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ALIWORLD

THE ALI GROUP MAGAZINE



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ALI GROUP

INTERNATIONAL EDITION



Pavyllon London, the Michelin-starred restaurant at the Four Seasons Hotel London at Park Lane, is one of the city's most exciting dining destinations



Built around you

Every edition of *Aliworld* begins in the same place: the customers who put our equipment to work every day, in every corner of the world. Their stories remind us that hospitality takes as many forms as there are places to experience it, and that our job is to make sure each of those places has exactly what it needs, however specialized that need may be.

Last year, our cover story on Princess Cruises showed what that can look like at its most demanding — Carpigiani, working alongside Welbilt Marine, engineering equipment for a floating kitchen with no room for error and nowhere to call for a spare part. It was a good reminder that Ali Group's strength isn't just in any single brand, but in the network behind it: in that case, a marine portfolio that also includes Metos Marine, Welbilt GalleyCare and Alicontract, each bringing specialized knowledge to a sector most equipment manufacturers never think about at all.

That same principle — deep expertise, applied wherever hospitality happens — continues to guide us as we look toward 2027. Electrification remains a defining theme across our markets. Sustainability has moved further still, from a design consideration to a regulatory one in much of Europe, shaping how kitchens are specified as much as how they're built. And artificial intelligence, automation and robotics, which we flagged as emerging technologies not long ago, are now genuinely reshaping how our brands design equipment and how operators run their kitchens day to day.

None of this changes what hospitality is in its DNA. It is still, at its core, about serving people well — and nothing about AI, electrification or automation changes that. If anything, these tools exist to protect it: to give kitchen teams back the time and consistency they need to do the human part of the job more efficiently.

For Ali Group, this moment represents both responsibility and opportunity. Our role is not simply to deliver equipment, but to help customers navigate change with confidence by combining innovation, operational knowledge and the collective strength of our brands. The depth of our expertise and collaboration across the Group allow us to deliver solutions that are both globally informed and locally relevant.

One example of this commitment is the Welbilt Experience Center, which opened in late 2025 in Coppell, Texas, just outside Dallas. More than a showcase of equipment, the 12,356-square-meter facility represents a new dimension in customer engagement, bringing together cutting-edge commercial kitchen technology, smart automation and sustainable solutions.

By bringing many of our leading brands under one roof, the Experience Center provides a hands-on environment where visitors can experience equipment across our portfolio and gain insights from our industry experts on how to address a variety of operational challenges.

The coffee and beverage category also continues to present significant opportunity across EMEA and APAC. In this context, we were pleased to welcome BUNN to Ali Group earlier this year. With its strong heritage, culture of innovation and highly complementary portfolio, BUNN strengthens our leadership in the global coffee and beverage equipment sector while enhancing our ability to deliver greater value to customers across key markets.

As always, face-to-face contact remains irreplaceable. We look forward to seeing many of you at GulfHost in Dubai and Host Arabia in Riyadh before the year is out, and into 2027 at Sirha Lyon, SIGEP World in Rimini, The NAFEM Show in Orlando and HOTELEX in Shanghai. Each of these gatherings is where the relationships behind our industry actually get built.

We hope this edition of *Aliworld*, filled with customer stories from across EMEA and APAC, gives you a few ideas of your own to bring home. Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Filippo Berti
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group

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Shaped by more than five generations of family entrepreneurship, dispensed beverage equipment manufacturer BUNN has continually evolved to deliver reliability and innovation

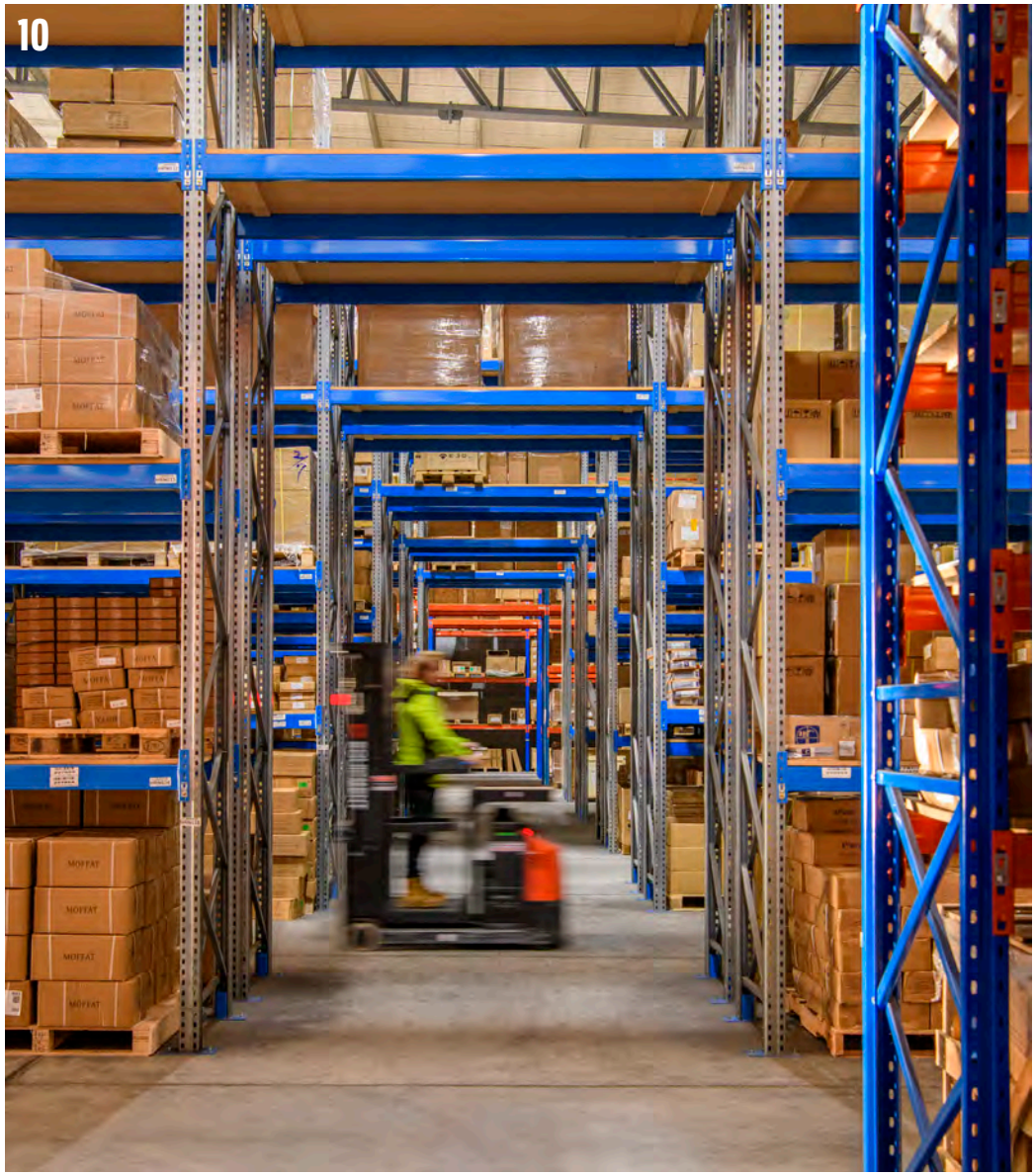


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01
GROWTH



A legacy of innovation

Shaped by more than five generations of family entrepreneurship, dispensed beverage equipment manufacturer BUNN has continually evolved to deliver reliability and innovation. Lauren Hurrell explores the foundations of a company that has built a lasting legacy

BUNN® is a commercial and home beverage equipment and service company with an impressive legacy. Some of the world's largest foodservice brands rely on BUNN products to serve high-quality beverages, from demanding commercial environments to cups brewed in home kitchens. Shaped by more than five generations of family entrepreneurship, the company entered the beverage equipment market in 1957 and was incorporated in 1963.

Today, the business has grown into a leading global manufacturer of beverage dispensing equipment, headquartered in Springfield, Illinois, U.S., BUNN specializes in coffee and iced tea brewers, bean-to-cup systems, coffee bean grinding systems, hot and cold beverage dispensers, frozen beverage systems, service, water systems, and related accessories, with production facilities in Springfield and White Hall, Illinois, Iowa and Canada.

Following its acquisition by the Ali Group in March 2026, BUNN now joins Ali Group's global portfolio of leading foodservice equipment companies.

BUNN has built a reputation for trust with its customers, reinforcing a people-first culture rooted in its history, while continued innovation has helped ensure its longevity and ability to adapt to evolving customer needs.

Beverage program partner

The commercial side of the business, as it exists today, covers traditional café equipment such as coffee brewers, alongside hot and cold dispensed beverage systems installed in settings ranging from cafés to convenience stores. By continually embracing change



and development in technology, much of the company's equipment has evolved for broader foodservice applications, including hot water dispensers now used in tasks such as pizza dough preparation.

This approach reflects the company's spirit of adaptability, a quality that has solidified its long-standing reputation for quality and purpose.

BUNN understands the complexity of today's beverage landscape and has changed the customer experience by supporting the full beverage program lifecycle, with a team equipped to guide customers from initial concept through daily execution and long-term growth. With BUNN, customers gain more than equipment. They gain a team that understands the pace and pressure of the business. Whether launching a new concept or expanding into new markets, they can rely on BUNN for equipment built to perform, expert service and connected digital tools that provide greater visibility and control, all backed by a team aligned with their goals.

A culture of innovation

The Bunn family founded its original business in 1840 when Jacob Bunn opened a grocery store in Springfield, Illinois, and a young Abraham Lincoln was one of the first customers, later to become the family's legal advisor.

The venture grew into Bunn Capitol Wholesale Grocery Company and was later managed by George R. Bunn who founded the beverage equipment division in the late 1950s. Bunn-O-Matic Corporation was officially incorporated as a separate entity in 1963, and since that time has been at the forefront of beverage dispensing equipment. Whether it's equipment for the most demanding commercial settings or the perfect cup at home, the team at BUNN has always started with what's in the cup — understanding what consumers expect from the experience to deliver quality and purpose to the highest standard for every serving occasion. BUNN has built a legacy of advancement that spans decades, from the 1950s to today.

Spanning decades, these highlights showcase a selection of notable innovations, reflecting BUNN's ongoing commitment to quality, consistency and ever-changing needs to those they serve.

It began with the development of the world's first flat-bottom coffee filter in the 1950s, improving coffee extraction and setting the foundation for everything that followed. The 1960s brought a pour-over commercial brewer that became foundational to the Office Coffee Service business model, pairing equipment with coffee programs in workplaces across the country. In the 1970s, BUNN expanded into home coffee makers, while also expanding beyond coffee with a commercial tea brewer, improving the quality and consistency of freshly brewed tea.

The 1980s advanced hot water dispensing systems to support a wider range of foodservice applications, while the 1990s marked a pivotal shift toward digital technology, introducing brewing controls for greater consistency alongside an expansion into frozen dispensed beverage systems.

The 2000s broadened BUNN's reach further, adding juice dispensing and machine-to-machine RFID communication between grinders and brewers for improved accuracy, alongside continued advancements in coffee



BUNN provides traditional café equipment, such as coffee brewers, alongside hot and cold dispensed beverage systems



BUNN's customers are served by the company's brand promise, A Partner You Can Count On™

and tea extraction. The 2010s brought Air Infusion® brewing technology for a smoother, fuller cup of coffee, smart server tracking, IoT-enabled remote equipment monitoring and a keg-free approach to cold brew.

In the 2020s, BUNN continues pushing forward with high-speed bean-to-cup coffee brewing, automated bean-to-batch freshness management and a versatile multi-beverage platform spanning hot and cold beverages — meeting the evolving needs of operators and consumers alike.

As the company grew, BUNN recognized the need to build a service network around its products, extending customer support beyond equipment alone to address labor challenges, cost pressures and emerging trends. This approach enabled the company to develop more effective engagement strategies, delivering tailored solutions through the products and services it had developed.

The service organization has been crucial to BUNN's success, bringing its full portfolio together to support the management of large-scale rollouts for major brands. Using connected digital tools to manage beverage programs and optimize performance, the business can analyze machine metrics and efficiently deploy updates across large fleets, driving labor savings, ensuring quality and consistency, and reducing costs by minimizing waste.

Unlocking opportunities ahead

In recent years, some of the most significant trends have been focused on cold beverages and cold brew coffee. As new and emerging beverages, such as refreshers, continue to gain momentum, BUNN has modified its original cold



beverage dispensers to meet the changing demands of an expanding customer base. The evolution of cold beverages has gone beyond refreshment alone — shifting toward indulgent, experience-driven offerings. Consumers are reaching for frozen drinks not just as a seasonal indulgence, but as an everyday treat — drinks that feel like a moment, not just a refreshment. The BUNN Ultra® frozen beverage dispenser helps operators bring those treat moments to life with smooth, consistent frozen beverages built for high-demand environments.

When cold brew rose in popularity, the company was quick to build on the core technology of a coffee brewer and recently introduced the Infusion Series® Platinum Pro™ that brews a batch of cold brew in minutes.

Compact and highly versatile, this system extends beyond cold brew to support iced coffee, hot coffee, tea and

BUILDING A LEGACY



Left: BUNN created the world's first flat-bottom paper filter to improve coffee extraction and taste

Right: Vintage Bunn-O-Matic coffee brewer that helped define a new era of commercial coffee brewing





The organization has built a global network of loyal customers, supported by its brand promise, A Partner You Can Count On™



lemonade, helping to streamline operations and broaden cold beverage menus.

The next chapter in coffee equipment innovation is the BUNN Premia®, a bean-to-cup brewer that automatically grinds, brews and manages freshness to deliver optimal coffee during peak demand while reducing waste during slower dayparts. Technology and new product development continue to move at an unprecedented pace, but what remains constant is an effective and adaptable workforce that exemplifies BUNN's history and core values of honesty, integrity and mutual respect. Through this foundation, the organization has built a global network of loyal customers, supported by its brand promise, A Partner You Can Count On™.

This people-focused culture of innovation and forward-looking business approach, combined with tailored customer service, has driven the company's continued success and now inspires today's workforce to build on its legacy of innovation.

BRAND WATCH

BUNN

1840

The Bunn family founded the original business, a grocery store, in Springfield, Illinois, U.S.

1963

Bunn-O-Matic Corporation was incorporated and ever since has been at the forefront of beverage dispensing equipment

2026

Honoring a legacy of evolution, BUNN became part of the Ali Group in March 2026

bunn.com



Bringing the energy



Executives from Moffat, Welbilt, Ali Group's Cooking & Refrigeration Parts division and The AFE Group tell Michael Jones and Lauren Hurrell how an effective, well-executed after-sales and spare parts strategy can elevate customer partnerships and drive growth





When things go wrong in a foodservice operation, the consequences can be daunting and costly. Ongoing global uncertainty, marked by supply chain disruptions, shifting customer demands and economic pressures, has made after-sales support increasingly vital to seamless foodservice and hospitality operations. That's why companies such as Welbilt® and Moffat have implemented robust strategies to help customers prevent problems rather than simply react to them.

"We're differentiated from our competitors in that we actually enjoy engaging with our customers in adverse situations," says Stuart Murray, group managing director of Moffat, a manufacturer of heavy-duty cooking equipment for foodservice. "We have a team of people who are trained to take a negative and turn it into a positive. We value that connection."

Strategic support for long-term success

Through its portfolio of leading brands, Welbilt supports the design, manufacture and supply of commercial foodservice and catering equipment, and has built strong after-sales expertise to support customers when they need it. "We know we're an emergency service, and our customers only call us when things go wrong, but we're always there to support," says Perry Breen, EMEA technical service director at Welbilt.

Like Welbilt, Moffat has refined its expertise in after-sales services to ensure long-term success for all parties. "Moffat's approach to after-sales service and spare parts is really hardwired in our DNA. We export from New Zealand to more than 50 countries worldwide, so local service and support are integral to our success," says Murray.

Going the extra mile

For Ali Group's Cooking & Refrigeration Parts division, which manages the worldwide sale and distribution of spare parts for some Italian Ali Group brands — including Alphatech, Baron, Friulinox, Lainox, Mareno, Olis, Polaris and Silko — it made sense to centralize parts operations in one efficient distribution center. This division is split into three areas: Customer Service, which provides information and support; Supply Chain, which delivers needed components; and Outbound, responsible for picking, preparing and packaging orders for shipping.

"In my experience, service has an intrinsic energy of its own. We shouldn't view service simply as a purely technical function aimed at resolving equipment issues," says Guido Ziglioli, general manager of Cooking & Refrigeration Parts (C&R) – Ali Group. "Service energy is the force that allows the customer to experience the company's closeness, not only when there's a problem, but when everything is fine."

Ziglioli suggests that after-sales activities help build relationships based on trust, while also recognizing the long-term value a customer can bring over the course of that relationship.

"After-sales is all about the connection between the end user and our brands," says Murray. "It starts with the right product specification and installation, and it follows on to make sure that the operator can safely use equipment, that they're well trained in how to use the equipment, aware of preventative maintenance needs and supported in facilitating necessary repairs."

Such support can mean sending technical personnel to a client location, managing escalations, training staff, authorizing new Factory Authorized Servicers (FAS) partners, adjusting networks, or ensuring that spare parts are available to everyone.

Flexibility for success

These organizations believe that proactive, flexible strategies and continuous feedback are key to improving service for customers, with a strong emphasis on effective communication between the customer and service support.

"It's important for customers to realize they always have an ally within the company," says Ziglioli. "We don't sell spare parts; we sell the security of protecting customers' investments so they can keep doing business. A restaurant with broken equipment can't generate

"We're differentiated from our competitors in that we enjoy engaging with our customers in adverse situations"

Stuart Murray
Moffat

"Service energy is the force that allows the customer to experience the company's closeness"

Guido Ziglioli
Cooking & Refrigeration Parts – Ali Group







From top: Stuart Murray, Moffat; Guido Ziglioli, Cooking & Refrigeration Parts – Ali Group; Perry Breen, Welbilt



Tim Smith
CEO, The AFE Group

TIM SMITH DISCUSSES MILLER'S VANGUARD'S APPROACH TO SPARE PARTS AND AFTER-SALES

Miller's Vanguard is the UK's premier service maintenance and equipment supply company within the retail industry. For over 45 years, Miller's Vanguard has been a trusted partner to the foodservice industry, providing a wide range of essential services — from reactive and planned preventative maintenance to equipment supply and installation. At Miller's Vanguard, spare parts and after-sales are driven by a singular priority: keeping customers trading without interruption. The approach is proactive and asset-led, aligning stockholding, supply chains and support to each customer's specific equipment profile, operational pressures and peak trading demands.

Crucially, this extends beyond service into direct parts supply, with customers such as City Facilities Management and Costa able to purchase components directly, supported by reliable availability and rapid sourcing.

Rather than applying a rigid service template, Miller's Vanguard builds flexible, tailored solutions, from dedicated site stockholding and preventative maintenance to rapid-response engineering and hybrid support models. Backed by strong supplier relationships and data-led insight, this ensures the right parts and expertise are always in place, with a model that continually adapts as customer needs evolve.

END-TO-END SOLUTIONS

Miller's Vanguard offers a truly integrated, end-to-end solution across service, maintenance and equipment supply, delivering a level of simplicity and accountability that competitors struggle to match.

With specialist expertise spanning bakery, catering and full store environments, the business combines deep sector knowledge with national scale to keep complex retail and foodservice operations running efficiently. Installation, after-sales, spare parts and lifecycle management are integrated into one seamless model, enhanced by value-added services such as equipment refurbishment, helping customers extend asset life while supporting sustainability goals and reducing waste. Supported by a highly skilled nationwide engineering network and a flexible, partnership-led approach, Miller's Vanguard doesn't just fix problems, it anticipates them, reducing risk, improving performance and delivering long-term, commercially and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

revenue, so speed is essential."

"We have to stay flexible because we are servicing a very broad range of different customers in different environments, from supermarkets and convenience stores to restaurants and five-star hotel spaces," adds Murray. "Customers want their equipment functional and operating to specification with minimum downtime."

This might involve flexibility to provide customer-specific training for their application and to calibrate preventive maintenance plans tailored to the foodservice equipment's use in that environment.

"Unfortunately, things do go wrong in our industry," says Breen. "It's all about how we react, how we get that equipment back up and running." He highlights the importance of strategic relationships for Welbilt EMEA, including partnerships with spare parts dealers, local Factory Authorized Servicers and variously sized service companies. These partnerships enable Welbilt, as an equipment manufacturer, to remain flexible in meeting customer needs both globally and locally.

The importance of feedback

To ensure services remain valuable, timely and effective, feedback is an essential part of the success cycle for all three organizations — to continuously improve and tailor services.

"Seldom do customers call you to say they're having a great day," says Murray. "Most of the time when somebody calls for service support, they're under pressure. Their operation is suffering because a piece of equipment may not be operating as they expected or has a fault. Our job is to put that right."

To efficiently manage customer requests, the C&R Parts' customer service team uses a ticketing system that assigns each customer a territory representative, so they have a single point of contact.

"The system is open: if one assistant is absent, the other colleagues can see the tickets of those customers and solve it quickly," says Ziglioli.

"We realized that more than 30% of tickets requesting a quotation already contained the reference codes, meaning the customer could potentially obtain a response through the spare parts web portals," he adds.

This enabled quick AI-generated responses through rapid information extraction.

"A strong local sales and after-sales service creates a powerful value proposition," says The AFE Group's Tim Smith

“Unfortunately, things do go wrong in our industry. It’s all about how we react”

Perry Breen
Welbilt









“Nothing can be improved if it isn’t measurable, so all the AI project’s activities are integrated with the main existing key performance indicators (KPIs) within Customer Service,” says Ziglioli. “We went from average response times of about 10 working hours in the first half of fiscal year 2025 to five hours in the second half.”

This “always on” customer care culture extends to maintenance too. “Ownership of a product doesn’t just stop at the point of purchasing the equipment; the client also needs to know about the maintenance. Our maintenance plans are extremely important to making sure we stay close to clients,” says Breen.

