

ALI WORLD

NORTH AMERICA

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SIERRA NEVADA BREWING UP CRAFT BEER AND DELICIOUS FOOD

CREATIVE DINING FOR SENIORS
SURPRISINGLY VARIED MENUS
PRODUCED EFFICIENTLY

READY FOR TAKEOFF!
SERVING HUNGRY TRAVELERS AT A BUSY AIRPORT





Once again, let me welcome you to the eighth edition of *Aliworld* magazine, featuring stories from around Ali Group, around North America and around the world.

It has truly been another challenging year for many operators, as some of the problematic issues of the past few years continue to affect all of us in the foodservice industry. Labor-related issues such as training and retention continue to be an important concern. Rising food costs and the cost of resources such as energy and water affect the bottom line more than ever. Along with those issues, uncertainty regarding global trade issues is now on the minds of many as well.

At Ali Group, we are aware of these issues and continually work toward developing products that help overcome these challenges efficiently and profitably. Many of our products use advanced technology to maximize resources and make operating them easier for untrained staff. All of this is done with the goal of helping you deliver a memorable experience to your customers.

To help you get a better idea of key trends and ways to meet the challenges of the day, we assembled a roundtable of foodservice consultants

who share their outlook on the issues shaping the foodservice industry. In addition, a noted trend expert gives her predictions on what the menu trends will be for 2020.

This issue also contains a variety of success stories. You'll see how a craft beer producer turned its brewery into a dining and entertainment destination. You will also learn how an innovative steakhouse with its own in-house butcher shop helps lead the restaurant renaissance in Detroit. For an example of how training can help a foodservice operation achieve its goals, check out our story on a young entrepreneur who makes unique and delicious gelato treats.

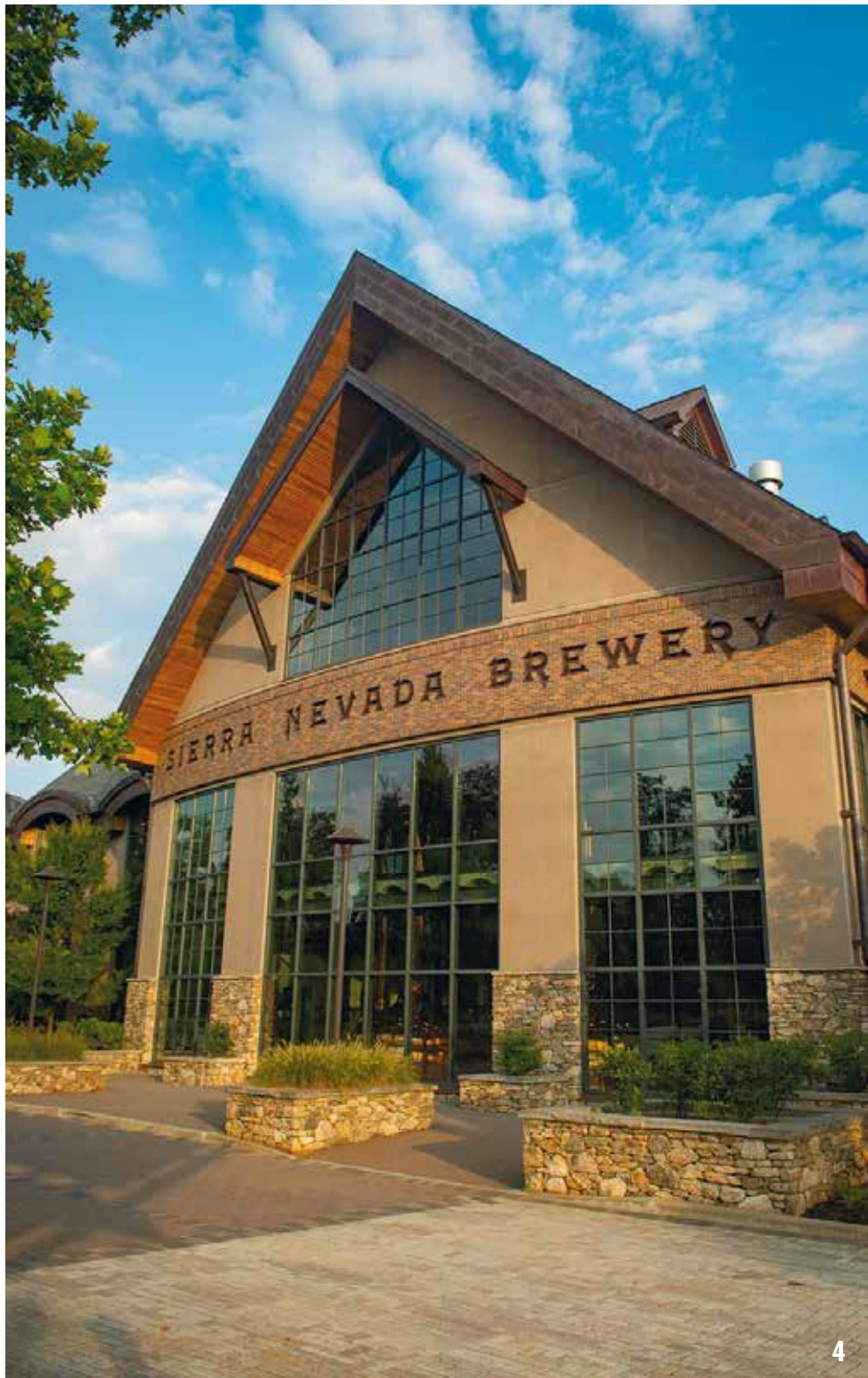
Again, I am pleased to introduce you to the annual winners of The Berti Foundation scholarships. They are all children of Ali Group employees, and we are happy to help them reach their educational goals.

