

# ALI WORLD

INTERNATIONAL

THE ALI GROUP MAGAZINE

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**TUSCAN ELEGANCE**  
BARON'S TECHNOLOGY  
HELPS CASTELFALFI SERVE  
UP TIMELESS TRADITION

**TOP OF THE CLASS**  
SCOTSMAN COLLABORATES  
WITH THE EUROPEAN  
BARTENDER SCHOOL

**FIT FOR A  
PRINCESS**  
Carpigiani and  
Princess Cruises®  
find the gelato  
sweet spot

  
GROUP

The iconic cruise brand  
Princess Cruises®  
collaborated with Carpigiani  
to improve the quality of  
the Italian-style gelato served  
on board its ships



# Hospitable by nature



**T**rends and technologies may come and go, but one constant that continues to connect all of us in the restaurant industry is the concept of hospitality. The friendly and generous entertainment of guests, visitors, and – even – strangers is what will continue to propel the restaurant industry forward for generations to come.

Consumers around the world consistently seek opportunities to gather – over a cup of coffee or a meal – to build mutual understanding, collaborate, create memories, and more. We are all social beings, and hospitality helps nourish not only our bodies but also the communities in which we live and work. That said, people are not static, and both where and how we choose to experience hospitality continue to evolve. This is evident in the many customer success stories our Ali Group brands have shared in this edition of *Aliworld*. Indeed, the Ali Group offers equipment lines that serve every segment of the global hospitality industry.

Take, for example, our cover story on Princess Cruises®. It illustrates how Carpigiani's comprehensive line of equipment is uniquely suited to meet the needs of the marine industry. It also demonstrates that when you work with an Ali Group company, you're getting more than a product – you're gaining access to a network of expertise.

While this particular project was led by Carpigiani in collaboration with Welbilt Marine, we are proud to offer a full suite of marine solutions

through our family of brands – including Metos Marine, Welbilt GalleyCare, and Alicontract – each bringing deep knowledge and proven capabilities to serve the evolving needs of the marine sector. We remain committed to expanding the depth and breadth of our offerings to keep pace with the evolving needs of the industry.

Electrification of commercial kitchens continues to be a hot topic across the global foodservice sector. To support our ongoing efforts in this area, the Ali Group earlier this year acquired JIPA, a Czech Republic-based manufacturer of electric multifunctional devices.

At the same time, we must stay mindful of other emerging technologies – such as artificial intelligence and various forms of automation, including robotics – that will shape both our industry and the solutions we provide.

At the Ali Group, hospitality is in our DNA. In addition to supporting your business endeavors, we had the pleasure of welcoming many of you at The NAFEM Show in Atlanta, and we look forward to seeing even more of you at HostMilano. While technology enables us to stay connected when we are apart, nothing compares to the experience of meeting face-to-face.

We hope you enjoy the 13th edition of *Aliworld*, and that the stories within inspire you to deliver even greater hospitality in the years to come.

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

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# 01

Growth



# HOT TOPICS, COOL HEADS

He may have a 50-year company milestone ahead, but **Claus Pedersen**, managing director of Convotherrm, remains firmly focused on the present. Michael Jones explores how he's turning the industry's challenges into opportunities

**F**rom trade tariffs to the labor crisis, the foodservice industry faces a wide range of challenges right now. But for Welbilt® brand Convotherrm®, which has been designing cutting-edge combi oven technology since its inception in Germany in 1976, today's geopolitically complex, post-Covid landscape is simply another puzzle to solve. It is one that presents opportunity and growth if approached with clarity and focus.

For Convotherrm managing director Claus Pedersen, that ability to see opportunity rather than adversity stems from the company's location and mindset. Convotherrm operates far from the noise and distractions of a major city. Headquartered in the small village

of Eglfing in Southern Bavaria, Germany, the company thrives outside of a busy conurbation. "We're not in the heart of a big city," he says. "We are humble, but we still have access to a lot of quality employees in this area, including engineers," he adds.

This is not to say that the company is somehow exempt from the issues facing major equipment manufacturers globally. "The U.S. tariffs are definitely a hot topic for us because we have a large-scale export business into the U.S.," says Pedersen. "The U.S. is also one of the markets where we have seen – and still expect to see – a lot of growth.

"The tariffs are not helping us, but we have a dedicated sales team in the U.S. that is still very confident on the future. But there are some challenges for us in terms of pricing and the uncertainty of what's going to happen on July 9, when the [U.S. government's] 90-day grace period is over. That's certainly an issue."

Closer to home, uncertainty created by the recent German election has sucked momentum out of the market in terms of buying decisions for foodservice projects, says Pedersen. "Everybody has been holding back a little bit, waiting to see what's going on, but these uncertainties in many regions are a challenge for everyone."

Despite testing market conditions, however, Convotherrm recently recorded "a solid fiscal year," and Pedersen believes 2026 also has growth opportunities. "We're in a very good spot," he says.

## A company for a crisis

Dealing with uncertainty has become second nature to Pedersen and his team, especially since the Covid pandemic. "We faced extreme uncertainty then. It was all new to us. Now, we have the tariffs issue, plus more uncertainty when an election takes place, and so on, but these are just things we must deal with. It's part of business. In every crisis we learn something," he says.

For Pedersen, being part of the Ali Group is a major comfort during unsettled times. He credits Ali Group's strong culture of navigating challenges and the steady support and confidence provided by its leadership team: "I don't feel any panic. Everybody knows ▶

Left: Convotherrm managing director Claus Pedersen believes 2026 will present good growth opportunities for the brand

# 01 Growth



## BRAND WATCH

**CONVOTHERM®**

**1976**

Convotherm has been designing cutting-edge combi oven technology since its founding in 1976

**69**

With 69 different models and numerous variations, Convotherm offers a combi oven suitable for every customer's needs

**2020**

The launch of ConvoSense in 2020 marked the debut of the world's first combi oven with AI-powered, fully automated cooking

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

what we need to do to deal with a situation, and there is a confidence in everybody that we will deal with it.”

That foundation also enables Convotherm to be on the front foot when it comes to growth plans, says Pedersen. “Our global approach ensures a strong presence across many regions. While some markets are growing and others are not, we continuously evaluate and adapt our strategy accordingly.”

He also believes the company could be doing much more in terms of brand awareness and investing into new geographical areas where it might not have focused before: “Latin America is one of those areas where we see growth for the future. APAC also promises growth in specific segments.”

### Shifting segments

Pedersen believes each market segment needs to be assessed on its own merits. “There is a shift in terms of spending,” he says. “Looking at people going out to eat, there is currently a downturn in trade for high-street restaurants. It will always be a big part of the market, but there is a shift now towards people spending more on value-based meals: the QSR and retail segments.”

This year, Convotherm launched an innovative new product catered to these growth segments. Its mini pro series features the world’s smallest and smartest combi oven, marking a revolution in the compact class of cooking technology. At just 49.8cm wide across the range, these ovens are “the answer” to the demand for higher throughput in the smallest spaces, says Pedersen. The first compact combi ovens with AI-driven Optical Cooking innovation, the mini pro is low on energy consumption and the first ovens in their class to offer integrated Solid-to-Liquid cleaning technology.

“We call it the ‘King of Compact,’” says Pedersen. “The mini pro is the common-sense

Convotherm believes compact is the future of foodservice. Its mini pro series features the world’s smallest and smartest combi oven

**“Our global approach ensures a strong presence across many regions. While some markets are growing and others are not, we continuously evaluate and adapt our strategy”**

**Claus Pedersen, Convotherm**

solution for many foodservice segments – QSRs, convenience stores, cafés, bakeries, and chain operations of every size – because it fits extremely well into a small space, offers great flexibility and does not need a skilled chef.”

Using ConvoSense, a system that detects the food placed inside the oven and automatically launches the corresponding cooking program, eliminates the need for staff input. This automation reduces training time, improves consistency and minimizes errors. It can save up to 60 minutes of labor daily, lowers energy usage by 28%, and reduces food waste by 17%, all of which contribute to stronger margins and more sustainable operations. Through integration with Welbilt’s KitchenConnect® system, operators can manage menus, monitor performance, and optimize production remotely across multiple locations.

For Pedersen and his team, compact is the future of foodservice. “We have high expectations for this product because we believe it fits with the trends we are seeing. Restaurants and outlets are getting smaller. Now, it’s all about space, ease of use, using less energy, and bringing more efficiency and flexibility. The mini pro product portfolio addresses this. We believe there is additional growth in other segment areas where this commonsense product portfolio fits,” he says.

The reaction from operators has been “fantastic,” he says. “I have been extremely happy since our launch at Internoga 2025. Attendees were blocking the hallways and other companies’ booths so they could look at it. We even had competitors coming over and admiring what we’ve done, telling us: ‘That’s really good.’ We’ve had great brand awareness since then,” he says.

### Ahead of the game

The mini pro’s AI-driven capability signifies a step-change for the future, says Pedersen. “ConvoSense was developed and launched back in 2020 but now is really the right time for artificial intelligence in foodservice – it’s much more accepted now. We also see the potential to do lots more AI-driven projects in the future,” he adds.

“There are lots of repetitive processes in equipment manufacturing, from order processing to invoicing, production planning, aftersales, service support, quality checks, and end-of-line testing. Artificial intelligence frees up resources so people can spend time on the other things where AI is not feasible. This is something we will continue to invest in over the forthcoming years. We must rethink the way we use our employees’ own intelligence, day-to-day.”

### A perfect match

In January 2025, Ali Group acquired JIPA, a Czech Republic-based manufacturer of advanced electrical multifunctional devices for commercial kitchens. The cornerstone of JIPA’s product line, the JIPA JUMP multi-purpose pan, performs a variety of cooking functions, including pressure cooking, frying, braising, grilling, and sous vide.

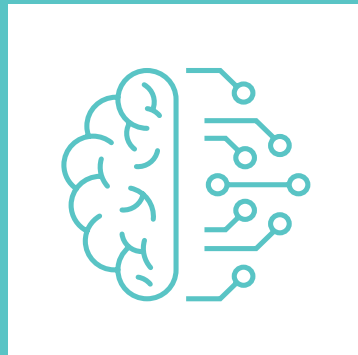
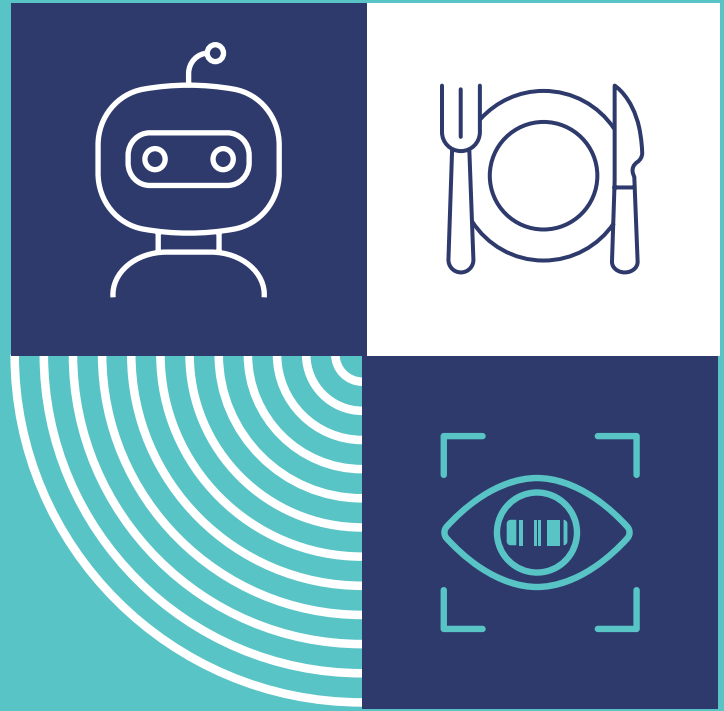
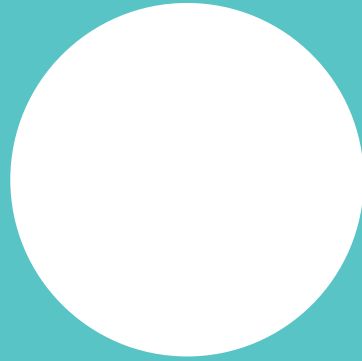
Pedersen is overseeing the integration of the brand into the Group’s portfolio. “We started working with JIPA more than two years ago. We were looking for a partner for multi-purpose cooking pans, because the market was ready for those, and JIPA’s product has proved to be extremely complementary to Convotherm. It’s perfect for foodservice projects such as larger canteens, due to its multi-functionality,” he says.

“Acquiring JIPA was an excellent move, for Convotherm and many other brands in the Group, because it adds an additional, fantastic product to our offering. The feedback from other Ali Group brands has been very positive, and I see this helping Convotherm adopt an even stronger brand position in the industry.”

Whatever “hot topics” the future may present, Pedersen and his colleagues relish turning them into opportunities to grow – and flourish. ■

# 02

## Trends



Foodservice enters

# the age of AI



Left, from top: John Egnor  
FCSI, JME Design;  
Stefano Raimondi,  
Rancilio Group; Joseph  
Alfieri, Bon Appetit  
Management Company



Consumers rely on AI every day, even if its influence is not always obvious, but the foodservice sector is yet to embrace it fully. Jim Banks looks at how kitchen design, customer interaction, and efficiency are set to be revolutionized

**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) is everywhere, whether we realize it or not.

It powers the algorithms that compile our Spotify playlists and suggest YouTube videos for us, and it shapes our social media interactions. It generates more and more content that we consume – words, music, and images – and it supports decision-making in every industry from manufacturing to medicine.

AI's ability to access, analyze and interpret vast amounts of data at a speed far beyond that of the human brain is undoubtedly a great asset, although it raises many questions about how much responsibility should be handed over to automated systems, and how those systems work with and for humans. These questions apply to the foodservice industry as much as any other, even if the sector has been slower to adopt AI.

So, what can AI do in kitchen operations to make foodservice operations quicker and more efficient? How can it enhance the customer experience? And does the commercial foodservice industry understand how AI can help?

Joseph Alfieri, regional vice president of Bon Appetit

Management Company, an on-site restaurant company offering full foodservice management to corporations, universities, museums, and specialty venues, has a clear answer for that last question.

“No, the industry absolutely does not have a good understanding of what AI can and cannot do,” he says. “Large corporations are starting to adapt to it. Burger King®, McDonald's® and other large chains are using it in their customer service portals, and some are working on AI-supported face-recognition technology, so that when customers walk in it knows their order from past transactions.

“Smaller operations are not on top of it yet, because of this continuous pivoting,” adds Alfieri.

“They are always adapting to their clients' needs, but they are not looking at AI in their operations as a whole, yet. AI could help with HR problems perhaps, or inventory management and ordering processes. Chefs can ask AI to create a menu by giving it different filters – vegan, allergenic and so on – but chefs are sentimental and don't want to use other people's menus. Their egos stop them letting AI do that job.”



## FAST CASUAL FAST TRACKS AI

To see how AI is impacting commercial foodservice operations, it pays to look at the QSR sector, which is leading the way in terms of adoption. A forthcoming white paper, *The Current and Future of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in the Fast Casual Restaurant Industry: Service and Production*, lays out many key trends that will affect the wider industry.

In it, author John Egnor FCSI, design evolutionist at JME Design, notes that the fast casual sector is starting to transform. The combination of AI and robotics is reshaping both service and production, enhancing efficiency, reducing costs, and improving customer experience. So far, this is most apparent in tasks such as order-taking, food preparation, and delivery – with Sweetgreen® and Chipotle® among the leading adopters – but many others also see the potential to further streamline operations, personalize customer

interactions, and address labor challenges.

So how do these restaurant chains envisage AI achieving these goals, and where will it be applied?

Part of the answer to that question has already emerged, in the shape of AI-powered ordering systems. White Castle®, for example – generally seen as the world's first fast-food hamburger chain – has piloted voice AI for drive-thru orders to reduce waiting times and free up staff for other tasks.

Similarly, AI is already being used to analyze point-of-sale (POS) data and customer preferences to deliver more personalized order recommendations. OpenTable®'s integration with POS systems, for example, provides real-time insights into guest behavior, enabling staff to anticipate needs and upsell more effectively. ▶



“The next step is looking at analytics for what to produce and when”

John Egnor FCSI

## ON THE FLIP SIDE

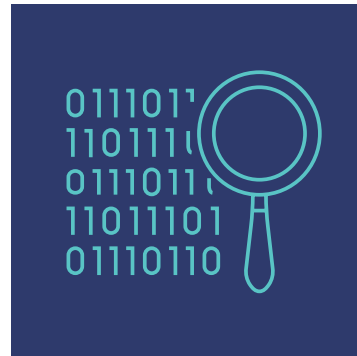
AI and robotics are increasingly finding applications behind the counter as well, reshaping kitchen workflows to be more efficient and consistent.

Robotic food preparation is already happening. The Flippy robot from Miso Robotics, for example – used in 15 White Castle restaurants and several other chains – automatically flips burgers and cleans the grill.

AI is finding its way into quality control and safety as well, using data from sensors and camera systems to ensure consistent cooking temperatures and detect anomalies. AI-powered predictive analytics can also optimize inventory by forecasting demand based on historical data of what sells and when, leading to less waste and more efficient ordering processes.

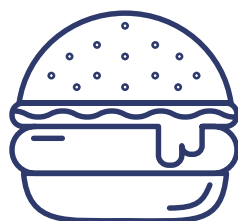
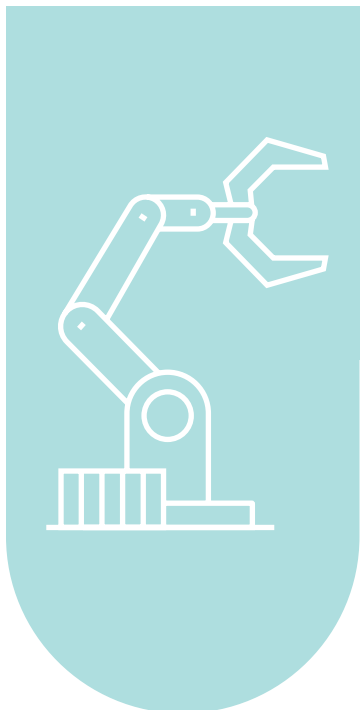
Although foodservice operations outside the QSR sector may not be interested in robotic preparation systems – such as Sweetgreen’s Infinite Kitchen, which automates salad assembly to save time – the personalization and inventory management capabilities of AI could be a better fit.

Egnor firmly believes that AI will find its place in foodservice in the not-too-distant future: “It will be a tool to control the production of menu items, with cues, with direction, and knowing the history of a product. If a McDonald’s usually serves 300



hamburgers at lunch time, then AI can queue the preparation process early enough for them to be ready in time.”

It will also be able to make decisions based on more nuanced information. “You can add in other data, such as weather information or local news reports, which will affect the number of orders,” he adds. “That level of integration of situational knowledge to control inventory and production schedules can save on waste. So, the next step is looking at analytics for what to produce and when.”



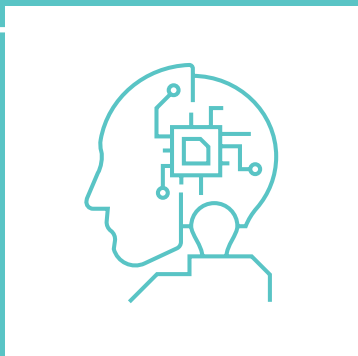
## A FUTURE OF AI-ENABLED AUTOMATION

For Egnor, robotics is not yet where AI needs it to be. Consequently, the first game-changing application of AI is likely to come through its role as a forecasting tool, with more applications soon to follow.

Front-of-house applications such as voice ordering will continue to evolve as advanced voice AI capability improves, and by leveraging big data – social media, loyalty programs, dietary preferences and more – AI might usher in the age of hyper-personalization.

In the kitchen, higher levels of automation will arrive, reducing human intervention to a minimum. Smart kitchens with digital twins could, according to Egnor, use AI to simulate and optimize workflows to create better kitchen plans, predict equipment failure, adjust cooking parameters in real time, and potentially reduce energy consumption by around 20%.

Stefano Raimondi, R&D Director at Rancilio Group, believes AI will also have an impact on beverages, and Rancilio is among the manufacturers engaging in the development of equipment with integrated AI functionality.



“AI can simplify the search of technical documents if there is an error with a machine, or optimize the parameters of the recipe, or recognize a barista in front of the machine to change settings to their unique requirements,” he says.

“AI will be used to simplify life for the technical team, providing more support for technicians”

**Stefano Raimondi,**  
**Rancilio Group**

“The state of the art is a system that can summarize information from hundreds of documents. The problem used to be finding the data, but with IoT we now have too much data, so we need to address the problem of analyzing it,” adds Raimondi.



## SHARED EXPERIENCE

“AI will be used to simplify life for the technical team, providing more support for technicians who don't necessarily understand coffee,” adds Raimondi. “We could use a generic technician for dishwashers and coffee machines, for example, because we could move the relevant knowledge from a person to an AI system.”

Meanwhile, forecasting order patterns using big data is as relevant to beverages as it is to food preparation. Raimondi foresees a time when AI is used to propose alternative recipes according to the time of day. “AI could help operators create something closer to individuals' needs – more personalized and customized – through integration of data and by face recognition,” he says.

He also believes AI will be used to simplify settings, improve consistency in automatic machines with grinders inside, and optimize recipe configuration.

In the early days, adoption of AI could raise concerns about cost, scalability, and the need for a human element in dining. Over time, however, it will become part of the fabric of foodservice.

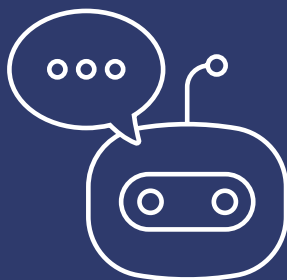
“When chefs see what it can do, they say: ‘Wow, where was this all my life?’” says Alfieri. “My team probably feeds 15-20,000 people per day in various locations, and I use AI for two or three hours per day to evaluate standard operating procedures,

safety protocols, and food trends, and to create financial forecasts and budgets. It is a useful tool if you know what to ask it.”

“When chefs see what [AI] can do, they say: ‘Wow, where was this all my life?’”

**Joseph Alfieri, Bon Appetit**

There remain many unknowns when it comes to AI and its limitations – and how to best apply its capabilities. However, while it is not yet baked into kitchen appliances, it is certainly defining the next wave of kitchen planning, workflow design, and forecasting. The one thing you cannot do with AI is ignore it. ■



# 03

## Cover story





# Sweet harmony

When an iconic cruise brand set its sights on producing authentic Italian gelato, Carpigiani knew exactly how to deliver, as Tina Nielsen reports

In 2018, US-based Princess Cruises® turned to Carpigiani with an important task: improving the quality of the Italian-style gelato already being served on board.

“We needed equipment that could produce consistently smooth, flavorful artisanal gelato and support an array of pastry creations,” explains Sami Kohen, VP of food & beverage, Princess Cruises. “This meant precise temperature control, robust performance, and user-friendly operation to ensure that our culinary teams could work efficiently, even during peak service periods, while delivering a premium dessert experience to our guests.”

After an initial assessment, the Carpigiani team identified three core components for success. ▶

## INDUSTRY FOCUS

### MARINE

Ali Group offers a comprehensive range of brands to meet the unique demands of the marine industry.

Metos Marine, Welbilt Marine, Welbilt GalleyCare and Alicontract provide expert support by leveraging the extensive capabilities and expertise within Ali Group’s brand portfolio.