This involves offering preventive maintenance (PM) programs, seven-day-a-week access and nighttime working, “whatever the customer needs to ensure a good experience,” he adds.

Partnering for forward-thinking

Moffat joined Ali Group in 2000 and has maintained a strong relationship since, which, in turn, has helped it expand its reach for effective services.

“The Ali Group brand is a promise that’s been built over many years. People understand that we are a part of a family of companies that brings additional benefit and trust,” says Murray.

“Being part of the Ali Group family has been a real pleasure,” adds Breen. “It’s really allowed us to open up and give a complete solution for the kitchen. Whether that be horizontal cooking, ice machines or warewashing, we now have access to many brands.”

Such partnerships within the Ali Group ecosystem enable new perspectives and the ability to reach new customers, broadening the horizons for both businesses and customers and helping them continue to mitigate the challenges the future holds.

A strong local sales and after-sales service presence creates a powerful value proposition: customers trust in local know-how and the assurance of best practice standards from those who best understand their local business needs.

Where interaction meets innovation



The new Welbilt Experience Center in Coppell, Texas, U.S., serves as an interactive environment for operators, end-users, consultants, dealers, distributors, manufacturers' representatives and service agents





For decades, Welbilt® companies have provided their customers with the ultimate in products and service. With the opening of the new 12,356-square-meter Welbilt Experience Center in Coppell, Texas, U.S., the company has introduced a new dimension of customer engagement to all areas of the foodservice industry. Serving as a hub for innovation, this unique interactive environment welcomes operators, end-users, consultants, dealers, distributors, manufacturers' representatives and service agents.

Every visit to the Center begins in the elegant reception area, highlighted by a massive commissioned mural by American visual artist Donald Martiny. The Story Lounge, a gallery of historical products from Welbilt companies, showcases everything from an early 20th-century Montague® range to a 1950s Hopalong Cassidy lunch box from Aladdin®. Just off the entry hall is the Culinary Innovation Center, where customers can work with Welbilt chefs on product and recipe development.

The Center also houses Welbilt University, a 210-seat world-class training facility. This area, which can accommodate one large group or several smaller groups, has full broadcasting and recording capabilities. Equipment can be moved in and out of Welbilt University as needed to support specialized programs.

The Center's convenient location — just minutes from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) — makes it easily accessible to customers and channel partners from around the world. By leveraging the robust infrastructure of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the Center helps solidify Welbilt's position as the provider of best-in-class solutions on a worldwide scale.

The Welbilt Experience Center reinforces the company's commitment to helping operators succeed









by setting a new standard for efficient, labor- and time-saving technology. "This project represents a transformative step in how we engage with our customers and partners," says Filippo Berti, chairman and chief executive officer of the Ali Group, parent company of Welbilt. "By offering an immersive, hands-on experience, we're reinforcing our commitment to delivering the industry's most comprehensive solutions, securing our position as the global leader in foodservice equipment and innovation, and showcasing our unique ability to provide turnkey solutions worldwide."





The new Welbilt Experience Center in Coppell, Texas, U.S., serves as a hub for innovation

THE WELBILT EXPERIENCE CENTER

BY THE NUMBERS

400+
Pieces of equipment

35+
Brands represented

12,356
Square meters in total area

SCAN HERE to Explore the new Welbilt Experience Center





Stronger together

A long-standing collaboration with Welbilt in the U.S. is supporting Chili's Grill & Bar's continued success and global expansion, as Ali Group's **Pere Taberner** and **Gary Null** of Brinker International tell Tina Nielsen

Above: Pere Taberner, senior vice president of sales, Ali Group EMEA and Gary Null, director of strategic projects – global, Brinker International



With more than 1,200 restaurants in the U.S., Chili's Grill & Bar is well established domestically and continues to grow its presence globally, with 375 locations across 32 countries. Its parent company, Brinker International, is a U.S.-headquartered enterprise with one other brand in its portfolio, Maggiano's Little Italy, which operates exclusively in the U.S.

"Chili's was born and raised here in Dallas, Texas, and we're still based here," says Gary Null, director of strategic projects — global, Brinker International. "You'll find our Big Mouth Burgers™, Sizzlin' Fajitas, famous Baby Back Ribs, Chicken Crispers™ and, of course, a full line of margaritas."

This year, as the company re-established itself in Europe, it opened a new restaurant in Romania. "This is our first franchise back in the European market and we are very excited about the partner we have found. This is the first of many that are coming," says Null.

When Brinker looked to Europe and needed an equipment partner, Welbilt® stood ready. "Once a chain like that decides to go international, the number-one priority is to find the right partner. And once they find a partner that can be a serious master franchisee and wants to open restaurants, then speed is of essence," says Pere Taberner, former vice president of sales and marketing for Welbilt EMEA and current senior vice president of sales for Ali Group EMEA.

"The minute they find the money, the resources and the partners, they really need to speed up and we can make life a lot easier now, considering that we can put a lot of brands together, coordinate the brands, and put a lot of services together before they open and after they open. Basically, that's been the beauty of this project," he adds.

More brands, more options

While Welbilt's 30-year partnership with Brinker has been highly successful, the merger with Ali Group has taken it to another level, giving the operator direct access to the manufacturer's international team, supported by Welbilt's network of distribution hubs.

As part of the Ali Group, Welbilt can draw on a global network of manufacturing, distribution and technical expertise — something that has proven particularly valuable in supporting Brinker's international growth

"We have worked with Welbilt for more than 30 years and the merger with Ali Group [in 2022] really strengthened it for us," says Null. "It opened up on the brands we were purchasing on the domestic side and brought in some different brands that were not yet being used by franchisees at the time."

The company has used many of the same brands over the years, including Convotherm®, Garland® and Frymaster®, and recently added Lincoln®. "Others are coming into play, especially for the European market, including Williams Refrigeration," adds Null.

Welbilt is confident in the equipment it supplies. "In almost every category we can offer something that's really top. I think technology-



When U.S. chain Chili's Grill & Bar made the decision to go international, its number-one priority was to find the right partner

“When it comes to execution, our equipment is going to guarantee that everything is working”

Pere Taberner
Ali Group

wise it’s important that it can really deliver and it can deliver with enough technology to make the life of a restaurant a lot easier,” says Taberner.

“When it comes to execution, our pieces of equipment are going to guarantee that everything is working with no difference. The other part is that we have so much experience working in QSR, fast-food and casual dining environments where really you need to have heavy-duty quality. And obviously we have developed a lot of pieces of equipment in the past that really fulfills this.”

It makes sense logistically too. The global reach of Welbilt means that franchisees don’t have to source everything from the U.S. “We can use some of these other factories that are more local,” notes Null.

Adapting and adjusting

If the watchwords for a global casual dining brand such as Chili’s pursuing expansion are speed, efficiency, consistency and quality, flexibility may be the most important. “Playing in all these different markets around the globe, there are different menus and different situations to navigate, for example, pork or alcohol-related issues in the Middle East or vegetarian options in India,” says Null.

“So, we play around with a lot of those different things, adapting and adjusting as we need to in order to make the brand work correctly in those markets,” he adds.

Thanks to a long-standing collaboration, Brinker has benefited from test kitchens and the facilities to review equipment performance.

Internationally, things are a bit different. “Because of different markets and different equipment that is not locally here, we have been able to partner up and visit other Welbilt kitchens and do exactly that,” says Null. “Before we launched in China, we were able to do testing and vetting out of the kitchen there, and it allowed









“Because of different markets and equipment we have been able to partner up and visit other Welbilt kitchens”

Gary Null
Brinker International

Brinker International and Welbilt’s long-term partnership highlights the growing importance of close collaboration between operator and manufacturer

us to get feedback on different cooking aspects and on the elements we need to adapt in order to tackle that market.”

This global set-up enables Brinker to operate across markets from Latin America to the Middle East, supported by culinary expertise and sales opportunities.

With Welbilt’s depth and strength, the culinary team can help adapt menus to local markets “almost everywhere in every country in Europe,” according to Taberner. “We have the people who can give that specific support, adapting menus or making sure that those menus can be executed anywhere in Europe, and that’s what we have done, converting the menu and training the people who need to cook,” he says.

And should things go awry, there is a plan for that too. “Even the best equipment sometimes fails, and we need to make sure that we have the right support in place through the life of that equipment. And especially that the cost of ownership is under control and it will be operating all the time that’s required. And that’s what we have done here,” concludes Taberner.

As both companies continue to evolve, the long-term partnership highlights the growing importance of close collaboration between operator and manufacturer, where shared expertise drives efficiency and consistency at scale. In an increasingly globalized foodservice landscape, that alignment is likely to become even more critical to long-term success.



BRAND WATCH

WELBILT

30+

Welbilt has partnered with Brinker International for more than 30 years

2022

Welbilt became part of the Ali Group in 2022

115+

Ali Group’s portfolio includes more than 115 brands available to partners

welbilt.com

02
COVER STORY



In a Michelin-starred, front-of-house kitchen where precision is performance and aesthetics rival output, Pavyllon London relies on Convotherm's compact, AI-driven Mini Pro ovens, reports Chris Evans

Compact power, Michelin precision





Pavyllon London, the Michelin-starred restaurant at the Four Seasons Hotel London at Park Lane, is a showcase of modern French precision. With its counter-style open kitchen and refined yet accessible concept, it demands equipment that performs flawlessly under pressure while matching the elegance of its surroundings. For that, the team turned to Convotherm®.

Convotherm, a Welbilt® brand, has supplied five Mini Pro 6.10 combi ovens to Pavyllon's front-of-house kitchen. The result is a partnership defined by reliability, aesthetics and advanced technology, helping power one of London's most exciting dining destinations.

Executive chef Benjamin Ferra y Castell describes the Pavyllon concept as "a counter open kitchen in a bistro-style restaurant with French Michelin-star cuisine."

Originally created in Paris, the concept has since expanded to Monaco and London, with further global growth on the horizon. The London outpost recently made headlines as the first Michelin-starred restaurant in the capital to launch a breakfast tasting menu, now booked eight weeks in advance. With service running from early breakfast through lunch and into dinner, as well as private dining and banqueting, the kitchen effectively never stops. That intensity places enormous demands on the equipment.

The solution was the Convotherm Mini Pro 6.10, billed as the "King of Compact." With a narrow footprint of just 49.8cm wide, it is one of the most space-efficient professional combi ovens on the market, ideal for a front-of-house setting where guests sit at the counter surrounding the kitchen. "We had five Convotherm ovens installed in the front kitchen overnight to avoid disrupting service. The engineers did a fantastic job. They've had no problems with them since and they look really impressive," says Jake Hewison, national accounts executive at Welbilt UK.

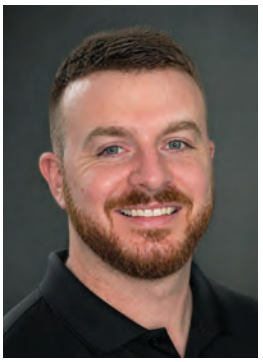
Convotherm managing director Claus Pedersen agrees. "It's not like stainless steel pieces, which can look ugly. The ovens blend in seamlessly while offering a full range of premium features."

Adaptable and intelligent

Performance and precision, however, are where the ovens really shine. "If you put 58°C, it stays at 58°C," says Ferra y Castell. "There are some other ovens — you put 58°C, it goes to 63°C. This one stays."

That accuracy supports delicate techniques such as slow-cooking trout in oil at 63°C or holding soft eggs at exactly 58°C. Across Pavyllon's stations, from garde manger to the hot section and pastry, the ovens are in constant use. "They adapt to whatever event you've got," adds Ferra y Castell. "Steam, mix, dry... If you want something super crispy, there is a mode for that."

That precision is underpinned by Convotherm's Intelligent Steam Management and Climate systems, which offer steam (30–130°C), combined steam (30–250°C), and



"We had five Convotherm ovens installed in the front kitchen overnight to avoid disrupting service"

Jake Hewison
Welbilt UK

Pavyllon London has a counter-style open kitchen in a bistro-style restaurant with French Michelin-star cuisine



Florent Suplisson
director of Bocuse d'Or, GL Events

CONVOTHERM AND THE BOCUSE D'OR. 25 YEARS AT THE CULINARY SUMMIT

For more than 25 years, Convotherm has been an official partner of the Bocuse d'Or, widely regarded as the culinary world's equivalent of the Olympic Games.

"Bocuse d'Or is considered the most relevant and prestigious culinary competition worldwide," says Florent Suplisson, director of the competition at GL Events. "When we organize a high-level competition, we need the best products, the best equipment and the best technology."

Convotherm provides ovens for national, continental and world finals across a two-year cycle, supporting teams from more than 70 countries. The partnership extends beyond equipment supply to on-site technical support and logistics, even managing complex international transport and customs arrangements.

"It's a live competition," Suplisson explains. "We need to be sure that no problem will happen, and that is why we use Convotherm, who have become a co-producer of Bocuse d'Or."

Flexibility is key. With chefs representing diverse culinary cultures, the ovens must accommodate a wide range of techniques.

"Cooking is about culture," he says. "There are as many ways of cooking as there are cultures. The equipment has to be flexible."

Timing is equally critical. "It's a competition. You fight against time from beginning to end. Power and efficiency are essential," adds Suplisson.

As Bocuse d'Or approaches its 40th anniversary in 2027, one year after Convotherm marks its own 50th, the relationship remains strong. "Let's celebrate together," says Suplisson. "Convotherm is part of the Bocuse d'Or family."





convection (30–250°C), along with five levels of humidity control (HumidityPro) and five levels of dehumidification (Crisp&Tasty).

The Mini Pro also incorporates Convotherm's AI-powered "ConvoSense" technology, which detects load size and optimizes cooking parameters automatically. Introduced across the wider range in 2019 and now integrated into the compact model, it reflects the brand's early adoption of AI in the foodservice industry. "When we launched it, it was probably a bit early," Pedersen notes. "But now everybody understands AI. It's not something scary — it's a benefit."

ConvoSense has delivered measurable gains, including up to 40% higher profit, 18% shorter baking times, a 28% reduction in energy use through standby mode and 17% less food waste.

Another major operational benefit comes from Convotherm's innovative ConvoClean Solid-to-Liquid (S2L) cleaning system. Integrated into the oven behind a discreet flap, the system uses two cartridges for detergent and rinse aid, eliminating bulky external chemical tanks and reducing the risk of operator error. Compared with traditional canisters, it requires up to 80% less storage space and offers both a 15-minute Express Cleaning cycle and a two-minute QuickRinse option.

"It's very simple," says Ferra y Castell (pictured left and bottom right). "There are two bottles you put there and you are OK for six months. It makes your mind free of stress."

In a kitchen with five ovens, automated cleaning translates directly into labor savings. "If we had to clean those with chemicals manually... that's five hours lost," he says. "You come back in the morning and it's like brand new."

The ovens also include a dedicated function to reduce limescale buildup, a critical feature in London's hard-water environment, along with a two-stage door opening system that helps prevent sudden bursts of steam in a customer-facing kitchen.

Consistent results

The technology reduces manual input to loading and unloading trays, minimizing training requirements and ensuring consistent results — particularly valuable in an industry facing staff shortages.

For a five-star hotel, downtime is not an option. As part of the installation, the restaurant adopted Welbilt UK's TotalCare™ service package, ensuring 24-hour response times, seven days a week, including bank holidays, plus an annual service. "The people giving the service are experts," says Ferra y Castell. "You have someone on the spot, and they are very friendly and efficient." For a visible, customer-facing kitchen, that peace of mind is invaluable.

Pavyllon's ambitions extend well beyond London, with Dubai and Abu Dhabi next on the horizon. "The project is to expand Pavyllon across the globe," says Ferra y Castell.

For Convotherm, that presents a powerful opportunity. "It fits extremely well," says Pedersen. "It's high cuisine, high expectations — and that matches our product portfolio."





"The ovens blend in seamlessly while offering a full range of premium features"

Claus Pedersen
Convotherm



BRAND WATCH

CONVOTHERM®

1976

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

489

Innovative products do not happen by chance. Over the years, Convotherm has filed 489 patents, with 73% of them successfully granted

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

03
SUCCESS STORIES

W Sardinia – Poltu Quatu set out to blend Sardinia's heritage and coastal beauty with the hotel brand's contemporary design. Lauren Hurrell explores how partnerships with Grandimpianti and Castello SGR brought that vision to life

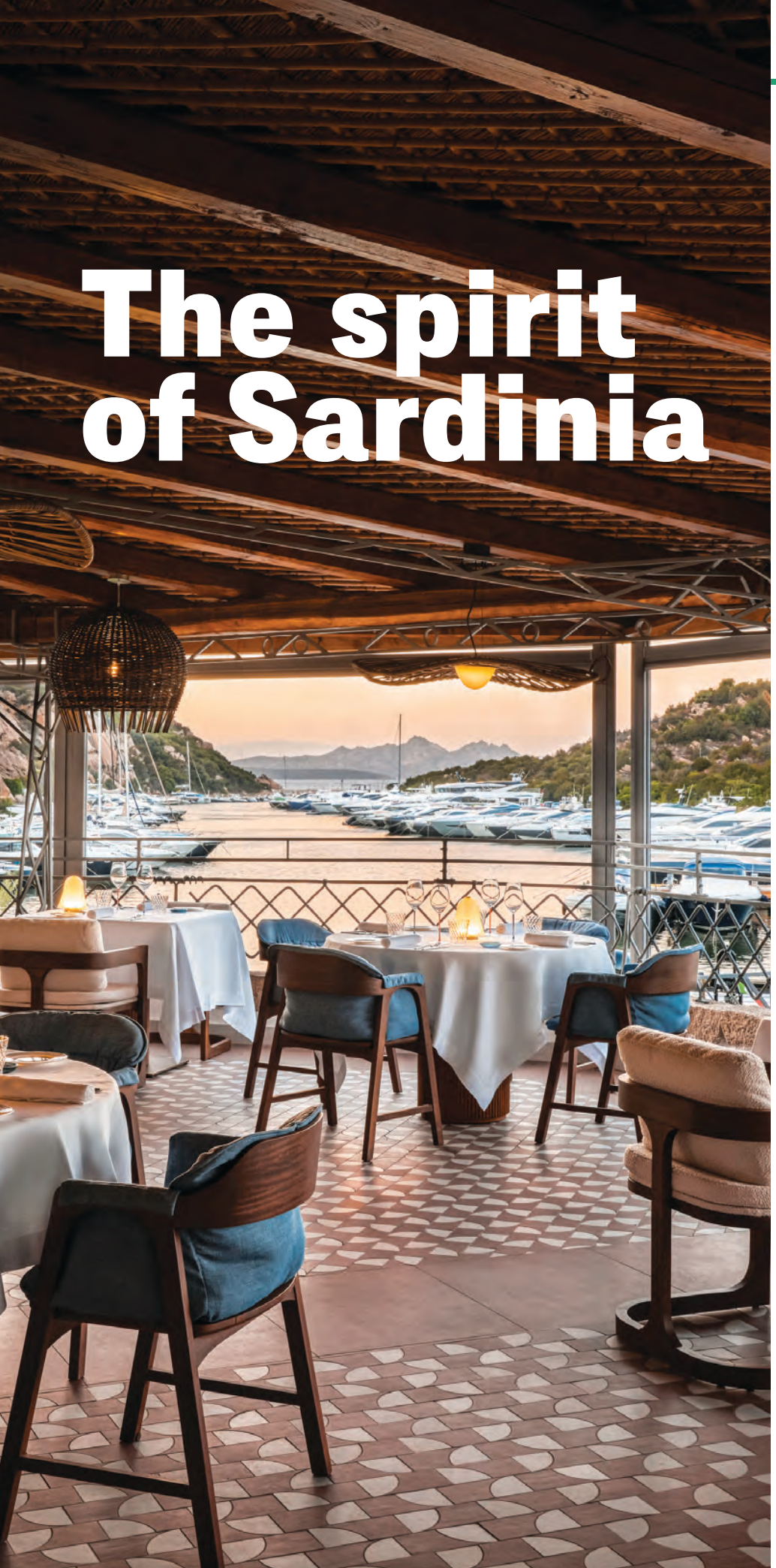
Sardinia, the Italian island in the Mediterranean, is known for its Bronze Age ruins, mountains and crystal-clear waters. Poltu Quatu means "hidden port" in Sardinian, and W Sardinia – Poltu Quatu reflects the island's vibrant culture through a design that blends heritage with modern sophistication, incorporating local materials and handcrafted elements inspired by ancient art and pottery.

Perched beside a vibrant marina just minutes from white-sand beaches, cliffs and turquoise waters, the hotel seeks to "capture the energy and contemporary spirit of the W brand in one of the most iconic corners of Sardinia," says Andrea Scanu, food & beverage director at W Sardinia – Poltu Quatu. "The standout features are the location, nestled between the marina and the natural rock formations, and the overall atmosphere: vibrant, stylish, and connected to the island's identity."

The venue features three F&B outlets — TANIT, W Lounge and WET Deck — each with its own distinct atmosphere, offering a total of 150 restaurant seats and 65 poolside loungers. Collaboration with equipment experts



The spirit of Sardinia











“Thanks to detailed planning and strong collaboration we were able to meet the deadlines”

Alessandro D’Andrade
Grandimpianti



“We chose to work with Grandimpianti because they are true professionals with deep experience in designing complex, large-scale operations”

Andrea Scanu
W Sardinia – Poltu Quatu

Grandimpianti and real estate company Castello SGR helped support both guest experience and operational efficiency throughout the project.

“Poltu Quatu has always been synonymous with exclusivity and hidden beauty. This project represents a pivotal step in our evolution, moving beyond simple hospitality towards a more integrated and sustainable lifestyle destination,” says Michelangelo Ripamonti, head of hospitality investments at Castello SGR. “Our strategy is to enhance the site’s natural charm through high-level architectural interventions that respect the landscape while elevating the guest experience to international luxury standards. It’s about creating a seamless dialogue between the Mediterranean tradition and contemporary innovation.”

