



COMBI OVENS FEATURE B&I – SEPTEMBER 2015

- ***What ranges of Combi Ovens are available?***

Options range from large combination steamers – available in various sizes and with either gas or electric power – down to versatile combination microwaves, which offer many cooking features in a compact space.

- ***What should caterers consider before buying new equipment?***

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!

- ***What advantages do Combi Ovens provide?***

The main advantage with any Combi Oven is speed, particularly when looking at Combi Microwaves. The many features of a modern combination microwave also offer huge versatility, meaning these are capable of the different techniques needed in turning out various courses.

- ***What features are the most useful on a Combi Oven?***

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. The model sits on a counter and operates from a single 13 amp supply. We have produced a brand new video showing all the features and benefits of combi cooking using the latest and innovative Maestrowave Combi Chef 7. Simply log on to www.rhhall.com and follow the links from the home page.

- ***How can chefs get the most from Combi Ovens?***

Getting the correct training for staff on how to use and look after the equipment in the first instance will help a caterer get the best from their equipment. 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.

With the pre-programmed options available, if used correctly a combination microwave can operate at the touch of a button – with consistent and quality results.

- ***What one tip would you offer someone who is buying/using a Combi Oven?***

Choose a leading brand and buy the best equipment you can afford – take a close look at build quality don’t be fooled into buying cheaper imports. Go for peace of mind - the leading brands, with an established and good reputation for quality, reliability and genuine service back up in a commercial situation is crucial.

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

www.rhhall.com and the recently re-launched website of www.maestrowave.com

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