# Cover story



Left: Sami Kohen, Princess Cruises; Above: Matteo Andreola, Carpigiani

## Shaping new generations of cruise ship culinary workers

Since April 2023, Carpigiani has supported the Magsaysay Center for Hospitality and Culinary Arts in Manila, where many of the Princess Cruises staff train. “One of the key pillars of the collaboration with Princess is related to staff training. Carpigiani has supplied three machines to this important school, where future Princess employees are trained on different subjects – now including gelato and pastry,” says Carpigiani’s Matteo Andreola.



Left: Princess Cruises delivers vacations to millions every year

First up, modification of the production cycle; second, old batch freezers needed to be replaced with new equipment; and finally, they would need to select suitable ingredients to achieve the perfect gelato quality.

Known as “The Love Boat,” Princess Cruises is an iconic cruise brand delivering vacations to millions of passengers every year. To support this experience, its foodservice operations must be high-quality and smooth-running. “Our onboard culinary program features a range of international cuisines, from classic continental and regional specialties to modern fusion dishes. Each ship hosts a variety of dining venues, including specialty restaurants, and casual eateries,” says Kohen.

Matteo Andreola, Carpigiani’s foodservice professionals business unit manager, outlines four key steps in the gelato production process: pasteurization, ageing, flavoring and freezing.

“Each step corresponds to a specific technology, so we had the opportunity to propose three of our machines: a multifunction pasteurizer, Pastrochef 55 RTL for steps one and two, a mixer model, Turbomix, to cover step three, and then a batch freezer, Labo 40 60 XPL/P,” he says.

### Serving up savings

The team explained that the new machines would not only produce a higher-quality product, but would also save on water, energy, ingredients and labor. Improved user-friendliness would also mean less stress in the kitchen.

Additionally, the versatility of the equipment – such as Carpigiani’s Pastrochef 55 RTL, which can be used for pastry recipes as well as pasteurizing gelato mix – helped maximize return on investment.

This thorough approach validated the cruise company’s choice of partner. “Our search for excellence led us to Carpigiani; we needed a partner who matched our commitment to culinary innovation, particularly within the world of desserts,” says Kohen. “With their industry-leading reputation in gelato and pastry equipment, Carpigiani was the natural choice. Their high-performance machines consistently deliver artisanal quality, even under the high-demand conditions at sea.”

In May 2019, Princess Cruises pastry chef Eric Le Rouzic attended Carpigiani Gelato University. His bespoke two-day course equipped him with the knowledge and skills needed to train personnel on the ships. Later that year, a University instructor came aboard twice – in June and again in November – to conduct the first training sessions. Carpigiani also provided support on the ingredients

side, connecting Princess Cruises with a producer of semi-worked ingredients for gelato and pastry.

All three elements were crucial to achieving a perfect product. “You can use the best raw materials and the best equipment, but if the production process is wrong, you don’t have a good gelato,” says Andreola.

Gelato is a popular treat among cruise ship passengers, meaning the machines are put to frequent use. “Depending on the itinerary and season, we can serve thousands of servings of gelato or soft serve ice cream each day,” says Kohen. “During peak dining times, our machines are in near-constant use, which places significant pressure on them. It’s imperative that they perform reliably, as any downtime directly impacts the guest experience. This high demand underscores the need for precision-engineered, durable equipment.”

### Beyond the basics

For Kohen, their steadfast focus on every element of producing the perfect gelato is what makes Carpigiani an outstanding partner. “Their equipment is known for its durability, innovative design, and ability to consistently produce top-quality results,” he says. “Their deep understanding of the culinary needs at sea and commitment to continuous improvement aligns perfectly with our own mission to elevate guest experiences.”

The partnership, which he describes as one of trust, innovation, and a mutual passion for quality, is ongoing. Carpigiani continues to support Princess Cruises, providing both equipment and training, through Carpigiani Gelato University.

Reflecting on the successful partnership, Andreola says this is a project that has plenty of scope for development. Given that Princess is part of the larger Carnival Cruises Corporation, there could be an opportunity for Carpigiani gelato machines to be installed on many more cruise ships, while a new collaboration with Welbilt Marine to provide soft serve ice cream machines is underway too.

Kohen certainly has no complaints about how things have gone so far. “Carpigiani’s state-of-the-art equipment and expert support have empowered us to create memorable culinary experiences for our guests. This comprehensive approach to quality, innovation, and guest satisfaction underscores why Princess Cruises and Carpigiani make such a strong team.”

Princess Cruises is now the only cruise line in the world to hold the gelato shop certification from Ospitalità Italiana, a seal of quality promoted by the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce. ■

**“ We needed equipment that could produce consistently smooth, flavorful artisanal gelato and support an array of pastry creations ”**

**Sami Kohen,  
Princess Cruises**



Carpigiani's Labo XPL P machine

### BRAND WATCH



**1946**

Carpigiani was founded nearly 80 years ago, in 1946

**500**

The company has 500 service centers worldwide

**35+**

There are more than 35 Gelato University campuses worldwide

**carpigiani.com**



# 04

Success stories

## A twist on

# Tuscan traditions

When luxury resort Castelfalfi decided to open a new 400-person event space, it turned to Baron equipment to combine modern functionality and time-honored techniques. Chris Evans gets the full story

Above: the luxury resort of Castelfalfi in Tuscany, Italy



**N**estled in the Tuscan hills and featuring three restaurants specializing in regional dishes, Hotel Castelfalfi attracts guests from all over the world.

And now, the five-star luxury resort has another highlight: a traditional Italian-style event space where culinary delights are crafted using state-of-the-art, Italian-made Baron appliances.

“We have designed and built this 650 square meter compound, called Aria [meaning ‘air’ in English], for banquets, events, weddings, dinner parties and so on, that can accommodate 450 people seated,” explains Leonardo de Pinto, project manager at the resort. “The key thing is that we give our guests an experience, and this is reflected in how the chefs prepare and present the food, always on display through a window looking out on to the event space. The aesthetics of the food and products are very important, as is the finishing of the kitchen itself.”

At the heart of the kitchen is the space-saving Baron Talent Multi-Function, a versatile unit tailor-made for preparing multiple dishes to perfection. Chefs prepare the ingredients in advance, to schedules coordinated by the Talent, and there’s a recipe storage system to ensure coherence and quality in the dishes served.

“This was a new and very appealing thing for

us and the executive chef, to see all the recipe descriptions and programs already pre-set in the Talent,” says de Pinto.

“Multi-functionality means chefs can execute multiple tasks with a single piece of equipment,” enthuses Raul Fadda, sales manager at Baron, who is overseeing this project. “With our high-performance ovens, they can just select the product they want to cook and choose the end-result. There’s software inside that uses an algorithmic system to determine temperature, time and humidity, which means the chefs don’t have to keep watching and controlling the food while it cooks.

“Instead, chefs can spend time talking with their customers, explaining about the food and then presenting it. So, the relationship between the chef and customer is now completely different.”

### Induction’s a gas

Baron’s advanced technology also enables chefs to stick to a more traditional style of cooking. “Many chefs prefer to use a gas range because they want to play with the pot over the flame, and do things such as flambé or salt the pasta. With our electric inductions, they can still do this. Even when they raise the pan from the glass-ceramic hob, the circuit isn’t cut and the heat remains,” says Fadda, adding that the induction also has safety ▶



**“ The professional quality and space-saving of the products has really impressed us ”**

**Leonardo de Pinto,  
Hotel Castelfalfi**





“Multi-functionality means chefs can execute multiple tasks with a single piece of equipment”

Raul Fadda,  
Baron

sensors to avoid overheating.

The kitchen is also equipped with other Baron equipment innovations, including an 80-litre electric motorized tilting bratt pan with duplex tank, which collects data to monitor operations, and a Fry Top S Electric M80 AISI Plate with thermostatic cooking temperature control. It also has a large, floodable gutter around the perimeter of the hotplate to collect cooking residues and drain them into a large drawer.

De Pinto notes that this functionality is backed up by modern touches, including easy-to-use touchscreens and digital displays.

“The professional quality, efficiency and space-saving of the Baron products has really impressed us,” he says. “Our executive chef is looking forward to using them to prepare dishes to suit our customers’ needs.”

Baron and the luxury resort are even discussing the possibility of the chefs making local, Italian ice cream with the diners. “The client has asked us to find a machine to achieve this. Thankfully, the Ali Group is huge, so we are looking into one of our sister companies supplying this,” says Fadda (pictured, top right).

The functionality of Baron's equipment is backed up by modern touches

### A partner for the future

There’s more to this relationship than simply identifying the right machine, though. To help foster a long-term partnership with its clients, Baron will provide regular maintenance and technical support to the resort plus training sessions to help the kitchen staff maximize the potential of the appliances.

Baron will also advise on potential future upgrades, ensuring the kitchens continue to evolve with the latest innovations.

“Raul has taken care of us throughout the entire process so far, as has Baron’s technical department, which arranged installation of the products within just three days,” says de Pinto.

“We have every confidence that when we test the appliances, the event space and kitchen will be a success, and Baron will continue to provide great support. We have already secured a subscription of maintenance service that will be available within 24 hours, which is crucial,” he adds.

Looking ahead, Hotel Castelfalfi is planning to build a few more restaurants, so Fadda is looking into potential solutions. “Following the success of our partnership on this project, I hope we will get the chance to supply more equipment and expand our strong relationship,” says Fadda. ■

### BRAND WATCH



**30**

For 30 years, Baron has been designing and manufacturing professional kitchens

**70+**

Countries in the world where Baron products are exported

**1,400+**

Different products in the Baron catalog produced in its Belluno plant

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

## 04 Success stories



With two ailing ovens threatening to derail her business, **Daisy Terry** of London bakery The Dusty Knuckle needed a swift, bespoke solution. She tells Sam Noble how MONO Equipment delivered the brief

# Rising together

In autumn 2024, The Dusty Knuckle bakery in Dalston, an area of East London, UK, found itself in a business-critical situation. “Our two ovens were failing – and no ovens mean no bakery,” says Daisy Terry, operations director. “We’d had to beg, borrow and steal equipment when we started out, so everything was sort of second hand.” On the hunt for a possible replacement, Terry reached out to the Craft Bakers Association, which recommended she take a look at MONO’s range of energy-saving convected deck ovens. The company was already familiar to Terry: “We got our first MONO oven, a small pastry one, in 2017, and it’s always been really great.”

### A tailored solution

All in all, The Dusty Knuckle was in the market for three large deck ovens, a pastry

sheeter, a second static rack oven and a large spiral mixer. “This was a sizeable investment for Dusty Knuckle,” says Simon Moon, sales director at MONO, “so we invited them down to do some test baking with us in our onsite test bakery in Swansea,” he adds.

“The test bakes produced great results and we were confident that the programs we created could achieve the quality of crust and depth of color Dusty Knuckle needed,” he says. Terry was impressed with what she saw: “I’m quite an analog kind of person. I like buttons. But the technology on these new ovens just makes everything so much easier.”

MONO’s convected deck oven also solved one of Terry’s biggest pain points, having to turn the bread mid-bake for even results. “The beauty of our fan-assisted deck ovens is that the airflow technology produces a perfectly even bake without having to turn the product mid-bake. You load the oven, shut

the door, press start, and everything is set up,” says Moon.

There was one more thing on Terry’s wish list – some kind of mechanized loading system. “It’s back-breaking work if you don’t have that,” she says, drawing on “years and years and years” of hands-on experience she gathered before assuming her current role. MONO took on the challenge, partnering with a supplier to design what Moon describes as a “semi-automatic” loading and unloading system.

**“ You load the oven, shut the door, press start, and everything is set up ”**

**Simon Moon, MONO Equipment**



Daisy Terry (far left) and her colleagues at The Dusty Knuckle have gone from three people operating out of a shipping container to a team of 125 working across four outlets in London



Terry is thrilled with the results. “That new loader means we can have the doors closed while we’re loading a different lane in, with minimal loss of heat,” she says. “We make sourdough and we make it quite dark, so the heat in the oven is really important to us.”

### Let them eat bread

In just 10 years, The Dusty Knuckle has grown from a three-person team operating out of a shipping container to a staff of 125 spread across four London locations. These include permanent sites in Dalston and Haringey, a van in Highbury Fields, and a milk float service launched during the pandemic.

“When Covid hit, nobody came. We had to work out how to get bread to the people,” says Terry. That spirit of social responsibility has remained core to the business. The Dusty Knuckle’s youth program, for example, offers young people who feel shut out of the job market a chance to build their self-esteem and confidence. “They get to experience legitimate work in a way that feels positive, supportive and inclusive,” says Terry.

“The majority are from custody, but we also

get people from care and people who might be in precarious situations and feel like their life isn’t going quite the way they want it to. Some come via various third-party charities, but we also get self-referrals.”

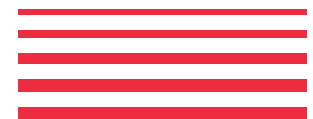
After completing their time in the program, some stay at the Dusty Knuckle, although Terry points out that equipping people with more general experience is the real goal. Several have gone on to work at Ottolenghi, or at Bubala restaurant in neighbouring Whitechapel, London.

“People pick up a lot of transferable skills here,” she says. “Communication between teams, for example, is really important. Some people do a placement in the kitchen or front of house – we have a restaurant – and it’s a good place to learn if you haven’t worked in that sort of environment before,” says Terry.

“In the bakery, work is physical, repetitive and rewarding. There’s a mathematical element too,” she adds.

“Hopefully they come away feeling that maybe the working world doesn’t have to be full of difficult people,” laughs Terry. ■

## BRAND WATCH



# MONO

### 1947

MONO Equipment was founded in the UK in 1947, marking the beginning of a proud legacy in bakery equipment

### x2

MONO Equipment is manufactured to stringent NQA ISO9001:2015 and NQA ISO14001:2015 standards

### 2007

MONO Equipment joined the Ali Group 18 years ago

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

## 04 Success stories



# Cool customers

With two main restaurants – including one featuring an open sushi kitchen – plus bars and room service, the Mandarin Oriental Mayfair, London, had complex refrigeration needs. Executive head chef **Jihun Maxime Kim**, Gary McMullan of Galgorm Group, and **Andrew Charles** of Humble Arnold Associates explain to Sam Noble how Williams Refrigeration provided the five-star solution

**W**ithout reliable refrigeration, foodservice operations simply can't function. At the Mandarin Oriental Mayfair, London, a five-star hotel with multiple world-class restaurants and bars, the refrigeration requirements are extensive, requiring a diverse range of high-performance equipment.

The hotel's culinary offerings include its main restaurant, Akira Back, which blends Japanese and Korean cuisine into innovative, mouth-watering creative dishes, and the Michelin-starred Dosa, an intimate 14-seat fine-dining Korean restaurant with an open kitchen. Add to that a lounge bar, a rooftop bar, and in-room dining, and the total covers reach around 800 daily, spanning breakfast through dinner.

Starting pre-pandemic and completed in spring 2024, the hotel's ambitious kitchen project required multiple coldrooms, refrigeration drawers, blast chillers, a dry meat ager, freezers, counters and cabinets. It needed a trusted brand with a proven track record. That brand was Williams Refrigeration.

"Refrigeration in a commercial kitchen is the most important factor in running a safe and successful restaurant operation," says Jihun Maxime Kim, executive head chef of Dosa. "As well as being reliable, refrigeration has to be easy to clean, to make sure food safety is controlled. Also, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group globally is very focused on sustainability, so energy efficiency is important."

At Akira Back, the award-winning chef's namesake restaurant, the sushi kitchen is on full display to diners. "Having a separate kitchen clearly gives us complete control and ensures there's no crossover between the Akira Back kitchen and the Sushi kitchen, where the products are raw," says Jihun.

But beyond food safety, the sushi kitchen's refrigeration is part of the guest experience. Custom-designed Williams chef's drawers, finished in sleek black using the brand's bespoke Chameleon vinyl wrapping service, ensure ingredients remain separate and precisely temperature-controlled, since very little cold is lost when the drawers

Left: at Dosa, refrigeration is the most important factor in running a safe and successful restaurant operation

are opened. The individually refrigerated, stackable drawers, are front-vented, making them ideal for the sushi kitchen's tight footprint.

### Improving the flavor

Dosa's open kitchen also features bespoke black Chameleon-wrapped refrigeration and a meat-ageing refrigerator (MAR). "We hang and dry the ducks for 21 days. It gives you really crispy skin when you cook it, and the meat is very tender." The MAR operates at the ideal temperature range of +1 to +6°C and provides humidity between 60-90%, ensuring that meat ages perfectly. Himalayan salt blocks assist with moisture management and improve the flavor of the meat.

The main kitchen features a variety of Williams Jade counters and cabinets, including glass door and drawer models. These options were chosen to enhance productivity and make the chefs' lives easier.

Jihun is particularly pleased with the Williams WBCF50, the company's largest reach-in blast chiller freezer: "We cook big volumes of food here and anything cooked in advance, such as eggplant, requires a reliable blast chiller to cool it down safely."

Throughout the hotel, water-cooled coldrooms enable safe food and beverage storage and separation. Williams coldrooms have multiple options, including bumper rails, internal release and foot-operated doors, and ramps, to help streamline a kitchen's operations.

A separate coldroom for refuse bins "protects from biological hazard and contains smells," says Jihun.

The project was executed by the Galgorm Group, with Humble Arnold Design serving as consultant. "Covid restrictions caused delays on the project, but Williams and other suppliers stuck with us all the way, working through all the different stages," says Gary McMullan, contract manager at Galgorm Group.

"We have a great relationship with the team at Williams. They are very professional, and we trust them absolutely," he adds.

Andrew Charles (above, right), project consultant for Humble Arnold Associates, says, "Williams Refrigeration was a great fit for the project, from a design and operational perspective."

"I've worked in many places around the world, and I've never had any issues with Williams," says Jihun. For him, refrigeration is about reliability: "I want to sleep at night and come back to work without any surprises." ■



**“ Williams Refrigeration was a great fit for the project, from a design and operational perspective ”**

**Andrew Charles,  
Humble Arnold Associates**

### BRAND WATCH



#### 45

For 45 years, Williams has been renowned for quality, performance, innovation and reliability

#### 1980

Since 1980 Williams has built a global reputation for excellence

#### 5

Williams is part of the AFE Group, a portfolio of five companies owned by Ali Group

**williams-  
refrigeration.co.uk**

# A safe landing in the Maldives

Local partners with expert knowledge played a crucial role in the installation of Mareno equipment at a new VIP airport lounge foodservice facility in the Maldives. Tina Nielsen speaks to the people at the heart of the project



Above: Carmelo Tortorici from Cook the Chef was project coordinator for the new VIP airport lounge foodservice facility in the Maldives. Right: the beautiful new buffet area and kitchen

**V**elana International Airport in Malé serves as the gateway to the Maldives, the tropical island nation in the Indian Ocean famous for its pristine white-sand beaches, crystal-clear waters and vibrant coral reefs. A highly sought-after destination for travelers from around the world, the Maldives welcomed more than two million visitors last year and is renowned for its luxury and exclusivity.

Five years ago, Maldives Airports Company Limited, a government-owned entity, began construction on a large new terminal. As part of the project, it also launched work on a dedicated terminal for the VIP Lounge, which was completed two years ago. “The lounge is for VIP guests arriving in The Maldives, whether by private jet or travelling business and first class on international flights,” explains project coordinator Carmelo

Tortorici from Cook the Chef. “This is also an area that can be booked as a meeting area for overseas diplomatic organizations or government officials.”

Invited to submit a proposal for the foodservice offering, Tortorici partnered with kitchen equipment manufacturer Mareno, and Wattson, a trusted local supplier responsible for installing the foodservice facilities. Together, they developed a proposal that included fitted kitchens and buffet areas, featuring the Mareno M1 kitchen solution and drop-in self-service elements integrated into the design.

## Staying flexible

“We prepared something that could be elastic and meet as many requirements as possible,” explains Tortorici, adding that having a local partner is crucial – not only for installation, but for after-sales service. “The Maldives is a complicated and remote area; when you need a cable, you can’t just go to a shop and buy it,” he says. “It is so important for us to have the professional team with the experience and skills on the technical side.” ▶





Khathman Abd. Sattar (far right), technical and after-sales manager at Wattson, says the government relied on their expertise to create a compelling proposition. “The request was a little bit vague, so they asked us to provide as much information as possible, based on our professional expertise,” he says. “We designed a kitchen that could cater for and supply a variety of different cuisines. It is basically divided into three floors with one covering the whole kitchen, which is a fully functional kitchen, and the remaining two floors serve as the buffet areas,” he says.

Visitors can request a selection of private rooms with optional waiter service, ideal for groups such as diplomats with specific culinary requirements. “I am sure the kitchen will be ready to accommodate almost any request,” says Tortorici.

The team faced several challenges. The bidding process began in early 2023, but the tender was not awarded until the end of the year. In the meantime, construction moved forward.

### Best-laid plans

By the time they returned to start on their work, the site had changed significantly from what had been approved. “Electricity, drainage and plumbing were already finalized when we jumped in. Matching this to our drawings was a significant challenge,” says Tortorici.

“There were some structural differences,” recalls Sattar. “So, we worked with Carmelo and the Mareno team to accommodate the new structure and the new electrical and water points. It was a bit of a challenge, but we didn’t change the design so much that it will create issues in the workflow and the customer was satisfied.”

When it came to specifying equipment from Mareno, the request was to exclusively use electric machines. For a project in a location as remote as the Maldives, electricity load is key. “The machines had to be flexible,” says Tortorici. “We used quite a lot of induction cooking machines [including several from INDUCS®], plus bratt pans, and multi-functional ovens.”

In accordance with HACCP rules, separate areas were created for the preparation of fish, meat and vegetables, plus separate pot washing and beverage zones.

As might be expected from a government-directed project, bureaucracy was an issue.



**“ We managed to finish the project on time and successfully by catering to all the demands ”**

**Khathman Abd. Sattar, Wattson**

“Any small change or adaptation to the facilities and structures had to be authorized,” says Tortorici. “You have to fill out an application just to move drainage 20 centimeters to the right. There’s an application to present the Request for Authorization, then someone has to ask for another authorization, and then another.”

Despite these obstacles, a solution-focused approach supported by local expertise and technical knowledge ultimately proved successful. “I think we managed to finish the project on time and successfully by catering to all the demands and the requests made by the client,” says Sattar. “It was a really successful project for us.” ■

Mareno and its partners employed a solution-focused approach, backed up by local expertise and technical knowledge, to deliver the project

**BRAND WATCH**

**MARENO**

kitchen solutions since 1922

**1922**

Mareno was founded in 1922 under its original name, Gribaoudi Domenico Cucine

**90%**

The percentage of Mareno's equipment made from 100% recyclable stainless steel

**714**

The number of models of M1 modular cooking products manufactured by Mareno

**[mareno.it](http://mareno.it)**

# Driving innovation: mastering the in-car espresso

Concept cars give manufacturers the freedom to explore bold ideas. In one of Nissan's latest designs, the company caters to coffee lovers with an in-car espresso machine from Rancilio, reports Jim Banks



Above: Nissan's Takahiro Ohno with Rancilio's Francesco Di Sano. Right: the X-Trail Unwind

**N**issan's new concept car, the X-Trail Unwind, is a vehicle like no other ever seen. In addition to advancements in drive performance, safety, and comfort, this model introduces features designed to elevate

life outside the car, turning roadside stops into moments of luxury.

Building on the established e-POWER model in the X-Trail range of compact crossover SUVs, the Unwind is Nissan's attempt to embrace a concept that is rarely explored in automotive design: relaxation. In doing so, it blurs the line between the car's interior and the outdoors to help drivers unwind in comfort.

At the heart of the Unwind concept is a custom trailer-terrace designed for relaxation. It creates an

elevated outdoor experience – a roadside lounge atmosphere. And what does a roadside lounge need most of all? A built-in, slide-out espresso system that fits perfectly into the trunk of the car.