A variety of venues

Developing these three venues required tailored equipment and careful planning. TANIT Restaurant delivers a convivial dining experience centered on local seafood and marina views, complemented by the Dolce Room by Fabrizio Fiorani for desserts. W Lounge offers a casual setting for drinks and snacks, while WET Deck captures the energy of the poolside environment with a lively atmosphere that continues into the evening.

“When designing the operations, we focused on three priorities: variety, giving guests different dining moods throughout the day; sense of place, highlighting Sardinian flavors in a contemporary way; and comfort and flow, especially around the pool, for a seamless, relaxed experience,” says Scanu.

With its technical know-how, Grandimpianti helped deliver efficient operational layouts, reliable equipment choices, and workflow improvements that enhanced guest satisfaction and supported high service standards.

“We chose to work with Grandimpianti because they are true professionals with deep experience in designing complex, large-scale operations. Their team understands how to translate a concept into a functional, efficient reality,” says Scanu. “Their experience made the whole process smoother and ensured that each outlet could operate exactly as we imagined. They brought expertise, reliability and the ability to turn ideas into a working system, which is exactly what we needed.”

With more than 60 years of experience, Grandimpianti specializes in the design, engineering and installation of professional kitchen and laundry systems for the contract and engineering sector. “We had already successfully collaborated with Castello SGR on previous projects, establishing a solid and trusted professional relationship built on technical expertise and reliability,” says Alessandro D’Andrade, general manager at Grandimpianti.

“For the W Sardinia development, Grandimpianti was engaged by Currie & Brown for the design phase, contributing from the early stages with a consultative approach and comprehensive technical support. This integrated approach ensured continuity between design and execution, guaranteeing efficiency, consistency and the highest quality standards throughout the realization of this prestigious hospitality destination,” he adds.



W Sardinia – Poltu Quatu features three distinct F&B outlets







BRAND WATCH

GRANDIMPIANTI
ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING

300+

Grandimpianti has worked on 300+ hotel projects

1965

The company was founded more than 60 years ago

5

Grandimpianti serves five main client categories

grandimpiantiali.it

A committed collaboration

With an August 2025 opening date, the tight schedule required careful coordination and a strong on-site presence to keep activities on track.

"Opening a hotel with three outlets in just 10 months of preparations is already a huge challenge," says Scanu. "As in every hotel I've worked in, issues come up every day. What made the difference here was the team, always supportive, always ready to step in when needed. Thanks to them, we managed to face every challenge and bring the project to life."

From May through July, technical teams were on site to finalize the installation of equipment from Amana® Commercial, Carpigiani, Comenda, Convotherm®, DIHR, Friulinox, Grandimpianti I.L.E., Icematic, Mareno, Menumaster® Commercial, OEM, Polaris and Scotsman.

"We installed Mareno cooking lines and efficient cold storage systems. The main requirements were compact design, speed and reliability," says Scanu. "The standout piece is definitely the Mareno line, which gives us consistency and performance across all outlets."

Working within clear brand standards and operational needs, Grandimpianti recommended alternative equipment as needed to optimize performance, functionality and reliability while meeting project expectations. "Thanks to detailed planning, strong collaboration with the other contractors and the commitment of our personnel, we were able to meet the deadlines and successfully complete the project in time for the hotel's opening in August 2025," says D'Andrade.

The project's success was driven by stakeholder collaboration, transparency and a results-driven approach. This teamwork enabled quick problem-solving, efficient use of resources, and early coordination, helping to keep the project on track. "This project was a success because everyone worked with the same goal and the same energy. We had tight timelines, three outlets to open and many moving parts, yet every team involved pushed in the same direction. I'm proud of it because we turned a very ambitious vision into something real — and we did it together. Seeing the outlets fully operating today, knowing how much teamwork, problem-solving, and commitment went into every detail, makes the result even more special. In the end, it worked because people believed in the project and that made all the difference," says Scanu.

For Castello SRG, the key takeaway from this project was that authenticity is the ultimate luxury. "Even when working with major international players, the success of a project depends on its ability to stay rooted in its territory," says Ripamonti. "We've learned that the market today isn't just looking for a brand they recognize; they are looking for that brand's interpretation of a unique place. This 'global-meets-local' approach will be the blueprint for our future developments."



Sailing in style: where reliability meets luxury

When a river cruise ship, *The Nobleman*, needed galleys that could deliver seamless, reliable food operations while reflecting its high-end feel, maritime kitchen experts Ahorn turned to equipment supplier Ambach. Lauren Hurrell explores the partnership behind the project's success



A ship of the caliber of *The Nobleman* requires reliable equipment

The Nobleman, Van Loon Cruises' 135-meter river cruise vessel with 84 premium cabins, offers its 168 passengers the prestige of Dutch craftsmanship and modern luxury amenities. The ship made its inaugural voyage on the Rhine just last November and sails between Amsterdam and Basel. For a vessel of this kind, delivering a luxury experience is essential, with amenities including a gym, massage room and sauna. With its tasteful décor, premium finishes and meals served against panoramic views, life onboard offers guests relaxation, comfort and flexibility.

Naturally, its onboard foodservice experience should be no exception. A ship of this caliber requires reliable equipment to support efficient, robust service with a luxury feel. These demands led Frank Verschure, managing director at Ahorn Grootkeukentechniek, to connect Van Loon





“The challenge onboard is balancing technical demands and client wishes”

Frank Verschure
Ahorn Grootkeukentechniek

Cruises with Ambach in 2018, drawing on his existing relationship with the company and confidence in its expertise.

“For this project, we delivered all the kitchen supplies,” said Verschure. “This included the galley equipment, bar equipment, sun deck equipment, and equipment for the galley at the end of the ship,” he says, referring to the Grandeur bistro, the Baroness restaurant and Majesty Lounge bar onboard.

“Everything in the deli, restaurant and bar must meet a high standard. The look and feel for guests should be high-end,” he adds.

A confident match

Based in Italy, Ambach produces high-quality horizontal cooking equipment for hotels, restaurants and the public sector, and is also active in the cruise kitchen space. For Ambach, cruise ship kitchen manufacturing was a natural extension of its expertise, offering opportunities in a growing market as more vessels like *The Nobleman* entered production. The goal was to design facilities that would support a high-end foodservice experience in keeping with the ship’s luxury setting, while remaining low-maintenance and easy to clean to minimize disruption and save valuable time.

“Our motto is ‘You, your kitchen,’ which means we always aim to meet the needs of the end customer,” says Niklas Burkard, sales manager at Ambach.

“One of our biggest strengths is the production of tailor-made cooking suites. We have references all over the world, from four and five-star hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants.”

This background, combined with the project’s need for on-site considerations, presented key challenges that Ambach and Ahorn were well prepared to tackle through their combined expertise. Ambach produces its own equipment and develops techniques in northern Italy, supported by in-house R&D.

“On the ship, appliances must be reliable because you cannot service them as easily as you would a restaurant on land. Even our more standard, economical products meet such





“Our motto is ‘You, your kitchen,’ which means we always aim to meet the needs of the end customer”

Niklas Burkard
Ambach





requirements for a ship," says Burkard.

"We have equipped several other ships as well, so our partner already knew what appliances to rely on, making it a smoother process," he adds.

The project's main challenges lay in balancing client demands with technical requirements, while maintaining cost efficiency and preserving the ship's high-end feel. "The challenge onboard is balancing technical demands and client wishes," adds Verschure. "Building a ship is difficult, with many pipes and tanks, more complex than land kitchens. Coordinating drains, exhausts and walk-ins requires precise cooperation with many stakeholders."

The nuts and bolts

Ambach's equipment is ideally suited for ship kitchens, thanks to its unique joining system. The modular design securely connects appliances, creating a flexible layout that is easy to clean, an important advantage in space-constrained marine environments. Conical rails, metal tracks shaped like a cone, and rubber seals tightly join each module, ensuring watertight connection. Seamless worktops eliminate edges or gaps, speeding up cleaning while reducing detergent use for a more hygienic, cost-effective kitchen.

Ambach's joining system uses round disks and a fork-shaped connector, combined with internal rubber seals to link equipment. This creates seamless, watertight joints that further enhance hygiene and simplify cleaning. The modular setup also allows equipment to be reconfigured if a restaurant concept or menu changes in the future. "It was very important that people in the galley wouldn't waste time cleaning," says Verschure. "Everything in the galley is closed. All worktables and surfaces are joined tightly. This makes the galley clean and easy to maintain after food preparation."

The new galley equipment delivers higher cooking capacity, boosting efficiency while offering a more robust platform for reliable, stress-free operation. The project also included the installation of a recessed griddle plate, primarily



The Nobleman offers passengers the prestige of Dutch craftsmanship

"Ambach is a perfect supplier for us. They always do a good job and maintain a high standard"

Frank Verschure
Ahorn Grootkeukentechniek



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

37
The number of years Ambach has been part of the Ali Group

ambach.com

used for pan-frying meat, fish and vegetables.

"We used a new type with a rounded bottom edge," says Burkard. "It is pressed and then welded in a different way than previous versions. Therefore, it comes with easy-to-clean, large radiuses, which makes it highly resistant against thermal stress. The rim around the plate stops liquids or dirt from running on the cooking surface," he adds.

The installed bratt pan (a large, wide cooking pan used for frying, braising and sautéing) and the griddle plates are equipped with Ambach Thermoblocks. These heating elements are embedded into aluminum and therefore ensure even heat distribution and full use of the cooking zone, while enhancing durability and protecting the equipment for long-term use.

The induction hob's generator, which powers electromagnetic cooking, sits in the upper module above the countertop, freeing space below for storage.

Delivering on promises

The success of these equipment pieces, and of the project as a whole, reflects Ambach's standards: affordable, high-quality equipment well-suited for river cruise ships, backed by a strong collaboration with Ahorn.

"Ambach is a perfect supplier for us," says Verschure. "They always do a good job, deliver the equipment we want, and maintain a high standard," he adds.

The result is a strengthened relationship with strong potential for future collaboration on sophisticated and effective maritime kitchen projects, while helping the customer deliver on its promise of a luxury guest experience.

"The partnership we already have established with the company, Ahorn, is becoming more significant for Ambach," adds Burkard.

"We are really happy to work together with this company because they are reliable, and we trust each other. We have a great base, and I hope it will only grow stronger in the coming months and years."



"Appliances must be reliable because you can't service them as easily as a restaurant on land"

Niklas Burkard
Ambach





Putting the art into French artisan baking

When the idea of opening a bakery inside the Louvre first emerged, it seemed almost impossible. Today, the Boulangerie du Louvre stands as a creative tribute to Paris' art world while paying homage to French artisan baking, reports Lauren Hurrell



The Boulangerie du Louvre in Paris, France, operates beneath the museum's iconic glass Louvre Pyramid, designed by Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei. This bakery — the first of its kind in a major museum — is the culmination of the creativity, skill and ambition of head bakers Pascal Rigo and Arnaud Chevalier, who both long dreamed of creating a unique bakery that embodied their vision for artisan French baking.

The bakery includes a workshop dedicated to preparing sourdough using Vitus, an ancient starter culture from the Puratos Sourdough Library in St. Vith, Belgium. Through glass windows, guests can observe bread being kneaded, proofed and baked on site in a daily display of traditional French baking techniques. From shaping and scoring the dough to flouring the loaves and finishing croissants and other classic pastries, the process pays tribute to the museum.

The bakery layout and workshop, designed by architects Margaux Lhermitte and Corentin Nicolas from CBA Design, presented a technical challenge, requiring versatile and compact equipment to support intense operations in a gallery that is fully booked and welcomes over 35,000 visitors daily. Of those, around 1,800 are bakery customers, driving daily production of 1,300 pastries and approximately 1,500 to 1,700 loaves of sandwich bread.

Naturally, there were myriad challenges, but for Chevalier, the primary hurdle was safety and convincing relevant personnel that this project was feasible. "There are 58 firemen at the Louvre, and I met almost 55 of them," says head baker Arnaud Chevalier, "because once they knew that there would be a boulangerie inside the museum, they were concerned."

Kneads must

Creating an "open laboratory" bakehouse in a public space, with specifications unlike those of a typical bakery, required careful attention to every safety and production detail. With a 25-square-meter customer-facing area and a 15-square-meter back-of-house production space, the challenge was to produce high volumes safely and efficiently within a tight footprint, something Chevalier specializes in. The project took three years from planning to opening, including two years of discussions and feasibility studies on safety and installation before construction and setup began.

"It's to show the know-how of an artisan baker, keeping an international audience in mind, because more than 70% of the customers come from abroad," says Chevalier. This involved serving chocolate croissants instead of the traditional pain au chocolat.

"Producing in mass in 40 square meters is always a challenge"

Arnaud Chevalier
Boulangerie du Louvre



The Boulangerie du Louvre in Paris, France, operates beneath the museum's iconic glass Louvre Pyramid



Chevalier is a loyal customer of Bongard, the French bakery equipment manufacturer and specialist founded in 1922, and has worked with the brand for 20 years on other projects, relying on both its products and after-sales support. Having previously collaborated with Bongard on concepts such as La Petite Boulangerie in Gironde, France, and having been satisfied with the equipment and service, Chevalier and Rigo felt it made sense to continue the collaboration for this project, given the similar challenges.

"For me, the hallmark of Rigo and Chevalier is their ability to open bakeries with artisanal production in places where no one would ever have believed it possible. The Louvre is yet another example," says Sébastien Guerin, key account manager at Bongard.

"But it is also important to highlight Pascal and Arnaud's production philosophy. They are committed to a virtuous bakery model, using 100% organic flour and ingredients sourced from responsible and fair agriculture."

A legacy in baking

Today, Bongard distributes its products in more than 140 countries and provides around-the-clock installation and repair support. Across France, its distributor network helps provide after-sales and customer service for installation after the bakehouse is installed. In Paris, Panifour assists Chevalier and the bakery whenever there is an issue for quick, on-hand support.

"A significant challenge was working during the museum's opening hours, and right next to the ticket office," says Vincent Hardouin, president of Panifour, who also highlighted transporting equipment and materials as a challenge due to the high security nature of the Louvre.

"We had to be as discreet as possible, which is not easy on a construction site. We also had to work at night, when the museum was closed, which creates a unique atmosphere."

"Another technical challenge was removing oven condensation. Inside the museum, there is no extraction system, so Bongard created a way to recycle the steam and other exhaust. And, of course, producing in mass in 40 square meters is always a challenge," says Chevalier.

Paneotrad®, one of the crucial pieces of equipment supplied by Bongard, is a patented process for separating and shaping dough, enabling Chevalier and Rigo to produce 1,500 sandwiches per day. The technology saves up to 30% of working time while minimizing flour dust and respiratory issues.

Paneotrad was a crucial piece of equipment supplied by Bongard to Boulangerie du Louvre

A batch made in heaven

So far, the bakery has delighted the museum and its customers. It has also expanded to other retail points and museum restaurants, including Le Cafe des Lions. The museum is now considering extending the bakery offering on Le Parvis, in the main square of the Pyramid, to demonstrate its involvement and enthusiasm for the project.

For Chevalier, this has been a significant personal and professional challenge, but a proud accomplishment for producing bread with organic flour, and sourdough bread produced proudly on display. "As an artisan baker I want to give and share this experience and the specificity to a large audience, an achievement in the Louvre that inspires me with motivation to continue to develop further projects of this kind," he says.

Bongard's collaboration with Rigo and Chevalier continues through their company, Sitos, which connects large retail stores with artisan bakers who want to open bakeries in supermarkets using Bongard equipment.

"Pascal and Arnaud are full of ideas and



Right, from top: Sébastien Guerin, Bongard; Pascal Rigo, Boulangerie du Louvre





projects in various formats, and they certainly haven't finished surprising us," says Guerin.

Everything about La Boulangerie du Louvre was carefully considered, reflecting a blend of passion and expertise. Even the sourdough came from a special sourdough library and is said to be the only one ever depicted in art. Such details capture the specificity and creative spirit of this bakery project.

"The reliability of our equipment, the professionalism of our teams and our dealers, and our innovative solutions, such as Paneotrad, have undoubtedly made a difference in meeting the demands of Arnaud and Pascal's ambitious projects," said Guerin. "This adventure is a human story, where relationships and trust play a major role in the partnership we have built over the years."





BRAND WATCH

BONGARD

1922

Oscar Bongard founded the bakery equipment company in 1922

70%

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

140+

Bongard has a presence in more than 140 countries

bongard.fr



Wingstop's rapid UK growth and strong focus on flavor led to a strategic partnership with Carpigiani UK, a specialist in frozen dessert and beverage equipment, reports Lauren Hurrell. Together, they are expanding the guest experience with shakes, desserts and more

Beyond wings: of flavor and



Wingstop is expanding its "flavor experience" with milkshakes, ice cream and other frozen treats

First opening its doors in 1994, Wingstop began as a small Buffalo-style chicken wing restaurant in Garland, Texas, U.S. Today, it continues to expand internationally at a rapid pace, with more than 2,500 locations across the US, Mexico, Colombia, Panama, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the UK, France and the United Arab Emirates.

But it's not just about wings. Best known for its iconic 10 to 12 wing flavors, the operator now promises a "flavor experience" by expanding into milkshakes, ice cream and other frozen treats, which are proving popular with both existing and new customers.

"After months of preparation, including retrofitting 35+ locations with new milkshake stations and partnering with Carpigiani UK for top-notch machines, we're here," posted Norbert Suki, head of operational excellence at Wingstop's UK and Ireland master franchisee Lemon Pepper Holdings, on LinkedIn, following the news.

"Expect high-quality shakes made with real ice cream mix and some unique flavors, first launching exclusively on Deliveroo nationwide. Hoping these shakes become as beloved as our wings. A big thank you to our head office and field teams for their hard work."

The promise of flavor

It was Wingstop's impressive growth story and success in attracting new younger audiences that initially drew Carpigiani's interest, says Paul Richards, sales director at Carpigiani UK. "We had been watching Wingstop's early momentum in the UK and were genuinely impressed by how quickly they were connecting with younger diners and building a culture around flavor and experience. It felt like a brand that understood its customers as



the dual force experience

deeply as we understood ours," he says.

Carpigiani helps businesses bring frozen desserts and beverages to life, whether they are single-site operators taking their first step into soft-serve, shakes or gelato, or fast-growing brands with national ambitions. The brand prides itself on turning customers' visions into concepts that are easy to execute, consistent and commercially successful. Specializing in professional gelato, ice cream, soft-serve and shake equipment, the business takes time to understand each operator's menu, space and staffing model, plus the guest experience they want to deliver.

"Every customer is different, and that's exactly how we treat them," says Paul Ingram, managing director at Carpigiani UK.

Carpigiani's expertise covers everything from compact solutions for small independents and busy QSR sites to batch freezers and pasteurizers for artisan producers. It also provides training, operational guidance and long-term support to help customers build confidence and grow after the sale.

With Wingstop expanding rapidly and investing in smart kitchen technology, Carpigiani was well placed to help ensure frozen beverages and desserts could be delivered consistently at scale as part of the broader flavor experience.

This shared belief prompted Carpigiani to reach out to the wing operator to explore opportunities to combine their strengths and enhance its frozen beverage and dessert offerings. From that actual meeting, the two teams developed a plan focused on consistency, speed and reliability at scale. An on-site trial of the Carpigiani 161K SP G shake machine demonstrated that the right equipment could help Wingstop deliver high-quality shakes quickly and efficiently, improving guest satisfaction and supporting continued growth.



"Every customer is different and that's exactly how we treat them"

Paul Richards
Carpigiani UK











Wingstop required fast, consistent shakes that matched the energy, flavor impact and quality of its core menu

"When we first sat down with the Wingstop UK team, the conversation wasn't about one specific machine; it was about understanding their vision," says Richards. "They were very clear about the guest experience they wanted to deliver: fast, consistent shakes that matched the energy, flavor impact and quality of their core menu. But when it came to the equipment itself, they genuinely welcomed our advice."

A considered approach

As part of the early discussions, Carpigiani's development chef joined the menu and product development process, exploring textures, consistency, serving formats, and how different shake bases would perform throughout the day. This collaborative approach helped Wingstop refine its shake profile while ensuring the equipment could deliver it consistently at scale.

"From there, we took them through the full range of Carpigiani shake solutions. We explored everything from high-capacity models for busier flagship sites to compact machines with a smaller footprint for tighter kitchens," says Richards. "The aim wasn't to push a product — it was to help them understand the operational considerations behind each option: speed of service, cleaning routines, energy efficiency, durability, and the ability to handle peak rushes without compromising quality."

With an operator the size of Wingstop, such a project was never going to be without challenges. The pace of growth, strong brand identity and commitment to delivering a very specific guest experience meant that standard, off-the-shelf advice would not be enough. Tailored guidance was needed at every stage, and Carpigiani was able to provide it.

"One challenge we hadn't faced quite in this way before was the level of price pressure from a direct competitor. They came in significantly cheaper on upfront cost, and on paper,





Carpigiani offered Wingstop tailored advice to refine its shake profile



it could have looked tempting," says Richards. "But when we broke down the true operating picture with Wingstop — energy usage, cleaning time, durability, parts, servicing and the overall cost of ownership over several years — the conversation shifted. It became clear that the cheaper option would actually cost more in the long run."

It was this transparency that helped Carpigiani win the project: "But this is exactly what we love: collaborating closely, listening carefully, and shaping solutions around each customer's reality. The more unique the challenge, the more rewarding the partnership becomes," says Richards.

The road ahead

The partnership succeeds not only through technology, but through a shared ambition to elevate the guest flavor experience. Wingstop's clear customer focus also helps drive the solution-oriented collaboration.

"That energy pushes us to keep evolving, too. From day one, the goal wasn't just to provide equipment; it was to become a long-term partner who could support their growth at every stage," says Richards.

"We're committed to growing together. We're already exploring ways to support them with more integrated equipment solutions, smarter service models, and ongoing operational insights."

As Wingstop continues to open new sites and strengthen its presence across the UK, there is a significant opportunity to deepen the partnership further.

