



# Garden Centre Catering magazine

## Theatre Kitchen Design - Winter 2014

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

The design of a kitchen and dining area is extremely important when providing a top class catering service. It can be the deciding factor between a normal service and an exceptional service. No matter how good the catering staff, they need to be able to work to their optimum skills and strengths with a kitchen/servery and dining area that is a well thought out and equipped space. Whether this involves both back and front of house in terms of the cooking element will pretty much depend upon the restaurant/café layout, the staffing levels and chef skills plus the menu offered.

The trend towards open kitchen theatre style cooking could be well suited to garden centre catering operations however, it does depend of the menu offering, the customer throughput and whether an operation can afford to site a dedicated skilled member of staff at a particular cooking station.

RH Hall's expertise goes beyond equipment supply... the company can advise on how to plan an effective servery layout, within the space available, develop menus and help choose the most suitable equipment for the needs of the operation and all to a budget.

We can also offer bespoke and tailored solutions for any foodservice brand, concept, menu or operational need through our in-house Foodservice Solutions team. Garden centre caterers can tap into this service and the successful creative foodservice solutions that have been developed already with a number of major foodservice chains and operators, including ready-made packages that offer a simple start up way to launch a concept into a foodservice operation – one such example is the package created with Chicago Town with their Pizzas and the Smeg ALFA43UK oven – all the leg work has been done – all the optimum menu timings, products selections have been developed and the package is ready to buy and have installed, up and running, almost immediately.

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And the beauty of the Smeg ALFA43UK oven is that it is a multi-tasking oven which also looks good enough to be sited front of house on a serving area – so in removing the freshly baked pizzas one can create an element of theatre style cooking. These ovens will not only cook pizzas perfectly, but can be used for other food items, such as morning pastries and baguettes. For delicate products like croissants the Smeg ALFA range can cook these to perfection with their efficient fan configuration which circulates the heat evenly within the oven chamber. Other features on the Smeg include: rapid pre-heat function to enable fast recovery after unloading; easy control functions especially for de-skilled operation; auto power cut-out to save energy when not in use; programme pre-sets and manual options for ease of operation – so at the touch of a button set menu items can be cooked quickly; cool touch doors for safety – especially good if sited front of house; fans for efficient heat circulation; grill function for versatility, when finishing off foods and the ability to vent that wonderful bakery smell into the premises if required, helping to maximise sales!

For more of the moment front of house theatre cooking, a garden centre could offer say freshly cooked 'wok' meals by utilising an induction hob, which simply sits on a serving counter top. Induction cooking is faster and more energy-efficient than traditional electric cooking and it allows for the instant control of cooking energy similar to gas burners. Other cooking methods produce flames or use red-hot heating elements; induction is direct heating and only heats the pot, so not only is it significantly safer for cooking front of house, but more energy efficient and environmentally friendly too. Induction hobs and cookers produce no background heat as induction heats only the pan, resulting in a cool working environment with lower or no extraction costs and since the glass hob surface retains only minimal heat, reflected from the pan, cleaning is easy and quick between services.

We have seen this type of cooking becoming more popular, especially with easy to install counter top induction hobs coming into their own. For a very small investment they can introduce induction into the front of house area by using a small induction hob, complementing an existing set up very cheaply.

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**The Maestrowave Induction Hob** is a very good example of an entry level product:

It's a super-fast piece of cooking equipment (a pan of water can be boiled in about 10 seconds) with cooking temperatures adjustable between 60 and 240 degrees centigrade by using the simple touchpad controls – instant changes are possible.

The unit can also detect when a pan is removed, so it cuts energy automatically – a great safety feature as well as an energy saver – this feature can save between 40-70% energy over conventional hobs once the pan is removed – this could mean a saving of over £3,000 per year! Another plus point is their ease of installation – just plug in and go!

### ***Kitchen Design Tool – bespoke solutions***

A client can start the initial design process by themselves to get an idea of what can be achieved before seeking further advice from RH Hall. By working with one of our key exclusive supply partners, Simply Stainless, we now offer an online Kitchen Design Tool available at [www.simplystainless.com](http://www.simplystainless.com).

With this design package an outline layout can be drawn up to fit a client's kitchen dimensions and to suit their working requirements. It allows for the full specification of work units/frames to be included from the range of Simply Stainless' off the shelf modular stainless steel benches, then accessories can be added, such as chefs' drawers, door panels and under/over shelves. Once a client has an idea of what they would like, we can then advise them on their plan and see if there is any need for bespoke alterations, which can fully maximise the space available. We can of course make these in our fabrications factory. We will produce a fully costed out plan along with a delivery/installation schedule – we can offer very competitive finance packages too. Once finalised, the final kitchen is then available from RH Hall from stock and can be fitted by our team if required. Bespoke dimensions which require tailoring by our factory has a turnaround time generally within 7 days from the date of order.

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### ***Clever equipment solutions***

Incorporating clever pieces of equipment to go with an optimum layout, can help save space, time and costs within a garden centre catering operation. By working with one specialist supplier, such as RH Hall, caterers can fully discuss their requirements and have a complete foodservice solution designed to their requirements, all backed up by an aftersales service to offer complete peace of mind.

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

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