The vehicle is customized with a trailer that transforms into a luxurious outdoor terrace. Lift the back door of the Unwind, and you'll find a beautifully sculpted S-shaped shelf unit, complete with a single-group espresso machine, a smart on-demand coffee grinder, a siphon coffee maker, and a cup shelf.

"The uniqueness of the concept car comes directly from the vehicle it is based on – the Nissan X-Trail – which has a 1500W power outlet in the cargo space that not many competitors can offer," says Takahiro Ohno of the Nissan Global Design Center.

"The concept car shows one of the best examples of how you can make the most of your chance to unwind when you are in nature.

"Espresso wakes you up from sleepiness before driving, so espressos and cars are an excellent combination," he adds.

"Furthermore, our research showed that target customers in the core age group – people in their fifties – usually prefer espresso, while younger age groups tend to prefer brewed coffee."

## A mobile espresso system

The Unwind has a very specific target market in mind. The ideal customer is a perfectionist in their fifties who takes pride in brewing and drinking espresso without compromise. They enjoy spending time in nature with their son or daughter, who drives an X-Trail Remastered concept equipped with a premium sound system from Audio-Technica and a turntable for vinyl records.

When open, the Unwind's rear door doubles as an umbrella, shielding the espresso system from rain and showcasing the shelf's elegant design. Its curved wooden louvers match the shape and tone of the trailer's terrace.

The slide-out system provides easy access to a Silvia espresso machine, a Stile coffee grinder, and a full suite of accessories – each supplied by Italian company Rancilio.

"A component list was thought out carefully to support every little step of ideal espresso making, such as a digital scale specialized in single dose espresso, a small water spray to moisten the beans, a base to place the portafilter horizontally, devices to stir and level ground beans evenly, a force-limited ▶



“Rancilio’s Silvia model is an ideal partner for us to communicate the character of our target customer, who would like the story behind the coffee machine”

Takahiro Ohno,  
Nissan Global Design Center



Nissan was drawn to Rancilio’s commitment to leveraging its rich heritage to stay at the cutting-edge of innovation

tamper, an easy-to-use knock box, and so forth,” says Ohno.

“We tried to choose everything in the design to be as simple as possible and readily available in the market, all in a matte black finish that looks unified but stands out on the light beige wooden shelf,” he adds.

“The biggest challenge was the choice of components in the right size and quantity to fit inside the shelf, which is limited by the size of the cargo space of the vehicle, without compromising either the quality of the espresso or the shelf design.”

The shelf is constructed to appear symmetrical when seen next to the shelf in the Remastered version, which houses a range of audio components. The Unwind shelf resembles the number 5, while the Remastered shelf looks like the number 2.

Together, the two designs create a sense of visual balance when the cars are parked on either side of the trailer deck. The design also offers a subtle reference to important dates, representing both the year 2025 and the 25th anniversary of the Nissan X-Trail.

### Embracing Italian expertise

Integrating premium espresso equipment into a concept vehicle is a bold and innovative idea. Turning that vision into reality, however, requires practical thinking and a strong understanding of what makes a great cup of coffee. It also involves making adjustments to ensure the final setup is both functional and user-friendly.

For example, Nissan originally considered using Rancilio’s Silvia Pro X espresso machine, but its height exceeded the available space on the lower shelf. The team ultimately opted for the single-boiler model, which offered a better fit without compromising quality.

“As a result, both shelves look very efficient without looking too empty or too full,” says Ohno. “Rancilio’s Silvia model is an ideal partner for us to communicate the character of our target customer, who would like the story behind the espresso machine,” he adds.

“It was, after all, created as the first espresso machine to be converted from a commercial machine to domestic use. Rancilio also has a long history as a company, having evolved espresso culture ever since 1926.”

Nissan was drawn to Rancilio not only for its rich history in espresso machine craftsmanship, but also for its commitment to using that legacy to remain at the forefront of innovation.

“Our collaboration began when Nissan’s team approached us to explore creating a design experience tailored specifically to their ideal customer,” says Francesco Di Sano, Rancilio’s sales area manager for Japan. “We bring a long history of expertise in crafting robust and premium espresso machines, and I think that we are naturally suited to deliver the experience Nissan wanted.”

“In terms of design, our Silvia espresso machine and Stile grinder stand out thanks to their unique design, which complements the Nissan vision very well,” he adds. “They are compact, with a minimalist and functional aesthetic, which enhances any environment they occupy.”

Designing a functional yet elegantly compact espresso setup for the vehicle’s limited space was a significant challenge. Rancilio collaborated closely with Nissan, providing 3D models of its products. Each component needed to integrate seamlessly into the slide-out design, meeting both aesthetic and practical requirements. Rancilio also offered valuable input on ergonomics, usability, and how best to pair the machine with complementary espresso tools and coffee beans.

### On the road to success

The Unwind perfectly showcases the potential and the flexibility of the car in terms of spatial design, and the reaction from the public so far has been encouraging. “Customers have been impressed with what the car can potentially do with its high-power supply,” says Ohno. “Some even asked for the price, so it must have looked too real to call it just a concept car.”

If the car were to come into production, one challenge would remain – reducing the cost of production.

“The cost makes this car purely a concept, like so many other examples from the past,” Ohno adds. “That is despite the confidence of our small team in its potential to be commercially successful.”

Even though the Unwind will remain a pleasant pipe dream, nothing can stop any coffee lover who owns an X-Trail from partially replicating the same set-up. After all, the car has more than enough power and space to brew a great cup of coffee with Rancilio Silvia. ■



**BRAND WATCH**

**115**  
Rancilio Group manufactures and sells professional coffee machines in more than 115 countries

**RANCILIO GROUP**

**7**  
Rancilio Group has seven branch offices, two R&D centers, an Extraction Lab and a global sales and service network

**4**  
With four distinct brands, Rancilio offers a wide range of products to meet every customer need  
**ranciliogroup.com**

# Triumph in the Dolomites



A complete redesign of two kitchens at the Gardena Grödnerhof Gourmet Hotel & Spa called for trusted partners. Ambach, Niederbacher and H44 Team were up to the task, reports Chris Evans

**N**estled in the breathtaking scenery of the Italian Dolomites, the five-star Gardena Grödnerhof Gourmet Hotel & Spa is an ideal destination for a relaxing retreat, with cuisine at the heart of its hospitality.

Its blend of tradition and innovation is reflected in its impressive new kitchens. The hotel owners recently decided to do a complete redesign and refurbishment of two kitchens: the main kitchen, serving guests at The Gardena and 4 Sajons restaurants; and the Michelin-starred Anna Stuben gourmet restaurant. They wanted the highest-quality designs, equipment and suppliers, leading them to a trusted trio: Ambach, Niederbacher and H44 Team, all conveniently based locally in South Tyrol.

“We have worked with both Ambach and [distributor] Niederbacher for a long time, dating back to the complete rebuilding of the hotel in 2001. We have always been very happy with their work, and with H44 too, which is why we chose them again to design the new kitchens,” explains Roland Oberhofer, manager of the hotel.

The centrepiece and star of the show is undoubtedly the specially designed, sleek horizontal cooking block in the main kitchen, created by Ambach.

“Like all our kitchen blocks it is made of high-quality stainless steel and contains induction hobs, fryers, recessed griddles and pasta cookers (for the traditional Italian food menu). But unlike our other square-shaped linear blocks, this one has more rounded



edges and a customized-shape to match the contours of the hotel kitchen, making it look clean and futuristic,” explains Stefano Tommasini, head of sales for Southern Europe, at Ambach.

The cooking appliances are welded to the block’s surface, ensuring durability and easy cleaning, while compound plates with rounded borders enhance robustness, hygiene, and heat resistance.

### Power and efficiency

Other special features include full-surface induction, cooking with an impressive seven kilowatts of power for each cooking zone, delivering flexibility of use.

“There’s also a salamander support under which chefs can keep the plates warm while they do the final touches to dishes using spoons cleaned in a built-in deep water circulation system,” adds Tommasini.

Perhaps most impressive is the fact that the block, and all the other appliances in the kitchen (even the ones not supplied by Ambach), are electronically controlled and monitored on a kitchen guidance IoT cloud system app called Creatus.cloud, created and managed by Niederbacher.

“This app is a smart system that allows for things like HACCP temperature monitoring, energy optimization, and automation of ventilation and cooling units. There is even a separate interface for the cooking block, where you can see all the conditions and temperatures. That’s particularly appreciated by the chefs – as is the fact they can timetable the use of the appliances (even when they’re away), all on one platform,” says Paul Schöpfer, CEO of Niederbacher.

“If there are any faults, we receive a message and can get information and data before sending highly competent technicians out to do maintenance. There are personalized accesses for chefs, owners, caretakers, etc., so everyone has the app’s function quickly to hand and can operate what they are authorized to do,” he adds.

### Seamless execution and customer satisfaction

The combination of high-quality equipment and superior technology, backed by competence to turn the project around quickly (in less than three months), and all-round customer service in aftersales – both in predictive maintenance and short response time to unforeseeable errors – ensured a smooth process.

“We worked hard to meet the client’s needs, ensuring everything and everyone is connected and the equipment and service is of the highest standard,” says foodservice consultant Alexander Hofer FCSI, CEO at H44 Team. “We have the latest technology in the kitchens, but still respect and appreciate the importance of handcrafted food made with love and emotion, which is why we separated the kitchens into separate zones like patisserie, prep and finishing, to allow the chefs to focus.”

The final result is a resounding success for both the hotel and its guests.

“The collaboration [with the three companies] was very successful. They not only designed the space to our specifications, but also offered valuable advice and improvements. Their expertise ensured that every detail was executed with precision, resulting in a functional, efficient and aesthetically pleasing kitchen. This [in turn] ensures a truly refined dining experience in an elegant and welcoming atmosphere,” says Oberhofer. ■

## BRAND WATCH

**ambach®**  
You, your kitchen

**1953**

The year Ambach was founded in Italy

**70+**

The number of countries Ambach exports to around the world

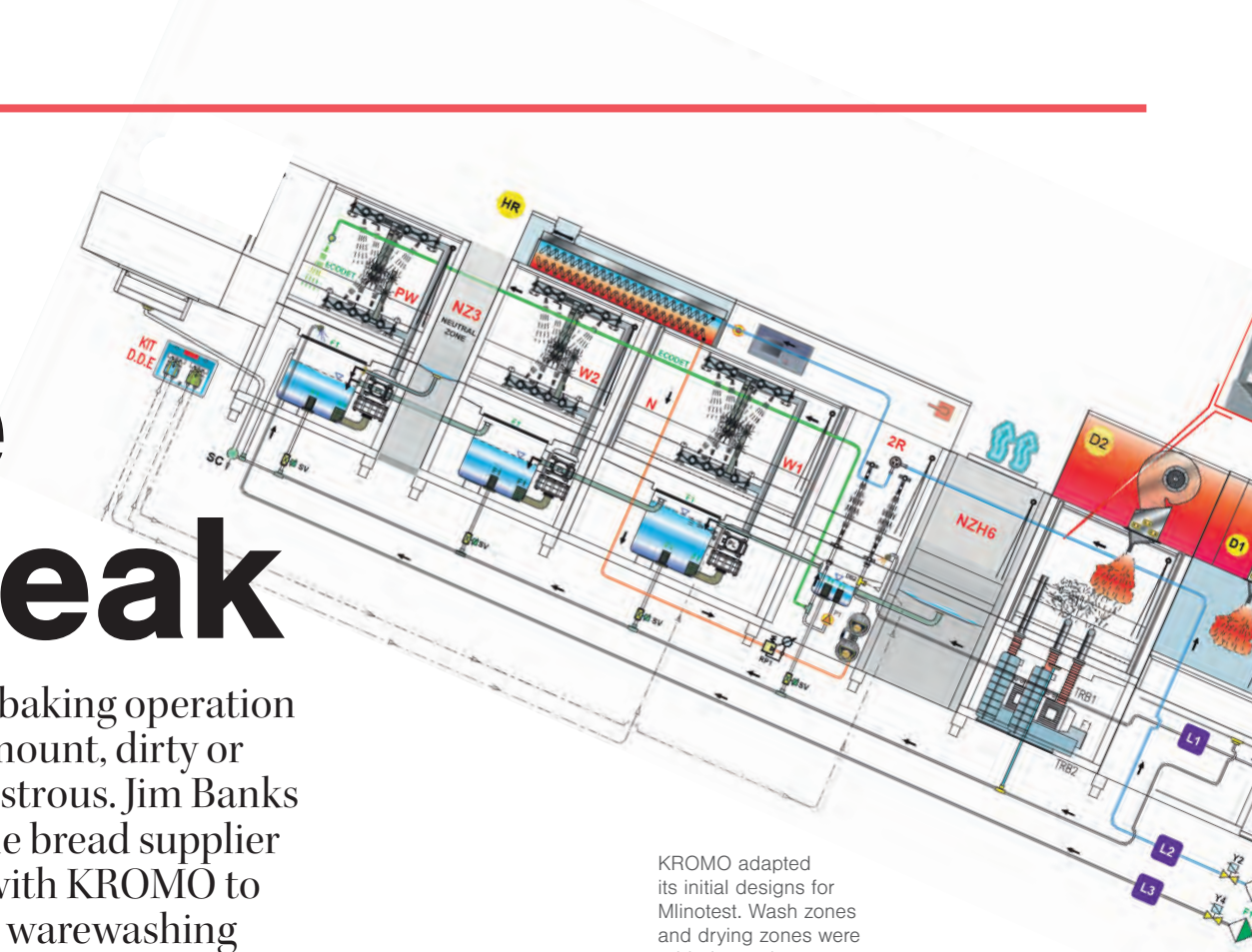
**36**

The number of years Ambach has been part of Ali Group

**ambach.com**

# Bake or break

In a fast-paced bread-baking operation where quality is paramount, dirty or wet crates can be disastrous. Jim Banks looks at how wholesale bread supplier Mlinotest partnered with KROMO to develop a customized warewashing solution that ticked all the right boxes



KROMO adapted its initial designs for Mlinotest. Wash zones and drying zones were added, creating a customized solution

**M**linotest, based in Ajdovščina, Slovenia, has a long history of excellence to uphold. Founded in 1867, when Wenzel Jochmann established a mill on the River Hubelj, it has since grown into a major food-processing company in the Adriatic region, producing pasta, flour, grain mill products, bread and pastries, confectionery, gluten-free biscuits, and more.

Its bakery operation distributes freshly baked bread in frozen, half-baked and green frozen form to a vast network of outlets across the region. Speed and efficiency are critical to its centralized operations, meaning both food preparation and the washing of crates that carry its products to its customers must be running smoothly.

“For green frozen, those crates are more difficult to dry, so that was the one that caused us the most gray hair,” says Monika Šporin, Mlinotest’s head of strategic development in bakery and confectionery. “But all our crates go straight into the washing process when they return to us. When they are clean they go straight into production, so they must be clean and dry very quickly,” she adds.

“Water doesn’t mix well with freshly made bread. Cleanliness is very important, and

because the bread goes into the crates without any packaging, it’s essential they are dry, too.”

Towards the end of 2023, Šporin noticed that the bakery’s warewashing equipment was not performing as required. Neither the cleaning nor the drying processes were adequate. She turned to her contacts at commercial dishwasher supplier KROMO and its exclusive local representative, Pulito Solutions, to recommend an alternative.

“Mlinotest had very specific demands,” explains Pulito’s local representative, Robert Žbogar. “One specific demand was that the crates needed to be 90% dry straight after the wash. So, we visited the KROMO facilities to discuss which machine would be able to do the job. It was a big challenge, as the crates are plastic, which is a very porous material, so they’re hard to dry.”

### Dry performance

KROMO offers an extensive range of undercounter and hood-type models, rack and flight-type machines, and much more. Using a modular design, the team

constructed a machine capable of handling Mlinotest’s heavy workload, operating six days a week, and equipped with two powerful dryers to ensure crates were 90% dry when leaving the washer.

“Most companies will just sell a dishwasher without knowing anything about the application or the items that it is treating,” says Marco Brugnolaro, sales manager, KROMO. “For us, the most important thing in dishwashing is to get all of the right elements working together for each customer. If you know what you need to wash and dry, and what materials are being used, then that gives you a big advantage.”

Mlinotest, a valued partner and customer, went beyond simply providing extensive information about its bakery process and warewashing needs. It brought samples of



**“The most important thing is to get all of the right elements working together for each customer”**

**Marco Brugnolaro, KROMO**



For Mlinotest, the speed and efficiency of its centralized operations is crucial, meaning that the washing of its crates must run smoothly

The modular design of KROMO's machines can handle Mlinotest's heavy workload  
Below: Monika Šporin, Mlinotest; Robert Žbogar, Pulito



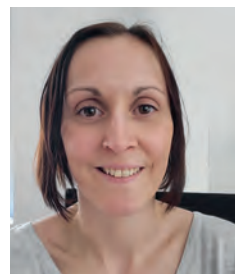
its crates to KROMO's manufacturing facility in Italy, spending a full day testing them across different machines. The first design came close to meeting the requirements, but KROMO was determined to deliver excellence, not just an acceptable solution. The team adapted the design, added extra wash and drying zones to create a customized solution tailored precisely for Mlinotest's operations.

The machine installed at the Mlinotest site in early 2024 stands as a testament to KROMO's expertise in high-end engineering, technical know-how and its collaborative approach. Like its partner, Pulito Solutions, KROMO invests heavily in customer relationships, understanding that true value lies in long-term partnerships.

"We consider ourselves good partners," says Žbogar. "Anyone can sell machines. The hardest part is to be a true partner, and this is why we also implemented the connectivity option in the machine, so that we can always check it. If an error occurs, the technician knows what the problem is before he arrives."

**Connecting ideas**

The new machine is WiFi-enabled, allowing performance to be monitored remotely. This lets Pulito supervise the system's operation and ensure it meets the required standards. It can also analyze how Mlinotest is using the machine to anticipate any performance or capacity issues that might arise in the future.



"We can see that we provided much more capacity than the customer needs, so the machine is already made for the future if there is any increase in use," adds Žbogar. "We could easily add 20-30% more crates without needing to make any changes to the equipment."

After one year of flawless operation, Šporin is very pleased with the results. "Not only do we have good support and service, but the workers using the machine now have more time to do more different work," she says. "There is much more efficiency in our workflow."

In warewashing, as in many areas of life, partnership is everything. ■

**BRAND WATCH**



**1987**

Since 1987, KROMO has been manufacturing, selling and servicing a comprehensive range of commercial dishwashers, with an increased focus on customer operating costs, sustainability, and technology

**120**

KROMO exports its wide range of high-quality professional dishwashers and warewashers to 120 countries worldwide

**135**

KROMO's complete range includes 135 models, from undercounter to custom-built rack and flight-type machines

**kromo-ali.com**

# How hospital catering moved from home-cooked to high-quality

Shifting from traditional Cook-Serve to Cook-Freeze can be a great step forward in enhancing efficiency and food quality, but such a big change is a bold move in a hospital setting. Jim Banks explores how Leighton Hospital in the UK smoothly navigated this change with support from Burlodge



**W**hen Paula Bamber took over as head of facilities at Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in 2022, she immediately realized the foodservice offering at Leighton Hospital in Crewe needed a rethink. The traditional hot-line produced food with a home-cooked feel, but that was the only positive.

“Catering operations were in a bit of a mess,” Bamber explains. “They were very old-fashioned, there was no innovation, and it was not a great place to work. In 2023, we got a new catering manager with a wealth of experience and knowledge, and everything was immediately better, but we knew we needed real change so that we were less reliant on the chefs.”

The operation Bamber had inherited was fragile – one absent chef could disrupt the entire operation. The menu was limited, inflexible, and inefficient.

“We were at critical-point failure,” Bamber says. “I looked at alternatives, including Cook-Chill, which had very little good feedback, as it creates a lot of waste and there is little shelf life. Waste was already high with traditional hot-line cooking. Then we looked at Cook-Freeze, which had a raft of positives. It took a year to plan for the switch and get approval, but we eventually got full backing from the board.”

Now, Leighton Hospital, which has 500 beds and serves approximately 500,000 meals every month, is sourcing starters and main courses from key partner Apetito, while its in-house chefs cook desserts and food for the retail outlet.

Above: Leighton Hospital in Crewe, UK, has 500 beds and serves approximately 500,000 meals every month



“That blended approach has actually saved us money,” Bamber adds. “We employ fewer chefs, as food is bought in, and everything is more efficient. The stocking, the contingency plans, and the menu changes are all done through Apetito. The food is of higher quality, too. Traditional cooking is lovely and homely, but there was too much running against it to keep it going.”

### The same but different

To deliver a sea change in the quality of its catering services, the hospital turned to long-time partner Burlodge, which mobilized 30 Multigen trolleys to support the new delivery model. Similar models were already familiar to the staff, but the team of catering assistants had to become familiar with more modes of operation.

“Before, staff would simply collect the trolley and take it to ward and serve, but now there is more responsibility,” explains Shelley Hudson, Burlodge UK regional sales manager. “With the trolley’s split chamber and its dual oven divider, there are effectively two convection ovens. Dense food, vegetables, and liquefied meals for people with dysphagia – difficulty swallowing – can be loaded and cooked all at once.”

“The chambers are very well insulated, which is important in the hospital setting,” she adds. “If you get to ward level and there is an emergency, like someone having a heart attack, then food service has to stop. So, you can put the trolley on hot hold mode, although with the intense level of insulation that might not even be necessary.”

Most employees were already familiar with the trolleys, so the transition was relatively easy, and training was minimal. With just three buttons, it is simple to understand how the trolleys work and initiate the cooking process. There is a 90-minute

cooking cycle, then the food is probed to check for temperature and quality.

“We also have the BCloud software,” says Bamber. “That means the information from the temperature probes is automatically recorded and logged on the cloud, where it cannot be manipulated. That is essential for HACCP monitoring and environmental health. It also cuts short any discussions if the ward says that we have served soup cold, for example, as we have the temperature records, and the dishes stay in heated trolleys.”

### Building partnerships

In just a short time, the impact has been remarkable. From the hospital’s point of view, meal service is more efficient, food quality has improved, and disruptions are extremely rare. From the patient’s perspective, there is more choice and food – along with visitors – has become a highlight of the day. There are now 84 dishes on the menu, rather than 24. Patient feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Technology has played a key role in this transformation, but equally important is the relationship between all parties. “Shelley from Burlodge has amazing knowledge,” says Bamber. “She knows every nut and bolt, and we always felt totally safe in her hands. The service is fantastic, and if I call her, I know she will be on-site right away to solve any problem.”

“It is all about what the client needs,” adds Hudson. “This is a partnership, and it is about finding the right solution through the lifecycle of the trolley, which means after-sales service, engineers, and everything else.”

Implementing change in institutional settings can be intimidating, but with the right partners and technology, it is possible to redefine the standards of hospital catering. ■

**“This is a partnership, and it is about finding the right solution through the lifecycle of the trolley”**

**Shelley Hudson,  
Burlodge**

### BRAND WATCH

**burlodge**  
TOGETHER, WE WORK.

**1984**

Burlodge was founded 41 years ago in the UK

**5**

Burlodge has operations in five countries in Europe and North America

**2045**

Burlodge is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045

**burlodge.com**



# A new face for an old favorite

Established in 1989, The Coffee Club is Australia's largest home-grown café group. By staying in tune with market trends while honoring its heritage, it continues to grow. Its latest makeover with partner Moffat reflects a perfect blend of old and new, as Jim Banks reports

**W**ith operations spanning 13 countries and 400 stores, and serving more than 40 million customers, The Coffee Club is a homegrown Australian success story.

