



## LIGHT DUTY EQUIPMENT FEATURE

### GARDEN CENTRE CATERING – SPRING 2015

*Please attributes any quotes to Kris Brearley, Sales Director, RH Hall*

- ***There's a vast range of counter-top equipment designed to produce enticing menu items. Which among them are essential pieces of kit for a garden centre or farm shop catering operation and what benefits do they provide?***

It really can be a mine field to decide the best equipment to choose out of the hundreds of brands and variations of equipment out there in the market. It really depends on the type of operation, the numbers to cater for and staffing levels – including whether a chef is in situ or whether the garden centre or farm shop has a basic catering kitchen/operation.

The amount of space available in the kitchen/server area is also a factor to carefully consider. Ideally as much of the kit a caterer has should be used daily, although obviously it's not always the case, but there's no point in having lots of individual pieces of kit if they are going to sit on a shelf for the majority of the time! Each piece of kit has to earn its keep and no caterer can afford to have kit lying around under-utilised. Caterers should assess their real need for light duty equipment in line with current and future menu requirements and current and projected numbers to cater for too.

Complementary light equipment can take the burden off the prime cooking areas/equipment. There are menu items that can be quickly prepared and served purely using specific pieces of light equipment, this can help spread the workload across the catering staff and increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

Energy costs are also a consideration in having various pieces of light catering equipment. Energy costs are rising and will continue to do so. Caterers seriously need to look at running and whole life costs of equipment before they choose them. By choosing the correct specification, quality and brand, coupled with regular maintenance of equipment, there is no reason equipment should not last for 5/10 plus years. Choice of equipment should be based on the long term, not short term too!

Many cheaper imports are flooding into the UK and it can be tempting to go down this route, but unknowingly to many, a lot of this equipment doesn't have any product conformity standards and the back-up of a full warranty. Go for a well-known brand - guaranteed quality doesn't cost you more!

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Regardless of size or duty, sturdy manufacture is a 'must' and this is what you get by choosing a well-known brand - anything else won't perform or last. Choose a leading brand with an established reputation for good quality, durability and reliability. These brands usually build in great operational features too, which should always be considered.

For those outlets with or without a chef and with limited space, I would suggest that a Combination microwave oven (such as the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7) which is an extremely versatile unit on a small footprint that can perform a number of multiple tasks in one easy to use unit is an essential all round piece of equipment to have in any kitchen. The sheer versatility of this piece of equipment is unrivalled. It 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.

The Combi Chef can be used as the primary source of cooking equipment or as a complementary or back-up to other large prime cooking equipment, depending on what the outlet has already. Couple this with the addition of an induction hob for further instant heat plus certain specific complementary pieces such as the 365 Soup Server or Maestrowave Panini grills, that each can efficiently performing individual tasks with ease and you will have a menu that can easily be expanded and quite a comprehensive offering for a site of any size.

***For more information, visit:***

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

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

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