"What I'd really like to add is just how proud we are of the journey so far, not only with Wingstop but with all the operators we support across the UK," says Ingram. "Every partnership teaches us something new, and every customer brings their own vision, challenges and personality to the table. That's what keeps our work exciting."



"Every partnership teaches us something new and every customer brings their own vision"

Paul Ingram
Carpigiani UK

BRAND WATCH

CARPIGIANI

1946

Carpigiani was founded in Bologna, Italy, 80 years ago

500

The company has 500 service centers worldwide

35+

There are more than 35 Gelato University campuses worldwide

carpigiani.com

Brewing success

A growing partnership between Egro, JJ Darboven and Café Du Monde UK is bringing reliable, high-performance bean-to-cup solutions to hospitality venues across the UK and Ireland, reports Chris Evans









The partnership between JJ Darboven, Café Du Monde UK and Egro is aimed at helping operators face a number of challenges



In busy hospitality environments, delivering consistent coffee quality while maintaining speed of service can be a significant challenge. Egro, part of the Ali Group Coffee Division, through its local branch and technical hub CTW-UK, and coffee specialists JJ Darboven and Café Du Monde UK, is helping operators meet that challenge. By combining high-performance equipment with strong technical support and training, the companies are helping streamline coffee service without compromising quality.

"We started a new entity in the UK so we could bring everything together, from entry-level machines through to specialty equipment and bean-to-cup technology," says Giacomo Fontana, Egro's regional sales manager, Europe. "It allows us to provide a complete solution for customers and support them properly with training, service and technical expertise."

The business launched its UK hub in 2024, establishing a showroom and technical training laboratory in Letchworth, England. The facility allows customers and partners to see equipment in action, train engineers and collaborate on projects.

According to Scott Singleton, managing director UK & Ireland at CTW-UK, this hands-on support has been central to the relationship with Café Du Monde UK. "We've worked closely with them on multiple projects and provided additional support during major equipment rollouts," he says. "That collaboration helped build a strong relationship and ultimately expanded the partnership across our product range."

Delivering solutions

JJ Darboven and Café Du Monde UK operate as full-service coffee suppliers, providing products, equipment and service support to hospitality venues.

Graham Mongey, managing director of JJ Darboven Ireland, says the company's philosophy is to offer customers a comprehensive service that extends far beyond simply supplying coffee.

"We supply restaurants, hotels, cafés, offices and more with coffee, tea, hot chocolate and equipment," he explains. "We also provide service support and training, so our clients get everything they need from one partner."

Café Du Monde UK follows a similar approach, working closely with Egro to supply and maintain coffee equipment for its customers. "We're seeing really strong growth," says Geoff Arnold, managing director of Café Du Monde UK. "Our relationship with Egro's local team at CTW-UK is very collaborative. If there's ever an issue, we can lean on them quickly and get the support we need."

The partnership has proved particularly effective in the hospitality sector, where reliability and ease of use are essential. Many installations are in hotels, where high-capacity machines must consistently deliver quality drinks for large numbers of guests.

"They are perfect for hotel breakfast service," Arnold explains. "Guests can simply walk up, press a button, and receive a high-quality coffee without staff needing to prepare every drink individually."

The Egro advantage

Central to the collaboration are Egro's bean-to-cup machines, particularly the Next and MoDe models. Combining automation with professional-level coffee quality, both allow operators to serve a wide variety of drinks with minimal training or intervention.

The Egro Next is designed for high-volume environments and can produce up to 300 cups per day, making it ideal for busy hospitality venues. Its 10-inch HD touchscreen interface allows operators to program and customize drinks quickly and intuitively, making day-to-day operation simple and straightforward even in busy service environments. The screen features provide a clear, user-friendly layout and give operators direct access to a wide range of settings, from drink configuration to technical guidance and maintenance information directly on the machine.

"That collaboration helped build a strong relationship and ultimately expanded the partnership"

Scott Singleton
CTW-UK

Operators can also create and switch between different user interfaces, allowing menus to be tailored for different service periods. For example, a simplified breakfast menu focused on espresso-based drinks and Americanos can give way later in the day to a broader selection including cappuccinos, flat whites and other specialty beverages.

Alongside this interface, integrated grinders help ensure consistent extraction and flavor. After three extractions that deviate from the standard, the machine's self-adjusting grinders (SAG) automatically recalibrate the burrs to restore a set optimal extraction time to maintain consistent extraction as conditions change.





Above: Graham Mongey, JJ Darboven Ireland (top); Geoff Arnold, Café Du Monde UK







Reliable design and high-quality components cut blockages and limescale risk



"The Next is really about flexibility and performance," says Singleton. "You can dial in the coffee exactly how you want it, from slower specialty extractions to faster service speeds."

Milk systems are equally adaptable, with configurations for fresh milk, dual milk options or cold milk foam depending on the customer's requirements. This flexibility enables the machine to meet the needs of a wide range of hospitality concepts.

The MoDe offers similar quality and technology, but in a more compact format. Designed for smaller operations or lower-volume environments, it can produce up to 180 cups per day. Its internal components are organized into modules to facilitate routine maintenance operations.

The MoDe can also be fitted with advanced milk systems and the automatic iSteam Pro wand, allowing operators to combine automated drinks with barista-level quality.

Built for reliability

For coffee operators, machine reliability is just as important as drink quality. Mongey says Egro machines have significantly reduced service issues for both his business and its customers.

"One of our clients switched eight automatic machines to Egro over the past two years," he explains. "Our service calls have dropped by around 90%. That reliability is hugely important for customers who depend on the machines every day."

"Engineers learn how to diagnose issues so they're confident supporting the equipment"

Graham Mongey
JJ Darboven Ireland

Several engineering features contribute to that reliability, including metal brew chambers, high-quality grinders and internal components designed to minimize blockages and limescale. While these technical details may not always be visible to the end user, they make a significant difference when it comes to servicing.

Another practical feature is the ability to automatically lock machines if they are not cleaned properly. "If the machine isn't cleaned daily, it simply won't operate," Mongey says.

"That might sound basic, but it massively improves reliability and keeps machines running properly," he adds.

Training and technical support

Alongside equipment performance, training and technical support play a crucial role in the partnership's success.

Engineers from JJ Darboven and Café Du Monde receive specialist training on Egro machines at both the head office facilities and the branch training lab in the UK. The training focuses on installation, servicing and troubleshooting, ensuring technicians are fully equipped to support customers.

"It's very hands-on training," says Mongey. "Engineers install the machines, break them down, and learn how to diagnose issues so they are fully confident supporting the equipment."

The partnership also supports customers through remote troubleshooting when possible, allowing many issues to be resolved quickly without requiring an on-site visit.

"In many cases we can solve a problem instantly through a video or phone call," Mongey explains. "That's a big advantage for our customers."

As the partnership continues to expand, all sides see further opportunities for growth, supporting more venues with reliable equipment, expert training and the infrastructure needed to keep coffee service running smoothly.

"We're building something that's growing stronger every year," concludes Fontana.

BRAND WATCH

EGRO
BUILT FOR EXCELLENCE

1934

Egro introduces the first filter coffee machine: the Supra I

2

Egro's dual boiler technology features two independent boilers enabling coffee preparation and steam dispensing

4

Egro has developed four different systems for the automatic preparation of drinks made with fresh milk

egrocoffee.com





For coffee operators, machine reliability is just as important as drink quality

Unlimited possibilities under one roof



Designing foodservice for a destination stadium that serves both premier hospitality guests and high volumes of sports fans and concert-goers is no small undertaking. At One New Zealand Stadium, that complexity has resulted in an operation built to stand at the heart of its community for decades to come. Lauren Hurrell speaks to the teams who brought this vision to life

The One New Zealand Stadium at Te Kaha is Christchurch's premier central-city stadium, set to host elite sports, major music concerts, and entertainment events from summer 2026. Located in the heart of the city, the stadium was rebuilt after its predecessor was demolished in 2019 following damage caused by the 2011 earthquake. The new venue is designed to be a full-service, year-round destination for community engagement, entertainment and top-tier hospitality, all housed under one roof.

Designing the stadium was a complex task. The fully roofed facility seats more than 30,000 and can be expanded for major events, operating year-round regardless of weather. It required high-capacity hospitality and foodservice solutions to serve both large crowds and VIP guests within tight timelines.

"One NZ Stadium is an incredibly important piece of infrastructure for Ōtautahi, Christchurch, so it was important that the food and beverage offering genuinely reflects our city," says Caroline Harvie-Teare, chief executive of Venues Ōtautahi. "At Venues Ōtautahi, we have a strong local procurement ethos and that played a key role in our vision for the stadium. When it came to the culinary facilities, it was important to build infrastructure that supports high-quality







food production at scale and could handle our central production model to ensure consistency and efficiency."

A collaboration game

The food and beverage operation needed to be both robust and flexible, capable of serving large public crowds and premium guests simultaneously. This required the design of multiple concourses, a variety of kitchen types, and integrated bar facilities throughout the venue.

"With many different vendors, it was important to design kitchens to support very different food styles within a stadium footprint," says Harvie-Teare. "We worked with Moffat and Wildfire to design custom kitchens, ensuring the unique needs of each vendor were supported."

Wildfire Commercial Kitchens & Bars was tasked with designing and developing the stadium's foodservice infrastructure, balancing a dual focus on community engagement and the demands of international-level entertainment. That balance shaped a foodservice strategy centered on menu diversity and operational versatility.

"The collaboration between Wildfire Commercial Kitchens & Bars and suppliers — especially Moffat, Stoddart, Just Heat Pumps & Refrigeration, DispenseWorx — and Besix Watpac ensured that the kitchens and bar facilities were delivered in alignment with the broader stadium build program," says Craig Cunningham, managing director of Wildfire Commercial Kitchens & Bars. "The final outcome reflects both architectural ambition and operational practicality. We all finished, on time, on budget."

Operational efficiency became a critical consideration, influencing kitchen design to minimize staff congestion, streamline workflows, and maintain food safety standards under time pressure. The goal was to create long-term infrastructure capable of withstanding extreme peak demand while ensuring quality, consistency and guest satisfaction were never compromised.

Main image: One NZ Stadium is "an incredibly important piece of infrastructure" for Ōtautahi, Christchurch







Above, from top: Venues Ōtautahi's Caroline Harvie-Teare; Wildfire Commercial Kitchens & Bars' Craig Cunningham; Moffat's Stuart Murray



"One of the challenges for the stadium was that it was to be an all-electric site"

Stuart Murray
Moffat



Wildfire's approach was to ensure facilities would remain sustainable and adaptable to future shifts in hospitality and event catering. The team focused on delivering durable, high-performance equipment capable of handling intense usage cycles, while making seamless operations between front- and back-of-house a top priority.

Moffat Group, a Christchurch-based company with a longstanding relationship with Wildfire, joined the project to provide expertise in designing and manufacturing the heavy-duty, electric foodservice equipment required for this all-electric stadium.

"This sort of venue application benefited from Moffat's capability to provide equipment suited to central production, including Convotherm® Combis and Multipans, as well as fryers and stove tops for the high-demand concession areas," said Stuart Murray, group managing director of Moffat. "Working with professionals, the equipment specification was clear from the beginning, and Wildfire has experience in other stadium venues using our equipment."

After initial discussions, a focus on "Support Local" helped set the design and specification. Moffat's reputation for performance and support made them a natural partner. Their equipment serves a wide range of venues both locally and globally. "One of the challenges for the Christchurch Stadium was that it was to be an all-electric site," said Murray. "Moffat has traditionally had a very strong electric product solution set, and for this application accelerated the development and supply of a new electric high-performance output fryer and supplied some 51 of these to the site — supporting the demand, production, and recovery requirements of intermission and half-time consumption."

Excelling technology

As expected with a project of this scale, challenges arose. Stadiums experience intense surges in food and beverage sales. To address this, high-capacity equipment



BRAND WATCH

90+

The Moffat Group's portfolio 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

"Wildfire and Moffat have been wonderful collaborators"

Caroline Harvie-Teare
Venues Ōtautahi



was installed, kitchen areas were strategically zoned, and redundancies planned to ensure continuity. Structural constraints limited back-of-house space, but Wildfire used modular designs, workflow planning, and multifunctional equipment to maximize usable areas. Coordination across architects, builders, consultants and operators also required early engagement and clear planning. The scale of the project created budget pressures, as only durable, commercial-grade equipment was suitable for the intense but intermittent use.

To meet high-volume demands, the venue installed high-capacity ovens, rapid fryers, and efficient equipment chosen for performance and reliability, ensuring fast service during peak times.

"As an event and venue management company delivering our own in-house catering, we needed a facility that supports efficiency, sustainability and scale from day one," says Harvie-Teare. "Wildfire and Moffat have been wonderful collaborators with us as the operator of the stadium. They listened, adapted and ensured our key operational ways of working were embedded into the design. The result is a future-focused, all-electric facility that not only supports our carbon-neutral ambitions but positions us to deliver an exceptional food and beverage experience for every guest who walks through the gates."

"The stadium stands as a benchmark for integrated stadium foodservice design in New Zealand"

Craig Cunningham
Wildfire Commercial Kitchens & Bars

Moffat's engineering expertise ensured the equipment met stadium demands. Wildfire and Moffat developed the HPO electric fryer for this project, and Moffat's local support network ensures ongoing maintenance for long-term success.

"The stadium stands not only as a landmark structure but as a benchmark for integrated stadium foodservice design in New Zealand," says Cunningham. "Wildfire is proud to have played a central role in delivering a hospitality infrastructure that will serve the city and its visitors for decades to come."


cube
GÜNTHER
STARBUCKS
WALTHER PARK
ZIOCOMITI
PUMA





The vision for Mercato Centrale, part of the WaltherPark urban regeneration project, was to create a food hall of 18 bottegas under one roof, each celebrating traditional Italian foodservice operators and presenting unique technical and operational requirements. Lauren Hurrell takes a closer look at the complex collaboration behind the project and how two Ali Group brands in particular helped make it a success

Embracing tradition through renewal

WaltherPark is a unique urban regeneration project that is restoring high-quality public spaces to the city of Bolzano in northern Italy. At its core is the 1,000-seat Mercato Centrale, the development's beating heart. WaltherPark also features 110 exclusive apartments situated 15 meters above the city and nestled among rooftop gardens in one of Europe's most innovative urban districts.

"This project involved the complete development of the Food Area on the second floor of the new WaltherPark High Street Gallery in Bolzano," says Marco Feola, architect project manager at EXA Group. "Our mission was to transform a 4,300-square-meter space into a vibrant Mercato Centrale-inspired destination, aligned with the vision of founder Alberto Montano and the creative direction of TA Architettura. We aimed to create a premium environment where architectural quality seamlessly integrates with the complex operational needs of each restaurateur, offering visitors a unique and engaging dining experience."

With more than 80 stores, along with Mercato Centrale Bolzano, a Virgin Active fitness club, the panoramic Mochi restaurant, a renovated park and more, the wider development aims to provide a natural oasis in the heart of the city, while giving visitors and residents everything they need at their fingertips.

Through a collaborative effort that included carefully selected equipment from across the Ali Group portfolio, Grandimpianti and Ambach played particularly important roles in bringing the project to life. Such an ambitious undertaking required the careful harmonization of equipment standards while accommodating the unique operational requirements of each bottega, a challenge both brands were well equipped to address.

"Our ambition is to offer a gastronomic experience that is truly unique and innovative for Bolzano — both in its scale and in the quality and atmosphere it delivers," says Thibault Chavanat, chairman of the board at WaltherPark SPA. "Rooted in openness and diversity, the Mercato is conceived as a place for everyone."

MERCATO CENTRALE BOLZANO IN NUMBERS

4,300
Square-meter space

18
Concept restaurants

1,000
Seat venue

50+
Employees

ambach.com
grandimpiantiali.it











The vision

The Mercato Centrale Bolzano project was built around a vision of 18 "botteghe" (the Italian term for traditional small shops, artisan workshops and studio-style spaces), each dedicated to a distinct gastronomic concept. Offerings range from fresh pasta, pizza and gelato to burgers, seafood, truffle-based dishes and desserts.

"Under the lead design of Alberto Torsello, the architecture and the interior design have been developed to be in strong contrast with the rest of the shopping mall," says Chavanat. "It is not a premium bright place with shiny materials, but a kind of Dolomites cave where you can find gastronomic gems in a cozy and protected atmosphere."

Naturally, coordinating 18 different concepts, each with its own operational requirements and distinct culinary identity, presented a number of technical challenges. Success would require the careful harmonization of equipment standards while accommodating the unique needs of each bottega.

"Torsello, and some of the artigiani [artisans], had a very precise vision of what they needed to create a unique place. All the counters have been designed as unique, nonstandard pieces," says Chavanat. "We chose EXA Group because managing a project of this complexity requires quality, coordination and accountability. Having a single partner overseeing the entire process made the project far more efficient."



"We support projects from the technical planning phase through to installation and commissioning"

Alessandro D'Andrade
Grandimpianti

The main challenge was bringing 18 independent food concepts together within a single architectural and infrastructural framework. Each bottega had its own production volumes, workflows and technical requirements. Managing utility distribution, ventilation interfaces, refrigeration needs and installation schedules within a complex urban construction site required precise coordination among contractors, operators and project managers throughout the project.

"To meet these challenges, we implemented an intensive planning and coordination strategy," says Feola. "Leveraging EXA Group's expertise and trusted network, we orchestrated multiple specialized teams and suppliers under a single management framework. This structured approach minimized disruption, accelerated progress, and enabled us to recover lost time without compromising quality."

Ensuring consistency and high performance across all 18 operators was critical to the project's success. WaltherPark relied on the expertise of Grandimpianti and Ambach, two Ali Group brands, to ensure every technical requirement was addressed.

"Our involvement in the WaltherPark project began after successfully winning the tender for the food hall equipment package. Following this process, we

were appointed by EXA Group, the project's general contractor and our partner in the realization of the development," says Alessandro D'Andrade, general manager, Grandimpianti.

Grandimpianti serves as a strategic partner in the professional foodservice sector, specializing in the supply and coordination of high-performance kitchen and foodservice equipment for complex developments.

"We support projects from the technical planning phase through to installation and commissioning, ensuring operational efficiency, durability and compliance with the highest standards," says D'Andrade. "Our expertise covers hospitality, mixed-use developments, retail food halls and large-scale urban regeneration projects such as WaltherPark."

A game of specifics

Equipment was carefully selected from across Ali Group's portfolio, including Mareno cooking systems, Esmach and Alphatech bakery equipment, Convotherm® combi ovens and Merrychef® high-speed ovens. Cold-chain management was supported by refrigeration solutions from Friulinox, Tecnomac and Polaris, while Hiber blast chillers preserved food quality and Scotsman ice machines served beverage and bar areas. The project was further complicated by significant logistical challenges stemming from the construction site's central location in the city. In addition, delays during the base-building phase meant the teams began work more than a month behind schedule, despite a fixed opening date.

"Despite the demanding timeline, safety and quality remained our top priorities, and the final result reflects that commitment," says Feola. "We established a strong and effective partnership between EXA Group, the client and all project stakeholders, which proved essential to the project's success. Successfully delivering highly customized units — both technically and aesthetically — within the required timeframe, is a testament to the strength of the collaboration and the commitment of everyone involved," he adds.

BRANDS FEATURED ON THE PROJECT:

- Alphatech
- Amana® Commercial
- Ambach
- Carpigiani
- Comenda
- Convotherm
- DIHR
- Esmach
- Friulinox
- Grandimpianti I.L.E.
- Hiber
- Icematic
- Mareno
- Menumaster® Commercial
- Merrychef
- Oem
- Polaris
- Scotsman
- Tecnomac



"Despite the demanding timeline, safety and quality remained our top priority"

Marco Feola
EXA Group



"Thanks to an exceptional level of teamwork, it was possible to open this remarkable new place on schedule"

Thibault Chavanat
WaltherPark SPA

"Thanks to an exceptional level of teamwork, coordination and dedication, it was nonetheless possible to deliver and open this remarkable new place on schedule," says Chavanat.

"We are proud because we realized the promise to bring something completely new to Bolzano: a new place with a unique atmosphere and great partners," he adds.

This integrated technological approach allowed each bottega to maintain its unique culinary identity, while ensuring consistent professional standards and operational efficiency throughout the food hall. And the successful collaboration extended beyond the food hall itself. One notable example was 'Mochi Sushi. Grill. Rooftop Bar,' located within the Falkensteiner Hotel Bozen WaltherPark and operated by the Falkensteiner.

The high-end foodservice concept was designed by hospitality consultant Mirko Predenz. To realize this vision the project brought together leading South Tyrolean partner Niederbacher — responsible for the complete organization and installation of the professional kitchen equipment — and kitchen equipment specialist Ambach, to create a highly customized kitchen environment tailored to the demands of Japanese cuisine. Flexible equipment solutions enabled seamless integration while meeting the restaurant's specific operational requirements.

The Ambach System 850 range's modular construction could be configured to meet a variety of operational requirements and spatial constraints while maintaining energy efficiency to help reduce operating costs and environmental impact.

The suite features, among other things, a full-surface induction hob, a two-tank fryer with electronic EC control and an integrated oil filtration system, and a tempura fryer specifically designed to meet the rigorous standards of the authentic Japanese tempura.

For Grandimpianti, it was clear from the outset that all stakeholders shared a focus on long-term performance, operational reliability and brand positioning. This alignment laid the foundation for a highly collaborative partnership throughout the project.