Maintaining a leading market position is always a challenge, but the company's refusal to rest on its laurels has ensured it remains attuned to customers' changing needs.

The Coffee Club's latest large-scale project has focused on improving food quality, outcomes and costs, while reducing labor resources by 60%. At the same time, the business aims to reduce its reliance on pre-prepared items, enhance energy efficiency and optimize workflows during peak periods.

"The momentum in our category is currently driven by independent cafés, but we have an opportunity to become an independent en masse," says Christian Bright, design and construction manager at The Coffee Club. "We have 400 stores worldwide, including 220 in Australia, so we have a

higher footprint, but we also have a long heritage, trust, familiarity, consistency, and quality.

"Many landlords tell us they are more wary of independents, as they drop out or are not growing," he adds. "We, on the other hand, are always expanding, and we have a regular and loyal client base. Each franchisee is backed by a solid business."

## A new face for foodservice

The Coffee Club has traditionally followed a cook-and-serve café model, featuring a ready-to-eat display and hot breakfast offerings. Recently, however, that service model – along with the brand and store design – has undergone a major transformation. "We wanted to increase our customers' expectations," says Bright. "When our new CEO was appointed in 2023, we conducted deep customer research into brand positioning, brand identity, building customer loyalty, store experience, and product evolution.

"We have gone back to our grassroots in the 1980s, with the nostalgia of a bright and colorful design, and we are developing the look, feel and



and enhances food quality. It also supports a shift to a preparation-focused workflow, where food is cooked in advance then held at safe temperatures, speeding service up.

“They wanted to move from the impinger ovens they had been using to a more flexible cooking platform based on optimal cooking and holding principles,” explains Dan Savage, sales manager, National Accounts/QSR at Moffat. “Standard restaurants have peak demand periods, but this is sometimes harder to predict in other operations [like coffee houses]. With the E33T5 you can do batch cooking and the EHT10 hot holding equipment keeps it at the right temperature and humidity, meaning it can be served when needed as if cooked fresh.”

**Better by design**

Implementing batch cooking and hot holding has reduced kitchen footprints, lowered operational costs and improved food quality and customer satisfaction. These gains are due to fresh scratch cooking and baking, greater efficiency, and faster service. Food can be prepared with minimal training or skill, cooking processes can be pre-programmed for consistency and hot holding technology ensures food quality is perfectly maintained.

“It’s about ensuring that everything runs smoother, better, and faster,” says Savage. “The Coffee Club has been very open to discussion, and nothing was off limits, so while the Turbofan convection product was a known product globally, the new technology around hot holding was less well known. Christian came in and I plated up breakfast from components I’d made a couple of hours ago, and he wouldn’t have guessed. Seeing is believing.”

“The consistency and quality of the product as it comes out is excellent – better than we had before – and it has been well received by customers,” says Bright. “Customer experience is what matters. The collaboration on the transition has been fantastic.”

By leveraging Moffat’s experience in providing tailored solutions for QSRs and improving both efficiency and quality, The Coffee Club has successfully implemented a cook-and-hold system that allows compact kitchens to become highly productive. The result is greater consistency, faster service, and significant cost savings – foundations for the brand’s continued growth. All set for another 35 years. ■

tone of our stores, moving away from a cookie-cutter approach,” he adds. “We even changed our coffee at the end of last year, for the first time in 35 years, moving to our own brand.”

To support this product development journey, The Coffee Club partnered with foodservice and bakery equipment specialist Moffat. The brief was to not only supply equipment, but to improve kitchen workflows and operational processes. The solution had to be flexible enough to accommodate various store formats, from enclosed kitchens to fully open designs serving customers directly.

Moffat builds fully tailored solutions, collaborating with chefs to provide comprehensive culinary support – from menu development and testing to planning, implementation, and staff training. Kitchens at The Coffee Club now feature double-stacked Turbofan E33T5 convection ovens paired with a humidified hot holding cabinet on the side.

The Turbofan cook-and-hold oven system enables more in-house food preparation, lower cost of goods,

**“ The consistency and quality of the product as it comes out is excellent ”**

**Christian Bright, The Coffee Club**



Above: Christian Bright, The Coffee Club (top); Dan Savage, Moffat

**BRAND WATCH**



**90+**

The Moffat group of companies operates across most industry sectors, backed by more than 90 years of experience and expertise

**1981**

In 1981, at the Hotel Olympia in the UK, Moffat Appliances introduced the first portable convection oven with a 13-amp power supply and a cook-and-hold grilling element

**4**

Moffat Australia/New Zealand operates in four key market sectors: foodservice, bakery, healthcare/meal distribution and coffee

**moffat.com**

# The house always wins

A Michelin star brings pressure alongside the adulation. For the three brothers running Casa Sgarra, fostering partnerships with suppliers who share their vision, such as Comenda, has been essential to smooth operations, learns Sam Noble

Right (l-r):  
Roberto, Felice,  
and Riccardo  
Sgarra of the  
Michelin-starred  
restaurant  
Casa Sgarra



**F**orty kilometers from Bari, on Italy's Adriatic coast, sits the picturesque city of Trani. For brothers Felice, Riccardo and Roberto Sgarra, who grew up in this land of stone and vineyards where time seems to move slower, this was always going to be the place where their restaurant, Casa Sgarra, would begin its story. "We wanted a place that spoke about us, about our history," says chef Felice. "Roberto, in the cellar, tells the story of the region through its wines. And I try to let Puglia speak through the dishes."

Cooking has always been at the heart of the family, but their parents passed down something equally valuable: a culture of hospitality and an understanding of the importance of care.

"Casa Sgarra was not created to impress, but to welcome," says Felice. "Riccardo in the dining room, with his grace and elegance, gives voice to our hospitality."

### **A tale of three brothers**

Chef Felice and his twin brother Riccardo were born in Andria in 1982, the year Italy won the soccer World Cup. As a child, Felice followed his father in the fields, absorbing the rhythms and values of the land. Today, his cuisine blends those rural memories with refined technique, a spirit of innovation and a desire to amaze through balance. He plays with the scents of the sea and the land, with textures and colors, but always starts with excellent, seasonal ingredients.

Restaurant manager Riccardo brings elegance and hospitality to Casa Sgarra. His international experience with Hyatt Corporation, along with his work as a brand ambassador in the world of wine, have made him a refined narrator of the dining room and the territory.

Sommelier Roberto, the youngest of the three brothers, is a true connoisseur of wine and the custodian of Casa Sgarra's cellar, which holds more than 600 labels. He serves as the bridge between the kitchen and the dining room, overseeing every detail of the service and expertly guiding guests through each glass.

The cuisine at the Michelin-starred restaurant strikes a delicate balance between innovation and tradition. Each dish tells a visual and emotional story, brought to life by an array of carefully curated tableware – irregular shapes, textured surfaces and porcelain as light as paper. “Every glass, every plate, every piece of cutlery is part of a story we want to tell our guests,” says Felice. “If even one of these elements arrives at the table imperfect, the story is interrupted. That’s why we need partners who are not just suppliers, but custodians of this narrative.”

### Be a part of the story

Fabio Di Michele, CEO of FERV – a company that installs, maintains and services kitchen equipment – explains how this works in practice. “With the Sgarra brothers, first and foremost, there is listening. Then there is work. Our job is not just to supply machines, but to build tailor-made efficiency.” Every detail, even washing, must meet the same standards of precision. “We cannot just install machines,” says Di Michele. “We need to guarantee continuity and reliability. That’s why we work with suppliers like Comenda, who share our approach and our attention to what really happens in the kitchen.”

When it comes to warewashing, that means accommodating a vast array of tableware and service requirements. “Every restaurant has specific needs: particular dishes, delicate glassware, fast turnaround times,” says Livio Brugnoli, general manager of Comenda. “Our racks are designed to adapt to these needs, guarantee protection, and ensure effective washing without compromise. That’s where a good result begins.”

At Casa Sgarra, where every dish is a sculpture and every glass blown, having the right rack is essential. Comenda has always designed its racks in-house and owns the molds. This is a deliberate industrial choice: every shape, angle, and material is born from technical knowledge and listening to customers’ needs. There are over 80 standard rack



Above, top: Fabio di Michele, CEO of FERV, pictured with Felice Sgarra; Right: Livio Brugnoli, general manager of Comenda

models, but if the right one isn't among that range, a custom solution will be made. “The rack is an integral part of the result,” says Brugnoli. “It is not an accessory. It is a technical component, just as important as the machine.”

Perfect washing isn't just about the racks; however the entire ecosystem plays a role. Casa Sgarra has chosen reverse osmosis for its machines because it eliminates the need for manual polishing, reduces damage from handling, shortens drying times and protects even the most delicate surfaces. It's all testament to Comenda's ability to deliver what Brugnoli calls “intelligent washing, tailor-made.”

He believes the market is ready for the next phase of washer development. “The machine must know where it is, what it's dealing with, and adapt accordingly.”

**“ Every glass and plate is part of a story we want to tell our guests. That’s why we need partners who are custodians of this narrative ”**

**Felice Sgarra,  
Casa Sgarra**



At HostMilano 2025, Comenda will be presenting new machines that can automatically recognize the Comenda rack inserted, adapting the cycle autonomously to protect objects and optimize consumption. “I confess, we had already designed them some time ago. It was a powerful idea, but perhaps too far ahead of the real technological possibilities of the moment. We never abandoned it, but we chose to wait for the right moment, without forcing it or being presumptuous. Today, with on-board machine intelligence and more mature technology, we can finally put it back into play. Not to impress, but to truly simplify the work of those who rely on us every day,” says Brugnoli.

At Comenda, innovation isn’t about spectacle. It is a practical response to real needs, showing respect for the people who use the machines, those who install them and those who rely on their consistent performance every day.

Five years since it opened, Casa Sgarra’s story is still unfolding, through the hospitality it proudly provides, the dishes and drinks it serves, and even in the details its patrons may never notice. Choices made away from the dining room – concerning washing, maintenance, and partners, for example – can make all the difference. “To make a great dish, you need a great team, even behind the scenes,” says Felice. ■

## BRAND WATCH



### 60+

For more than 60 years, Comenda has been synonymous with performance excellence, reliability and safety in professional warewashing around the world

### 100+

With a reliable and efficient distribution network spanning more than 100 countries worldwide, Comenda delivers prompt after-sales support

### ISO 9001

Comenda machines are manufactured in Italy at a factory certified to the ISO 9001 quality management system and ISO 14001 environmental management system standards

[comenda.eu](http://comenda.eu)



# A comfortable home in the harshest conditions

Every major infrastructure project has its challenges, but in the harsh Arctic environment of a Norwegian gas refinery, those challenges are multiplied. Jim Banks speaks with **Endre Sørstrømmen** of Stord Innkvartering and kitchen equipment partner Metos to find out how they successfully housed and fed a large workforce in the toughest conditions

**T**he Arctic city of Hammerfest in northern Norway, perched on the coastline of Norway's Finnmark County, holds a dramatic and remote position. Often cited as the world's northernmost city, it also encompasses the tiny island of Melkøya, which is home to an onshore liquid natural gas (LNG) plant that receives natural gas from the Snøhvit gas and condensate field via a pipeline running beneath the Barents Sea.

Operated by Equinor, Norway's national oil company, the refinery was closed for 80 days from the start of April 2025 to carry out essential maintenance and extensive electrification work. Supporting this project meant accommodating up to 1,000 workers on site, each of whom

needed to be housed comfortably and fed consistently, regardless of the weather. This is no small feat, given the isolation and harsh cold of the environment. But for Stord Innkvartering, it is just another day at the office.

The company specializes in providing temporary modular buildings and constructing workforce accommodation camps for large-scale infrastructure and industrial projects across Norway.

### Unlocking spaces

"We help our customers scale their opportunities by unlocking space that helps their workforce to get the rest they need after a full day at work," says Endre Sørstrømmen, Stord's managing director.

"Essentially, we deliver a temporary home



away from home – providing convenience, recovery, and community. We can deliver modules for the clients, or we can provide all of the services needed to run the worker community. We can help our customers to manage their entire project by handling municipality contacts and approvals, setting up everything needed to deliver a hotel-like solution for the workers. Or, if the customer wishes, just deliver the modules where they're needed," he says.

"The beauty of modular building solutions is flexibility and scalability. With a standardized module fleet and experience to manage complex and big projects, we can set up a suitable solution and adjust it quickly by adding more space if needed," he adds.

The Hammerfest camp project, conceived

in summer 2024, brought its own set of planning hurdles. The proposed site presented challenges, including pollution and land-use restrictions related to surrounding development. Once local approvals were secured, Stord got to work by constructing and transporting housing and canteen modules to the remote site during the harsh conditions of an Arctic winter. “There are only six hours of daylight in January,” Sørstrømmen explains. “We had to deal with everything the Arctic can throw at us – the wind, the cold and the snow – to deliver 10,000 square meters of accommodation. This included a huge canteen, probably one of the biggest ever made, capable of feeding 1,000 people several meals each day.”

To deliver consistent, high-quality foodservice for the worker community, Stord partnered with Metos, a leading kitchen equipment supplier. Metos provides the essential components of the canteen modules and sources critical equipment from across Ali Group’s portfolio. That includes Metos Viking cooking kettles, Metos steamers and Wexiödisk dishwashers, KROMO pot washers, Metos Prince bratt pans, and Metos Nova/Halo display units. Everything except cold storage falls under Metos’ scope.

The first thing Metos does on any project is get to know the space and how many modules it will need, says Geir Aas, project manager at Metos. “We can create kitchens to serve anything from 100 to 1,000 people, so we need to know the number of modules in the camp. Camps can be up in the mountains far from any grocery stores, so we need to think carefully about storage, too,” he adds. “For 1,000

Pictured, right (from top): Endre Sørstrømmen of Stord Innkvartering; Geir Aas and Liv Haugen of Metos



people, as at Hammerfest, we’ll have maybe 250 seats and run three or four sittings, so we need to plan well to use the equipment efficiently, as well as providing variety and nutrition.”

Stord’s ability to execute large, complex projects combined with Metos’ expertise and strengths in large-scale canteen solutions, formed a partnership built on quality and proven performance. “Being able to deliver quickly, wherever we’re working in Norway, is very important. That means relying on Metos to provide quick service during the project, through its connection with partners across the country,” says Sørstrømmen. “We deliver wherever our clients need us, and we need to make it as smooth as possible no matter where it is, even if there are no roads to the site and we have to go by boat. We take on the challenge and Metos has to be part of that.”

The results of this strong and effective partnership are clear, despite the extreme demands of the Hammerfest project and the risks of delivering a second-rate solution. “If the canteen and living environments are not up to standard then the mood of workers can drop, and that can affect the project,” says Sørstrømmen. “That mood can spread quickly and it’s hard to turn around.”

Liv Haugen, sales executive at Metos, explains how the company has adapted to demand. “Activity in the north of Norway has evolved, so we’ve developed more support providers there, as it’s hard to drive around all of the fjords,” she says. “Much more is happening in the north now, and when people work on these big infrastructure projects they need places to eat and sleep. This is a big part of the foodservice industry that’s often forgotten.”

If they can make it work in Hammerfest, Stord Innkvartering and Metos can make it work anywhere. ■

“ We had to deal with everything the Arctic can throw at us ”

Endre Sørstrømmen, Stord Innkvartering



BRAND WATCH

metos  
kitchen intelligence®

100+

Metos was founded in 1922 and celebrated a century as an industry leader in the Scandinavian area in 2022

21,000+

Metos manufactures over 21,000 products annually, all focused on improving client workflow and profitability

8

A market leader in Scandinavia, the Baltic countries, and Benelux, Metos has a presence in eight European countries

metos.com



## 04 Success stories



# French baking, with a twist

Vegetal bakeries like Land&Monkeys are part of a growing trend in foodservice. Tina Nielsen explores how Bongard's expertise and equipment have supported the zero-carbon-impact group's expansion



Above: Olivier Bosc, key account manager at Bongard



**“ We needed quality ovens that are easy to use, and provide consistent quality ”**

**Marc Raffa, Land&Monkeys**

**L**and&Monkeys was launched in 2020 with a mission to create the best French bakery products with a vegan twist. “The keywords to describe us are plant-based, classic and delicious. Our motto is ‘Dream fair, eat fun,’” says head executive chef baker Marc Raffa.

Appealing to a broad demographic, from locals to tourists – and, of course, vegans – Land&Monkeys operates five company-owned bakeries and three franchises across Paris, Bordeaux, and Aix-en-Provence. Several more are slated to open this year. The strategy is to strengthen the brand domestically before expanding abroad, all while maintaining a zero-carbon-impact mission.

The busy kitchen focuses on four different product categories: bread, pastry, viennoiserie and snacking. Bread is made with 100% organic flour sourced within 200km of each store, while pastries are made using Yumgo, the company’s own plant-based “eggs”, created by founders Rodolphe and Yoshimi Landemaine.

Viennoiserie, including croissants, pains au chocolat and chaussons aux pommes, are baked with vegetable butter and animal-free milk. The snacking menu, which accounts for 25% of total turnover, changes every three months based on seasonal ingredients. Bread, viennoiserie and brioche are all made on site, while pastries and cakes are assembled on site.

### Animal-free challenges

Using plant-based ingredients requires bakers to modify their approach: the dough is more liquid, making it harder to work with, and developing new recipes is a constant challenge. “We have to adapt and find the good ingredients to replace the animal ingredients, but it keeps our work interesting,” says Raffa, adding that it takes longer to perfect new

recipes as they can’t base them on anybody else’s recipes directly. “With time we get more used to the new recipes, and we become more efficient.”

Before launching Land&Monkeys, co-founder Rodolphe established the eponymous Maison Landemaine brand, with 22 locations across Paris, many supported by bakery equipment supplier Bongard. When it came time to outfit the vegan bakeries, they turned once again to their trusted partner.

“We needed quality ovens that are easy to use, and provide consistent quality for each franchisee, as well as lasting over time,” explains Raffa.

“When we were opening the first three bakeries for Land&Monkeys, we already knew Bongard equipment is good quality, reliable, durable and easy to repair,” he says, adding that on the few occasions they have needed a spare part, Bongard was very quick to respond through its local, exclusive dealer Panifour.

### Land of opportunity

Olivier Bosc, key account manager at Bongard, worked closely with Raffa to support the national rollout of Land&Monkeys. “We were able to provide them with comprehensive help, from project study to aftersales support,” he



says. Land&Monkeys plans to have all future bakeries and franchises replicate the existing ones, so every baker works with the same equipment, removing the need to adapt recipes.

To support this consistency, Bongard has proposed a complete range of equipment, from mixing to baking, that will deliver the same results – whether in a 20m<sup>2</sup> or 80m<sup>2</sup> space and regardless of the location. “The main challenge was to offer equipment with a high capacity, because of the large volumes sold every day, that produced the level of quality they require,” says Bosc. Bongard’s Orion Evo and Soleo Evo deck ovens met the challenge. The latter is a modular model that fits into tight spaces, still performing at the level of a traditional deck oven.

Land&Monkeys now plans to create a dedicated laboratory for training and preparing bread and Viennese pastries. Bongard will accompany the team in this next phase, as it continues to develop plant-based alternatives to classic French bakery goods. ■

## BRAND WATCH



**1922**

Oscar Bongard founded his bakery company, Bongard, in 1922

**70%**

At least one unit of Bongard equipment is installed in 70% of French bakeries

**140**

Bongard is present in more than 140 countries worldwide

**bongard.fr**

## 04 Success stories



# West meets East

Trimex Foods Pvt. Ltd. has brought Tex-Mex favorite Chili's Grill & Bar to India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and French patisserie café PAUL to India. Existing supplier Welbilt was there to offer technical help, advice and exceptional after-service, reports Chris Evans

**T**ex-Mex food chain Chili's Grill & Bar and French bakery specialists PAUL are rapidly expanding across India, delighting the locals' taste buds. This growth is driven by food franchise powerhouse Trimex Foods Pvt. Ltd., with essential kitchen solutions from Welbilt®. Until 2010, there were very few Western food chains in India. "It's mainly either you go to a five-star hotel or a local chain," explains Vaibhav Kaushish, COO and director of Trimex Foods Pvt. Ltd.

Despite introducing a menu unfamiliar to many locals, including quesadillas, fajitas, burgers, wings and pastas, there were long queues outside when the first restaurant opened. "Initially it was mostly the elite, well-traveled locals (who make up about 2% of the population), but after a few years other local palates have grown and adapted to the food," adds Kaushish.

### Hot growth and smart kitchen solutions

Under Trimex Foods, Chili's has steadily grown while maintaining the same quality and consistency

as its U.S. counterparts. Achieving this in a time- and energy-efficient manner required the right kitchen equipment.

Fortunately, Welbilt has been on hand to help achieve this. As an approved supplier of kitchen equipment for Chili's U.S. locations, Welbilt had extensive knowledge of the brand's needs. With test kitchens and in-house chefs, Welbilt helped develop menus, experiment with equipment, and enhance operational efficiency.

"We've been able to try out and develop the menus but also experiment with equipment to test efficiency and see how the food comes out," explains Kaushish.

"A good example of this was their Convotherm® combi ovens, which we were using to heat our meats (pork ribs, chicken breasts, etc.). Welbilt showed us they can also be used to bake the breads (burger buns, garlic breads, etc.), cook the rice and boil vegetables. So we didn't need separate baking ovens or outside suppliers and rice cookers anymore. That saved us a lot of time and money at our sites."

They also took on the Convotherm mini ovens, which are just 50.5 cm wide and use only seven kilowatts of power, "so [they] have saved on



Above: Vaibhav Kaushish of Trimex Foods Pvt. Ltd. Top right: PAUL, French patisserie elegance in Mumbai. Right: Chili's store opening, Ahmedabad



space and are far more energy efficient than the competitor's equipment they were using before," says Gaurav Sharma, associate director strategic accounts at Welbilt India.

### A winning recipe

Kaushish explains how Lincoln® conveyor ovens came to be used in Chili's throughout the world. "Chili's had been using a competitor's conveyor belt ovens (for pizzas), but we reached out to head office and told them we've tested the Lincoln ovens and the pizzas come out really nice. Plus, they have a better price and warranty, and we trust Welbilt. Now they're approved globally," he enthuses.

FilterQuick® fryers from Frymaster® have also been introduced to the Chili's restaurants. Working at the touch of a button, with sensors to control the recipes, they prioritize energy efficiency and ensure food is faithfully reproduced. "They also use an oil-filtration system to conserve and increase the shelf life of the oil, so this saves on costs. That really impressed Trimex," says Sharma.

Having automated machines also helps keep staff training to a minimum. "With the previous fryers they had to keep training operators to use the equipment, but with our fryers the recipes are pre-fed. They simply press the button and the cooking starts," says Sharma.

Kaushish has been impressed with the quality and performance of Welbilt's products, which are built to last. "They are made of sturdy materials and don't break down, unlike some competitors' products that have had consistency issues. This means operational costs are low – and they also use the latest technology to help with energy efficiency," he says,

Welbilt's proactive local support and after-service has also been exceptional, he adds. "Trained technicians show us trials in their kitchens, teaching us about the products and what we can do with them."

"We have around 100 engineers through our service partners spread out across India," says Sharma, "even in the smaller, growing cities, who take care of the Welbilt equipment."

Parts and stock are always reasonably priced, because Trimex have a global deal with Welbilt. They're also readily available, because Welbilt supplies all the big players, such as McDonald's and KFC. "They always hold the stock in their warehouses across India, so parts can be replaced quickly, unlike competitors who might only have a warehouse in one city," says Kaushish.

Trimex's trust in Welbilt has grown so much that they have even adopted equipment they weren't originally required to use – such as Icematic ice

machines – because of their proven reliability.

