



## Pub & Bar Magazine

### Combi Ovens Feature – March 2015

***Please attribute any comments to Kris Brearley, Sales Director, RH Hall***

***Q. What innovations and new technologies have you seen in combi ovens and cookers in the past few years?***

Equipment is becoming more intelligent, with programmable models aiding efficiency and ensuring consistent results, leading to less wastage. In addition, features such as rapid pre-heat functions save on power and aid unit recovery after loading/unloading; self-diagnostic facilities are built-in to some equipment which can detect any operational problems, again helping to keep them running at optimum performance and efficiency and auto power cut out is a great feature which saves energy when the equipment is not in use.

Combi's can be operated manually or as we have seen in the past few years, unique pre-programme options have been developed which save valuable time in an operation and ensure food quality and consistency time after time.

***Multi- functional benefits have come to the fore in the past few years – for example:***

The Maestrowave Combi Chef 7 has many features to offer including the latest Menu Creator 2.0™ software package, which allows you to 'create your own menu' and programme up to 99 menus using any method of oven, microwave, grill or combination and with or without the turbo fan! This oven is the most flexible, efficient and easy to use oven yet and will help you produce the best results ever, in super quick time – it's really an oven that can do it all and produce consistent results time after time. Fits into a skilled or non-skilled kitchen with complete ease, this piece of equipment is very easy to operate with sophisticated results being possible within both operations.

***Q. What should operators look for in a combi oven?***

First and foremost you should look at choosing from a recognised brand – the major manufacturers are often the most innovative and have developed machines with intelligent features that are time/labour saving and energy efficient too. So, choose a leading brand with an established reputation – don't be tempted to go down the cheap import route.



To help make the right choice, caterers must be clear on the intended use: the volume of throughput; the types of dishes/menu available; variations in service time; staffing skills and find out about the latest features and operational functions before they invest.

Having ovens that can adapt to changing needs will help in terms of productivity and throughput, profits and cost savings too. Caterers can easily switch between one or two combi's depending on demand, which will give great flexibility and potentially added profits when operating to full capacity, off-setting initial outlays.

With regards to features when choosing a microwave/combi microwave, variable power is very important, as this will allow more dense food products to be reheated/cooked more evenly, working in the same way as a hob, it gives you exact control for a quality cooked/reheat result. A further feature to look for is stage cooking. This allows the operator to program in a series of different defrost/cook/reheat tasks to allow a complete process to be carried out at the press of a button. For example, it is possible to defrost then cook and keep warm ready for serve up all in one go. Most leading brand models now have this function as standard.

For a combination microwave oven, make sure you choose a machine with sufficient power. If the output is too low you can be frustrated by delays and if too high it will be difficult to judge timings of small portions and can lead to overcooking and wastage.

Also look for: accelerated cooking, regeneration and rapid defrost functions; rapid cool down facility, invaluable when needing to switch from oven or combination mode to defrost or microwave. Some latest models, like the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7, incorporate Menu Creation software for the ease of updating ever evolving food menus!

Space and installation aspects are also key considerations. It may seem fundamental, but consider the footprint of some ovens in comparison to their potential output. The Combi Chef 7 has a small counter top footprint and can be stacked one on top of the other – so you can save on space yet double the output. Also many ovens will need hard wiring to a certain KW rating – with the Combi Chef 7 it's a simple case of plug in and go!

***Q. What measures should a caterer take to ensure longevity?***

Regular cleaning and maintenance is a must to prolong the life of the equipment and ensure it continues to work to its optimum performance. In addition, simple regular low cost maintenance and cleaning will keep it in peak health and condition.



***Q. How important is it for staff to be trained correctly?***

Getting the correct training for staff on how to use and look after the equipment in the first instance will definitely help a caterer get the best from an oven or range. With the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7, the menus are easily pre-programmed and then operation is extremely easy, even from a completely de-skilled staff base.

Understanding is still the key to success with combination microwave cooking though. To maximise usage of a combi effectively, I think it is paramount that all caterers are educated as to the full potential of their unit and also be receptive to implementing the alternative cooking techniques required and then they'll be able to fully appreciate the great results that are possible and implement its use more and more in the meals produced by their kitchen. By fully understanding their combi microwave and getting the right techniques for each type of food, succulent meat, poultry and fish together with perfectly cooked vegetables that retain taste, texture and nutritive value are all possible.

***Additional information:***

Choosing an equipment supplier such as RH Hall is very beneficial as we are totally independent and can offer a range of models from our large range of leading brands - impartially recommending the best equipment for an operation. We also offer total after sales service, so from start to finish you only have one point of contact.

In addition we have a development kitchen where we can help develop/create your menu and make the most of such an investment. We have a development chef who has specialised knowledge in combination microwave cooking and can assist to make your menu have maximum impact and as deskilled as you wish, helping to extend food hours.

Whatever the choice of combi oven or cooker, caterers must carefully consider their purchase. Sturdy, commercial manufacture is a must, anything less won't perform or last! Also consider the availability of spare parts and after sales service, plus what length of warranty is available.

***For more information, please visit [www.rhhall.com](http://www.rhhall.com)***

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