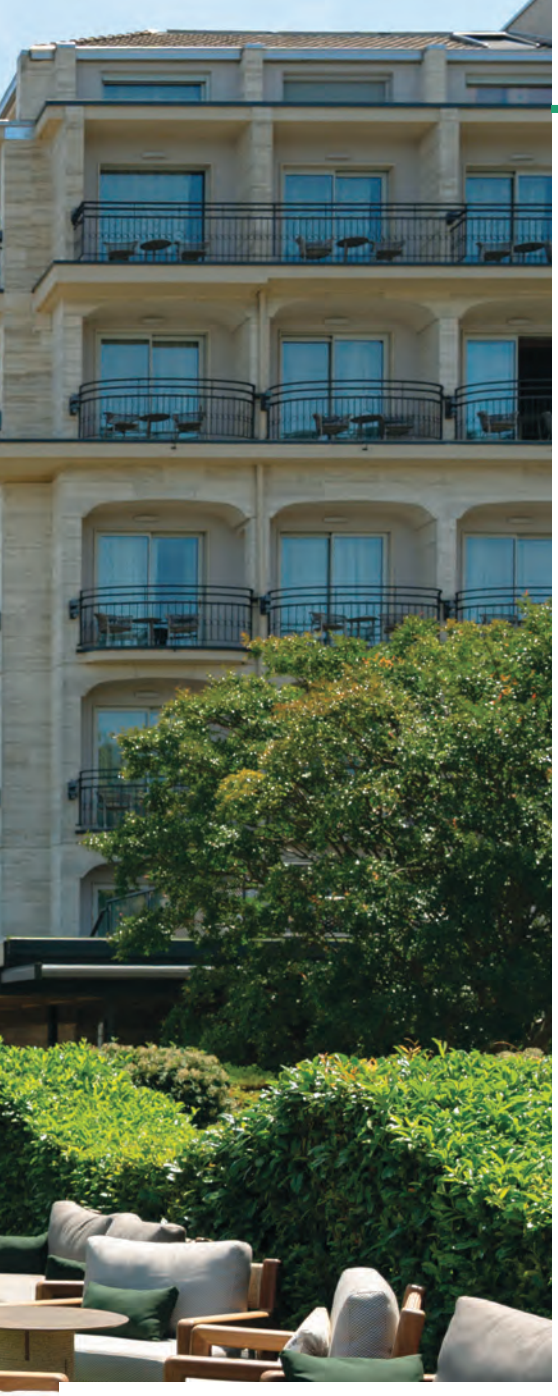
Reflecting on the project, Feola highlights the collaborative effort that made it possible to meet such a demanding opening deadline. "Delivering such a complex project within such a demanding timeframe required an exceptional team effort. The commitment and collaboration shown by everyone involved was key to achieving this result, and we are proud of what was accomplished together," says Feola.

"Projects of this caliber are built on trust and technical competence," says D'Andrade. "We value relationships where we can contribute not only as suppliers, but as technical advisors. We certainly remain open to future collaborations within similar mixed-use or hospitality-driven developments."

The silent support that allows service to shine



Situated on the shores of Lake Maggiore, the elegant Grand Hotel Bristol traces its origins back to 1873



Grand Hotel Bristol turned to dishwashing specialists Comenda and partner Tecnobi to bring the "same silent elegance" on display in its exquisite dining rooms, which have overlooked Lake Maggiore for more than 150 years

There is a precise moment in every major hotel renovation, says Marco Locci, Italy sales director of dishwashing specialist Comenda, when a project stops being a technical drawing and becomes a promise.

It happens, "when the room fills with light and the first dish leaves a brand-new kitchen, designed to last as long as the story it is part of," he says. This is what happened at the Grand Hotel Bristol on Lake Maggiore, in Stresa, Italy, where the fifth generation of the Zacchera family chose to reinterpret a piece of Italian hospitality history "without losing its soul."

For the team at Comenda, which has been designing industrial dishwashing systems worldwide since 1963, being part of this transformation reflects the power of a perfect partnership. Working alongside local partner Tecnobi Srl, which managed the design and implementation of the entire kitchen, Comenda helped connect the luxury of a prestigious hospitality destination with technological efficiency.

One family, 150 years and five generations

To understand the spirit behind the new kitchen at Grand Hotel Bristol, we need to go back to 1873, when Francesco Zacchera opened a small inn, the Osteria Milanese, offering accommodation on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

From that first entrepreneurial venture grew one of the most enduring family stories in Italian hospitality. Generation after generation, the business expanded into a group that today includes five properties between Baveno and Stresa — Grand Hotel Dino, Hotel Simplon, Hotel Splendid, Residence Carl & Do and Grand Hotel Bristol — representing approximately 900 rooms and more than 350 employees.

Today, Zacchera Hotels is led by siblings Antonio, Massimo, Maria Gabriella and Andrea Zacchera, with support from their cousins. It's a rare model of family continuity that has allowed the group to grow while remaining faithful to a clear vision of hospitality built on attention to detail, deep roots in the local community and the ability to innovate without compromising its identity.

This vision lies at the heart of the transformation of the Grand Hotel Bristol, which in recent years has undergone an ambitious renovation project. The property has renewed its guestrooms, common areas, pool area and dining offering, including two completely redesigned restaurants overlooking the spectacular waters of Lake Maggiore. The renovation was designed not only for leisure guests, but also for the hotel's conference and events business, which has long been one of the leading players in Lake Maggiore's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) sector. The hotel hosts meetings, conventions and corporate events for up to 250 guests, as well as weddings and receptions that take advantage of the historic gardens and the 'Liberty-style' (an indoor-outdoor structure built in the Art Nouveau aesthetic) winter garden.

For the Zacchera family, it was essential that Grand Hotel Bristol's new kitchen continue to deliver the exceptional hospitality for which the hotel is known.



The hero behind the scenes

Behind every event, banquet dinner or breakfast overlooking the Lake, "there is a technical heart of the operation that must perform with the same silent elegance as the dining room," says Locci.

In the world of luxury hospitality, away from


The hotel's dishwashing area required three different types of Comenda machines

the beautifully crafted dishes and sparkling crystal glassware in the spotlight, is the ever-present but unseen "true engine behind this magic," the dishwashing machine, says Locci.

"It is a constant, silent presence working behind the scenes while guests raise their glasses and chefs create their dishes. If we think about it, the essence of fine dining is contained in a perfect circle: everything begins with a clean piece of tableware and everything ends with a clean piece of tableware. Dishwashing is the invisible hero that sets the pace of the kitchen," he says, and the new dishwashing area at Grand Hotel Bristol was designed for precisely that.

Tecnobi: the bespoke link

Distinguished by its professionalism, creativity and design, Tecnobi Srl was the company that transformed the hotel owners' vision into a fully realized technical project. Since 1984, Tecnobi has been operating in the design and supply of systems, furnishings and equipment for the hospitality sector. "We have more than 40 years of experience and over 700 completed projects across hotels, restaurants and large-scale facilities, and a hands-on, 360-degree approach that supports customers — from on-site consultancy and professional design through to after-sales service," says Mauro Bellini, one of the owners of Tecnobi.

This approach also reflects the same philosophy that guides Comenda, says Locci. "Because they understand a client's needs before proposing and they design before selling, Tecnobi is our natural local partner. They understand the specific needs of a hotel business shaped by seasonality and periods of intense workload."

Comenda, he says, has a single objective: "to design the best dishwashing system for each customer's specific operation, avoiding standardized solutions because no two businesses are the same. Our experts analyzed every aspect of the Grand Hotel Bristol's operations in detail: the available space, the number of operators involved, the workflow organization, the quantity of tableware to be washed during peak periods and the time available for service," adds Locci.

Only after assessing all these elements did Comenda propose the most suitable solution, "to optimize investment and guarantee efficiency, ergonomics and effective organization," he says.

When developing a dishwashing area solution, there are several interconnected factors that must be considered, adds Locci. "Results, ergonomics, practicality and timing, but also efficiency, hygiene and costs. We aim to help facilities reduce water and energy consumption and better manage waste disposal, save time, use space more efficiently, automate processes and seamlessly integrate every stage of the workflow."

"All our products put people at the center: every day we work to improve the operators' user experience by reducing unnecessary or incorrect movements, creating a comfortable working environment while ensuring excellent service for end customers."





Lainox ovens (above) and Silko cooking blocks were also installed on this project

Three technological solutions for a harmonious workflow

From this shared vision with the Zacchera family and Tecnobi, the dishwashing area at the Grand Hotel Bristol was equipped with three Comenda machines, each calibrated to a very specific requirement.

The first challenge was managing space without sacrificing productivity. The answer was Comenda's ACR rack conveyor dishwasher with a corner drying module. When every centimeter matters, Comenda's rack conveyor modules can be configured in corner layouts without compromising productivity, while always guaranteeing exceptional hygiene results.

The ACR range is designed to adapt precisely to every environment, building itself around the workflow. This model reaches a maximum productivity of up to 205 racks per hour, while its heat recovery system makes it a sustainable choice. Positioned above the rinse area, the system enables energy savings of up to 40% on water heating and reduces total installed power by 20% compared with a standard model.

For larger dishwashing volumes, the second solution installed at the hotel also rose to the challenge: a Comenda NE2 Series flight-type unit. Robust, reliable and fast, it is designed to handle heavy workloads while delivering outstanding performance and maximum hygiene.

"It incorporates the core of our patented technologies. We reduce consumption, our customers benefit from greater efficiency and the environment benefits as well. This model guarantees the sanitization of up to 3,850 plates per hour, eliminating waiting times during major events," says Locci.


Comenda's machines contribute to the "perfect team symphony" at Grand Hotel Bristol

Both machines share a technological foundation designed to ensure complete operational continuity.

C-SMART electronics: simple and intuitive, the graphical interface with remote connectivity communicates through icons and colors. It helps operators monitor parameters, track consumption in real time and manage anomalies from a smartphone, tablet or PC.

The exclusive EOR (Emergency OverRide System): a standard electromechanical control system activated by key. In the event of an electronic malfunction, simply inserting the key bypasses the electronics and allows operation to continue in electromechanical mode. Performance and minimum consumption levels are preserved, enabling the service to continue uninterrupted and for technical assistance to be scheduled at the facility's convenience — without ever resorting to manual dishwashing.

Finally, to complete the ecosystem and relieve operators from the most demanding tasks, the GR series granule washer was introduced. Preparing tableware and kitchenware is often a repetitive and physically demanding task. By combining the abrasive power of granules with high-temperature water and detergent, the GR series removes stubborn residue from utensils and trays. This eliminates the need for soaking and manual pre-washing, while improving ergonomics and operator comfort.

Furthermore, the use of Bio Granules — made from shells and natural materials — helps reduce the release of microplastics into the water system, demonstrating a deep respect for Lake Maggiore's ecosystem.

Moving forward in perfect harmony

The great success of the Grand Hotel Bristol's new kitchen can be described as "a perfect team symphony," says Locci.

"There is the forward-looking vision of the Zacchera family, which for more than a century and a half has continued to invest in the beauty of its territory. There is Tecnobi's bespoke expertise, capable of orchestrating perfectly designed workflows. And then there is Comenda engineering," he says.

"Our machines will never seek the spotlight," adds Locci.

"Yet it is precisely in their hardworking invisibility that their true strength lies: being the silent support that allows the Grand Hotel Bristol to shine. One perfect service after another."

"Every day we work to improve the operators' user experience"

Marco Locci
Comenda




Comenda dishwashing machines are robust, reliable and fast

BRAND WATCH

COMENDA
TO CLEAN. WITH CARE.

1963

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

100+

With a distribution network spanning more than 100 countries, Comenda delivers reliable service and responsive after-sales support around the world

ISO 9001

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

comenda.eu

Smart scaling for a savvy business

When Greece-based food company Lekos Group sought to scale its operations, it needed technology that aligned with its ambitions, reports Lauren Hurrell



The impacts of the pandemic-induced workforce turnover are still being felt across the global foodservice industry. Restaurants and foodservice operators continue to face labor challenges and a lack of skilled personnel, prompting greater reliance on dark kitchens — delivery-only food preparation facilities without a dine-in storefront — to help meet demand.

Today, dark kitchens are becoming more prevalent across Europe as operators respond to labor shortages and rising demand for ready meals, particularly in urban areas where younger generations are entering the workforce. This shift is driving kitchens to adopt innovative technologies and partnerships as part of the solution.

One such example is Lekos Group. Founded in Greece in 2015, Lekos Group quickly grew into a modern food production company specializing in ready meals. By investing in infrastructure, technology and people, it combines traditional food expertise with modern methods to deliver consistent quality and support sustainable growth.

The company transformed a former Adidas warehouse into a cook-and-chill facility to help restaurants address kitchen staff shortages. Today, Lekos Group operates a 7,000-square-meter production complex in Thessaloniki, supplying the local market with high-quality frozen dough products and ready meals.

"The transformation of a former Adidas warehouse into a modern production facility was a strategic investment," says Vasilios Zacharias, F&B manager at Lekos Group.

"The site was designed to support large-scale ready-meal production and reflects the company's long-term vision for growth, efficiency and expansion in both the Greek and European markets," he adds.

Consistency, efficiency and quality

As production volumes increased, the main challenges became consistency, efficiency and production flow. It became clear that more advanced cooking technology was needed to maintain consistent product quality and support larger-scale production. Lekos Group chose Metos, a manufacturer of high-quality professional kitchen equipment, for its reliability, expertise and professional cooking solutions.

"Their systems helped improve consistency, efficiency and product quality, while also supporting better standardization across production," says Zacharias. "Having a reliable technology partner like Metos is very important for the company's future growth. As production expands, technology, reliability and support play a key role in maintaining quality and supporting new product development."

Having a longstanding reputation in the food industry, Lekos Group has continued to identify opportunities in the market. As one of the first businesses in Greece's ready-meal production landscape, it was already familiar with the challenge of staff shortages. Metos Cooking Solutions provided the smart equipment needed to support that growth, installing four 200-liter kettles, two food pumps connected to the packaging line, and a sous vide tank for cooking meat.

> **"The site reflects the company's long-term vision for growth, efficiency and expansion"**
>
> **Vasilios Zacharias**
> Lekos Group

The company needed intuitive, intelligent equipment that did not rely on skilled chefs, only dedicated operators.

"The cooking systems and the overall project design stood out, as they improved control, consistency and repeatability in production, contributing to a more efficient production environment," says Zacharias.

For Jan Jansen, export sales manager, Europe, at Metos Cooking Solutions, this project — one of its first since the pandemic — was a perfect project on which to collaborate with Lekos Group. Metos Cooking Solutions designs products specifically for cook-and-chill production and freezing, providing an efficient way to produce large quantities of food while simplifying handling and transportation in a chilled state.





Metos Cooking Solutions designs products specifically for cook-and-chill production and freezing





"Lekos Group can scale really well. Our four 200-liter kettles provide a capacity of 800 liters," says Jansen. "If they create three or four batches per day, they can make four or five tons of sauces, soups, Bolognese sauce or whatever they want on the production scale."

Tackling constraints through technology

Multifunction kettles reduce cooking time and labor, support recipe standardization and help minimize waste. Pumping maintains product temperature during dosing, improving accuracy and reducing labor costs.

"The most important technical aspect of our equipment is the programming. You can program every step of a cooking process, so that every recipe is programmed inside the kettle," says Jansen. "It does everything automatically. The only thing people have to do is put in the ingredients."

All recipes and cooking steps are programmed, requiring only basic oversight. Temperature control, mixing and water filling are automated to minimize error. Operators simply monitor the process. Pumping is performed by volume or weight, ensuring accuracy and eliminating manual handling.

"After cooking, users can pump food by weight or volume, as well as cook and chill in the kettle. If making soup, for example, users can chill it back to 7°C and pump it into bags or containers, or they can do hot fill using the





“With this equipment, food production facilities can run a complete kitchen with two or three people”

Jan Jansen
Metos Cooking Solutions

packaging line,” says Jansen. “There will be a hose from the kettle through the pump to the packaging line, where the plastic units for the ready meals are filled. This is used for a variety of foods, which helps to support multifunctionality.”

Traceability and transportation

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) recording, the documentation of food safety procedures, monitoring data, and corrective actions required to prove compliance and control hazards is standard across the Metos Proveno range of equipment.

“This means users can look back at the data for 30 days,” says Jansen. “It can be connected to the internet for traceability, so you can track exactly which batch was made on which date, in case of errors.”

Food is transported safely and cost-effectively in sealed bags that extend shelf life. This approach improves portion control, prevents waste and reduces transport weight and space needs. “Transporting food in bags or containers is much more hygienic and makes it perfect for logistical purposes,” says Jansen. “With this equipment, food production facilities can now run a complete kitchen with only two or three people, creating a significant advantage amid labor shortages.”

Building a reliable, resilient partnership

This technology has made significant contributions to addressing the global shortage of trained personnel. The use of dark kitchens is increasing as operators adopt these solutions to improve efficiency. These facilities produce meals for restaurants that don’t require specialized chefs and can be transported easily.

“This was a successful project because of the strong cooperation between all partners,” says Zacharias. “The project created a modern and reliable production environment and the company is most proud that this investment created a strong foundation for future growth.”

Looking ahead, Lekos Group’s kitchens are ready to be equipped with 12 more kettles and mixpans, highlighting a promising future of continued growth. With this intuitive technology to help mitigate labor shortages, businesses such as Lekos Group, through partnering with equipment experts like Metos, prove that innovation and collaboration will be the key ingredients to navigating complex industry challenges ahead.

BRAND WATCH

metos
kitchen intelligence®

100+

Founded more than 100 years ago, Metos celebrated its centenary as an industry leader in Scandinavia in 2022

21,000+

Metos manufactures more than 21,000 products annually, all designed to enhance client workflow and profitability

8

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

metos.com



From left: Jan Jansen, Metos, and Vasilios Zacharias, Lekos Group, with the kitchen team

Perfect partners create an island paradise





From a lush seaside garden to an expansive luxury retreat, the land that is now the East Winds Resort remains a paradise for adventurous travelers in search of tranquility. Jim Banks learns how its collaboration with Grandimpianti I.L.E. helps to keep the operation running smoothly for guests and staff alike

Spread across 12 acres in La Brelotte Bay on the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia's northwest coast, some 30 cottages nestle close to the beach among more than 100 species of plants and trees. This botanical paradise, lovingly nurtured since American expats Richard and Margaret Egerer acquired the land in 1966 to build their island home, is now the East Winds Resort, one of the island's most prestigious destinations, explains Natasha Calixte, hotel manager of East Winds.

"The land is close to the sea, so Margaret decided to build a home there. She started grilling fish for the locals, then they created a small inn, and it all grew from there."

East Winds started with no restaurant, just a beach rum bar and a barbeque with two self-catering cottages next to the beach. The Egerers ran housekeeping from their own private cottage. After expanding to 10 self-catering



Right (l-r): Carlos Philip, Innovation Saint Lucia; Natasha Calixte, East Winds Resort; Gabriele Giotto, GILE







To solve its laundry challenges, East Winds turned to Italian-headquartered GILE

cottages, the hotel was sold to a local hotelier, who expanded to 26 cottages and then later bought the neighboring beach house from the Horlicks family, adding four ocean view suites. Today, the all-inclusive boutique resort, which sits mere steps away from one of Saint Lucia's stunning secluded beaches, provides a place of peace, calm and lush natural beauty for adult visitors. Its 30 one-bed cottages and its oceanfront suites and rooms are surrounded by tropical gardens and colorful bird life, providing the perfect getaway for those who want to bathe among the trees as well as in the crystal clear waters.

An unpretentious, laid-back atmosphere pervades the entire estate, as guests enjoy scenic walking trails, treatments at the open-air Garden Spa, yoga and Pilates sessions at the Pavilion, or simply relax and sip the many herbal drinks brewed from plants in the botanical garden.

"The land is close to the sea, so Margaret decided to build a home there. Then they created a small inn, and it all grew from there"

Natasha Calixte
East Winds Resort

The hard work behind the scenes

Maintaining this air of relaxed luxury requires operational discipline, a clear vision, and equipment that is both reliable and delivers on efficiency and quality. Saint Lucia may be the most densely populated of the four Windward Islands in the Caribbean Sea, but it has limited industrial infrastructure, meaning that sourcing and maintaining high-quality commercial equipment for the kitchen or laundry requires a network of highly professional partners.

A prime example of the value of these partnerships came a few years ago when new owners came on board and brought in Carlos Philip, director, Innovation Saint Lucia, to oversee renovations to the resort's cold storage facilities and the all-important laundry. "There had been problems with multiple brands in the past," he says. "There were washers, dryers and flat ironers from different brands with no support on the ground, and it was very difficult to get diagnostics when problems arose."





East Winds Resort in Saint Lucia has become one of the island's most prestigious destinations

To address this, he turned to Italian-headquartered manufacturer Grandimpianti Intelligent Laundry Equipment (GILE), which supplied two GWH 180E washers, each capable of handling 18–20 kg of linen, along with a GD350 dryer and a three-meter-wide flat ironer. The GWH 180E is a high-spin industrial washing machine designed specifically for professional, heavy-duty commercial laundry environments such as hotels, hospitals and restaurants. Built around advanced, user-friendly technology, it delivers efficient, high-capacity cleaning through a modern, smartphone-style touch interface that can be tailored to different levels of use, from self-service and basic operation to professional and technical modes.

The washing machines feature a built-in dynamic weighing system, eliminating the need to weigh loads manually. Instead, the machine automatically detects the load weight and adjusts all parameters, including water and detergent usage. In addition, the system reports the number of cycles remaining









The laundry equipment is Wi-Fi-connected, so data from every laundry cycle goes to the central hub in Italy

BRAND WATCH

grandimpianti
intelligent laundry equipment

1972

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

2020

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

20

New ironers reduce clutter by up to 20% without compromising roller length, freeing up workspace

grandimpianti.com

before the next service is due, helping to support proactive maintenance planning. "Most machines would use maximum level of detergent and the longest spin cycle, so use the maximum amount of energy," Philip adds. "We've worked with other brands before, and the number of after-sales repairs and parts was much less with GILE, so there are big cost savings in the long run. We've not had to change any mechanical parts in any of our projects so far, but we are here on the island with after-sales technical support if it is necessary."

That support is crucial. Buying equipment from a supplier in Italy rather than a closer source seems inefficient initially, but remote monitoring capability and high-quality manufacturing mean distance is no longer a barrier. All equipment is Wi-Fi-connected, with data from every laundry cycle sent to a central hub in Italy, where each machine's performance is monitored and analyzed. Potential issues can be identified early, enabling predictive maintenance that minimizes downtime, keeping repair costs to a minimum.