"The financial pricing and breakdown they give us as partners also plays a vital role," says Kaushish. "Welbilt is very open, explaining the exact factory and importing costs, what the margins are, everything, so it's all clear. No other competitors were as open with their numbers or as supportive. This helped us to make the decisions and do a lot of business with Welbilt."

With 24 Chili's locations already operating in India and Sri Lanka, Trimex Foods plans to open at least 10 more outlets this year, targeting 200 locations by 2030, ahead of going public.

"Chili's is at an all-time high in the U.S. at the moment. Their shares grew sixfold in the last 18 months. They're going head to head with the leading QSR brand in the U.S. So we get a lot of data from them about what's working in the U.S., and keep track of new products rolling out, and what equipment we need – even removing some if the menus are changing. Welbilt is a key part of those conversations," says Kaushish.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Trimex – through its associate company Cogent Hospitality Ltd, which is supported by a team of more than 350 employees, a reliable vendor base and seamless logistical network – and Welbilt for the PAUL sites has also been going from strength to strength.

### French fryers

Since 2019, seven PAUL bakeries and cafes – which offer an authentic French casual dining experience – have been set up across India, with three more set to launch within the next fiscal year.

Welbilt has already introduced Garland® griddles, Frymaster oil-conserving fryers, Convotherm combi ovens, Merrychef® ovens (two per outlet) and Icematic machines at the PAUL sites.

"They came to us because we were already supplying the equipment at Chili's," says Sharma. "Initially, they opted for a compact fryer, anticipating modest sales of fried items. But India had a surprise in store – demand

**“ We have around 100 engineers through our service partners spread out across India, even in the smaller cities ”**

**Gaurav Sharma, Welbilt**





**“ We provide a lot of support because we realize it’s an upcoming chain in India, and they’ve got large kitchens with a lot of equipment in place ”**

**Gaurav Sharma, Welbilt**

soared, and they quickly transitioned to our high-performance Frymaster units, which have handled the volume brilliantly.”

**An extensive range**

“We provide a lot of support because we realize it’s an upcoming chain in India that’s growing fast, and they’ve got large kitchens with a lot of equipment in place. So, they’re a chain that needs a lot of attention. But we are happy to be on hand to help,” enthuses Sharma.

Welbilt is also in discussion with Trimex to replace existing coffee machines and dishwashers. “Now that we are part of the Ali Group, we have an extensive range, so this relationship is only growing and expanding,” adds Sharma. ■



**BRAND WATCH**



**1929**

Welbilt’s industry knowledge and insights stretch back nearly a century, from the original founding of the Hirsch brothers’ Welbilt Stove Company in 1929

**57**

Number of brands worldwide

**8,000+**

Number of employees globally

**welbiltasia.com**



# Oktoberfest: putting warewashers to the test

Millions of liters of beer are consumed during Munich's two-week event, placing staggering demand on warewashing facilities. Jim Banks explores why DIHR machines are the trusted choice to keep the steins coming



Above: DIHR's Giovanni Bianco with Andreas Krug, area manager for Switzerland, Austria and South Germany

**E**ach year, beginning in late September, Munich comes alive with Oktoberfest, a world-renowned celebration filled with lively crowds, oversized steins and endless German beer. What began as a royal wedding celebration for Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria (later King Ludwig I) and Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen has since become a global phenomenon, with festivities extending to Brazil, the US, China and beyond.

But Munich tops them all. Approximately 6.5 million visitors descend on the Bavarian capital during the festival, making it second in attendance only to India's Kumbh Mela Hindu Festival. Half of these attendees will visit one of the 14 large tents or 20 smaller tents, contributing to the consumption of around seven million liters of beer over 16 days.

"The event is part of our local tradition and culture, but it is a worldwide festival now, attracting people from all over the world to a stunning location," says Hubert Hackl, owner of Hackl GmbH, which supplies most of the catering equipment for the event in Munich. "People in the tents will have between one and five beers. They'll eat typical Bavarian dishes too – such as pork sausage and pork knuckles," he adds, noting that chicken and vegetarian or vegan options are also now on the menu.

"We supply around 80% of the catering equipment – including braising pans, holding equipment and dishwashers," says Hackl. "One



DIHR equipment is perfect for a high-intensity warewashing environment such as Oktoberfest, says Hubert Hackl (below)



**“ We don’t need a dishwasher designed like a Formula 1 car; we need one like a tank ”**

**Hubert Hackl, Hackl GmbH**



of the most important things our clients need is a solid and stable dishwasher.”

### Helles kitchen

Given the number of people attending the event, the quantity of dishes and glasses that need to be washed is truly staggering. The intensive use of dishwashers and glasswashers makes robust and reliable equipment essential, as the event otherwise could grind to a halt. “The dishwasher and glasswasher need to run almost all of the time,” says Hackl. “We need to clean up to 2,000 one-liter glasses per hour, per machine, and the dishwashers need to handle around 3,000 dishes per hour. The machines run constantly throughout the day – they only get to rest between midnight and 6:00am.”

In a high-intensity warewashing environment like this, certain design features are a must. Foremost of these is simplicity. Thousands of casual workers are hired for the event, so operation needs to be straightforward. “The people working these machines don’t need to be engineers or doctors,” says Hackl. “They don’t need to know German or English very well, because the operational instructions are clear and easy. There are no big displays, detailing every small fault – just simple on/off controls. We don’t need a dishwasher designed like a Formula 1 car; we need one that is like a tank.”

At the same time, high standards of performance are essential. Officials from the City of Munich monitor hygiene standards and operators need to be able to show that glasses

are fresh and ready-to-use after the washing process. Given the high temperatures at which professional dishwashers normally work, this isn’t easy to achieve.

### In-tents assembly

Hackl used German warewashing machines in the 1990s, but logistics became a problem. He couldn’t find a machine that combined the required capacity, durability and high-performance level with a modular easy-to-set-up design. “We had to get big machines delivered and assemble them within the tent, which took a long time and was not efficient,” he says.

Setting up is a massive task. “We have six weeks to deliver and install 1,500 pieces of equipment for Oktoberfest, and warewashers are the biggest units in the tents,” he adds. “DIHR was the first supplier to have a six-meter flight-type machine with the capacity we needed, and which could be transported on a forklift without changing the whole system.”

Hackl’s relationship with DIHR is now approaching 30 years. Cooperation between the companies has grown, underpinned by high satisfaction levels regarding both the equipment – from QX and RX potwashers to the smaller Optima and Electron undercounter machines – and the speedy response to any queries. “We listen to our clients, and we are always ready to improve,” says Giovanni Bianco, sales manager at DIHR.

“The feedback we get from experts who see the machines working on-site is valuable. We

need their eyes and ears to keep improving the technology. For example, on a pre-wash module on the flight-type machines – which consist of pre-wash, wash and rinse zones – water was flowing from one tank to the other. We acted quickly to solve the problem.”

For both parties, the relationship is as important as the engineering. Without that, festival goers might find themselves going that little bit thirstier. So, come October, raise a stein to Hackl and DIHR. ■

### BRAND WATCH

**DIHR**  
we mean clean

**40**

DIHR has 40 years of experience in serving hotel and restaurant businesses worldwide

**20,000**

The company produces 20,000 units annually across 20 different product ranges

**120**

Headquartered in Castelfranco Veneto, Italy, DIHR distributes to 120 countries worldwide

**dihr.com**



# Beyond bubble tea: Yumity's growth story continues

When an idea is strong, growth becomes inevitable. The concept behind Yumity, with its blend of Asian cuisine and bubble tea, is no exception. Jim Banks explores how the right partnership has helped the brand to spread its wings



**A**t the tender age of 20, Leane Schlegel is the driving force behind the Yumity brand, a growing chain of restaurants in northeast France and the first in the country to offer a fully customizable menu combining poke bowls, bagels, and bubble tea. In addition to serving high-quality food, Yumity captures customers' attention by preparing each dish in front of them using fresh, healthy, and gourmet ingredients. The brand is committed to constant innovation, exploring new culinary ideas while creating a warm, welcoming space for enjoying a meal, a snack, or simply a drink.

"Yumity began as a concept in 2017, then we launched the business in 2020, while I was studying business," Schlegel explains. "When I came up with the concept, I explained the business model to my father – the simplicity of serving poke bowls, bagels, cookies, donuts, and bubble tea – and soon he, along with other backers, decided to expand the concept."

"In 2024, there was a lot of expansion," she adds. "Initially, we had two stores with the goal of opening one more. Soon, however, we had four in the Metz region, and another opened in Strasbourg in January 2025, making five in total."

There are many Asian restaurants in France, but few chains have captured the imagination quite like Yumity. Its concept is straightforward, as it focuses on simple, high-quality food that is freshly prepared on-site. It focuses on flavor and customer experience rather than an overly extensive menu.

Bringing this concept to life required thoughtful decisions about kitchen equipment. With time being a critical factor, the high-speed cooking needs of a Yumity kitchen demand ovens that are not only high-quality and robust but also versatile enough to deliver flexibility and consistency throughout the day.

"For some products, including bagels, we found that we were having to wait too long, so we needed to look for rapid ovens," says Schlegel. "We went to a demonstration of the Oracle oven from Lainox in 2023, seeing how it prepared bagels, chicken katsu, chicken

tenders, and some other products. Now, we have two Oracle ovens in each restaurant."

"Since then, we have also launched the Pause Tomate brand, each of which uses four Oracle ovens," she adds. "That makes pizza, as well as panini and pasta. We chose the Oracle ovens for their speed, their cooking ability, their size and their flexibility, as well as the fact that there is no odor when they are cooking. And you can use them to cook many different things in the same ovens because there are many different programs."

## Committed to growth

The choice of the Oracle black oven was based on several aesthetic, technical, and energy-saving criteria. First, its sleek black finish creates an elegant and modern contrast in a bright environment, bringing a touch of refinement and character to the space.

This visual contrast highlights the appliance's presence while still blending harmoniously into a contemporary kitchen.

"From a technical perspective, the oven operates on single-phase electricity, making it



The Oracle oven is easy to maintain and service



easy to install in most configurations without requiring complex or costly adaptations,” explains Jean Bellet, director of sales for Lainox in France. “This makes it accessible to a wider range of users. Finally, its low energy consumption is a major advantage, particularly for reducing Yumity’s energy footprint. This choice is both economical and ecological, in line with current expectations for energy efficiency.”

The Oracle oven stands out as an innovative solution both technically and aesthetically. It is designed specifically to operate on single-phase power, eliminating the need for any specialized electrical infrastructure. It also consumes less energy than most competing rapid-cook ovens.

Its many advanced features include a hybrid cooking system that combines forced air, convection, and microwave technology. This enables ultra-fast cooking without compromising quality, texture, or flavor. The customizable touchscreen interface simplifies programming and reduces training time, while Nabook Plus connectivity allows recipes to be created or updated remotely.

Oracle ovens are also easy to maintain and service, with accessible components such as magnetic air filters. The compact design requires no fume extraction system, thanks to an integrated catalyst, allowing for greater flexibility in installation compared to competing models.

Beyond the technical specifications, support from Lainox is also of paramount importance to Yumity.

“The relationship with the Lainox team is important, and they are always available if we need modifications or programs for new recipes,” says Schlegel.

“We are comfortable with the level of trust we have built, and that human relationship will be important as we continue to expand. We will have nine stores when Strasbourg opens with both Yumity and Pause Tomate, and that growth has come in less than one year. That can only happen when you work with the right partners.”

The Lainox approach of co-developing solutions with its customers is clearly paying off, and it seems that the sky is the limit for Yumity. ■

“The relationship with the Lainox team is important. They are always available”

Leane Schlegel, Yumity



Launched in June 2025, the new Oracle XS is the smallest high speed oven model, just 356mm (W) x 588mm (D) x 580mm (H)

## BRAND WATCH

# LAINOX®

## 100+

The Lainox brand has earned a strong reputation with foodservice operators in more than 100 countries worldwide

## 1981

Lainox launched the first fan-assisted hot air oven in 1981 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2021

## 300°

Oracle is the first high-speed oven on the market to be able to reach a temperature of 300°C

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



# All in the finish

With upcoming international football tournaments set to draw global crowds to Morocco, the five-star Park Hyatt Marrakech needed to ensure quality across every department. In Alicontract, it found a foodservice partner with an eye for the perfect finish, reports Fran Cotton



It's a cliché, but 25 minutes' drive southeast from the center of Marrakech, there's an oasis in the desert. The five-star Park Hyatt Marrakech, with its 130 luxury rooms and suites, three restaurants, sprawling pool and spa complex and view of the Atlas Mountains, elevates Marrakech's status as a luxury destination for international travelers. And it has opened just in time for Morocco's hosting of the Africa Cup of Nations and joint-hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2030.

Eight years in the making, the hotel is a master class in thoughtful design and craftsmanship, and nowhere is that truer than in the kitchen and back-of-house setups. Alicontract was tasked with outfitting these areas with "high-quality equipment, and also an outstanding service throughout the duration of the works," says Antonio Mongiardo, project manager at Alicontract.

"The client and the general contractor were looking for an international kitchen contractor capable of meeting the technical requirements of a five-star hotel chain like Hyatt. They needed a partner capable of managing a highly complex project with multiple upscale food and beverage outlets from start to finish."

The hotel offers three distinct dining experiences, all overseen by Moroccan-born executive chef Issam Rhachi. At TFAYA, "the focus is on authentic Moroccan flavors with a refined twist," says Issam, whose style is "deeply rooted in Moroccan traditions... classic dishes with a modern, refined touch." The Pavilion Terrace & Pool is Mediterranean-inspired, and the Living Room serves casual bites and elevated drinks.

### Building from the back, leading from the front

Operations start in the basement with the back-of-house area, preparation and cold-room areas, pastry and bakery sections, and staff canteen, as well as the laundry and ironing areas – all of which Alicontract was tasked with outfitting. On the ground floor are the dining areas, main kitchen, dishwashing stations, and a cold prep zone.

There are also small pantry areas, dotted throughout the hotel, dedicated solely to room service. "Each one features a Comenda dishwashing machine, Friulinox refrigerator, Egro

coffee machine and other countertop equipment," Mongiardo says.

"That was designed at the scope to reduce the timing between the kitchen and the room, so that the customer can receive assistance as quickly as possible at any time."

The scale of the operation and dedication to customer satisfaction may be impressive, but it's the finishes and details that really set Park Hyatt Marrakech apart. "The kitchen consultant requested a unique steel countertop," explains Mongiardo.

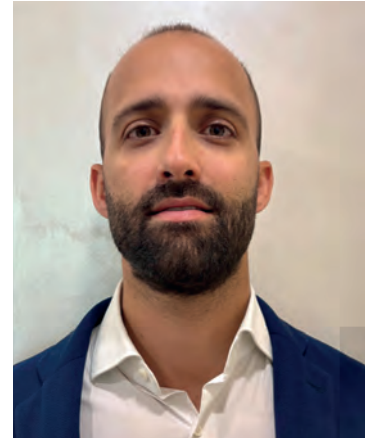
"We used 1.5mm thickness, including the stainless-steel under-counter covering, sink covers on all tables with sinks, and a 150mm backsplash," he adds.

Specialist Italian welders welded on site to obtain a seamless surface – something which Mongiardo explains is "cleaner than an individual table, and also has a better look".

The other star of the show in the kitchens is the Ambach System 900 modular cooking block, prized for its flexibility, reliability and energy-saving features. Issam is certainly pleased with this decision. "The induction cooking stations are incredibly responsive, helping with precise temperature control, which is vital for many of our more delicate preparations," he says.

### Teamwork makes the dream work

Although the project got underway in 2016, it was affected by the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. Raw material prices and new building ▶



**“The client and the general contractor were looking for an international kitchen contractor capable of meeting the technical requirements of a five-star hotel chain like Hyatt”**

**Antonio Mongiardo,  
Alicontract**





regulations in Morocco presented significant challenges, but thanks to some good old-fashioned teamwork, the original deadline for the project was met.

“We can proudly say that the coordination between our team, the factory, the manufacturers, the general contractor, the interior design and local partner on site was carried out in the best possible way,” says Mongiardo.

Alicontract provided a full-service turnkey approach, says Mongiardo, “from MEP drawings, to our constant presence on site to monitor the work in progress, to supporting the purchase department so that all orders were placed with suppliers.”

Equipment was shipped by sea from Alicontract’s Milan warehouse, with a year’s warranty granted for any breakdowns or damaged parts. “After-sales service is incredibly fast, thanks to the contribution of our local [Moroccan] market partner,” Mongiardo explains. “That allows us to support the operation in the best possible way and to reduce the wait times.”

It’s this devil-in-the-detail approach, from start to finish, front- to back-of-house, that’s made Park Hyatt Marrakech such a successful project.

“Front-of-house we have something beautiful, but in the back-of-house, the kitchen consultant wanted to have something better than the competition,” says Mongiardo. This means having a “clear and distant separation between the clean and the dirty path” and equipment that goes the extra mile.

“Having multifunctional stations helps streamline operations and reduce movement within the kitchen, which is key for efficiency,” says Rhachi.

### Quality makes the difference

Mongiardo recalls the reaction Rhachi and his team had when they saw the quality of equipment they would be working with. “I met Issam [and the team] for the first time in the bakery. They saw everything [static oven, rotary oven, blast chiller, retarder proofer, fixed bowl spiral mixer, and chiller] was Bongard and just said ‘Wow!’ – because a Bongard is like a Ferrari. So they are very happy with that.”

It’s a similar story for everything from refrigeration to the staff canteen areas. “We use Friulinox for refrigerators – all equipped with drawers, locks and wheels for easy cleaning,” Mongiardo explains. “We use Comenda for pot wash and hood-type dishwashers – and all the hood dishwashers have heat recovery. There’s Baron for staff canteen areas, and Lainox combi ovens.”

It’s these combi ovens that have been game-changers for Rhachi and his team. “They offer versatility, save space, and significantly reduce cooking times without compromising quality,” he says. Elsewhere, there are Carpigiani ice cream machines and Scotsman ice makers. Even the laundry is high-quality, with dryers and washing machines from Grandimpianti I.L.E.

For Mongiardo and Alicontract, Park Hyatt Marrakech is clearly a source of immense pride. “We have completed one of the most prestigious five-star hotels in Marrakech, that will soon attract people from all over the world,” says Mongiardo.

With the draw of Morocco’s upcoming football tournaments, that future is coming fast. And, just like in the beautiful game, it’s the finishing that makes the difference.

“The equipment works well, but the finishing is another story,” says Mongiardo. ■



**“Having multifunctional stations helps streamline operations and reduce movement within the kitchen, which is key for efficiency”**

**Issam Rhachi,  
Park Hyatt Marrakech**



Alicontract provided a full-service turnkey approach for the five-star Park Hyatt Marrakech

### BRAND WATCH



**110+**

Alicontract works with all Ali Group brands

**30+**

Alicontract has more than 30 years of experience delivering global turnkey projects

**84**

Alicontract has delivered projects in 84 countries worldwide

**Alicontract.com**

# What can we learn

With cocktails, true quality transcends the individual components, and the skill of the bartender is the most important ingredient of all. Jim Banks speaks to the European Bartender School and ice machine manufacturer Scotsman about their collaboration, and why ice should never be overlooked

# from the humble



# ice cube?

Scotsman will be the exclusive provider of ice to EBS for the next five years



**F**or more than 25 years, the European Bartender School (EBS) has been at the forefront of training in this highly specialized segment of the hospitality sector. Actively offering the most sophisticated programs in more than 20 countries, and having trained more than 80,000 students, it is no exaggeration to say that EBS is shaping the skill set of bartenders across the world.

From Amsterdam to Sydney, from Mexico to Delhi, EBS currently trains more than 8,000 bartenders annually in its 25 purpose-built academies around the globe.

“What sets us apart is our hands-on approach, industry-leading instructors, and our commitment to equipping bartenders with the skills they need to thrive in the real world,” says Gavin Wrigley, head of education at EBS. “It also helps massively to have a large global network to help us align and effect change on the roots of this industry.”

“Our programs go beyond just teaching recipes,” he adds. “We instill technique, efficiency, creativity, and deep product knowledge, and we don’t take shortcuts or have drop-in courses which often kill students’ focus and momentum. We offer immersive, intense and highly efficient training in all our schools.”

And therein lies the crucial element in training the most skilled bartenders in the world – every detail counts. That includes the bartenders’ skills, the recipes, and even the ice that adds the final, finishing touch.

“Ice is often treated as an afterthought, and many customers see the ice as stealing the volume of their drink somehow, but the reality is that ice is in nearly every cocktail, and without ice

bartending as we know it would cease to exist,” says Wrigley. “What other ingredient can you say that about? Poor-quality ice can ruin a drink, while the right ice can enhance flavors, slow down dilution, and improve presentation and temperature.”

### An accent on ice

Recognizing the vital role of ice in mixology, EBS has partnered with Scotsman, a leading manufacturer of ice systems. The collaboration aims to elevate the role of ice in bartending education and provide EBS students with high-quality equipment that meets the highest industry standards.

Scotsman has built a reputation through decades of innovation, producing over 300 models of ice machines, bins and dispensers. Its product range includes cubes, flake, superflake, scale, nugget, and gourmet ice – capable of producing anything from one cube to ten tons of ice per day.

Under the new five-year agreement, Scotsman will serve as the exclusive ice provider to EBS. As part of this partnership, Scotsman ice machines are being installed across all 25 EBS schools, ensuring consistency and performance that aligns with the high standards of bartender training. Scotsman employees will also participate in bartender training courses to further strengthen the collaboration and foster mutual understanding.

To date, Scotsman has installed MXG 638 gourmet cube ice machines, with a 300 kg/24-hour capacity, and MFN nugget ice machines producing up to 200 kg per day.

These units are present in every EBS school thanks to Scotsman’s global network of distributors and dealers.

“In the last three years, Scotsman has invested a lot in the coffee and mixology world to increase brand awareness,” says Simone Buratti, ▶



Above: The European Bartender School (EBS) in Mallorca, Spain



“Ice clarity and shape matter in cocktail-making, and Scotsman ice helps ensure drinks maintain their flavor profile”

Simone Buratti, Scotsman



Scotsman's partnership with EBS sets "a new benchmark for professional bartender training"



international marketing manager at Scotsman, who devised the idea for the partnership. “We wanted to push our philosophy from the bottom to the top, so we thought of starting a partnership with an important bartender’s school. Immediately, we contacted EBS, the biggest and most important in the world, and, after one year, we made the agreement official.”

So why Scotsman, when there are many ice machine manufacturers on the market? The answer lies in the company’s product quality, reliability and expertise. These attributes make it the ideal partner to help elevate bartending standards.

“Scotsman is one of the most recognized and trusted brands in the ice industry, providing ice machines for hospitality, foodservice, and premium bars worldwide,” explains Buratti. “We offer a range of crystal-clear, slow-melting gourmet ice cubes, which are ideal for high-end mixology and consistent drink presentation. Ice clarity and shape matter in cocktail-making, and Scotsman ice helps reduce dilution, ensuring drinks maintain their intended flavor profile.”

### Education, education, education

When it comes to education, Scotsman can provide aspiring bartenders with an in-depth understanding of the science behind ice, the reasons why different types of ice are used for specific cocktails, and how ice impacts dilution, texture, and aesthetics.

The collaboration agreement enables Scotsman to integrate its technical knowledge into EBS courses, thus enriching the curriculum with insights into ice quality, and best practices for storage.

“EBS schools need equipment that is durable, efficient, and easy to maintain under high-demand conditions,” says Buratti. “Scotsman machines are designed to withstand intensive use, ensuring students always have access to top-tier ice. Also, our eco-friendly innovations, such as energy-efficient and R290 refrigerant models, align with modern sustainability trends, making them a responsible choice for training facilities.”

