

# Buying Guide



Potential profit margins on hot beverages can exceed 300%, so it most definitely pays to get the offering right and never more so than now, in light of more discerning and informed consumers who are living in an age of the High Street coffee chain. Consumers' love of premium coffees, teas and hot chocolate – such as latte, cappuccino and chai, are all set to continue and grow, so perfecting the hot beverages offering will help secure maximum opportunities from the trend, whilst enhancing the customer experience and boosting profits too.

To produce premium beverages and be able to charge accordingly, quality equipment is a must. And whilst the end product may be a cup of coffee, there are different ways of making it and adding value. Depending on your offering, operation and venue there is all sorts of equipment from which to choose, starting with the simple hot water boiler, ideal for all drinks and additional catering uses, to pour and serve coffee systems, through to the semi and fully automatic coffee machines requiring various skill levels.

Nowadays, a good quality hot drink (especially coffee) is an expectation not the exception and undoubtedly plays an important part in the overall impression a catering operation hopes to project to its customers, so it's incredibly important to understand what the different beverage systems are and their benefits to determine which one is right for a business and save costly mistakes in the short and long term.

## Advantages

- Premium hot drinks can enhance an operation's image – if done right!
- Potential profit margins are extremely good for a relatively small investment.
- Water boilers are ideal for any business and can be an easy and efficient way of producing large volumes of hot beverages and some models can be wall mounted or sited under counter to save on valuable counter space. Manual fill boilers can easily be re-located for added flexibility. They can also be used to serve other hot beverages including mulled wine or hot cider. LPG boilers are available for mobile/outdoor catering.
- Semi and fully automatic bean to cup machines can produce premium hot drinks with minimal training of staff.

## Buying Tips

- **What equipment?** – Assess equipment needs in terms of current and predicted volumes, the drinks variety offered, customer base and site/venue limitations. Consider peaks in service and where the equipment is to be sited – for service flow and any plumbing considerations. Hourly output should also be considered with regards to water boilers. A combination of equipment might work, not just machines alone.
- **Build quality and reliability** – Choose a leading brand with an established reputation for good quality, durability and reliability. Don't be tempted to go down the cheaper import route. Look for a full manufacturer's warranty – the minimum being at least a year. Many of the leading brands have warranties ranging from 1-4 years. Check the availability of spare parts, service support and maintenance requirements.
- **Operational features** – Look for eco-modes across all equipment. But for water boilers: built-in filtration to help reduce limescale build up, integral diagnostics, programmable metred cup measures, safety features such as locking taps and safety handles for lids/portability, boil dry and safety cut-out thermostatic controls. For all coffee machines: stylish appearance if to be sited front of house, self-cleaning cycles or ease of cleaning if not, integral diagnostics, robust fitments. For semi-automatic machines: actual level of operator skill required, steamed milk wands with pressure gauges, plumbing requirements, electronic/digital display. For automatic machines: range of beverages and cup throughput per hour.

## Key to icons



### Light Duty

Designed for commercial use in a less busy environment



### Medium Duty

Strongly constructed to perform in a busy situation



### Heavy Duty

High standard of build to provide good service under heavy use



### Extra Heavy Duty

High powered, fast throughput with the highest standard of build



### 13 Amp

Plug and go!



### Hardwired

Hard wiring required



### Gas



### Stainless Steel Construction



### Warranty