernusco sul Naviglio  
Milan | Italy  
Phone +39 02 921991  
italy@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Australia**

740 Springvale Road | Mulgrave  
Melbourne Vic. 3170  
Australia  
Phone +61 3 95183888  
australia@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Canada**

2674 North Service Rd.  
Jordan Station | Ontario  
L0R 1S0 Canada  
Phone +1 905-562-4195  
canada@aligroup.com

**Ali Group China**

MTR Cloud Center, 3rd Floor, Suite A  
619 Caoyang Road Putuo District  
Shanghai 200063 | China  
Phone +86 21 6285 5858  
china@aligroup.com

**Ali Group France**

17-19 Avenue Gaston Monmousseau  
93240 Stains  
France  
Phone +33 1 48216325  
france@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Germany**

Lochfeldstraße 30  
D-76437 Rastatt  
Germany  
Phone +49 7222 90470  
germany@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Hong Kong**

Unit C, 12/F. | Roxy Industrial Centre  
58-66 Tai Lin Pai Road  
Kwai Chung, N.T. | Hong Kong  
Phone: +86 852 2407 5422  
hongkong@aligroup.com

**Ali Group India**

3rd Floor, Plot no-117  
Sector-44, Gurgaon-122003  
Haryana, India  
Phone +91 124 4763700  
india@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Japan**

1-13-1 Mishuku Setagaya-ku  
154-0005 Tokyo  
Japan  
Phone +81 3 5779 8850  
japan@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Mexico**

Camino a la Montaña #176  
Col. Industrial la Perla  
Naucalpan, Edo Mex | 53370 | Mexico  
Phone +52 55 5357 7100  
mexico@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Middle East & Africa**

Unit 607, Building 1B  
Dubai Design District  
Dubai, UAE  
Phone +971 4510 8200  
middleeast@aligroup.com

**Ali Group New Zealand**

45 Illinois Drive  
Izone Business Hub | Rolleston, 7675  
New Zealand  
Phone +64 3 9836600  
newzealand@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Russia**

Novodmitrovskaya St. 2, Building 1, Floor 8  
Office 11, Room 1D  
127015 Moscow  
Russia  
Phone +7 495 481 60 33  
russia@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Singapore**

140 Paya Lebar Road  
#08-09 AZ @ Paya Lebar  
Singapore 409015  
Phone +65 6738 5393  
singapore@aligroup.com

**Ali Group South Africa**

P.O. Box 30072 Jetpark 1467  
Unit 4 Lakeview Business Park  
8-10 Yaldwyn Road | Jetpark | Boksburg, RSA  
Phone + 27 10 590 0609 / + 27 11 053 5000  
southafrica@aligroup.com

**Ali Group Thailand**

825 Phairojkijja Tower 11th Floor  
Bangna-Trad Road km. 3.5  
Bangna, Bangkok 10250, Thailand  
Phone +66 2 361 4611 18  
thailand@aligroup.com

**Ali Group UK**

Bryggen Road | North Lynn Industrial Estate  
Kings Lynn, Norfolk  
PE30 2HZ | United Kingdom  
Phone +44 1553 817 000  
uk@aligroup.com

**Ali Group USA**

101 Corporate Woods Parkway  
Vernon Hills, IL 60061 USA  
Phone: +1 847-215-6565  
usa@aligroup.com



**Ryan Blackman**  
**Managing Editor**

Ali Group North America  
101 Corporate Woods Parkway  
Vernon Hills, IL 60061 USA  
Phone: (847) 215-5090  
Email: rblackman@aligroup.com

This edition of *Aliworld* Magazine is produced with pride by Zoomba Group Custom Publishing Division (190 N. York Street, Elmhurst, IL 60126 USA) under the authority of the Ali Group. Some of the content within this issue was reproduced with the permission of Ali Group from *Aliworld* International Edition October 2023 issue 11. Zoomba Group and Ali Group wish to express thanks to Progressive Content Ltd. (Standard House, 12-13 Essex Street, London WC2R 3AA United Kingdom) for their contribution.

Inclusion of a particular company or organization in this magazine does not necessarily imply endorsement by that company or organization.

**Pictures**

David McLeod Lewis, Brightside Creative, cover, inside front cover, 4-9; Aaron Fallon, 64-67; Bryan Fay, 32-35; Gerard + Belevender, 72-75; Grant Kessler, 60-63, 68-71, 80-83; Libertad Rodriguez Otero/PHL & Services, 52-55; Montgomery Whitewater, 56-59; ReBecca's Photography, 44-47; Sonya Revell, 24-27; Simon Eva Photography, 14-17

**Printing**

Royle Printing  
745 South Bird Street  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590 USA

**Editorial Office**

101 Corporate Woods Parkway  
Vernon Hills, IL 60061 USA  
(847) 215-6565

[www.aligroup.com](http://www.aligroup.com)





## A GLOBAL LEADER

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

Through its subsidiaries, the Ali Group designs, manufactures, markets and services a broad line of equipment used for commercial food cooking, preparation and processing. With 74 manufacturing sites, over 14,500 employees in 29 countries and more than 110 brands, it gives life to the most extensive product portfolio in the industry, operating in every hospitality and catering sector.

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