For EBS, the benefit is clear: students get real-world experience using ice designed specifically for professional mixology. For Scotsman, the partnership increases awareness among future bartenders and raises expectations for ice quality in the industry.

“Scotsman leads the industry with cutting-edge ice technology, producing clear, solid, slow-melting ice that enhances every cocktail,” explains Wrigley.

“Their ice machines are designed for efficiency, hygiene, and consistency – qualities that align perfectly with our training philosophy. Their range of ice types, from gourmet cubes to crushed ice, allows our students to experience firsthand how different ice shapes impact dilution and temperature,” he adds.



“Ice isn’t just a component of a cocktail and, in fact, it is often taken for granted, even though it is the most commonly used ingredient”

Gavin Wrigley, EBS



### Raising the bar

The partnership between Scotsman and EBS represents a leap forward for bartender education. Based on a mutual understanding, it means new bartenders will be trained to use the best and expect the best. “Ice isn’t just a component of a cocktail and, in fact, it is often taken for granted, even though it is the most commonly used ingredient,” emphasizes Wrigley.

“It affects temperature, dilution, texture, and, ultimately, the drinking experience. With Scotsman as our exclusive ice partner, we’re setting a new standard in bartender education by ensuring our students train with the best ice technology available.

“Our goal is to teach future bartenders not only how to handle ice, but also why high-quality ice matters,” he adds.

“This partnership will ensure that every EBS graduate understands the science of ice and how to use it effectively to elevate their cocktails, in the hope that this knowledge will then permeate through the bar industry and improve drink quality from the ground up.”

The partnership sets a new benchmark for professional bartender training. It enriches the EBS curriculum, ensuring that students work with top-tier equipment, and reinforces the importance of ice as a fundamental cocktail ingredient. Whether we are talking about the equipment maker, the school, the students or, ultimately, the clients they serve, everyone is a winner. ■



### BRAND WATCH

**Scotsman®**

**1955**

Scotsman pioneered the development of reliable and affordable ice-making machines in 1955

**2012**

Scotsman Industries, the world’s largest manufacturer of commercial ice machines, joined the Ali Group in 2012

**300+**

Scotsman delivers purposeful innovation across more than 300 models of ice machines, bins and dispensers

[scotsman-ice.it](http://scotsman-ice.it)

## 04 Success stories

# Oven-ready opportunity



Boyce's Bakery co-owners are Nicholas Canty (above), Tommy Boyce, and Gemma Boyce. Above left: Stacey Canty



Boyce's Bakery has been expanding across Kent since it opened its first site in 1995. Co-owner **Nicholas Canty** tells Chris Evans how Merrychef and Welbilt helped them find new ovens to match their ambitions



**W**ith its 13 stores across Kent, England, Boyce's Bakery hasn't been afraid to grow. But the owners recently realized they needed to expand their menu as well.

"We were already selling a huge range of baked goods, including paninis, hot wraps, toasties, sausage rolls and pasties," says Nicholas Canty, co-owner with wife, Stacey, and Tommy and Gemma Boyce. "But we wanted to provide pizzas – slices, quarters and whole ones – too."

The company was started by Nicholas's father-in-law, Keith, and his wife, Karen, in 1995. Then, about 10 years ago, Nicholas started his own bakery. Both were setting up shops across Kent, so they decided to merge their businesses and support each other.

The ovens they had been using in the shops could only hold and heat one panini at a time. On top of this, they were "difficult to repair and find engineers that could fix them beyond warranty," says Canty. So, earlier this year, they reached out to Merrychef®.

### Follow the experts

"We noticed that Merrychef was already supplying its ovens to top brands like Costa®, Marks & Spencer® and Subway®, so we were intrigued to see what made them so good," says Canty.

Welbilt®, the parent company of Merrychef, met with Boyce's Bakery to discuss their vision and operational requirements. Boyce's then went to the Guildford demonstration kitchen to test their food products across different Merrychef ovens: the conneX® 12e, the conneX® 12 with a panini press, and the conneX® 16. "It was clear straight away that they were quality builds. We were impressed with the speed they were able to produce, cook and heat our baked goods. And when they came out of the oven, the consistent quality of how they looked was amazing," says Canty.

They chose the compact, high-speed conneX 12 – not just for the consistency, speed and quality of the food, but also for the oven's capacity. "It's ideal for the quantity they want to produce within the right timeframe, and it fits on a standard 600mm worktop," says Randeep Prabhakar, regional sales manager, London and South England, at Welbilt.

The ovens have transformed how Boyce's Bakery operates. "Being able to cook up to three paninis at once has sped up our process and delivery to customers – cooking times have halved to one minute – and the quality and consistency is right every time," adds Canty. "Plus, it's great to be able to showcase the delicate, light flavor of the bread,

which is baked on site, rather than pressing and squashing it as we've done with the other ovens. And the filling doesn't spill out either. It's been a game changer."

The conneX 12 is also easy to use. Its new, high-definition screen, running the latest easyTouch® 2.0 software and featuring more than 100 pre-programmed recipes, makes operation simple for everyone. "You just click on the button for each set food item, and the job is done perfectly. The Welbilt chef, Greg Crump, showed us how to set the recipe programs and make changes. It's been a seamless transition," says Canty. So much so that, after testing the oven at one busy site in Leysdown-on-Sea, they rolled them out to all their shops.

### Going the extra mile

Welbilt are also on-hand at all times if Canty and his team need help with the appliances. "We want to work closely with our customers and form partnerships, rather than just be a manufacturer who sells a product and leaves," says Prabhakar.

"Randeep has been brilliant, really attentive to our needs, and even does site visits to make sure everyone's happy with the ovens," says Canty. "And if there's an issue with the ovens – which there hasn't been yet – then there's a system in place to get an engineer out quickly," he adds.

"We have our own in-house service department and engineers here in the UK, plus dedicated culinary chefs who can create or tweak menu programs," says Prabhakar.

Welbilt can help monitor all the conneX appliances across Boyce's sites through its KitchenConnect® online system. Once connected, this will provide data on everything, from what's being cooked, when, by site, and what's on trend. "They'll be able to push new menus out remotely from the platform," adds Prabhakar.

"The software will tell me everything – from whether the ovens are being cleaned properly and consistently to if there's been a dip in sales of a particular item," says Canty. "It will also indicate if we need more ovens for a site."

More sites certainly seems likely. Their 13th site, in Sittingbourne, is about to open and there are plans for more. "We are looking at populated areas across the county. Our customers range from eight year-olds to pensioners, because of the products we sell, so we can go to places the big chains don't necessarily go to," says Canty.

Having satisfied customers helps underpin this ambition, he adds: "They are loving the food cooked in the new ovens." ■



**“The conneX 12 is ideal for the quantity they want to produce within the right timeframe”**

**Randeep Prabhakar, Welbilt**

## BRAND WATCH

### MERRYCHEF®

#### 1950

Merrychef designed its first commercial microwave in 1950, beginning a 75-year legacy of innovation for accelerated cooking

#### 2022

The company launched its breakthrough conneX 12 and conneX 16 ovens in 2022

#### 80%

The conneX range features ground-breaking speeds that are up to 80% faster than other cooking methods

**merrychef.com**

# Greek expectations

Blending luxury and wellbeing in a stunning Cretan resort, Minos Palace aims to help guests live longer, happier lives, starting with sound nutrition. Jim Banks explores why Olis and Xenex were the partners of choice

Minos Palace Resort offers guests the latest innovations in wellbeing





## “The Nao longevity hub is designed to inspire a true lifestyle evolution”

**Stratos Patsakis, Minos Palace Resort**

healing practices with modern diagnostic treatments. The spa is built on a data-driven approach that emphasizes nutrition, sleep, movement and self-mastery.

The facility includes a brain gym, cryo chamber, meditation spaces, vibroacoustic loungers, an infrared sauna, a vitality pool, hot and cold plunge baths, a photobiomodulation therapy room, a retail boutique, indoor and outdoor relaxation areas, and a sensory tunnel experience.

“The resort’s setting, on a secluded private peninsula, gives it a rare sense of place – it feels like an island within an island,” says general manager Stratos Patsakis. “This natural isolation creates an atmosphere of peaceful exclusivity, offering uninterrupted sea views from nearly every corner of the property,” he adds.

“The Nao longevity hub, which lies at the heart of the resort, is designed to inspire a true lifestyle evolution,” he adds. “Through diagnostics and personalized guidance, Nao optimizes not only the body and mind, but also daily habits, empowering guests to lead longer, happier lives. This soulful approach, grounded in science, delivers personalized programs that nurture deep renewal, self-discovery, and connection – both with oneself and the world around.”

### **You are what you eat**

No wellness resort can truly succeed without careful attention to nutrition, which is the foundation of a healthy body. Dining is therefore acknowledged as an essential part of the wellbeing journey.

“Our foodservice is designed to support more than 200 guests daily, across two restaurants and two signature bars, with each ▶



### **Here and Nao**

The Nao Spa’s inspiration is drawn from water as the source of all life and its ability to adapt. The spa itself has been conceived as a hub for cultivating holistic longevity, and its evidence-based approach to targeting the 12 hallmarks of aging – from cellular senescence to mitochondrial dysfunction – is built on four core pillars: nutrition, sleep, self-mastery and movement.

Of these four elements, nutrition comes first. At its core is the typical Mediterranean diet, built on daily intake of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and plant-based fats, with some fresh fish, poultry, beans, legumes and eggs. Moderate portions of dairy products are also included, but the amount of red meat is limited. “Contemporary nutritional science plays a key role,” says Patsakis.

“Our dishes are designed to be rich in micronutrients and antioxidants, low in processed elements, and inclusive of all dietary needs. Superfoods, organic products, and plant-based alternatives are thoughtfully incorporated to reflect a growing global demand for conscious, health-centered cuisine. Our foodservice offering is shaped by the desire to create culinary experiences that promote balance, longevity, and happiness, in harmony with the natural surroundings and the guest’s individual journey.”

“Moving forward, this project will serve as a benchmark – both in design and execution – for future renovations and new developments within our portfolio, further strengthening our reputation as leaders in hospitality and gastronomy.”

**T**he Minos Palace Resort sits in a truly idyllic setting. Located on a private peninsula on the coast of Crete, Greece, it is a modern-day sanctuary offering guests 360° sea views and cutting-edge innovations in wellbeing. A luxury, adults-only destination, its bespoke design enhances the beauty of the surrounding landscape while offering guests everything needed for a transformative experience for their mental and physical health.

At the heart of this experience is the resort’s brand-new Nao Spa, a longevity-focused wellness facility with eight treatment rooms. Here, guests can enjoy evidence-based treatments that combine the best of ancient

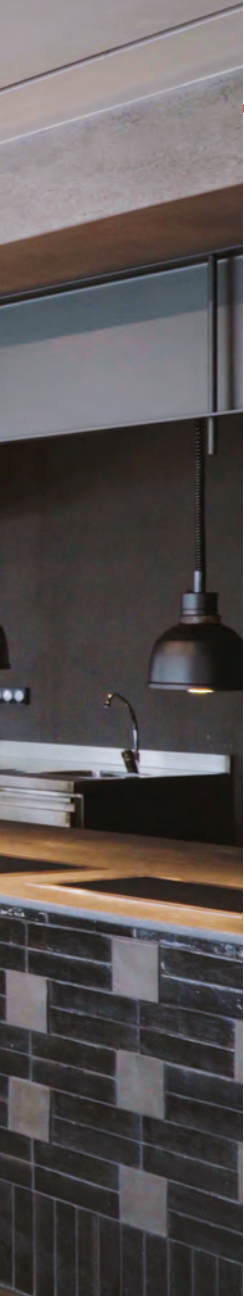


outlet offering a distinct culinary experience rooted in health, sustainability, and Cretan authenticity,” says Patsakis. “The Nao team works closely with our culinary team to ensure all menus are nutrient-rich and scientifically aligned with long-term wellness.”

Chefs use locally sourced, seasonal ingredients to craft dishes that are both nourishing and delicious, embracing plant-based options, farm-to-table meats, artisanal cheeses, and Cretan olive oil. Processed foods are kept to a minimum, while micronutrients, superfoods, and bio-based produce feature heavily in the resort’s health-forward approach to dining.

The foodservice is deeply influenced by a commitment to wellbeing and sustainability, both of which are integral to the resort’s





Above from top: Thomas Fabris, Olis; Emil Kioulpapas, Xenex; Stratos Patsakis, Minos Palace Resort

**“ We provide very reliable equipment with precise temperature control ”**

**Thomas Fabris, Olis**

implemented a high-performance kitchen that balances functionality, ergonomics, and efficiency.”

Olis, a leading manufacturer of high-quality kitchen equipment, is represented in Greece by its long-time distribution partner, Xenex. “Together, using advanced equipment, streamlined workflows, and sustainability-focused practices, they were able to create a space that could deliver an ambitious gastronomic vision. We provide very reliable equipment with more precise temperature control than our competitors,” says Thomas Fabris, sales director for Olis, which supplied the full cooking suite, including induction hobs, fryers, and grills.

“Our equipment is also easy to maintain. For example, our new plancha has a surface that is not welded, so it can be removed to clean or change parts.

“Every kitchen is based on the needs of the chefs and the menu, and the equipment must also look good,” he adds. “More important, however, we can fit equipment together and attach each part in a modular way, so that it is all easy to clean, has the same depth and the same height, and leaves no space for fat to stick and harden. It is all modular, so you can change anything out from the cooking block.”

**Partners in time**

Every project presents challenges, but the more experience your partners have, the easier they are to overcome. “Xenex has been in the industry for 55 years, and we have represented Olis in Greece since the late 1990s,” says Emil Kioulpapas, general manager of Xenex. “We have a strong relationship, and Olis always gives us the support we need. Even in difficult situations, we always find a solution.”

identity. Food is meant to nourish, heal and energize. The Cretan diet, which is similar to the Mediterranean diet and recognized for its health benefits, forms the foundation of the menus. Crafting nourishing dishes depends not only on ingredients, but also the kitchen’s infrastructure.

**Kitchen cooperation**

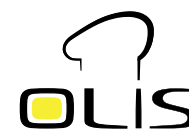
“With the full renovation of Minos Palace – and its repositioning as a holistic wellbeing destination – our operational requirements evolved significantly, particularly in the kitchen,” says Patsakis. “We needed a reimagined layout that could seamlessly support a demanding, health-focused culinary operation. In collaboration with Xenex and Olis, we successfully designed and



“For this project, it was a very natural process,” he adds. “We used Olis equipment to upgrade infrastructure in the kitchen, because its equipment is very robust, up-to-date and modern – plus we can support it well, which reduces downtime.”

Just as combining the four key pillars – nutrition, sleep, movement and self-mastery – can improve wellness, so complementary skills among partners can deliver optimum results. Working with mutual respect, trust, and a shared commitment to excellence, Minos Palace, Olis and Xenex have delivered a luxury experience that goes beyond mere dining, to enhance and even prolong lives. ■

**BRAND WATCH**



*we*innovate cooking

**1972**

Founded in 1972, Olis is renowned for its innovative approach to technology and design

**2021**

In 2021, Olis launched a full range of 4.0-connected products for the HoReCa sector, powered by the Olis Cloud System

**150+**

The standard Olis catalog offers more than 150 cooking and refrigeration units with 4.0 connectivity capabilities

**olis.it**



# San Patrignano: tackling addiction with love

For more than 40 years, the San Patrignano community in Italy has provided free support to young people struggling with addiction. Jim Banks explores how refrigeration equipment supplier Castel MAC is helping to strengthen its education and recovery programs



Founded in 1978, San Patrignano is the largest recovery community in Europe

Left: Christian Sebastiani, Castel MAC

**D**rug addiction can cause irreparable damage to families and communities across the world, but with the support of peers, mentors, and people with experience in rehabilitation, it can be overcome.

This has been proven time and time again by the San Patrignano project.

San Patrignano is a community for life that welcomes people suffering from drug addiction and marginalization, helping them find their way to a healthy and productive life through a rehabilitation program built on love, acceptance, and mutual support. “This is the largest recovery community in Europe,” says Matteo Diotalevi, communications manager at San Patrignano. “Founded in 1978, it is dedicated to helping young people with addiction problems. It has become a point of reference for rehabilitation thanks to its socio-educational approach, with individual recovery paths, characterized by listening and discussion.”

More than 800 people currently live in the community, which functions like a small town. Over the years, as many as 26,000 individuals have been welcomed through its gates. Remarkably, more than 72% of those who complete the course of rehabilitation recover fully from their addiction. That rate of success is extraordinary, and San Patrignano stands out as a beacon of hope for young people.

“We are committed to helping not only those who have already fallen into the drug tragedy, but thousands of other young people who might find themselves with the same problem in the future,” says Diotalevi. “And it is free, because love is a gift.”

### Different roads to recovery

Within the community, each person follows a recovery path tailored to their individual needs. Intervention can be educational in nature but, when the need arises, a person can also benefit from psychological or psychotherapeutic support.

Each person at San Patrignano is provided with opportunities for professional training in a variety of sectors. Primarily, this helps them connect with other team members and, in turn, with the wider community. They first learn how to interact with others and then develop skills that will be useful for working in a trade outside the community.

The skills available include a variety of artisanal trades, particularly in agri-food production, such as work in the cellar, dairy, or bakery. “Regardless of the sector in which people are placed, they learn the basic rules of the workplace, such as respecting timetables, their collaborators, and the responsibilities assigned to them,” says Diotalevi,

who notes that artistic activities, such as choir and theater, and sports are also part of the process. “The driving forces behind the San Patrignano project are a love for others, the belief that everyone should have a second chance, and allowing those who ask for help to rebuild their lives. The community’s success is demonstrated by the thousands of stories of recovery and reintegration into society and the world of work.”

For those vocational programs, especially those focused on the foodservice sector, having access to equipment typically found in commercial kitchens is essential. To support this, San Patrignano partnered with Castel MAC, a company within the Ali Group.

### A partner with purpose

Castel MAC, a specialist in professional refrigeration, is dedicated to supporting community initiatives like this by supplying equipment and technical expertise. “Castel MAC is a very well-structured group, composed of three main brands, each with its own area of expertise,” says Christian Sebastiani, commercial and marketing director, Castel MAC S.r.l.

“Tecnomac is a key reference in retarder-proofing systems, offering both roll-in and reach-in chambers and cabinets designed for controlled proofing and fermentation of dough. The product range includes equipment such as proofing chambers, fermentation chambers, roll-in blast chillers, blast freezing tunnels, and customized solutions,” he adds.

“Icematic is a renowned manufacturer of ice-making systems, with its K Series featuring an innovative paddle system to produce hollow ice cubes, ensuring high reliability and performance, even in demanding environments. Lastly, Hiber specializes in refrigeration solutions for the gelato and confectionery sectors, providing high-quality blast chillers, shock freezers, and storage cabinets.”

Castel MAC also provides San Patrignano with expertise that enhances the effectiveness of its recovery programs. But that is not the only reason the partnership works so well. “We chose Castel MAC because it shares our values of social responsibility,” says Diotalevi. “They supply equipment that matches the training and work needs of the community. That means these young people have the opportunity to acquire skills that are useful for their future – they’re constantly updated on new production techniques.”

The program’s success, along with San Patrignano’s relationship with Castel MAC, will undoubtedly lead to additional training initiatives to help the community stay current with innovative technologies and find their place in the foodservice industry. Love may be the driving force behind San Patrignano’s success, but when it comes to reintegration into society, practical know-how goes a long way too. ■

“Castel MAC supplies equipment that matches the training and work needs of the community”

Matteo Diotalevi,  
San Patrignano

Castel MAC is a consolidated group of three well-established brands: Tecnomac, Icematic, and Hiber

hiber  
ICEMATIC  
TECNOMAC

### BRAND WATCH

## Castel MAC

**1963**

Castel MAC celebrated an extraordinary milestone in 2023: 60 years of success, innovation and growth

**100+**

Castel MAC employs more than 100 employees across its operations

**6,000+**

Castel MAC companies Tecnomac and Icematic produce more than over 6,000 modular machines per year

[castelmac.eu](http://castelmac.eu)



# How à la carte hospital food became a pillar of healthcare

When the Jeroen Bosch Clinic in Den Bosch radically overhauled its foodservice operations, it turned to trusted partner temp-rite to ensure a successful transition. Jim Banks explores how that partnership made food a key part of patient wellbeing



In healthcare, food plays a critical role in the patient experience. When thoughtfully prepared and nutritionally balanced, it can support healing and promote long-term health. That's why changes in hospital catering can carry significant meaning – and potential.

At the Jeroen Bosch Clinic in Den Bosch, Netherlands, a major transformation began in 2020. The hospital moved away from its traditional cook/chill/reheat model – previously offering only a limited menu – to an innovative à la carte system that delivers up to 600 fresh meals daily.

“We had a kitchen in place from 2000, and at some point you have to look at whether to renovate and do something completely different,” says René de Bont, the clinic’s head of nutrition and catering. “We were looking at how we served meals and realized we needed to change something, so we looked for systems that would fit.”

“We still wanted to cook fresh and give patients full control over what they eat, when and with whom, so we turned to Sodexo, which was already working that way at another site in The Netherlands. We had some space in the hospital, so we could build a whole new kitchen, which is now à la carte, like a hotel kitchen.”

The changes extended well beyond the kitchen. Service hours now run from 7:00am to 7:00pm, with





hot meals available between 11:30am and 6:15pm, which required a big shift in staff work schedules. Also, patients can now order meals by phone, rather than putting in a written choice the day before.

“We can now nudge people towards healthy food and get them to choose things that suit their diet, which is a totally new part of the service,” says de Bont. “Previously, nurses delivered and collected food. Now, hospitality is done from the back door of the kitchen and delivered with a smile by specialist staff. Most people can eat normally, so we do not need a nurse to deliver food, unless the patient needs some help with eating.”

### Better by design

Shifting from three fixed mealtimes to an all-day foodservice system, with visitors and patients making their choice of food less than an hour before eating, rather than one day before, meant rethinking their equipment. Enter temp-rite, the clinic’s long-time partner.

To support the new model, temp-rite supplied 24 custom-built serving trolleys, purpose-designed to meet the clinic’s needs. “We had been a partner of the clinic for a long time, and we had the best-fitting solution for this room-service concept together with Sodexo NL. More than 90% of our company sales are in the healthcare sector, so we understand the needs of our clients,” says Aimé Eijssen, area manager of temp-rite Netherlands.

“We already knew temp-rite, so we got in touch with them to provide the induction activators, bases and insulated domes to keep the food warm,” says de Bont.

“There is a warming plate in the bases that is activated with induction, and the meal is placed on top under a dome, so it can be kept warm for at least 60 minutes. In fact, we helped design new trolleys with temp-rite that can serve up to ten meals to patients at the same time.”

While many clients can use equipment from temp-rite’s existing product portfolio, the company also offers custom solutions when needed – like this specially developed trolley for Jeroen Bosch Clinic.

The heart of the system is the innovative and user-friendly induction-based Activator appliance, which was developed by American sister company Aladdin Temp-Rite. The compact system guarantees HACCP-

compliant minimum temperatures and impresses with its robust and safe handling. The newly designed trolleys also include ergonomic handles for easier transport throughout the hospital. Although foodservice should only take 45 minutes, the temp-active system keeps food hot for an hour or more, giving staff flexibility in busy clinical environments.

### The power of partnership

Through a close working relationship with its client, temp-rite was able to design the ideal solution for the clinic. “Because the patient’s recovery is the top priority, the clinic’s food is seen as part of the healing process, especially the protein intake,” says Niek van der Rijken, country manager of temp-rite Netherlands. “The right nutrition saves money and creates wellbeing, and patient satisfaction has increased significantly. Furthermore, there is 60% less food waste.”