"Even to clients on a small island with no industrial infrastructure we can sell hi-tech machines that can be managed remotely"

Gabriele Giotto
GILE

Dealers have peace of mind that GILE can support them and manage the equipment. For example, staff can use the touchscreen to adjust many operational parameters and change the set-up of the machine, but if this results in sub-optimal performance due to a lack of technical skills on the part of the operator, then mistakes can be corrected remotely. "They are on the other side of the world, but we can still manage everything they need," says Gabriele Giotto, GILE's sales and product manager. "Even to clients on a small island with no industrial infrastructure we can still sell high-tech machines that can be managed remotely — even if they are seven hours and thousands of kilometers away from us."

The guests and the management at East Winds have high expectations, but so do GILE and Philip. This is a partnership that works to perfection. "We are very happy," says Calixte. "There are cost savings in terms of efficiency, better quality of the end product, and our linen has a longer lifespan as there is less wear and tear. We can't go wrong."

A strong blend

Italian heritage, innovation and technical expertise come together in a mutually beneficial collaboration between Rancilio Group and Lavazza, as Tina Nielsen reports



For Lavazza, the choice of equipment is crucial to ensuring the consistency and quality of its product











In a long-standing partnership spanning more than two decades, Rancilio Group has supported Lavazza across key markets and events worldwide. "The partnership started for the Italian market and has since moved beyond to France, the rest of Europe and the U.S.," says Rancilio Group's marketing and communication manager Simona Sordelli, adding that the group developed a machine customization as part of the partnership.

Lavazza, a global coffee group with a strong Italian heritage, has a presence in more than 140 markets and operates in both retail and out-of-home channels. It is recognized as one of the leading operators in the international coffee industry.

Rancilio Group, meanwhile, is known worldwide for its high-quality professional espresso machines and will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027.

This is a story of leadership and sector expertise coming together to deliver a complete coffee experience. "We are proud to collaborate with Lavazza in a partnership that brings together two Italian companies known for excellence in the coffee world," says Sordelli. "By combining Lavazza's expertise in coffee with Rancilio's technology and espresso machine know-how, we can offer professionals a more complete and consistent coffee experience."

The collaboration has grown over the years through a number of projects around the world, most recently with the IKA Events by Lavazza in luxury hospitality venues.

Emanuela Chiono, international key account trade marketing manager for the Lavazza Group, says this collaboration is built on a natural correlation. "Lavazza brings deep expertise in coffee selection, blending and brand experience, while Rancilio represents one of the leading names in professional espresso machine technology," she explains.

"In the hospitality world where I am personally involved, we often collaborate during industry events, trade shows and dedicated activations. These occasions are not just showcases, but opportunities to demonstrate how the integration between coffee and equipment can elevate the overall guest experience."

Consistency and quality

For Lavazza, working with a company such as Rancilio is crucial, says Chiono. "Even the best blend can only express its full potential when extraction parameters are properly optimized. The choice of equipment plays a key role in ensuring consistency and quality in professional environments," she says.

This point comes into focus in the hospitality setting where hotels expect — and need — reliability, precision



"Even the best blend can only express its full potential when extraction parameters are properly optimized"

Emanuela Chiono
Lavazza Group













Rancilio Group supports Lavazza across all market segments

and performance during high-intensity moments such as breakfast service. It is at these times that working with a trusted provider makes a difference. "It helps us ensure that our coffee can be delivered with exactly the level of consistency and technical reliability that customers expect," notes Chiono.

And the support is all-encompassing. Rancilio Group supports the coffee producer across all market segments, from entry-level to high-end. Lavazza mainly uses Rancilio Specialty RS1 and Classe Lavazza machines. "The Rancilio equipment offers precise temperature control, advanced brewing parameters, and high-quality materials, ensuring a consistently excellent coffee experience," explains Sordelli. "The innovative design and engineering provide a reliable and efficient solution for Lavazza's clients, enhancing their coffee offerings."

No matter how large or well-known a company may be, today's coffee industry is facing a challenging climate, with significant volatility in green coffee supply (raw, unroasted coffee beans), evolving consumer habits, changing demographics and increasing pressure on global supply chains.

But, according to Chiono, these challenges come with opportunities. "The ongoing development of the out-of-home channel, the growing interest in premium coffee experiences and continuous technological innovation all contribute to raising expectations around quality and consistency of the cup," she says.

Clear communication and coordination

This is a partnership underpinned by shared values, mutual trust and a clear understanding of what each partner brings to the table. "Often, one side brings the opportunity and the customer relationship while the other contributes with the right technology and expertise to strengthen the overall offering," says Chiono.

Just as important is clear communication and coordination. "Having a project leader who can oversee the different aspects of the project helps ensure alignment, accountability and efficient execution," she adds.

The ambition, says Chiono, is to move beyond the product. "We aim to deliver a complete coffee experience where machine performance and coffee quality work in harmony to meet the expectations of professional customers and demanding consumers," she says.

With an eye on the future, Sordelli says the partnership has provided an effective way to showcase espresso machines in high-appeal settings. "Thanks to this collaboration, our machines have been seen and will be seen in elegant and high-appeal settings frequented by top management and the franchisees of major luxury hotel chains. We're excited and proud to support the Lavazza key international account team during the main events all over the world," she says.

For Lavazza's Chiono, the partnership is a long-term collaboration that will evolve in step with the market and the requirements of the professional customers. These demands will place more importance on the integration between coffee expertise and equipment performance.

"I see strong potential in continuing to collaborate on key industry events and tailored projects for the hospitality industry. Moments that allow us to demonstrate product excellence as well as the right combination of coffee and technology can enhance the overall guest experience," she says.

Ultimately, the objective at the core never changes, says Chiono. "The objective is to continue supporting our customers in delivering high-quality coffee service while adapting to the evolving standards of the industry."

"We're excited and proud to support Lavazza during the main events all over the world"

Simona Sordelli
Rancilio Group



BRAND WATCH

RANCILIO GROUP

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

6
Rancilio Group has six branch offices, two R&D centers, an Extraction Lab and a global sales and service network

3
With three distinct brands, Rancilio Group offers a wide range of products to meet every customer need

ranciliogroup.com





Three partners, one vision

Café Alma in Almaty, Kazakhstan, partnered with Silko and dealer Bioshop to transform a small kitchen into a powerhouse of modern gastronomy, reports Chris Evans

Kazakhstan's Café Alma has a compact but highly efficient kitchen

In the heart of Almaty, Kazakhstan's former capital, Café Alma is more than a bistro-style restaurant where European classics meet local cuisine. Behind the scenes, its compact yet highly efficient kitchen tells a story of collaboration between Silko, Bioshop and Café Alma, combining Italian manufacturing excellence, local expertise and a chef-led vision of quality.

With its striking Soviet-era aesthetic and warm atmosphere, the restaurant also benefits from being part of the ABR Group, one of Central Asia's most dynamic hospitality groups. The group includes more than 15 restaurant concepts, each exploring new dimensions of taste, culture and dining experiences. The ingredients for success are clearly in place. The kitchen itself, however, measures approximately 17 square meters. Despite its small footprint, it relies on a full Silko setup to deliver an ambitious menu spanning breakfast, brunch, pastries and evening dining. Dishes include horsemeat stroganoff and steak, hummus and mushroom ragout, a Soviet breakfast featuring Doctor's sausage, and paccheri pasta with shrimp.

Seamless working

"High-performance equipment was absolutely essential for us," says chef Andrey Titov, head chef at Café Alma. "In such a small space, Silko equipment has been a real godsend, working together seamlessly."

The team has integrated multiple Essence 700 Series equipment, including induction hobs (4 zones x2), an electric pasta cooker (1 well – 42 liter), an electric deep fryer (double well – 22+22 liter), a 1,200mm griddle, a neutral element and refrigerated drawer bases (under the griddle and inductions). This allows prepared ingredients to be stored directly below the cooking line. For a high-volume restaurant with fast service demands, this configuration maximizes

“Silko’s strength is impeccable build quality… for a chef, that’s everything”

Andrey Titov
Café Alma

both space and workflow efficiency. The induction ranges are powered by generators from Inducs, an Ali Group company and a leader in induction technology, reflecting shared values of sustainability and kitchen well-being.

For chef Titov, reliability has been the defining factor. “We don’t use experimental or overly complex technology,” he explains. “But Silko’s strength is impeccable build quality. We’ve been using the equipment intensively for almost a year without a single issue — and for a chef, that’s everything.”

The project was delivered by Bioshop, one of Kazakhstan’s most established catering solutions providers. According to Nikita Bykov, director of Bioshop, Silko represents a premium benchmark in the local market. “In Kazakhstan, Silko is associated with high-level equipment,” Bykov says. “Not only because of design, but because of internal components that can withstand heavy-duty use. Café Alma serves many guests simultaneously and needs speed, consistency, and confidence that nothing will fail during service.”

Bykov highlights that Silko equipment maintains precise temperatures, a crucial factor for food quality and repeatability. “If you set 250° you get 250° — not fluctuations. That consistency directly affects the final dish.”

Precise and intuitive

Design also played a key role. With Café Alma’s open kitchen visible to guests, aesthetics mattered. Sleek lines, ergonomic controls, and smooth drawer mechanisms elevated the visual appeal while improving ease of use. “The equipment is comfortable to work with, precise and intuitive,” Bykov adds. “It’s easy to train staff, and that’s a big advantage.”

From Silko’s perspective, the partnership reflects a long-term commitment to quality-driven markets and trusted distributors. Annamaria Giacomin, export manager at Silko, emphasizes the importance of service and shared values.

“Bioshop has always focused on European brands and high-quality solutions,” she explains. “Kazakhstan is a challenging market due to low-cost competition, but Bioshop consistently chooses quality. That alignment makes cooperation natural.”

She also underlines that, today, service and relationships are what differentiate manufacturers. “Professional kitchen equipment is mature technology. What matters is support, trust, and the ability to respond quickly and decisively when challenges arise.”

That philosophy has already paid off. Café Alma plans to expand, with two new restaurants and a bakery opening in Astana (the capital city of Kazakhstan) — projects that will rely exclusively on Silko equipment.

For chef Titov, the decision is straightforward. “Silko offers the best value for money on the market,” he says. “I only regret one thing — that my other restaurants don’t already have Silko kitchens.” Together, Silko, Bioshop and Café Alma demonstrate how thoughtful collaboration, technical excellence and shared ambition can transform even the smallest kitchen into a powerhouse of modern gastronomy.





Above (from top): Annamaria Giacomin of Silko; Nikita Bykov of Bioshop. Bottom left: Andrey Titov of Café Alma





BRAND WATCH

SILKO

1980

Silko was founded 46 years ago in Italy and is headquartered in Vittorio Veneto, 70km from Venice

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 reduces plastic consumption by 60%

silko.it

Aging to perfection

At the two-Michelin-star Opheem in Birmingham, England, chef Aktar Islam is redefining Indian cuisine with the help of Williams Refrigeration's advanced aging cabinets, unlocking new levels of control, consistency and creativity across meat, fish and beyond, reports Chris Evans





At the heart of Opheem's kitchen lies a quiet but transformative process. Beyond the precision of service and layering of spices is the deliberate aging of ingredients. For chef-owner Aktar Islam, this is not a trend or a flourish. It is fundamental.

"We're in the business of flavor," he explains. "Any process we adopt has to be for that reason."

His philosophy has found a powerful ally in Williams Refrigeration's MAR1 stainless steel meat-aging cabinets. Installed as three dedicated units in Opheem's kitchen, they have allowed the restaurant to bring a once partially outsourced process fully in-house, unlocking new dimensions of taste, texture and creativity.

Dry aging has long been associated with beef, but at Opheem it goes much further. One cabinet is dedicated to beef, another to poultry, and a third to fish — each requiring different environmental conditions and handling.

Tangible results across the menu

"With poultry, we've found the skin is lovely and crisp by removing some of that moisture in the drying process," says Islam. "The same goes for fish; it really helps the marinades stay on rather than dripping off."

For a restaurant that frequently cooks over charcoal, this is essential. Reduced moisture content allows for better adhesion of marinades and improved caramelization during cooking, enhancing both flavor and finish.

Beef, however, remains the most striking example. Extended aging, sometimes up to two and a half months, intensifies flavor while also improving cooking performance. "With beef, we get a far better sear [using the Williams Meat Ager]. That Maillard process is much easier with a beautifully dry-aged piece of beef," Islam explains.

Before installing the Williams units, Opheem relied heavily on suppliers to age its proteins. This created constraints around consistency and experimentation. Now, everything happens in-house.

"We dry-age all our proteins and have control over the entire process," says Islam.

The flexibility of having three separate units also allows the kitchen to test different aging times, techniques and even ingredients simultaneously. "Being able to experiment and find what works for me is really important," he adds.

Pushing boundaries, improving quality

From Williams' perspective, the partnership is about more than supplying refrigeration. It's about enabling chefs to push boundaries and improve quality.

"Our aging units actually make clients money, transforming standard cuts into premium, flavor-rich ingredients through controlled aging," says Haydon Hendry, Williams Refrigeration's sales manager for the Northeast and Midlands.

The cabinets, which can be wrapped in any color, maintain carefully balanced humidity and temperature levels, supported by features such as Himalayan salt blocks to manage bacteria and moisture. This creates the ideal microclimate for aging. As Hendry notes, even marinated products can benefit, as they will "still dry out nicely" while the fibers break down and tenderize.

Importantly, the systems are straightforward to use, with intuitive controls and minimal maintenance requirements, allowing chefs to focus on results rather than process.

For Islam, the decision to work with Williams also came down to "trust, support and dependability."

That is reinforced by a hands-on approach from the experienced Williams team, some of whom were chefs themselves, including Hendry. "We're more like advisors, there to guide and help," he says, offering accessible service and aftercare, an important factor in a high-pressure kitchen environment.

That reliability underpins Opheem's ongoing evolution. Since opening in 2018, the restaurant has undergone multiple kitchen refurbishments, with each iteration refining its approach to food and technique.

Perhaps most telling is where Islam plans to go next. While meat and fish currently dominate the aging cabinets, the future lies in broader experimentation. "Now we're looking at what we can do with vegetables as well, because the possibilities are endless," says Islam.

"We dry-age all our proteins and have control over the entire process"

Aktar Islam
Opheem



Before installing the Williams units, Opheem relied heavily on suppliers to age its proteins



BRAND WATCH

46
For nearly 50 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

williamsrefrigeration.co.uk

In care facilities across Bavaria, Germany, residents can enjoy local cuisine that is both nutritious and steeped in regional culture, thanks to catering company An Guadn. Jim Banks explores how its cook-and-chill delivery model relies on temp-rite International's unique technology







A taste of home for Bavaria's care facilities

The phrase "An Guadn" is familiar to people from the southeastern part of Germany — it means "enjoy your meal" in the local Bavarian dialect. The company that bears the name aims to deliver high-quality Bavarian cuisine to residents in 60 nursing and residential care facilities across the region.

Part of the family-run Pichlmayr Group, the business sums up its approach to food with one simple phrase: "Bayrisch, Regional, Gut" (Bavarian, Regional, Good). Its focus on flavor and quality distinguishes it, but maintaining those standards across so many facilities is no easy task, requiring the founders to give careful thought to their meal distribution system.

"We always had a big challenge in delivering meals to the residents, so we decided 10 years ago to go with a cook-and-chill model," says Johannes Pichlmayr, An Guadn's managing director. "We want people in these homes to have good, fresh meals with the taste and culture of home, not the frozen meals they would get elsewhere."



An Guadn now has more than 150 temp-rite trolleys in operation

Traditional Bavarian food is hearty, rich and rustic, with a strong emphasis on meat and sweet dishes. Pork, dumplings and beer-based sauces are common. Signature dishes include *schweinshaxe*, a crispy pork knuckle; *weisswurst*, a traditional white sausage; *knödel*, potato or bread dumplings; *obatzda*, a popular cheese spread; and *kaiserschmarrn*, a much-loved dish of scrambled sweet pancakes.

"Older people in the homes know this traditional cuisine, though the people who work there and the people who visit want something more modern. So we have to offer a wide spectrum of meals," says Pichlmayr. "We have to think of it more like a healthcare setting and we have clients who have special dietary needs, so we must work with the doctor and the nursing home to create special meals."

Cook-and-chill brings consistency

The cook-and-chill system ensures meals remain fresh and flavorful, even when delivered to residents located far from the central kitchen in Moosburg an der Isar, which serves care facilities within a 150-kilometer radius. Chilled meals can be delivered a day in advance. Previously, the company operated a cook-and-serve system across 12 sites, creating significant logistical challenges. By contrast, cook-and-chill has proven both more reliable and more flexible.

This is due in part to the high performance of temp-rite International's Temp-Classic Pro M buffet trolleys, which form the backbone of the meal distribution process. "The introduction of the central cook-and-chill system increased















Above: Johannes Pichlmayr (top), Pichlmayr Group; Steffen Hülsen, temp-rite

requirements for technical equipment in the facilities, so they searched for a system partner that could ensure process reliability, hygiene, automation and everyday practicality at the same time," says Steffen Hülsen, temp-rite's sales manager for the Southern Region.

The trolleys are characterized by smart functionality, hygienic and robust construction, and a consistent focus on the needs of care and clinical environments. They feature fully automatic heating and cooling processes, integrated HACCP documentation for complete data recording, ergonomic design to help staff, easy cleaning processes and a durable design made from high-quality materials.

"Particularly important in care routines is the high degree of automation," adds Hülsen. "Heating and cooling processes run fully automatically. Reheating begins only at a defined time, so the meals are ready to serve exactly on schedule. Afterwards, the trolley automatically switches to holding mode, while the second compartment continues to cool. Parallel cooling of a separate compartment allows flexible menu planning with hot and cold components — without additional equipment."

After first introducing the trolleys six years ago, An Guadn now has more than 150 in operation, with no issues reported to date. "We tested other products before, but temp-rite's trolleys are better because they work with hot air, which keeps food in better condition," says Pichlmayr.

"The quality and service are among the best on the market, so we are getting the complete package. We are already making more than 4,000 meals per day and we want to extend that to around 7,000 — and for such a big expansion we know we have the right partner."

"The quality and service are among the best on the market"

Johannes Pichlmayr
Pichlmayr Group

BRAND WATCH

temp-rite

50+

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

2002

The temp-rite group joined the Ali Group in 2002

90%+

More than 90% of temp-rite's sales are in the healthcare sector

temp-rite.eu

Innovation and automation power the Xiaomai revolution

From redefining convenience retail to supporting the legendary Da Dong roast duck brand, Xiaomai Group is pushing the boundaries of what standardized high-end Chinese cuisine can be. Jim Banks looks at how a trusted partnership with Welbilt has helped make that possible









Xiaomai Group's smart, unstaffed stores are found all over China

In China, Master Dong is a name synonymous with roast duck of the highest quality. That the Da Dong brand is regarded as the market leader is largely due to Master Dong's dedication over more than 40 years to perfecting a recipe for crispy duck, with his signature feature being that the skin is not greasy.

"Master Dong is iconic in China, and more than 90 global leaders have been invited to taste his duck on their visits to China," says Zexuan Liu, chairman of Xiaomai Group, which entered into a strategic partnership with the brand in 2025 to focus on the globalization of Chinese cuisine.

With more than 50 restaurants in China, the Da Dong empire is steadily expanding its international presence. As it grows, the challenge is to maintain the highest standards, which have always been the result of Master Dong's close personal involvement.

He usually controls every step of the journey, from selecting the duck breeds to serving them at the table, so maintaining his rare level of personal mastery across multiple outlets and geographies is a big challenge.

"Achieving Da Dong's mission to go global depends on standardization," Zexuan explains. "Usually, putting the duck into the oven by hand and being able to control a wood-burning oven requires the expertise of the chef, but to go global you need standardization. Having the right breed of duck is important, and so is the marinating method, the drying cabinet and the time it takes to dry it."

That the Da Dong brand is regarded as the market leader is largely due to Master Dong's dedication

It was only with the involvement of Welbilt® that Da Dong was able to successfully standardize its equipment. The company developed a digital solution that allows up to eight ducks to be cooked in a single oven, even though delivering the same quality result requires different cooking parameters for each one. "There are potentially five stages where each parameter might be different, so we needed intelligent ovens to digitize the programming," Zexuan continues. "We were able to standardize the breed of duck and the preparation phase, but now we can also standardize the cooking process."

Xiaomai sets the standard for success

Zexuan's understanding of what it takes to successfully standardize high-end cooking processes comes from his own experience as the founder of Xiaomai Group. Back in 2013, the company was a startup focused on developing and operating unmanned community-based convenient stores.

Today, its smart, unstaffed stores are found across China. Using a container-style or modular kiosk model, they are well suited to high-density residential areas, business districts and locations near metro exits. The stores are small, pre-built units, often around 20 square meters in size, though sometimes much smaller, and can be deployed quickly and relocated as needed.

These pop-up stores are fully automated, relying on AI, sensors and cameras to track inventory and manage the customer shopping experience. Each store typically stocks more than 600 items, focusing on high-demand, fast-moving products like snacks, beverages, and sometimes daily essentials. Consistently high-quality hot food is also a key selling point.

The idea came to Zexuan after he graduated from Hupan University, which was set up by Jack Ma, the founder of Alibaba. Building also on his experience at Jingdong (JD.com), China's answer to Amazon and the country's largest retailer by revenue, he put digitization and automation at the core of his new concept. "The attendees at the university are all entrepreneurs, and I was in the first class there," he explains. "During that period, I developed a sense of mission — to inherit the spirit of my country's culinary masters and make the world fall in love with Chinese cuisine. I wanted to standardize and industrialize Chinese food, which is usually handled by individual master chefs."

