



HOTEL F&B – FEBRUARY 2016 OVENS FEATURE

Please attribute any quotes on this information to Ray Hall, Managing Director, R H Hall

What types of oven are most suitable for hotels?

There are many choices available within the commercial oven market, whether gas, electric, dual fuel or increasingly induction, the options are wide and varied and come down to personal preference as well as the menu offered, plus other considerations such as space and budget restrictions. Whatever the preference though, I would recommend that it has to be a versatile and flexible workhorse able to make light work of the most demanding and varied dishes and be able to respond to the on-going changing demands that come with any busy, professional hotel kitchen.

Microwave ovens are definitely an essential part of every commercial kitchen – essential for speed of service yet still allowing a chef to prepare and offer a wide choice of menu. Microwaves are also very energy efficient. If simple reheat and defrosting of foods is required then a microwave will suffice, but if a chef wants to reheat and cook food products then a combination microwave convection oven is well advised. The latest and most flexible combination microwave oven from Maestrowave is the Combi Chef 7. It is able to operate in a combination of modes and can bake, roast, grill, steam, defrost, regenerate, microwave, boil or simply keep food warm all in one flexible, efficient unit. Packed full of new features and the latest version of Menu Creator (Menu Creator 2.0™) the oven will produce the best results ever in super quick time, allowing for 99 menu's to be pre-programmed using any method of oven, microwave, grill or combination. There is a video showing all the features and benefits of this 'Intelligent Chef' online – www.rhhall.com

For more traditional oven cooking, the Smeg ALFA Range of bake-off ovens provides an equally flexible solution. Ideal for breakfast service, savouries, breads and morning goods including the most delicate of products, like croissants, can be cooked to perfection. Plus use of these ovens can expand way beyond that – in fact, there is relatively little that can't be cooked!

What should caterers consider before buying new equipment?

Hotel F&B managers and chefs should consider their equipment needs in line with current and future menu requirements, numbers and times/peaks in service – for example, it maybe that two smaller, versatile ovens that can adapt to changing service needs are better than investing in one large unit or that for example, one larger bake-off oven could cover a breakfast offering by itself and then bake-off products, such as baguettes, ready to be filled for the lunch service.

Space and installation aspects are also key considerations. Consider the footprint of some ovens in comparison to their potential output and whether products can be stacked, one on top of the other. Chefs can easily switch between one or two ovens depending on demand,

which will give them great flexibility and potentially added profits when operating to full capacity, off-setting initial outlays. Alternatively a secondary smaller back-up oven such as the Smeg ALFA43UK could be installed to help cater for peaks – or a microwave added for speed. There is a huge range of options to suit and fulfil all needs and cost effectively.

An oven to look out for: The Smeg ALFA144XE1 has a proven track record of success and is already being used by some of the UK's leading operators. Recently selected as the winner of the Ranges & Ovens category at the 2015 Product Excellence Awards, this is one of the most technically advanced ovens on the market today, offering an innovative and versatile cooking solution.

Are there certain types or models that use less energy than others?

Energy efficiency is extremely important. As the leading independent catering equipment distributor in the UK we work on behalf of a number of the leading brands in the industry and the majority if not all of these companies now manufacture products that have sustainable and environmentally friendly technology in their designs. Equipment is evolving all the time and there are plenty of very good pieces of kit on the market which can help an operation build their green credentials and become more energy efficient.

Many ovens will need hard wiring to a certain kW rating, but unique to Smeg is a switchable power supply that can be run from different kW ratings depending on the power on site – anything from 3kW plug-in to 8.3kW 3 phase hardwired - making them ideal for any site with no limitations.

On some menus, the style of cooking and oven type is made public, but does the name or brand of the oven being used matter to a hotel's customers?

Most customers will not specifically be aware of the leading foodservice brands, although the popularity of programmes featuring professional kitchens and equipment may create interest.

The most important factor to a customer however, is the final result! Hotel F&B managers must therefore carefully consider the product/brand they choose to ensure the right results and reliability. Sturdy, commercial manufacture is a must, anything less won't perform or last! Choose a leading brand with an established reputation – they shouldn't be tempted to go down the cheap import route. Also consider the availability of spare parts and after sales service, plus what length of warranty is available.

How important is it that oven models are easy to clean and maintain?

Regular maintenance and cleaning will help to prolong the life of your oven, so it is very important that all staff are aware and capable of performing essential daily tasks. Most ovens should come with at least a 1 year On Site manufacturer Warranty as standard, but operators should also consider on-going maintenance contracts to ensure their equipment is operating at its peak.

Is there any training required on how to operate oven units?

Training requirements can vary hugely depending on the type of oven selected and the skill level of operators. With RH Hall's access to the most extensive range of foodservice equipment available on the market today, together with our vast knowledge and experience within the sector, we are ideally placed to offer expert, unbiased advice – working with our National Dealer network and National Account team. In addition our development team can work closely with a hotel's own chef to look at equipment and create new menus, adapt recipes and perfect equipment timings to enhance cook/bake/regeneration results. Chef's and F&B managers can also come along to our development kitchen and see and use the ovens first hand.

If you could offer one tip to hotel F&B managers deciding on a new oven, what would it be?

To help make the right choice, chefs must be clear on the intended use of their oven. Look at 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.

Website for further information:

For more information, please visit www.rhhall.com

R H Hall are the Sole UK Distributor for the Smeg range of Foodservice Ovens.

FOR FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION CONTACT: Emma Smith, 01296 663400

emma.smith@rhhall.com

R H Hall, Hallco House, Beacon Court, Pitstone Green Business Park, Pitstone, Bedfordshire, LU7 9GY

T: 01296 663400

F: 01296 663401

E: sales@rhhall.com

W: www.rhhall.com