“We try to create solutions for our customers. It is all about consensus, so everyone talks and agrees on the right solution. We are more of a partner than a supplier,” adds Frank Höck, managing director of temp-rite International, regarding the corporate philosophy that applies to the company in the Netherlands, but also the other national companies.

With happier patients, better nutrition, and less waste, the results speak for themselves. ■



Above: René de Bont, Jeroen Bosch Clinic (top); Aimé Eijssen, temp-rite (below)

### BRAND WATCH

# temp-rite

## 50+

temp-rite has been a market leader in healthcare meal distribution for over five decades

## 2002

The temp-rite company group joined the Ali Group in 2002

## 90%+

More than 90% of its sales are in the healthcare sector

[temp-rite.eu](http://temp-rite.eu)

## 04 Success stories



# Quality made in the lab

The EsmachLab range of kitchen equipment has transformed chef **Patryk Nowakowski's** operations at Fabrico Pizzalab – so much so that he has launched a training school in Poland to share its use. Chris Evans finds out more

**E**smachLab is transforming the world of professional baking. Its high-tech, AI-enhanced equipment ensures consistently perfect artisan pizzas, breads and other baked goods every time.

At the Fabrico Pizzalab restaurant in Turek, Poland, EsmachLab has introduced an SPI AI spiral mixer, a GL AI liquid yeast processor, an EF-P modular electric oven and a Climother® proofer cabinet. “The EsmachLab has completely transformed the way I work,” says Patryk Nowakowski, owner of Fabrico Pizzalab. “Most pizzerias and bakeries don’t use sourdough for their bread, but I can, thanks to this equipment. It’s normally hard to work

with, but with the Esmach equipment I can set the temperatures, times, and even recipes at the touch of a button. And the final products are perfect, with a distinctive crunch and taste.”

Each piece of equipment works in harmony with the others. The Esmach spiral mixer kneads perfectly because its bowl and spiral-arm speeds are precisely balanced. The result is a homogenous, soft and distinguished dough. Throughout the process, operators can monitor the rheological properties of the mixtures, their timings and final temperature.

“I can make any amount of dough in this mixer, whether it’s 2kg or 40kg, and the quality and consistency will always be the same,” says Nowakowski. “The kneading process is very relaxed, not stressed and quick like with some

machines. So, the process is controlled and the final dough is just right.”

### Keep it natural

The liquid yeast generator prepares and stores natural yeast using only water and flour, giving the final dough an incredibly fragrant lightness. Impressively, the machine automatically renews the yeast as it is used. “This generator is absolutely vital when baking with sourdough. It has a very distinct microbiology that requires specific temperatures, timings and humidity – all of which can be managed in the Esmach generator,” says Nowakowski.

He can also set the proofer to adjust its temperature at different times of the day. “I could set it at 8:00am for 25 degrees, then at





eight degrees 18 hours later, and back up to 25 degrees again the following morning. The machine just makes the adjustments itself. It's very intelligent."

When the leavening has reached the right point, the chefs can cut and shape the dough by hand, then transfer it to Esmach's patented Climother® system, which manages the natural-yeast baking process and even offers a long-storage mode. Finally, it's into the electric oven. The EF-P modular electric oven easily heats up to 520 degrees Fahrenheit, which is ideal for pizza Napoletana, one of Fabrico Pizzalab's signature dishes. Humidity is easily adjusted on the oven's digital display. "The whole process is easy to learn, with standardized procedures, touchscreen technology and customized recipes," says Nowakowski. "My pizzaiolo (pizza chef) hadn't used them before, but he quickly picked it up."

### Smooth and successful

This ease of use, along with stability with the equipment and consistent food quality, is so important to Nowakowski and his team "to do it during the day" that they work 12-14-hour days ensure it all runs smoothly. "EsmachLab was born from the idea that we could give commercial activities in the HoReCa sector the same advantages that Esmach has brought to the world of bakeries," says Paolo Pescatori,

The EsmachLab has transformed how Patryk Nowakowski works



**“The machine just makes the adjustments itself. It's very intelligent”**

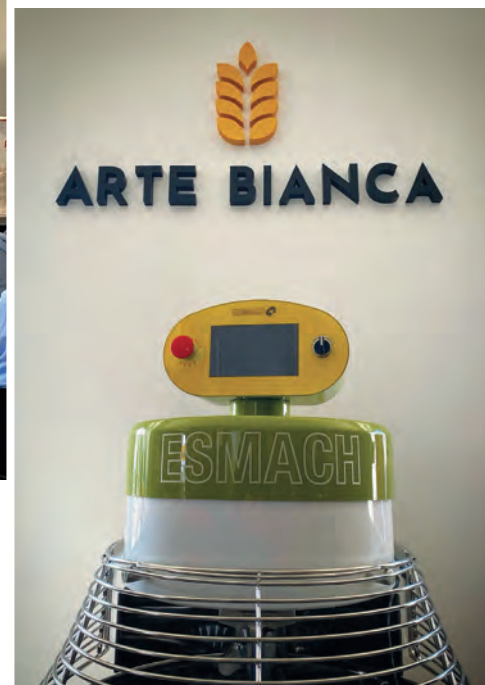
**Patryk Nowakowski, Fabrico Pizzalab**

general manager of Esmach. "That means having a space-saving, fast and easy-to-manage system with standardized processes that even novice operators can use. The equipment doesn't take up much space, so you can increase profitability per square meter."

Nowakowski has been so impressed with the equipment that he launched a school called Arte Bianca Lab, where he trains other chefs and owners of restaurants, bakeries and pizzerias in Poland how to use the EsmachLab. "At the school, we also have a Spiral Mixer AI SPI 45 and thanks to its artificial intelligence you can set the desired recipes automatically and what ingredients are required (salt, yeast, water etc). It then does everything for you. It's incredible," enthuses Nowakowski. "There are about 10 recipes built in already, for things like pizza, bread and croissants."

EsmachLab can support everything from small bakeries to large restaurants, helping them produce quality pizza, bread, cakes and focaccia during the day.

Nowakowski is now experimenting with Esmach's rotor ovens, which as well as being ideal for gourmet pizzas, can excel at burger buns and gluten-free products. For this context, Esmach is proud to introduce the new EvaLab, specifically developed for the gluten-free sector and equipped with advanced AI technology. ■



### BRAND WATCH

**ESMACH** 

### 50+

For more than 50 years Esmach has served the bakery sector with top-quality mixers, moulders, dividers, leavening proofers, retarder proofers and ovens for bakeries, pastry shops and pizzerias

### 1980s

In the 1980s the company rebranded from Esperia Macchine to Esmach to support its international expansion and promote its industrial bread-making lines

### 1990s

In the early 1990s, Bongard chose Esmach as a partner to expand the presence of its ovens in Italy, forging a cross-distribution agreement that cemented a strong bond between the two companies

**esmach.com**



# Coffee with a conscience

But First, Coffee is supporting farmers in the Philippines by creating affordable, high-quality coffee for everyone to enjoy – while also building a viable commercial brand. Jim Banks finds out why they chose Crem to supply their coffee machines

Coffee drinking is deeply embedded in the culture of the Philippines

**L**aunched in 2020 at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, But First, Coffee (BFC) is the brainchild of owner Anna Magalona, who started the business from her condo in Manila. With the world in lockdown and people separated from their loved ones, she envisioned a brand that would put community at the heart of everything it does.

Through strategic marketing and Magalona's personal touch, exemplified by the brand's in-house free delivery, BFC quickly gained traction in the market. Once the fastest-growing café franchise in Metro Manila, BFC now serves customers across the Philippines with more than 200 outlets.

So, what drove the brand's rapid success? It comes down to a combination of two things: great coffee and a strong sense of social responsibility.

"Our strategy is to position the brand as the go-to coffee destination by offering a perfect blend of quality, affordability, and community," says Magalona. "The brand aims to create exceptional experiences while ensuring customers have access to great-tasting beverages anytime, anywhere. Its core values center on elevating everyday moments through convenience, consistency, and a strong sense of connection with its customers."

### Drip-fed support

"From the beginning, we have supported Philippine farmers by using locally sourced Barako beans, which serve as the foundation of our drip-based line and one of our best-selling drinks, the Vietnamese coffee," she adds. "We continue to highlight and promote these products to maintain strong sales, ensuring a steady demand for local beans. Additionally, we support local suppliers by sourcing some of our ingredients from them, further contributing to the local economy."

Coffee drinking is deeply embedded in Filipino culture – not only in the morning, but throughout the day, whether for socializing, working, or simply relaxing. Today, BFC operates 212 branches, including 182 franchise-owned and 30 corporate-owned locations. The brand continues to innovate

## “Our strategy is to position the brand as the go-to coffee destination”

### Anna Magalona, But First, Coffee

and expand, bringing high-quality, affordable coffee to more communities across the Philippines.

The market embraces both traditional local beans, like Barako, and international trends such as milk-based and iced beverages. BFC has capitalized on this by offering flavorful, affordable drinks that cater to evolving consumer preferences, making premium coffee more accessible to local consumers.

### The Crem de la crème

In a competitive and fast-growing market, delivering a high-quality coffee experience requires more than great beans; the right equipment is just as critical, which is why the Crem® EX3 2G is the machine of choice for the brand. The EX3 was launched in 2020, the same year as BFC, emphasizing a strong link between the two brands, both of which aim to provide an affordable specialty coffee experience to customers – offering premium quality without exclusivity.

"When we first started, we used a basic drip coffee maker," Magalona explains. "As the business grew, we transitioned to professional coffee machines to ensure consistency and quality. After testing various equipment, we chose the Crem EX3 2G for its reliability and performance. It has since become the standard machine across most of our branches and the required model for our franchisees. We are confident in its durability and efficiency, ensuring that every cup meets our quality standards while supporting the success of our franchise partners."

The EX3 2G is a professional-grade espresso machine known for its precision, reliability, and intuitive design. Its modular system allows for customization to meet specific business needs, while advanced temperature stability and efficient steam wands support consistent milk frothing. Its ease of use





Above: Tommy Cheong, Crem (top); Yasmin Vasquez, Allegro; Anna Magalona, But First, Coffee

means all BFC baristas can craft high-quality coffee with speed and precision, while its durability ensures consistent performance. “This machine plays a key role in maintaining our brand’s standard of offering great-tasting, affordable beverages while supporting the smooth operations of both corporate and franchise-owned stores,” stresses Magalona.

“At Crem, we believe it’s all about consistency, craftsmanship, and connection,” says Tommy Cheong, regional product sales manager for Crem in North and Southeast Asia. “From the very first shot, our machines are designed to deliver reliable performance, day in and day out. But beyond that, cafés stay with us because we’re not just a supplier, we’re a partner. We evolve with their needs, whether they’re expanding, refining their menu, or elevating the barista experience. That long-term relationship is built on trust, and trust is earned through years of standing side-by-side with our customers.”

Professionals trust Crem because of its deserved reputation for precision and durability. Its machines have been thoroughly and carefully designed with cutting-edge espresso technology to ensure they are not only beautiful to look at, but built to perform under pressure. “Baristas and business owners alike value that balance – intuitive interfaces, customizable settings, and consistently exceptional extraction,” adds Cheong. “In a competitive market, we help professionals stand out, serve faster, and deliver a memorable cup – every time.”

### Making a match

As strong as their relationship is today, it may never have come to life without the involvement of Allegro Beverage Corporation, whose premium products and solutions have supported BFC’s growth from the start. “When they recommended Crem, we trusted their expertise, knowing it would enhance our brand’s quality and efficiency,” says Magalona. “Together, BFC, Allegro, and Crem are ensuring our expansion is backed by reliable equipment, maintaining the consistency and excellence our customers expect across all branches.”

“Crem provided a classic and straight-to-the-point type of espresso machine,”

**“At Crem,  
we believe  
it’s all about  
consistency,  
craftsmanship,  
and connection”**

**Tommy Cheong, Crem**

says Yasmin Vasquez, president and CEO of Allegro. “The sleek design shows class and is very eye-catching, but it’s not intimidating to use, performing how an honest-to-goodness espresso machine should.”

The EX line’s modular platform is perfect for a rapidly growing chain of franchises, as customers can adapt configurations based on their space or workflow needs. It also brings operational advantages, as many components and spare parts are shared across the entire line, making service and maintenance easier and more cost-effective. Plus, the range of customization options – color combinations, wood finishes, and panel materials – means the machines not only perform beautifully, but also fit seamlessly into each café’s aesthetic.

### Hard graft

Crem’s machines also help franchisees deliver consistency in a country where water quality and power fluctuations can pose challenges. While Allegro encourages operators to invest in automatic voltage regulators to stabilize fluctuating voltage levels, it stands behind the Crem machines to cope with water hardness. With proper maintenance the machines can withstand the calcium build-up that would limit the performance of less robust machines.

As BFC expands, growing its customer base and deepening roots in the local coffee-growing community, the partnership with Allegro and Crem will become more important to the brand and the farmers it supports, allied by Crem’s robust and agile manufacturing supply chain in Asia. “The partnership is built on trust, quality, and support,” says Magalona. “Crem provides reliable, high-performing equipment, while Allegro ensures high-quality products, technical assistance, and maintenance. For long-term success, we prioritize consistent product quality, responsive support, and a shared vision for growth.” ■



Crem’s machines help franchisees to deliver consistency

Crem’s EX3 is available in a wide range of options and extras. Scan here to explore its new configurator web tool:



## BRAND WATCH

# CREM®

## 1985

Crem was born as Expobar in Spain in 1985. By 1993, the company operated as Crem Aparatos S.L. and was focused on building smart, high-performance machines

## 2008

Crem International was formed through a 2008 merger with Swedish brand Coffee Queen. Spengler GmbH joined the group in 2015

## 2020

The EX3 was launched in 2020 and has since won four international design awards. In 2022, Crem joined the Ali Group’s global coffee division

**crem.coffee**

# 05

## Innovation



# Thinking outside the laundry box

A partnership born during Covid has evolved into an innovative, hands-on approach to commercial laundry equipment. **Herman Harsevoort** of Laundry Total and **Gabriele Giotto** of Grandimpianti I.L.E. explain their vision to Chris Evans



Grandimpianti I.L.E.'s new machines help Laundry Total to clean laundry efficiently, says Herman Harsevoort, managing director (above)

**S**tubborn stains are an occupational hazard for commercial laundries. “We had a chemicals company customer recently that had emulsion adhesive spills on their overalls. They were proving difficult to get out,” says Ronald van Velzen, owner of Velzen Textiel in Bolsward, The Netherlands, which provides commercial laundry services to a range of businesses. “Laundry Total stepped in, creating a tailored program with specific

chemicals and a longer water cycle. It worked perfectly.”

This is the kind of dedicated customer service that Dutch distributor Laundry Total provides. They began selling Grandimpianti I.L.E. washing machines and dryers to local companies during Covid. Although it was a challenging period for many businesses, it highlighted the benefits of the Italian brand’s remote-controlled appliances, which helped minimize the impact of restricted site access. The partnership has gone from strength to strength ever since.

“They are doing a great job of selling and distributing our machines to customers, and their aftercare is incredible,” enthuses Gabriele Giotto, sales and product manager at Grandimpianti I.L.E. “They take a scientific approach and are really focused on the running costs of the machines.”

“We are all about ensuring clean laundry in an efficient way,” says Herman Harsevoort, managing director of Laundry Total. “A lot of commercial laundry companies in Holland are old school and put everything on a high wash. But we explain to customers how

they can go from a 60 degree wash to 40 and still clean the clothes thoroughly, using the right amount of chemicals and time, thus saving on electricity. It's about investing in every cycle."

### Cloud control

Laundry Total's work is made easier by their ability to manage Grandimpianti I.L.E. machines remotely through the exclusive TheMind.cloud platform. This system enables them to monitor, track and control all aspects of laundry operations. It includes features for overseeing wash cycles, tracking energy consumption and meeting individual customer requirements. The platform also allows precise control over drying settings, enabling customers to treat even the most delicate items by adjusting time, temperature and drum rotation speed according to fabric type.

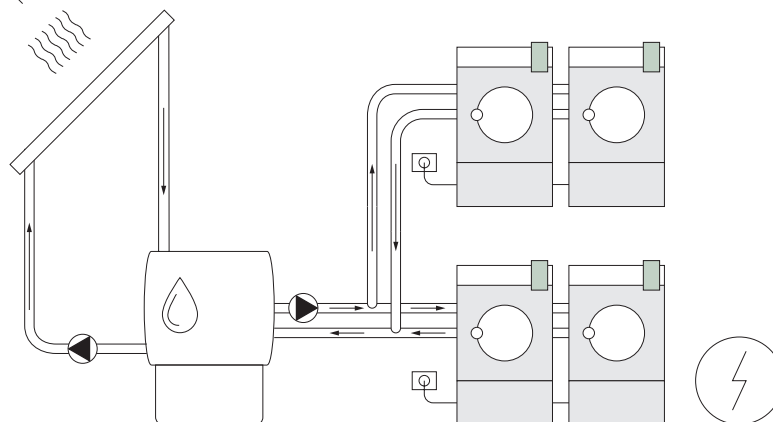
"With this smart service, customers get a huge amount of information every hour of the day, including electricity and water use, any problems, and where they can save money on washing programs," says Harsevoort.

"It's an impressive smart package, and we are constantly finding new ways to use the data to improve things for the customers."

Velzen has certainly been won over. "If there's a problem with some dirt we can't clean, we call them, and they can change the washing program from wherever they are – adjusting the temperature, adding more soap or water etc.," says Velzen.

The washing machines themselves have a new, interactive control system called Wavy, with a touchscreen interface providing information about the programming and operating of the machine according to the user's

A unique, innovative and sustainable feature of the new, 'hybrid' model Grandimpianti I.L.E. machines is their use of solar panels



experience. They also come equipped with a weighing system called MWS as standard, "so every load can be monitored, controlled, measured and recorded online, and changed if needed, which saves up to 50% of detergent use," adds Giotto.

But perhaps the most unique, innovative and sustainable feature of the new, 'hybrid' model Grandimpianti I.L.E. machines is their use of solar panels.

"They use energy from the sun to warm up the water in the boilers, and then some of that water is also used for the dryer, combined with electricity (so a hybrid system), to heat the appliance," says Velzen. "So this saves us money – and is better for the environment."

### Energy efficiency

All Grandimpianti I.L.E. dryers use fresh air to cool down the motor, exhaust and rear of the machine. "The thermal energy absorbed by this fresh air dries the clothes in the machine. That's another energy efficient process we introduced. It saves something like 12 minutes per cycle, which is huge," says Giotto. "You can control the temperature of the air going in and out of the drum at the touch of a button, thanks to an algorithm we developed. Once calculated, the machine adjusts according to the items being put in (whether it's t-shirts or bathrobes)."

Laundry Total and Grandimpianti I.L.E. think creatively when it comes to the set up of the machines

themselves. "Laundry rooms are often hidden away in a corner somewhere, far away from everyone, because they're dirty, noisy and wet places. We want customers to think about making the space brighter so they can show off our machines. We offer them 3D images of the best designs that would suit their space," says Giotto. "If you think about it, with a nice restaurant the first thing a customer sees is the textiles, not the food, and hotel guests see the bed sheets and towels. So ensuring the space where they're washed is hygienic and efficient should be key." ■

## BRAND WATCH



### 1972

Grandimpianti I.L.E. has been operating in the laundry industry for over 50 years

### 2020

The company received the coveted ISO 45001 certification for its occupational health and safety management systems in 2020

### 20

Grandimpianti I.L.E.'s new ironers offer 20% less clutter while maintaining the same roller length. They occupy less space, giving operators more room to work

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



# A new wave of cooking

Innovative chefs are embracing ultrasound-based cooking techniques to transform cheaper meat cuts and vegetable waste into creative new dishes. Silko, co-creators of the Sonika, and Next Cooking Generation explain to Chris Evans how it works

**W**ords such as revolutionary and redefining are often overused when new products launch, and the hype is rarely justified. However, in the case of the Sonika – a cutting-edge preparation appliance from Silko and Next Cooking Generation that uses patented, focused ultrasound technology – these terms are more than fitting.

Ultrasound technology has been used before to clean products, but this is something new. Silko and Next Cooking Generation are harnessing wave technology to treat food and prepare drinks – all within a stylish, stainless steel,

professional-grade machine.

“We were trying to think outside the box,” says Michele Bartolini, product specialist at Silko. “Using Next Cooking Generation’s patented waveco® focused ultrasound technology [developed at the University of Teramo in Italy], we found that we could massage the food towards accelerated maturation.”

This “massaging process” softens proteins in the food without losing moisture, enhancing tenderness. It also kills bacteria, such as salmonella and listeria, significantly extending food shelf life “by about 50%” according to Bartolini.

But perhaps most importantly for chefs and restaurant owners, the Sonika also allows the use of

less premium cuts of meat that would normally go to waste – with perfect results.

## Meat cuts

At Il Posto restaurant in Bologna, executive chef Gianpaolo Rola typically uses filet beef for tartare – not for its flavor, but for its consistency and tenderness. With the Sonika, he achieves the same tenderness using the more flavorful shoulder cut of beef – but all at a much cheaper price. “Filet was costing €32 per kilo, whereas the shoulder of beef was just €11, so it was saving him about €7,000 over the year,” says Bartolini. “Plus, there’s no need for dressing (oil or vinegar), because the liquid distribution of the



**“SONIKA OFFERS FULLY AUTOMATED MANAGEMENT, ENSURING EASE OF USE AND CONSISTENT RESULTS”**

**Mauro Piovesan, Silko**

ultrasound gives the tartare a shiny quality already.”

The restaurant has also dramatically reduced the cooking time of its meats using Sonika. For example, pork ribs that used to be cooked at 60 degrees for four hours before being finished on the griddle now take half the time, thanks to Sonika’s heating transmission and fast killing of bacteria, which also allows for lower cooking temperatures.

Marinating is also quicker and simpler, taking just a few hours. “We can heat up the water to 85 degrees and perfectly cook the food without needing to touch it as everything is automatically processed using a digital display,” says Bartolini.

“Sonika offers fully automated management, ensuring ease of use and consistent results. The machine automatically removes oxygen from the water and self-adjusts the ultrasound intensity based on the quantity of ingredients in the tank,” says Mauro Piovesan, area manager for Francophone countries at Silko.

“Throughout the process, the real-time water temperature and processing time are displayed, providing full control at a glance,” he adds. “The built-in menu features pre-set and customizable recipes, minimizing operator error and ensuring repeatable excellence,” he adds.

The machine can also be controlled by mobile phone, with all prep data sent to the HACCP food safety management system.

**Refuse reused?**

Sonika even transforms food that would normally be discarded. For example, the green leaves

of the cauliflower can be finely chopped, sugared, and salted, to create a candied vegetable dressing for a starter.

“We even used discarded celery leaves from a broth to make a unique alcoholic drink,” says Bartolini. “We filled up a vacuum bag with the leaves and alcohol, put it in the ultrasound machine for an hour and then let it rest overnight. Then we added water and sugar to balance the flavor, and ended up with a delicious drink,” says Bartolini, who hopes to get the machines into lounge bars too.

“We can infuse oil, water, alcohol, milk and more with every kind of waste in the kitchen to create delicious food and help save the environment.”

Word of Sonika’s success is spreading fast, with machines being sold across the globe. “In Asia, where they cook a lot with vegetables, they’re realizing they can put them in the ultrasound directly and keep all the vitamins and flavor. It’s also more sustainable this way,” says Bartolini.

