



LIGHT CATERING EQUIPMENT FEATURE

EDUcatering – APRIL 2015

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

- ***What are the essential pieces of light catering equipment to have in schools?***

It really can be a mine field to decide what equipment to choose out of the hundreds of brands and variations of equipment. It really depends on your type of operation, the throughput and staffing levels – 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!

As a very basis, we would suggest that a Combination microwave oven (such as the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7) which is extremely versatile and can perform a number of multiple tasks in one easy to use unit is one essential. Couple this with the addition of an induction hob for further instant heat plus certain specific complementary pieces that can spread the workload such as Panini grills, slicers, rice cookers and soup kettles that can perform individual tasks with ease can all be essential depending on the type of operation and menu offered.

- What considerations do caterers need to take when purchasing light catering equipment? Eg space, energy consumption etc.

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. So when purchasing, I would recommend operators to go for a well-known brand - guaranteed quality doesn't cost you more!

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.

Equipment that is multi-functional and versatile is ideal and where space is at a premium, units with a small footprint can help save valuable space – as can those that can stack, one on top of the other.

With microwaves in particular, it is essential to choose a commercial model and not fall into the trap of purchasing a domestic microwave - they simply will not stand up to the rigours of the job. It is also important to get the right commercial model for the right throughput - that is number of covers and the type of cooking tasks it will need to perform. Equally important is

the correct choice of microwave oven wattage. You need to choose an oven with sufficient power, but just as important is not to over specify. If it's too low, you can be frustrated by delays and if it's too high, it will be difficult to judge the timings of small portions.

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!

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.

Yes, they definitely should be aware. Energy costs are rising and will continue to do so. Caterers seriously need to look at running and whole life costs of equipment.

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!

- Do staff need to be trained in how to use light catering equipment?

We recommend that the correct training of staff on how to use and look after the equipment in the first instance will definitely help the life span of any equipment. In addition, simple regular low cost maintenance and cleaning will keep it in peak health and condition.

At RH Hall we train our distributors to be able to offer the best advice and training to the end user. Such advice as to when and how to clean the oven, service interval recommendations and the best use of the oven are just part of the training given to customers. We also have an extensive facility at our HQ fitted out with all the very latest equipment so clients and distributors can see and operate a number of microwaves in addition to a very wide range of kitchen equipment.

We recommend that the correct training of staff on how to use and look after the equipment in the first instance will definitely help with the maintenance and life span of any equipment. In addition, simple and regular low cost maintenance and cleaning will keep it in peak health and condition and very importantly will help avoid breakdowns at times when they least expect or need them.

- ***What one tip would you offer someone who is investing in light catering equipment?***

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. So the one tip I would recommend is that they go for a well-known brand - guaranteed quality doesn't cost you more! 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.

- ***Please include any other comments that you feel our readers will be interested in.***

RH Hall carries over 10,000 items of catering equipment from leading foodservice brands. We have an extensive development kitchen facility at our Pitstone HQ and this is open to all within the industry. It showcases a vast array of equipment and customers can see these pieces in the flesh and try them out before they specify them for their business. We also stock our leading brands through our 1,400 nationwide dealers, so help and advice on what is best for your catering operation is on hand at a regional level.

We can also offer a complete professional kitchen design service and can manufacture bespoke tailor made solutions through our UK based factory. ESPO accredited.

- ***Please include a definitive website address where readers can go for more info on your company.***

www.rhhall.com

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