Using the right core equipment, he set out to create industrialized processes for creating high-end food and to open up more international channels through which to sell it. In 2017, during the early stages of developing the convenience store model, a visit to a Welbilt R&D center proved to be a major turning point.

A relationship built to last

During that trip to the innovation center in Tampa, Florida, organized by Patrick Xi, Welbilt's vice president for North Asia, Zexuan was introduced to the innovative equipment that would ultimately help shape his strategic vision. "He was very much impressed by our technology and our innovations in kitchen equipment," Xi explains. "Soon after, Welbilt China and Xiaomai started putting Merrychef® ovens in the convenience stores. Over the years, Xiaomai Group has evolved from a convenience store operator into a developer of large-scale, pre-made food industrial parks, where different food manufacturers make packaged ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook Chinese food for retail stores such as Sam's Club. Now, Xiaomai's ambition is to expand globally."

Xiaomai Group has evolved into a developer of large-scale, pre-made food industrial parks

Through this strategic partnership, Welbilt supplies cook-and-chill solutions for food production, including floor-standing Convotherm® combi ovens, Cleveland® kettles, Tecnomac



"Achieving Da Dong's mission to go global depends on standardization"

Zexuan Liu
Xiaomai Group



Da Dong has more than 50 restaurants in China





Welbilt and Convotherm work with and support Da Dong on a global basis





blast chillers, and Metos braising kettles. Welbilt China and Xiaomai have also jointly established the Welbilt Xiaomai R&D and Experience Center within the Xiaomai industrial park, supporting product development while giving customers the opportunity to experience the solutions firsthand. This partnership now extends well beyond China, as Xiaomai Group has expanded into Japan, Southeast Asia and the US. Welbilt KitchenConnect®, which allows all ovens to be connected to the cloud and managed from a single computer, is a key enabler of this expansion.

"This not only improves efficiency but is also a security measure," says Xi. "The cooking parameters are proprietary — they are the secret sauce and must be protected.

"We can monitor store operations and check supply chain requirements, and we can maintain the quality and the breed of duck that is important to Da Dong. We are providing full solutions," he adds. "We see what they are making and how they operate, so we can see what they need."

In September 2025 at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, Convotherm and Da Dong signed a global strategic partnership agreement. With this partnership, Welbilt and Convotherm will work with and support Da Dong on a global basis. That is just the latest step in a relationship with Welbilt that will carry both Xiaomai and Da Dong far on their journey to bring high-end Chinese food and innovative automation to the world.



"We are providing full solutions. We see how they operate, so we can see what they need"

Patrick Xi
Welbilt







Xiaomai Group's partnership with Welbilt extends beyond China into Japan, Southeast Asia and the United States

BRAND WATCH

WELBILT

1929

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

58

There are nearly 60 Welbilt brands operating worldwide

2022

Welbilt was acquired by the Ali Group

welbiltasia.com



Alb-Fils Klinikum, a municipal hospital owned by the Göppingen district in Baden-Württemberg, elevates its patient meal service with Stierlen's innovative B-Smart and AGV transport system, learns Chris Evans

Smart food logistics

When Alb-Fils Klinikum opened its new state-of-the-art hospital building in Göppingen, Germany, in 2025, the goal was clear: to create one of the most technologically advanced healthcare facilities in the region. Alongside cutting-edge medical infrastructure and digital systems, the hospital also required a modern, highly efficient meal distribution solution capable of serving hundreds of patients every day.

To achieve this, the hospital partnered with Stierlen, implementing the company's B-Smart tray system combined with an Automated Guided Vehicle (AGV) transport system — an innovative approach that brings automation, hygiene and precision together in hospital catering.

Alb-Fils Klinikum is a municipal hospital, owned by the Göppingen district in Baden-Württemberg, that also serves as an academic teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Ulm. With around 645 beds, including 43 intensive care beds, and approximately 30,000 inpatients and 135,000 outpatients treated each year, the hospital required a robust catering infrastructure capable of delivering consistent meal quality at scale.

According to Michael Tibi, head of catering services at Alb-Fils Klinikum, the move to the new hospital building created the opportunity to rethink foodservice operations from the ground up.

"The main reason for the partnership was the need to implement a highly modern, efficient and



Alb-Fils Klinikum needed a robust catering infrastructure capable of delivering consistent meal quality at scale



hygienically safe foodservice system for the more than 600 beds of the new central hospital," he explains.

Stierlen was involved early in the planning stages, helping to integrate meal logistics into the hospital's digital infrastructure. The project ultimately included the installation of B-Smart meal distribution trolleys, docking stations for regeneration on the wards, and integration with the hospital's automated transport system.

"What makes this project special is the combination of B-Smart with AGV transport to the patient wards and decentralized regeneration in the individual supply rooms," says Siegfried Hilser, managing director at Stierlen. "The fact that we were able to implement this system in a state-of-the-art new hospital shows that our systems are at the cutting edge."

Improving logistics

In practice, the system works as an integrated process. Meals are portioned in the central kitchen and placed into insulated B-Smart trolleys with separate hot and cold compartments. These trolleys are then transported through the hospital by AGVs (driverless vehicles), which carry them directly to the correct ward. Once there, they are connected to docking stations that regenerate meals to precise serving temperatures shortly before distribution to patients.

The automation significantly improves logistics while maintaining strict hygiene and food safety standards.

"The shift to fully automated delivery without manual intervention represents a major advancement," says Tibi. "Automated transport eliminates logistical bottlenecks and human errors while ensuring a fully documented cold and heat chain."



"What makes this project special is the combination of B-Smart with AGV transport"

Siegfried Hilser
Stierlen

The B-Smart system itself is designed specifically for cook-chill hospital catering. Its high-performance insulation and precise temperature control allow hot and cold elements of a meal to remain perfectly separated until regeneration. This ensures that soups arrive hot while salads remain fresh, an important factor in patient satisfaction.

Hilser emphasizes that hygiene and durability were also key considerations during the system's design.

"The trolley is completely welded inside and outside and fully foamed for insulation," he explains. "There are no openings where moisture can enter, which is important because hospital meal trolleys are washed multiple times every day. This ensures long service life and excellent hygiene."

Beyond food quality, the system also delivers clear operational benefits. Automated transport reduces the need for staff to move heavy carts across multiple floors, allowing them to focus more fully on patient care. Digital monitoring also ensures temperatures and food safety data can be tracked and documented throughout the distribution process.

For patients, the benefits are equally clear. "Reliable mealtimes are important for coordinating with medication or therapy schedules," says Tibi. "Precise regeneration ensures meals arrive exactly as intended, hot food hot; cold food fresh."

As Alb-Fils Klinikum continues to develop its digital and automated infrastructure, its partnership with Stierlen remains a key component of its long-term strategy.

By combining advanced catering technology with automated logistics, the hospital has created a foodservice system that supports both operational efficiency and patient wellbeing, demonstrating how innovation can transform even the most routine aspects of hospital care.





BRAND WATCH

Stierlen
SEIT 1889

1889

A leader in the production of food distribution systems and professional dishwashers, Stierlen was founded in 1889 in Rastatt, Germany

1997

Stierlen was acquired by the Ali Group in 1997

90%+

More than 90% of customers come from the healthcare market

stierlen.com

Small but perfectly formed

Fitting out the kitchen of a village primary school may not seem like a flagship project, but its importance to a local Czech community – along with the elegance of the solution, centered on equipment from JIPA – shows that size is not the right measure of quality or creativity, reports Jim Banks









Above (from top): Čebín primary school; Patrik Čechák, JIPA; Marek Kaspar, GOZ GASTRO





BRAND WATCH

12
JIPA equipment features 12-inch touchscreens, with control panels that can be positioned on the left or right

AISI 304
JIPA uses AISI 304 stainless steel for corrosion resistance, formability and weldability

2
JIPA's multifunctional equipment features a specially designed base with a double-sided weld

jipacz.cz

Home to just 2,000 people, Čebín is a small municipality a 30-minute drive from Brno, the Czech Republic's second city. The village's primary school recently moved to a new site, created through the refurbishment of an old Socialist-era shopping mall. As a result, the local authority faced an important decision about its kitchen: transfer the existing equipment, some of which dated back to the late 1980s, or invest in something new.

Thomas Kříž, mayor of the Municipality of Čebín, chose the second option. His goal was to build a reliable, modern kitchen with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the local community. "It was important for us that the new facility could serve not only the children at the primary school, but also pupils from the kindergarten and the elderly from our local senior community," he explains. "We also wanted to give more choice by being able to prepare multiple courses, so that people could select from at least two meals each day."

Energy efficiency was also a key factor, with the new kitchen proving significantly less energy-intensive than the original, delivering both environmental and financial benefits. To achieve this, Kříž turned to Marek Kaspar, director and co-owner at consultancy GOZ GASTRO. His genuine effort to understand the school's specific needs, including budget and the spatial constraints, immediately made an impression.

"For us, dinner is at midday and is usually soup, meat, rice, potatoes and, now, more veg. That is our tradition, so every school has a canteen, and it either cooks food on-site or brings in fresh food to serve," says Kaspar.

"We were able to make a complete change to the menu because we used equipment from JIPA that supports fast preparation and much fresher food. A unique device, with endless possibilities," he adds.

"For example, we can make fresh pasta for every serving. My memories of school are running as fast as possible through the canteen to go home for something good to eat. Now, I eat with my clients from the kitchens we design," says Kaspar.

Versatility takes center stage

In addition to serving primary school and kindergarten students, the kitchen also prepares up to 70 meals for elderly people in the area. Its capacity and versatility stem from multi-functional tilting pans from JIPA, which are now the centerpiece of the kitchen.

"The main idea is to have many technologies in a minimal footprint"

Patrik Čechák
JIPA

The pans, particularly the JIPA JUMP 101DL, with its two 80-liter pans, provide sufficient capacity to produce more than 50 meals per day, offering a choice of three menu types and the ability to cater to special diets.

"The main idea of our multi-functional device is to have many technologies in a minimal footprint. A unique device with endless possibilities," explains Patrik Čechák, head of sales and export manager, JIPA. "It replaces a pasta cooker, a classic bratt pan, a grill and a deep fryer. All of those things are combined into one device that can work 24/7. It can do overnight cooking so that meat is ready when chefs arrive in the morning, leaving them to concentrate on sauces and puddings. Or it can deep fry donuts, or make French fries."

The pans also feature an automatic basket system, allowing chefs to step away while food cooks. Operators simply select a program and leave the system to do the rest. "The reaction from the cooks is always the same," says Kaspar. "In week one, they want their old kitchen back. By week two, when they have had some training, their world changes. Their workload is easier and they can be more productive in a smaller space. Then they would never let you take it away and go back to the old system."

The impact is clear: healthier food for children and seniors, lower electricity bills for the mayor, and greater efficiency for the kitchen staff. With the right equipment and thoughtful design, even a small school kitchen can make a big difference to a community.

04
INNOVATION



Innovation

A collaboration between Scotsman and Caffè Sempione in Milan, Italy, shows how rethinking something as familiar as an ice machine can elevate drink quality, efficiency and design, reports Chris Evans



in every cube

At first glance, an ice machine is rarely considered the hero of a modern coffee bar. Yet as iced coffee, cold brew, and coffee cocktails continue to reshape café menus worldwide, ice has become a critical ingredient — one that directly affects flavor, dilution, aesthetics and customer perception.

Recognizing this shift, Scotsman has placed innovation firmly at the center of its latest product development. That focus is on full display at Caffè Sempione's flagship café in Milan, one of Italy's most forward thinking specialty coffee roasters, where the brand has installed its new EXG undercounter gourmet ice machine. The EXG represents a shift in how ice machines are conceived and integrated into hospitality spaces. Compact enough to sit neatly under the counter and finished in a sleek black exterior, it is designed specifically for premium environments where performance and aesthetics must work in harmony.

Enhancing bar design

"The first thing you notice is that it looks like a machine of today," says Alessio Pianta, chief technology officer (CTO), Caffè Sempione. "For the first time, someone thought to make a beautiful ice machine. When it's behind the counter, it doesn't clash with the bar design — it enhances it."

Beyond appearance, functionality drives the design. The EXG produces crystal-clear, solid gourmet ice cubes weighing 20 grams each. Engineered to melt slowly and evenly, they deliver a critical advantage for iced coffee drinks and cocktails, where excess dilution can quickly compromise flavor. "When you take the cube in your hand, you feel the difference," says Pianta. "The new cube is drier, more compact. The old one melts immediately. This one lasts longer in the glass. That changes the quality of the drink."

Left: The new EXG undercounter gourmet ice machine, as used by Caffè Sempione (top) in Milan, Italy

Innovation extends well beyond the cube itself. Developed using the natural refrigerant R290, the machine reflects Scotsman's broader focus on sustainability and energy efficiency. Full front ventilation allows for true built-in installation, even in tight spaces, while also simplifying servicing and maintenance.

"The new product line was developed with user-friendliness, energy efficiency and ease of maintenance in mind," explains Simone Buratti, international marketing manager at Scotsman. "Ease of use in everyday operation and cleaning is a significant advantage for our customers."

Practical features such as a removable air filter, simplified internal access and magnetic accessories, including an ice scoop that automatically attaches to the bin, help reduce friction during busy service periods. Digital electronics allow technicians to access parameters quickly, while remote connectivity via the XWave app enables real-time monitoring and preventative maintenance for customers.

"We can see daily reports and verify that everything is working perfectly," Buratti says. "So far, there have been no challenges at all."

The decision to install the EXG at Caffè Sempione was deliberate. The two companies have worked together for years and are located close to one another, allowing for close collaboration and continuous feedback throughout testing and development.

"Active feedback from end-users is always an important part of every new product line," Buratti





explains. "This was especially true for the EXG, which features a completely new design, energy savings and digital technology."

Caffè Sempione's flagship café in Pogliano Milanese provided an ideal test environment. Serving more than 300 breakfasts per day and over 1,000 customers on weekends, the café operates under sustained pressure, conditions in which equipment reliability quickly becomes non-negotiable.

"The machine is installed in our main coffee shop," Pianta says. "It's been on test for several months and hasn't caused any issues."

At the center of service

Ice quality plays a visible role throughout the day. The EXG supports iced coffees and cold drinks during service hours and becomes central to aperitivo service in the evening. "We serve happy hour until 8pm," says Pianta. "Thanks to the new longer-lasting ice, drinks are less diluted. That's a big advantage for us and for the customer."

"Thanks to the new longer-lasting ice, drinks are less diluted. That's a big advantage"

Alessio Pianta
Caffè Sempione



Consistency is another key benefit. Unlike older machines that can produce hollow or irregular cubes, the EXG delivers near-identical cubes every cycle, an important detail in how customers perceive quality.

The success of the installation reflects a deeper alignment between the two businesses. Founded in 2012 as a single bar, Caffè Sempione has grown into a roastery serving hundreds of customers, supported by an in-house technical team that installs, repairs and maintains equipment.

"Our idea was to sell a complete service," Pianta explains. "Coffee, machines, layout, assistance — everything. For us, reliability is more important than just the product."

That philosophy mirrors Scotsman's own approach. "Through innovation, a well-balanced product portfolio, outstanding service and a fantastic team, we are a thoroughly reliable partner," Buratti says.

"Through innovation... and a fantastic team, we are a thoroughly reliable partner"

Simone Buratti
Scotsman

Innovation at Caffè Sempione also extends into education. Its coffee academy focuses on operational training rather than theory alone, placing students behind the counter alongside experienced instructors.

"We teach what really happens every day in a bar," Pianta explains. "It's about efficiency, workflow and quality."

The EXG fits naturally into this environment, demonstrating how modern equipment can support better service, reduce cleaning and maintenance challenges, and improve consistency.

Looking ahead, buoyed by the success of the EXG installation, Caffè Sempione plans to begin offering the machine to its own network of bar and restaurant customers, an endorsement that carries particular weight. "They are very satisfied," Buratti confirms. "And they've already asked for other machines in the future."

In an industry where innovation is often associated with new brewing methods or digital menus, the EXG demonstrates that even the most familiar elements of hospitality can be reimagined. By placing ice quality at the heart of beverage excellence, Scotsman and Caffè Sempione are quietly — but decisively — reshaping expectations in the modern coffee bar.







Above: Alessio Pianta, CTO of Caffè Sempione (top); Simone Buratti, international marketing manager at Scotsman

BRAND WATCH

Scotsman

1955

Scotsman pioneered the development of reliable, affordable ice-making machines

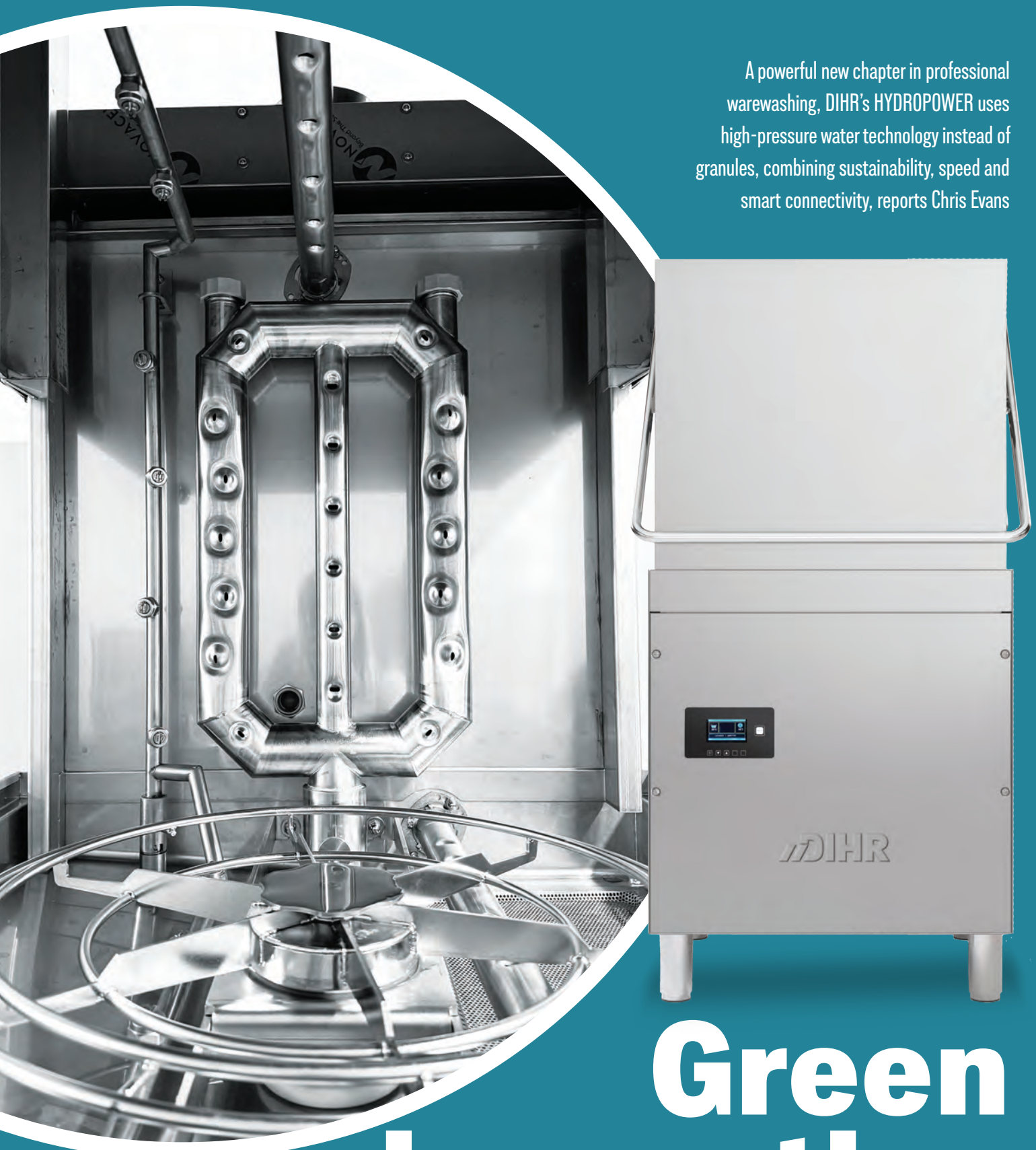
2012

Scotsman, the world's largest manufacturer of commercial ice machines, joined the Ali Group

300+

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

scotsman-ice.it



Green innovation

A powerful new chapter in professional warewashing, DIHR's HYDROPOWER uses high-pressure water technology instead of granules, combining sustainability, speed and smart connectivity, reports Chris Evans

Described as "the ultimate warewashing technology," HYDROPOWER is more than a new machine launch for DIHR. It represents a shift in how professional kitchens can tackle their toughest washing challenges.

The compact 2-in-1 solution combines a high-pressure utensil washer and a hood-type dishwasher in a single footprint, meaning no need for granules, while delivering exceptional performance.

"Twenty years ago, we developed the granule machine," explains Carlo Brunati, commercial director at DIHR, headquartered near Venice, Italy. "Now we're innovating again. Instead of granules we use water power, so no pollution from microplastics."

That evolution is significant. Where traditional systems relied on plastic granules to remove burnt-on soil, HYDROPOWER harnesses the force of high-pressure water jets to achieve the same result — without soaking and without abrasive media.

At its core, HYDROPOWER is engineered for versatility. The machine features two separate wash circuits: a high-pressure pump dedicated to trays and baking pans, and a low-pressure pump for standard dishes. Eight wash programs — four for trays and four for plates — allow operators to move seamlessly between heavily soiled gastronorm pans and everyday crockery.

"It is a two-in-one machine," explains Claudia Vezzaro, DIHR's R&D manager. "It can wash gastronorm trays with stubborn soil and also standard dishes, thanks to a sensor that recognizes what is loaded and automatically provides the right selection of cycles."

Speed is another defining feature. "Just three minutes to remove stubborn dirt from a gastronorm pan, which frees kitchen teams to focus on higher-value tasks," says Andrea Squizzato, who is also DIHR's R&D manager alongside Vezzaro.