And in France, at Sirha Lyon in January 2025, respected private chef Benjamin Moulinas demonstrated how to cook traditional French recipes, including duck, in the Sonika machine.

“He produced a dried duck recipe. It normally has to be conserved with salt for at least three or four weeks to dehydrate, but with Sonika the process took just a few hours,” says Piovesan.

“Ultrasound technology is incomparable,” says Moulinas. “I use it to find new food textures and research innovative techniques, like transferring flavor and color to raw food.

**Sound progress**

“The Sirha presentations were a total success and people [including Michelin-starred chefs] were amazed by the refined textures and intensified flavors,” adds Moulinas.

Bartolini says Moulinas has helped train others how to use Sonika, showing them how it can easily be personalized for each customer/client and their recipes. “We just give them an indication of time for every ingredient and that’s it,” says Bartolini.

Silko and Next Cooking Generation continue to work together to find new features and applications for waveco® technology and the Sonika machine. “We are helping them grow in the market, but also giving them suggestions on the design and build. Our technical departments learn from each other,” says Bartolini. ■

**BRAND WATCH**

**SILKO**

**1980**

Silko was founded 45 years ago in Italy. Its headquarters is in Vittorio Veneto (Veneto region)

**100%**

Silko manufactures a complete range of kitchen equipment, with all machines produced in Italy

**60%**

Silko’s use of eco-friendly Fiber Film™ in its packaging material reduces plastic consumption by 60%

**silko.it**

## 05 Innovation

Wexiödisk dishwashers have long set the standard for efficiency, sustainability and performance. Jim Banks explores how its WD-10S pot washer helped a busy Swedish supermarket eliminate leaks and reduce noise

# Pot washing without the fuss



**T**he ICA Supermarket in Borgholm, on the island of Öland, Sweden, plays a key role in the lives of the municipality's 11,000 inhabitants. Its high-quality produce is always fresh, and its range of cooked food and salads are a talking point in the local community.

Maintaining these standards requires efficiency in the kitchen that goes beyond food preparation. Faced with a loud and leaky pot washer, store manager Felix Teern knew it was time to replace it with something more reliable and convenient.

"The old machine had been here for 10 years and was leaking water," Teern explains. "We called someone who sells Wexiödisk machines and asked about the new models, and they told me about a brand-new product that was coming out soon. So, we agreed to take it on as part of a pilot project."

Teern says their dishwasher gets used a lot, particularly in high season. "It's mainly to clean the plastic lids for our classic salad bar, as well as the serving cutlery. Then there are other kitchen utensils, like tongs, but it depends on the day. Spoons are always particularly dirty from products like pasta, chicken, shrimp, and sauces, and sometimes we have a lot of pots and frying pans to clean."

In the low season, the machine is used between 20 and 40 times per day. The most commonly



**“THE FIRST STEP TO SUSTAINABILITY IS HAVING A LONG LIFESPAN, WHICH IS WHAT OUR PRODUCTS ARE DESIGNED TO DELIVER”**

**Johan Engström,  
Wexiödisk**

used light program runs for about two minutes, though it can be extended to four or six minutes for a heavy-duty cycle. In the high season, when sales can triple, the machine is used 60 to 80 times a day.

### Clean and green

The machine chosen to attack this heavy workload – Wexiödisk's new pot dishwasher WD-10S – offers more than just efficiency and reliability. Its environmental performance is also outstanding.

With ECO-FLOW technology that saves energy with each wash cycle, granule-free washing, an intelligent energy-saving mode, and four flexible wash programs, including a soaking cycle for heavily soiled items, the WD-10S delivers sparkling

results with minimal fuss.

"Water flow, pump pressure, detergents and time are the four key parameters that can be matched in different ways to optimize cleaning," says Wexiödisk's international area sales manager, Henrik Florentzson. "We have a dual pump system that starts with lower pressure before another pump activates for higher pressure to get full coverage of wash items across the four programs."

Adding to its sustainability credentials, the WD-10S is manufactured with recycled steel. In Sweden, where being environmentally conscious is in the DNA of every business, that is an important bonus.

"Before, we had a product that was 90% recycled material, but this is made with 98% recycled steel," says Wexiödisk sales and marketing manager Johan Engström. "The market is asking for it, so we are proud to be leading on the steel aspect. We are the first company to do this here," he adds.

"Our customers are now asking about carbon emissions too," he adds. "By using less new nickel and chromium, the WD-10S reduces our carbon footprint by 47%."

Engström says sustainability has influenced their product development for many years. "The first step to sustainability is having a long lifespan, which is what our products are designed to deliver. Customers want a low carbon footprint, a long lifespan, and resource efficiency."

### Supermarket satisfaction

The WD-10S delivers on all of those factors. In fact, customer satisfaction levels in Borgholm could hardly be higher.

"We are 110% pleased," says Teern. "It is very simple to use. You press the button and open

the hatch. It takes ten minutes to fill with water at the start of the day and then it is preset to run the two-minute program. The water may need to be changed during the day, but this happens automatically," he says.

"It is cheaper to run, more efficient, and it cleans very well," he adds. "Every time we take out the lids and pots, they are like new. Also, it is much quieter, which is very important in a small kitchen."

The WD-10S has one more ace up its sleeve. At 820mm, its loading height is also higher than normal, making it more versatile for handling a wider range of items.

"We had a gap in our product portfolio for products with the higher loading capability, and because this model does not have a hood it can wash bigger, bulkier items," says Florentzson. "That opens up a new market when it comes to stores." ■

## BRAND WATCH

**Wexiödisk<sup>W</sup>**

**1972**

Always maintaining a keen focus on craftsmanship, Wexiödisk was founded in Växjö, Sweden, in 1972

**100%**

Wexiödisk's Service Tag acts as a service record to ensure each machine can perform 100% when it comes to wash performance and wash economy

**98%**

Wexiödisk's WD-10S machine is made from 98% recycled steel. It also uses less new nickel and chromium, reducing the carbon footprint by 47%

**wexiodisk.com**

Left: Shopping baskets can be efficiently cleaned using the new WD-10S pot washer, which was chosen by the ICA Supermarket. The machine is made from 98% recycled steel



# High altitude, high performance

At 3,100 meters above sea level, Zermatt Hospitality Group AG's 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat is one of Europe's premier destinations for both accommodation and dining. **Thomas Marbach**, managing director, tells Sam Noble why the hotel turned to INDUCS to elevate its kitchen line



L-R: Damiano Grillo, sales manager, INDUCS; Daniele Romano, managing director, INDUCS



## “THE ENTIRE TEAM WAS EXCITED ABOUT THE NEW INDUCTION TECHNOLOGY IN THE KITCHEN”

**Thomas Marbach,  
3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat**

the region, including the Grand Hotel Zermatterhof in the heart of Zermatt and the historic Riffelhaus 1853 at 2,548 meters. However, the extreme elevation of the 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat altitude makes it a uniquely challenging environment. “The very first question,” recalls Thomas Marbach, managing director, 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat, “was whether induction could be connected and operated at 3,100 meters above sea level.” It gave INDUCS®, a Swiss kitchen equipment manufacturer specializing in induction – a cooking method where the cookware is heated using magnetic induction – the job of finding out.

“For us, this was a really prestigious project. The chance to have our induction technology installed at the 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat, with its stunning view of the Matterhorn, was all the motivation we needed,” says Daniele Romano, managing director of INDUCS.

### Remote control

In remote mountain environments, especially at extreme altitudes, hotel operators face unique practical constraints. “Gas becomes less efficient at higher altitudes due to the reduced oxygen levels,” says Romano, while the electric glass ceramic cooktops they

currently had at the Kulm were slow and imprecise. “Induction has a lot of advantages in this situation,” says Romano.

Once technical feasibility had been confirmed, the teams moved into detailed design. “We were able to install our latest induction technology, which provides the necessary relief and reliability for daily, challenging operations, both of which are essential for a hotel/restaurant at this altitude,” says Romano.

The transformation of the kitchen brought huge benefits – and not just behind the line. “The entire team was excited about the new induction technology in the kitchen,” says Marbach.

Performance gains were significant. “The electric glass ceramic cooktops we used to have made everything take much longer. With induction, you get to the desired cooking temperatures much quicker and you can also fine-tune the power and temperature levels. This makes it possible to prepare even very delicate dishes at the perfect temperature,” he adds.

Induction also proved a better fit for the demanding physical environment. “Induction cooktops don’t produce an open flame, of course, so they’re safer. They’re also easier to clean and require less maintenance than gas stoves.”

### The heat isn’t on

Heat reduction was another win. “Induction technology radiates much less heat than an electric glass ceramic cooktop or gas,” says Damiano Grillo, sales manager at INDUCS, “so you end up with a significantly more comfortable climate in the kitchen.”

At the heart of the new installation is INDUCS’s proprietary RTCS<sup>mp</sup> (Realtime Temperature Control System multi-point) technology. “This ensures we use the optimum amount of power that can be

absorbed by the respective cookware material,” says Romano.

INDUCS continues to innovate. Its new INDUCS X2 induction technology, launched last year, features an induction generator that can be positioned up to six meters away from the cooktop. “This means it can be installed in cooking blocks with limited space, where there is no room for the electronics,” says Romano.

The new range offers three operating options: classic rotary switch control, rotary switch with digital display and rotary switch with a display beneath the ceramic glass. It also includes a variety of additional features, such as a hold function, temperature control, timer and power reduction.

For Zermatt Hospitality Group AG, this upgrade reflects a broader ethos that combines performance, precision, and sustainability, even in the most extreme conditions. In INDUCS, they have found a partner as refined as the guests they serve and one that meets the unique demands of cooking at the very top of Europe. ■

## BRAND WATCH

# INDUCS®

## 1998

Founded in 1998 in Herisau, Switzerland, INDUCS is one of the world’s leading suppliers of induction technology for professional kitchens

## 2024

INDUCS pioneered its groundbreaking X2 Induction with RTCS<sup>mp</sup> (Realtime Temperature Control System multi-point) technology in 2024

## 90%

With INDUCS equipment, more than 90% of the energy reaches the cooking vessel, resulting in electricity cost savings of up to 40%

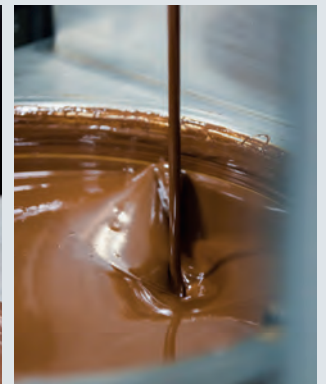
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**D**oing anything at 3,100 meters above sea level comes with challenges – and installing new kitchen equipment is no exception. Perched on the Gornergrat ridge, 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat is the highest hotel in the Swiss Alps and one of the most exclusive. Alongside once-in-a-lifetime views and year-round snow, guests expect top-tier Alpine cuisine, making kitchen performance absolutely essential.

The Zermatt Hospitality Group AG, based in Zermatt, Switzerland, is known for operating high-altitude properties that blend rugged Alpine tradition with world-class hospitality. The group runs nine distinctive hotels in

# Pastry puts warewashing to the test

The stubborn residues left on high-quality pastry laboratory equipment put warewashers to the test. **Luigi Biassetto** explains to Jim Banks why he trusts Hoonved to deliver spotless results



**B**orn in Brussels, a city inextricably linked to the production of the finest chocolate, Luigi Biassetto trained as a maître pâtissier chocolatier confiseur glacier. He returned to Italy in the 1990s, forging a career as a master pastry chef renowned for creativity. The Biassetto method has since become a point of reference for the patisserie community.

His pastry shop in Padua is a mecca for anyone seeking the finest confections, and his laboratory L'Atelier Biassetto, aka "The Temple of Sweetness", is where he indulges his creative urges to create new masterpieces.

Behind the shop's stunning displays and the sophistication

of the lab's experiments lies hard work, commitment, and more than a little mess. Making pastry is a mucky business, so robust hardware – to ensure elite levels of cleanliness and hygiene to match his products – is required.

"First and foremost, the fats are a big challenge," says Biassetto. "They have a very high melting point. It is crucial to have a washing solution capable of effectively removing them. In a kitchen, most of the residues are related to the Maillard reaction, where sugars caramelize. These can be removed relatively easily. In pastry, however, we deal with a different type of dirt.

"We use a lot of trays and plastic containers, and grease sticks pretty well to plastic," he adds. "Plastic doesn't retain heat the same way metal does, so it's harder to break down fats stuck

to it during washing. Having a dishwasher that can properly clean plastic items is a major challenge in pastry laboratories."

## Handling a heavy load

In Biassetto's lab, dishwashers start washing at 6:00am and run non-stop until midnight. On average, they wash 1,200 trays per day – sometimes more – as well as pots, trays, utensils, planetary mixer bowls and more. To be reliable is not enough. They must be durable enough to survive occasional mishandling by less experienced operators.

"This is a real test for us, because if a machine is beautifully designed but can't withstand rough handling or distractions, then it becomes a problem," says Biassetto.

Energy and resource consumption are also important.



Top: Alberto Carioni of Hoonved.  
Below: master pastry chef Luigi Biassetto



Hoonved is Luigi Biassetto's preferred supplier of warewashing equipment

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Every year, Hoonved manufactures more than 10,000 machines – from small undercounter to large rack conveyor dishwashers

**hoonved.com**

Using less water, less detergent, and less power is important to Biassetto. The latest machines installed in the lab – from Hoonved, his preferred supplier of warewashing equipment – satisfy all these conditions.

The company introduced freshwater dishwashing in 1985 and has been developing the technology ever since. Its new APx machine – featuring a modern design, increased clearance, and an intuitive, user-friendly interface with Wi-Fi remote control – is the latest evolution of this concept.

The APx68 Extreme freshwater dishwasher has a clearance of 400mm and a 600mm x 500mm rack, making it ideal for washing large plastic containers, as well as trays, GN 1/1 pans, pastry utensils, and other accessories.

“The APx was designed to meet

**“WHAT I’VE FOUND IN HOONVED IS SAFE TECHNOLOGY”**

**Luigi Biassetto, L’Atelier Biassetto**

market demands for guaranteed cleaning performance, ensuring high levels of dirt removal and microbial load reduction,” explains Alberto Carioni, Hoonved’s senior sales manager for Italy. “Its combination of total tank water drainage after each cycle and thermal disinfection makes it ideal for environments like pastry labs, where there is a high concentration of fats and chocolate residues.”

Unlike traditional models, the

water in the tank of the APx is completely drained and replaced at the end of each cycle, meaning the tank water is never saturated and is always completely free of food residues from previous washes, guaranteeing impeccable washing results and the total absence of odors.

“Thermal disinfection – the X10 Cycle – employs higher temperatures and extended cycles to tackle challenging residues such as chocolate and grease,” says Carioni. “By replacing the water after each cycle, the APx Extreme prevents cross-contamination from previous washes, guaranteeing maximum hygiene and cleanliness.”

**Growing together**

Biassetto has been a Hoonved customer for more than 25 years – which is testament to both the

quality of the equipment and the strength of a relationship that has been nurtured over time. “First, I like buying Italian, especially when it comes to advanced technology,” says Biassetto. “I appreciate the typical Italian mindset that goes beyond the problem, to overcome obstacles rather than just facing them.”

“It is essential the machines truly meet our needs,” he adds. “I have traveled the world and seen how American and German companies do this. What I’ve found in Hoonved is safe technology. Another crucial factor is aftersales support. Quick and efficient service is fundamental. Hoonved excels in this.”

The APx Extreme, officially launched at the SIGEP exhibition, is already making a strong claim to be the optimum warewashing solution for pastry labs. ■

# 06

## Aliworld



### Metro

## PINK SHELL'S POST-HURRICANE OVERHAUL

In 2022, Hurricane Ian battered Florida's Gulf Coast. The Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina, an iconic 200-room resort on Fort Myers Beach, saw its foodservice facilities wiped out. "Fortunately, we were OK structurally," says Mathew Mitnitsky, Pink Shell's chef and executive director of food and beverage. The restoration included a re-visioning of Pink Shell's foodservice infrastructure to reconfigure back-of-house spaces to maximize and centralize storage, create efficiency and a smoother flow of products to the foodservice venues. Metro® shelving, transport products and space-saving SmartWall® wall shelving played key roles in the update. "I wanted to create a Pink Shell 2.0 that would be better designed and equipped for its next 70 years," Mitnitsky says.

In the resort's main kitchen, Mitnitsky seized the opportunity to create dedicated stations to improve organization. A new walk-in cooler was a prime target for introducing upgraded storage strategies. Metro's high-density Top-Track® overhead track system fit the bill, significantly expanding the cooler's storage capacity by enabling productive use of its interior space. Two Metro SmartWall units were installed in the main kitchen to provide convenient storage space for freshly washed pots and kitchen utensils. Pink Shell's back-of-house redesign and restoration also introduced Metro SmartWall units, which enabled Mitnitsky and his team to take advantage of unused wall space. Each SmartWall unit features adjustable, interchangeable grid brackets and a variety of

shelf, hook and basket accessories. Shelves, supports and grids can be easily removed for cleaning of walls and fixed elements.

Portability was also a priority. With the main kitchen and storage areas remote from the resort's poolside, beach and banquet venues, fitting rolling transport racks down hallways and into service elevators was crucial. "The rolling rack system enables us to push the shelving units together when we don't need additional capacity but roll them apart for extra storage and easy access when we do need more shelving capacity. We had to do a lot of careful measuring but were able to go with Metro all the way," says Mitnitsky. More operationally efficient than ever, Pink Shell's food and beverage program was back to 95% operational by mid-2024.



## Belshaw The whole package at Duck Donuts

Customization and quick service are key to Duck Donuts spreading its wings internationally. The Mechanicsburg, Pa.-based chain opened stores in Northern Ireland and the Bahamas in fall 2024, bringing its international presence to 15 stores on top of its 150 across the U.S., with plans to open 30 or more stores annually. Crucial to its expansion has partly been thanks to Belshaw's efficient, standardized equipment package.

Inspired by donuts he enjoyed on vacation, Russ DiGilio opened the first Duck Donuts in Kitty Hawk, N.C., in 2007. By 2013, the brand had received numerous requests from vacationers who missed its sweet treats after returning home, prompting the decision to franchise. "Demand became so high that my dad thought himself silly if he didn't look into that venture," says Marissa Heath, franchise director of onboarding and daughter of DiGilio.

Each Duck Donuts store prepares its donuts to order in front of customers, and then customizes them with dips, toppings and drizzles. The experience is customizable, and it's fast. Each donut takes 115 to 125 seconds to cook in a Donut Robot® Automatic Fryer from Belshaw. They cool for about 30 seconds, then an employee dips, tops and drizzles.

Stores have two Belshaw fryers in case there's an equipment problem, so they don't need to halt operations. Each store has a complete equipment package from Belshaw, including an EZMelt shortening melter-filter that keeps



oil hot and melted. It also functions as a filtration system, removing all particulates from the oil, which extends its usability and reduces the frequency of oil changes.

For those rare occasions when a repair is necessary, Duck Donuts has equipped each location with a spare parts kit from Belshaw. They also recommend each franchisee buy the same package from Belshaw, which includes hand-held depositors, plungers and hoppers, to allow stores to offer different flavors, shapes and sizes.

Duck Donuts has also considered using Belshaw's Insider unit,

which would allow it to move into nontraditional locations where there's no hood; instead, the unit recirculates air within itself.

"The focus is trying to get into these nontraditional spots," says Heath. "They would all probably use this Insider unit unless there was a hood system already established."



Metro helped Pink Shell be better equipped "for its next 70 years"



## XpressChef HEATED TO PERFECTION

At Maisie Eatery, an artisan eatery inside Calgary's Sam Centre, beautifully displayed made-from-scratch creations never fail to stop customers in their tracks. With a daily changing menu of some 100 SKUs including salads, sandwiches, savory baked goods and pastries, maintaining a well-organized kitchen is essential for chef and founder Barbara Spain. When designing the kitchen, Spain found an ideal solution in the MRX2 XpressChef® from Accelerated Cooking Products (ACP, Inc.).

After running four restaurants in Dublin, moving to Calgary and opening Cleaver restaurant and Gringo Street, Spain met the people behind Sam Centre. She envisioned a destination restaurant where visitors could visit the galleries and then have lunch with their

families. Customers could also stop by for a coffee and pastry in the morning, a hearty lunch or a cocktail and snack in the late afternoon.

"Everything on offer at Maisie is literally right in front of you on the display line," says Spain. "Everything is down to a T. We are enjoying what we are doing because we are organized."

Prior to purchasing equipment, Spain spent the day at one of the test kitchens of Food Service Solutions, a North American distributor of commercial foodservice equipment led by chef consultants. Mark McEwan, executive chef consultant/western sales director, walked Spain through the equipment. Initially, Spain was interested in combi ovens, but McEwan had other ideas. Now, at Maisie Eatery, two MRX2 XpressChef countertop high-speed

ovens perform a variety of duties in a very fast process. "By the time customers are done with their transaction, they have a hot beverage and hot food in their hands," says McEwan.

The ovens also play a key role in re-serving food. Microwave technology helps penetrate heat all the way through the product. "We are re-temping things like sausage rolls and pasties," says Spain. "The oven creates a crispy, flaky pastry when it's re-temped and heats the internal as well. So, you are giving back the product that might have been cold, but it tastes like it came fresh out of the oven." The XpressChef high-speed oven also provides consistency with its preset capabilities. "There's no guesswork for our staff," says Spain. "It's brilliant and does exactly what it's meant to do."



The XpressChef high-speed oven has helped Maisie Eatery significantly



## Lincoln Hunt Brothers Pizza speeds up service

The pandemic impacted many restaurant and foodservice businesses, but two segments have fared better than others: pizza and c-stores. Hunt Brothers® Pizza straddles both and has carved out a highly successful niche, growing to 10,000 locations across 33 states. Within the last year, however, Hunt Brothers Pizza has sought to advance by testing Lincoln's latest impinger oven model.

The Hunt Brothers — Don, Charlie, Jim and Lonnie Hunt — got their start in the food business working for their father at Austin's Drive-In. In 1991, they recognized that c-store owners needed a pizza program that was easy to operate and would keep consumers coming back. Hunt Brothers Pizza places a branded pizza program in a participating c-store with a compact equipment and design setup. Pizzas arrive at the stores semi topped. Consumers can add as many toppings as they like at no extra charge.

The equipment package provided by Hunt Brothers Pizza can include a branded pizza shoppe, an oven, a freezer, and a refrigerator. Directly behind the pizza shoppe is the impinger oven used to cook pizzas in minutes. "Currently, [Hunt Brothers Pizza] uses the Lincoln® DCTI 2500 oven," says Melinda Scheuneman, CFSP, director of product management for Lincoln, which has a 32-year relationship with Hunt Brothers Pizza. Lincoln's latest impinger oven model is the Aperion® 1624. "This model cooks pizzas faster, and you can control not only temperature but also airflow independently from the top and the bottom to be able to make adjustments for additional menu items," Scheuneman says.

Aperion's technology can reduce cooking time by up to 35% with no food quality loss or noise increase. The model is also stackable up to three units

for more production capability and comes in gas, electric and ventless options. "The ventless units give the capability to open quickly in smaller stores or locations without a hood," Scheuneman says. Hunt Brothers Pizza's Lisa Lem, category manager, equipment and smallwares, says that their goal is to enhance speed of service as the company continues to expand.

"Our convenience store customer partners have always wanted to service their consumers in the fastest manner possible," Lem says. "So implementing a more advanced oven that can help us increase the speed of service but still maintain quality is what we're always looking for."

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## A GLOBAL LEADER

Ali Group is the largest, most diversified global leader in the foodservice equipment industry. A corporation founded more than 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.

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