



MICROWAVES FEATURE SLTN – 21ST JULY 2016

Please attributes any quotes to Ray Hall, Managing Director, RH Hall

- ***How have commercial microwaves changed over the years? What are some of the features and benefits that a modern microwave can offer an outlet that may not have been available in years gone by?***

Microwaves today are split into 2 main categories – standard microwave only, which are perfect for reheating a wide range of foods – and combination microwaves, which offer huge versatility for cooking a wider range of products, with the speed of microwave cooking.

The market leading Sharp range of microwaves available through RH Hall offer heavy and extra heavy duty build quality with total control, flexibility and versatility –with in-built features to save time and energy. The best-selling range goes from 1000W to 1900W to cater for all foodservice applications and are available in both touchpad or manual control versions.

The Maestrowave Combi Chef 7 is able to operate in a variety and combination of cook modes making it the most flexible, efficient and easy to use oven yet! It can bake, roast, grill, steam, defrost, regenerate, microwave, boil or simply keep food warm - this is the oven that can do it all. This high speed oven features Menu Creator 2.0™ software. Packed with features, the oven will produce the best results at the simple touch of a button – a total combination of 11 cooking modes can be used to achieve top quality results. Up to 99 menus can be pre-programmed to ensure consistency time after time. But don't be daunted, the Menu Creator 2.0™ is extremely easy to use; however, if required, full technical support is available from RH Hall. There is a web video available on line which demonstrates the benefits of combination Microwave ovens - visit www.rhhall.com and follow the link on the home page.

- ***What kinds of dishes can modern microwaves handle well? How can microwaves reduce a chef's workload and improve speed/efficiency in the kitchen?***

Today's microwave ovens are sophisticated, yet easy to use and produce excellent cooking results in a fraction of the time it takes to cook foods conventionally and their versatility is under estimated. Many foods and dishes can be cooked very, very well in a microwave oven: cakes, sauces, meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, pasta, rice, eggs and jams can all be cooked with great results – you can even roast a chicken in one, but you won't get a crispy, brown skin! However, a duck will cook well because of the amount of fat naturally found under the skin of the meat.

Meat and pastry products are often better cooked conventionally then re-heated in a microwave oven, but with the versatile combination microwave ovens available, these types of foods can be cooked using microwave technology and still producing excellent results.

Models with manual controls are incredibly straight forward to use and offer an out of the box solution for unskilled kitchen staff. However, these models can sometimes lack the advanced features that have become available in recent years.

A touchpad, programmable model may seem daunting at first glance, but provided this is set up correctly from the start it can actually be the most straight forward option.

- ***What should operators look for when purchasing a new microwave for their outlet? What are some of the key considerations when choosing the right piece of equipment for a particular outlet?***

To choose the right kind of microwave, operators should look at their menu and decide what tasks the microwave oven should undertake. If you require the microwave to be used mainly for the simple reheat and defrosting of foods then a straight Commercial microwave will suffice. However, if you wish to reheat and cook food products then a combination microwave oven is well advised. Items such as pastry will become soggy if reheated in an ordinary microwave whereas using a combination microwave the crisp, golden brown and conventional finished result will be achieved in microwave time!

It is very important to choose the correct microwave oven wattage. You need to choose an oven with sufficient power, but just as importantly, do not over specify. If too low, you can be frustrated by delays, and if too high, it will be difficult to judge the timing of small portions. Whilst it is common for caterers to choose speed (the higher the output the faster reheat times), it is also very important to understand that for some food products too much speed will destroy smaller portions of food or the delicate and sugary types of products.

It is very important to choose from a commercial range of microwaves, operators shouldn't be tempted to go down the domestic route – these units simply aren't built for the rigours of a professional kitchen. Likewise we would also recommend that cheap imports are also avoided – the testing, safety and product back-up that are offered by the leading brand names are often not available with a cheap import.

- ***How can operators ensure they get value for money from their microwave? What are some maintenance steps that should be taken to extend the life of a commercial microwave?***

Caterers should look for a full service back-up in terms of on-site warranty and availability of spares from their manufacturer. Expect a least a year's warranty, some manufacturers offer 3 years. Genuine service back-up in a commercial situation is absolutely critical.

With annual servicing in place and by buying a recognised quality brand, there is absolutely no reason why your commercial microwave oven shouldn't last between 3-5 years and even more, dependent on site and on how the oven is cared for! Regular cleaning and servicing are key to ensure users get the maximum lifespan from their microwave.

When using your microwave on a regular basis, one tip that shouldn't be overlooked for getting the best from a microwave is regular cleaning - keep the oven's cavity and inner door clean of food spillage / deposits at all times. This will avoid cavity burn ups and prolong the life of its heart "The Magnetron". This measure will also help the consistency and speed of reheat/ cook times.

You could purchase the Microsave Cavity Protection System which is a unique and simple plastic cavity liner which is safer to use, easier to clean and provides long term financial benefits.

This invaluable accessory is exclusive to Sharp commercial microwave ovens. Every Sharp sold with the Microsave CPS comes with a lifetime warranty on the cavity.

- ***Is there any microwave specific training operators should be aware of that will help them get the most of their unit? What steps can chefs take to make the most of their microwave as a kitchen tool?***

We can provide expert advice on programming and even offer a pre-programming service at our HQ, prior to machines being sent to site. Combination Microwaves such as the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7 take things a step further. With all the extra cooking modes available, menu options can be set using your PC and then transferred to an SD card for use in the machine. Our Food Solutions team can provide full support and assist with menu development, particularly useful for larger chain operator's.

R H Hall are the Sole UK and Eire Distributor for the Sharp range of Professional Microwave Ovens and Sole Worldwide Distributor for the Maestrowave range of Catering Equipment.

For more information:

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