Despite its power, the machine remains compact — smaller than a traditional warewasher and only slightly larger than a standard hood-type model. Designed for canteens, caterers, airports and modern restaurant kitchens, it delivers high output without demanding excessive floor space.

Stable pressure ensured

Central to HYDROPOWER's performance is DIHR's innovative PLUS system, which guarantees a consistent rinse even with low inlet water pressure. The system incorporates an atmospheric boiler that maintains water at 85°C throughout the rinse cycle, refilling only after the cycle is complete. A rinse pump and break tank ensure stable pressure and prevent backflow.

"It assures constant rinsing water and pressure," Vezzaro explains. "Stability in the rinsing result is very important."

HYDROPOWER also features a final spinning phase, rotating the basket at high speed to remove residual water. "The spinning function helps remove the residual water after rinsing, and improves drying and turnaround," says Squizzato.

Left: HYDROPOWER is integrated with DIHR's optional Connectivity 4.0 system and app

> **"Instead of granules we use water power, so no pollution from microplastics"**
> **Carlo Brunati**
> DIHR

Optional enhancements further elevate efficiency and ergonomics. The improved two-step LIFT system, powered by an electric motor, automatically raises the hood at the end of the cycle. "Nowadays the ergonomic side is very important," notes Squizzato. "The lift makes the work easier and safer."

The HR heat recovery unit captures steam generated during operation to preheat incoming cold water, delivering immediate energy savings while improving the dishwashing environment. "You get two advantages in one," explains Brunati. "Saving energy and getting rid of steam in the kitchen, which is a big issue."

Reliability as standard

HYDROPOWER is fully integrated with DIHR's optional Connectivity 4.0 system and app, enabling remote monitoring of cycles, alarms and HACCP data. "The service staff can know in advance which component is better to replace," says Vezzaro.

With in-house production spanning sheet metal cutting and folding, robotic processing and final testing, every unit is rigorously checked before dispatch to ensure quality and cost control.

"Each machine is tested and each testing result is recorded in our system continuously," says Squizzato. "Reliability is a big point that makes us stand out from the competition and the reason why we distribute to more than 120 countries worldwide."

The machines have also been field-tested across multiple markets and foodservice environments and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. "Clients have tested it and appreciated the cleanliness and performance," Vezzaro adds.

Looking ahead, the team sees HYDROPOWER as the starting point for further development. "It is significant for our vision of the future," Vezzaro concludes. "Intelligent, versatile and connected."

BRAND WATCH

DIHR
we mean clean

40+

DIHR has more than 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

A smarter way to serve

Burlodge's innovative BSmart Class-e system is supporting nutrition, ergonomics and foodservice efficiency at Centre de Rééducation Fonctionnelle DIVIO, a new healthcare facility in Dijon, France, reports Chris Evans







Providing nutritious, high-quality meals is a vital part of patient recovery in rehabilitation facilities. For healthcare teams, ensuring food reaches patients at the right temperature and in the best possible condition is essential to supporting wellbeing, comfort and morale. At the same time, the systems used to deliver those meals must also make transport safer and more efficient for staff.

At the Centre de Rééducation Fonctionnelle (CRF) COS Divio in Dijon, France, these priorities are being met through the implementation of the BSmart Class-e system from Burlodge. The advanced meal distribution solution helps ensure meals retain their nutritional quality from kitchen to ward, while also significantly improving ergonomics and ease of use for staff.

For the Rehabilitation Centre, food quality is an important part of the care pathway. "We are convinced that nutrition plays an essential role in patient recovery," explains Nicolas Carlot, deputy director of CRF COS Divio. "Eating well contributes to patients' health, comfort and morale, which is why we attach particular importance to offering high-quality meals in our facility."

Installed as part of the Centre's move to a new, modern facility, the system has transformed how meals are transported and delivered, combining precise temperature control, ergonomic design and smart digital monitoring.

Improving usability

The BSmart Class-e system is part of Burlodge's latest Class-e product range, a new generation of meal distribution equipment developed to improve usability, operational efficiency and environmental performance.

According to Daniela Triolo, product and marketing manager at Burlodge, the Class-e concept represents an evolution of the company's established technologies and innovation.

"The 'E' stands for ergonomics, efficiency, expert, ecological and elegance," she explains. "It's about taking products that healthcare operators already know and trust and making them more ergonomic, more efficient and easier to use."

Rather than focusing solely on technical performance, the development of the system focused on the needs of the people who interact with the equipment every day, from kitchen teams and porters to caregivers distributing meals to patients.

"There's a lot of technology in these trolleys," Triolo says, "but the goal is to make them so intuitive that everyone who uses them feels like an expert."

Supporting nutrition and care

Nutrition plays an important role in the rehabilitation process at CRF COS Divio. The facility maintains an on-site kitchen and dedicated culinary team to ensure meals are prepared fresh and tailored to patient needs.



The Centre de Rééducation Fonctionnelle (CRF) COS Divio relies on Burlodge's BSmart Class-e system

This is particularly important for patients with swallowing disorders or complex dietary requirements, where careful preparation and precise temperature control are essential.

The BSmart Class-e system supports this approach by helping ensure meals maintain the correct temperature from kitchen to bedside. The trolleys use unique foam-injected insulation to ensure that hot food is kept hot and cold food is kept cold throughout transport and service.

"This is the main objective for delivery to patients," Triolo explains. "The Class-e range improves both heating and refrigeration performance."

The system also uses R290 refrigerant gas, which offers excellent refrigeration performance while significantly reducing environmental impact. These features help preserve food quality and presentation, an important factor in encouraging patients to eat well during their recovery.

Staff comfort and workflow

While patient nutrition was a key priority, improving working conditions for staff was also an important factor in the Centre's decision to adopt the BSmart Class-e system.







“The benefits of a Burlodge Class-e trolley lie in its strong added value”

Philippe Milon
Burlodge

With meals prepared on site every day, staff must transport large numbers of trays between the kitchen and patient units. “Our previous meal distribution carts were particularly heavy and difficult to manoeuvre,” says Carlot. So, the team evaluated several suppliers and solutions, attending industry exhibitions such as SantExpo to identify equipment that could meet their needs. Ergonomics, durability, hygiene and ease of operation were all key criteria.

One crucial requirement was a system with separate docking stations and shuttles, reducing the weight staff needed to handle each day and helping prevent musculoskeletal disorders.

After demonstrations and on-site testing, the Centre ultimately chose to install seven BSmart Class-e carts, each capable of transporting 20 trays, with six serving inpatient care units and one dedicated to the day hospital.

Designed for ease of use

The system’s ergonomic design was widely appreciated by staff. The shuttles are constructed with a stainless steel frame for strength and durability but remain lightweight, reducing weight while maintaining strength and durability. Their lower height also improves visibility during distribution, making them easier to manoeuvre through corridors and patient areas. “The shuttles are low in height, allowing good visibility during distribution, even for shorter staff members,” says Carlot.

“From the beginning, our needs were taken into account with a tailored solution”

Nicolas Carlot
CRF COS Divio

Above, top: Pierre-Andre Villard of Burlodge (L) pictured with Nicolas Carlot of CRF COS Divio (R) in Dijon

Full-length push-pull handles allow operators to place their hands wherever feels most comfortable, improving manoeuvrability for users of different heights. Optional six-wheel configurations also enhance stability and turning capability.

Together, these features help reduce physical strain during daily operations while improving workflow efficiency.

Smart features

Beyond temperature performance and ergonomics, the BSmart Class-e system incorporates several features designed to simplify everyday tasks for healthcare staff. One example is the color-coded gasket system inside





the trolley. Red seals indicate the hot compartment, while blue seals identify the cold section, helping staff immediately identify where trays should be placed.

While simple, this visual system significantly reduces the risk of loading errors during busy meal service periods.

Another practical feature is the status lighting system. "If you walk into a room full of trolleys, you can immediately see which ones are operating normally and which ones may require attention," explains Triolo.

The trolleys also feature intuitive touch control screens that allow operators to check temperatures and monitor cycles easily. The interface uses clear visual icons, making it accessible even to users with limited technical experience.

One of the most significant innovations in the BSmart Class-e system is its integration with Burlodge's IQ-Control 2.0 app, a 2.0 digital management platform.

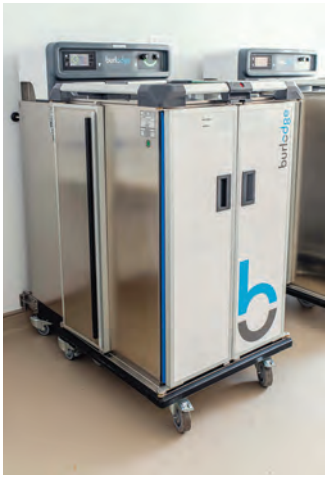
Using Bluetooth connectivity, authorized staff can connect to the trolley via a mobile device to monitor performance, check temperatures or adjust settings in real time.

"Here at CRF COS Divio we particularly appreciate the traceability the system provides," Carlot explains. "All information is stored for two months, and we can monitor the operating status of the shuttles in real time."

The system records operational data such as temperature history and alarms, helping facilities maintain compliance with food safety standards while identifying potential issues before they affect service.

Operational flexibility

Healthcare facilities must often adapt their service models as patient needs evolve. The BSmart Class-e system provides that flexibility through configurable operating settings.



The BSmart Class-e system offers clients such as CRF COS Divio flexibility through its configurable operating settings

"When we first opened, we operated with hot chain service at lunch and cold chain service in the evening and on weekends," Carlot explains.

"Later we switched to an exclusive cold chain system. The cart settings were adjusted accordingly, and no difficulties were encountered."

For Burlodge, installations such as the CRF COS Divio project demonstrate the growing impact of the Class-e range within healthcare catering.

"The Divio Functional Rehabilitation Centre is an excellent example of what has been happening in the French market since the launch of our Class-e ranges," says Philippe Milon, director general of Burlodge.

"The benefits of a Burlodge Class-e trolley lie in its strong added value in terms of ergonomics, ease of use, reliability and temperature security."

For the Rehabilitation Centre, the partnership has delivered exactly what it set out to achieve: a system that supports both staff and patients.

"We have successfully developed a partnership based on trust," says Carlot. "From the very beginning, our needs were taken into account with a tailored solution," he adds.

As healthcare facilities continue to modernize their operations, systems such as the BSmart Class-e show how thoughtful design and smart technology can improve everyday processes, helping caregivers focus on what matters most: patient recovery and wellbeing.

BRAND WATCH

burlodge
TOGETHER, WE WORK.

1984

Burlodge was founded 42 years ago in the UK

5

Burlodge has offices in five countries in Europe and North America

2045

Burlodge is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045

burlodge.com





Seamless soft serve solutions

Renowned Argentinian fast-food chain Mostaza is fueling its growth with standout dessert offerings. Lauren Hurrell spoke to Mostaza and Iceteam 1927 on how this effective partnership is helping to broaden Mostaza's horizons

Established in 1988, Mostaza is Argentina's second-largest fast-food chain, and one of the fastest-growing in the region. The operator continues to evolve, delivering convenience, speed and quality by adapting its menus to shifting customer preference while maintaining a consistent, high-quality experience at its more than 220 stores nationwide.

Specializing in hamburgers, sandwiches, desserts and coffee, Mostaza is supported by a robust drive-thru service. What sets the brand apart is its proud use of local produce, helping preserve the Argentine legacy of its world-famous meat. Born from a family-run company, it continues to champion national cuisine, quality and a strong commitment to locally sourced ingredients.

"Our operation is large, dynamic and designed to serve high volumes efficiently across multiple channels. From dine-in to drive-thru, every touchpoint is optimized for speed and consistency," says Gabriela Daverio, supply chain director at Mostaza. "When developing our







Right: Gabriela Daverio, Mostaza (top) and Piero Giordano, Iceteam 1927

foodservice strategy, we focused on what matters most to our guests: fast service, great taste and variety. We also recognized the growing importance of indulgence and impulse purchases, which led us to strengthen categories like desserts."

However, despite its scale and wide range of products, Mostaza was looking to further enhance the quality and consistency of its soft serve offering, leading the operator to choose Iceteam 1927 as its partner. "Our mission is to turn ice cream into a true sales driver and elevate the front counter experience," says Daverio. "We wanted to make desserts more visible, more appealing and more accessible — ultimately increasing customer engagement."

This project focused on transforming the role of desserts within Mostaza's restaurants. Iceteam 1927, an Ali Group company specializing in gelato, ice cream, soft serve and pastry equipment, managing brands such as BIB, Cattabriga, Coldelite, Ott-Freezer and Promag.

"Iceteam 1927 stood out as a strategic partner thanks to their expertise, innovation and reliability," says Daverio. "They understood our ambition to reposition desserts as a key category and provided solutions that aligned perfectly with our needs. Their technology and support played a critical role in bringing our vision to life," he adds.

"As part of its continuous search for innovation and performance improvements, Mostaza explored alternative solutions and asked to test one of our machines," says Piero Giordano, resident area manager at Iceteam 1927. "They said, 'If we test and everything goes well we will consider 10 machines in the next six months.'"

Just one month later, Mostaza ordered 30 units from Iceteam 1927. Within one year, it replaced more than 150 units. "Mostaza has since purchased 220-230 units, with sales continuing after 2.5 years," says Giordano.

> **"Our mission is to turn ice cream into a true sales driver and elevate the front counter experience"**
>
> **Gabriela Daverio**
> Mostaza

It was clear the equipment delivered not only strong performance, but also advanced technology, reliable spare parts availability, streamlined processes, low maintenance, easy cleaning and high capacity and productivity. "We were looking for high-performance equipment capable of delivering speed, consistency and premium-quality products at scale — and that's exactly what we got," says Daverio. "These machines not only improved operational efficiency but also enhanced the visual appeal and desirability of our dessert offering."

Technical know-how

Naturally, challenges are to be expected when scaling innovation across a network of over 200 locations, but through effective planning, phased rollouts and hands-on training, the teams implemented the solution efficiently and consistently across Mostaza's restaurants. Seamless integration into fast-paced operations, without hindering service speed, however, would be critical.

"We installed our equipment in Mostaza's busiest locations, which increased productivity, through seamless service with much faster cleaning and reasonable spare parts costs," says Giordano.

"We use peristaltic pump technology, which helps make it extremely easy to clean with few parts. It's a heavy-duty model compared with other machines available in the market."

Understanding the considerations needed to justify the long-term value of such an investment, Giordano worked closely with technicians to provide guidance. He explained the product's remote-control system, which allows technicians to access machines via a mobile app to check performance, review data and proactively address issues across locations. This capability provides greater control, enabling teams to resolve issues remotely and in real-time, minimizing delays that might otherwise occur due to a lack of skilled staff on-site.

"Perhaps 90% of issues can be solved by phone call without the presence of the technician on-site. However, if a technician is needed, this technology helps to inform them of the fault or issue before arrival, so they can bring the right spare part for replacement, if necessary," says Giordano. "This was the real game-changer for technicians."

Post-sales care has involved regular visits from Iceteam 1927, two to three times per year. "Normally, I visit more to talk about the weather, because they are so happy," says Giordano. "We installed more machines in recent weeks, demonstrating that the partnership continues to grow. It is a different sale; previously they were replacing machines, now we are their partners, as they continue to grow, and that's not limited to Argentina."

Today, Mostaza also operates in Uruguay and Paraguay, with plans to expand across Latin America and into the U.S. by the end of 2026. "This project delivered a true 360° impact on our business. It significantly boosted front counter sales and gave our dessert portfolio a leading role within our offering," says Daverio. "Beyond the numbers, it strengthened our brand positioning as an innovative and customer-centric company. We're proud because it reflects who we are: a brand that continuously evolves, invests in better experiences and turns great ideas into real business results."



As Mostaza continues its growth trajectory with the help of Iceteam 1927's unique technology, expert solutions and tailored after-sales assistance, the partnership has created a strong foundation for the operator's ongoing evolution. The result? Putting Mostaza further on the map across Argentina, wider Latin America and beyond.

BRAND WATCH

ICETEAM 1927

1927

Nearly 100 years ago, talented Italian engineer Otello Cattabriga patented a mechanical system for producing Italian-style gelato, marking the birth of the Cattabriga brand

2010

Ali Group incorporated Iceteam 1927 as a single company, comprising five historic brands: BIB, Cattabriga, Coldelite, Ott-Freezer and Promag

2023

At SIGEP 2023, Iceteam 1927 inaugurated the "Innovation for Gelato" award featured in Gambero Rosso's renowned annual guide, Gelaterie d'Italia

iceteam1927.it

05
GLOBAL VIEW









MONTAGUE
Raising the steaks

While many steakhouses adopt a "bigger is better" philosophy, Wilder's in Birmingham, Michigan, U.S., went in the opposite direction. Open since February 2025, the newest addition to the prolific Chickpea Hospitality group portfolio seats a mere 60 guests with an additional seven spots at the bar. "Wilder's is a special place," says Nick Janutol, managing partner and director of culinary at Chickpea Hospitality. "You don't see high-end steakhouses with only 13 tables."

Wilder's feels like it's from a bygone era, channeling both the snazzy supper clubs of the Midwest and the East Coast's elegant old-school steakhouses. Developed under the watchful eyes of Chickpea owner Samy Eid and Saroki Architecture, the restaurant's interior design features Art Deco-inspired elements throughout. At the marble-topped bar, brass-toned light fixtures add a warm glow to the cozy space. Gently curved green-and-brown leather booths invite diners to sit back, relax and stay a while.

Wilder's small size hasn't been without its challenges, especially when it came to designing its 42 square meters. The restaurant uses a separate basement space for prep and storage. The basement also includes a ventless kitchen and private dining room. "Every inch is paramount, so that was probably one of the hardest things to work out," says Janutol of the main kitchen.

Joel M. Schultz II, principal/founder of JS2 Designs, was excited about Wilder's as soon as Eid shared the concept with him. "We knew it was going to be a project where attention to detail would really matter, and that's where we do our best work," says Schultz.

"Everything in the kitchen was built around the charbroiler," says Janutol. "The versatility of having a broiler with a plancha on top was and is pivotal to the success of Wilder's." The burners on the Montague wall suite are also impressive. "The control we have with the burners blew my mind," he says. "I've never seen such an even burn at such a low temperature."





METRO

Metro makeover moves the dial

Scott and Jenny Ellenbecker opened Round Lake Vineyards & Winery in Minnesota, U.S., to the public in 2015 with a small tasting room and a single food offering of charcuterie. Shortly after, they added burgers, pizzas and paninis, using a food trailer as a makeshift kitchen.

Scott recalls that when the food trailer was moved out of sight in 2019, it improved guests' perception of food quality. "People started to perceive the food differently," says Scott. "Customers associated the food trailer with lower-quality food."

By 2020, the food component had proved successful enough to justify an investment in a kitchen build-out; the owners sold the food trailer and started purchasing secondhand equipment to fill the kitchen space.

Winning the Metro-sponsored 2025 *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* Kitchen Storage Makeover contest gave Scott an expert team to work with to address efficiency, flow and more.

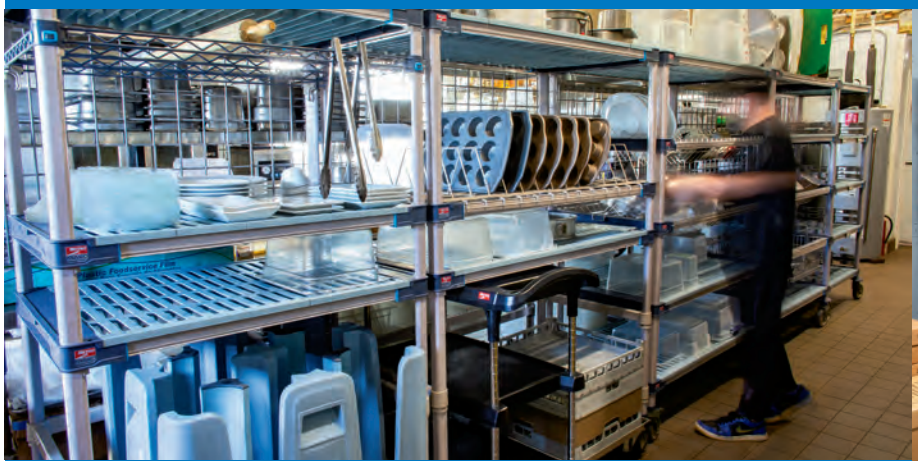
"We watched how they worked and talked about their pain points during our assessment," says AJ Zambetti, director of creative & brand communications for Metro®. "The ultimate vision was to take a large kitchen and make it seem smaller, so staff would need to take fewer steps to access what they need."

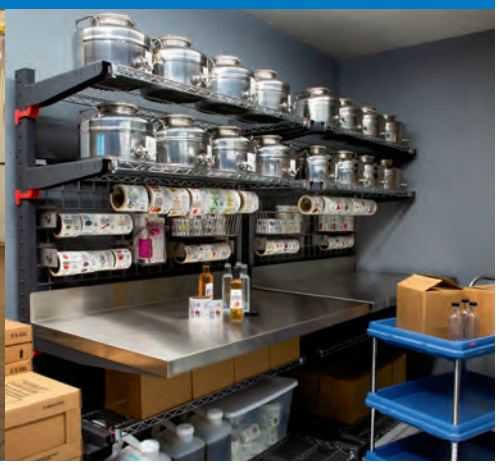
Two main areas were targeted for improvement: the main prep and dish wash area and the expo area.

Metro installed new Metro TableWorx™ Worktables to create delineation between the prep and dishwash areas and provide under-surface hanging storage bins for common prep items like spatulas. Several rust-proof MetroMax® drying solutions were added to the dish pit area so that staff can put pans away wet and allow them to dry safely.

The expo area was outfitted with Metro SmartSolutions®, combining standard Metro shelves, stainless work surfaces, grids and grid accessories. At the end of the expo area is a mobile MetroMax shelving unit, used as a dirty dish exchange between the expo and dish areas.

The dirty dish exchange has a twin near the warewashing station. When one unit is filled with dirty dishes, an employee pushes the filled rack over to the dish area and returns with an empty rack.





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