And a special congratulations goes to one of our Ali Group companies, Falcon, which celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2019. Falcon has a long and proud history of serving its customers, and we look forward to many more years of success.

On a personal note, I was very pleased to see many of you at HostMilano 2019 and at the NAFEM or NRA shows over the past year. We look forward to seeing you at this year's NRA Show, or at one of the many other trade shows, buying group conferences or industry events in which Ali Group will participate.

On behalf of all of us at Ali Group, let me convey my sincerest hopes for a prosperous and happy 2020.

Filippo Berti
Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group



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01

Cover Story



BREWING UP DELICIOUS FOOD AND GOOD TIMES AT SIERRA NEVADA

Many craft breweries have restaurants or tasting rooms at their brewing facilities but few have executed them with the success of Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. The Taprooms at the company's breweries in Chico, Calif., and Mills River, N.C., offer visitors and residents a variety of dining and entertainment options right on the grounds.

The Sierra Nevada story starts in Chico in 1980 when Ken Grossman, an avid amateur beermaker who had operated a home-brewing shop in the '70s, decided to go into the commercial brewing business. He purchased some used dairy processing equipment and, after taking community college classes on welding and electricity, retrofitted the equipment for beer brewing. The first trial batch he produced consisted of 10 barrels of stout with pale ale coming shortly thereafter. The brewery name came from his favorite place to go climbing, the Sierra Nevada mountains. As his business took off, Grossman soon outgrew the 3,000-square-foot warehouse in which he had started. He moved to a new facility and then had to expand again, which led him to purchase some of the surrounding buildings.

In 1989, Grossman decided to open a small pub at the Chico brewery. "The original idea for the Pub in Chico was really a gathering place for [Grossman], his friends and the employees at the brewery," says Dale Nelson, Food and Beverage Director for Sierra Nevada.



View of the brewery Kettles.



Diners are surrounded by natural foliage while they enjoy their meals.



“Once we decided to open up [the Taproom], it was off to the races with all these incredible ideas: Let’s have an amphitheater. Let’s have a huge, world-class kitchen. Let’s throw in a bakeshop. Let’s have gardens, walking trails and hiking trails. Let’s have river access. It was just one idea after the next.”

Dale Nelson
Food and Beverage Director for Sierra Nevada



One of the walking trails on the Sierra Nevada grounds.



Ever the handyman, Grossman could be found laying the carpet and running wires for the pub. That small “friends-only” pub eventually grew into a full-service restaurant, serving 300 people between its indoor and outdoor seating areas. Much like Grossman’s successful brewery business, the Pub soon became popular both with locals and visitors passing through Chico on Highway 99, the main state thoroughfare between Sacramento and northern California. In the early 2000s, the brewery added a concert venue called The Big Room, which also hosts private events and banquets. Today, the Chico Pub serves between 250,000 and 300,000 guests annually.

Heading East

With gas prices steadily rising in the 2000s, making it less cost-effective to ship beer across the country, the brewery looked to establish an East Coast location. After scouting 40 different locations, it selected a 215-acre site in Mills River, N.C., in the western part of the state. Western North Carolina had much the same “personality” as Chico, says Nelson, who calls the area “very outdoors-centric. There’s a lot of biking, hiking and climbing.” Even the locations’ distance to their respective oceans is similar: It’s about three hours from Chico to the Pacific and only a half hour more from Mills River to the Atlantic coast.

The original plan was for Mills River to simply serve as a production brewery with possibly a small tasting room. The design team suggested a food and beverage component, which was at first resisted because, as Nelson says, “it takes a lot of effort and bandwidth to operate F&B sites.” At the last

minute, however, it was decided to add the Taproom. The brewery opened in 2014, and that last-minute addition, which opened the following year, eventually became a restaurant that seats up to 400.

The opening of the Taproom spurred an expansion of the whole Mills River environment, Nelson says. “Once we decided to open up [the Taproom], it was off to the races with all these

incredible ideas: Let’s have an amphitheater. Let’s have a huge, world-class kitchen. Let’s throw in a bakeshop. Let’s have gardens, walking trails and hiking trails. Let’s have river access. It was just one idea after the next,” he says.

As many breweries do, Sierra Nevada offers tours of the facility, both guided and self-guided. But besides the tours and special tasting events (one recent offering

was a Beer and Pie Pairing), visitors come to enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings at Mills River. They can stroll along the river, sit around the firepit, hike trails through the woods, visit the herb and produce gardens, amble down to Lower Park to play yard games or simply while away some time in hammocks.

The Mills River facility has an amphitheater, which presents about 150 concerts



CMA Dishmachines help keep the glassware at the Sierra Nevada Taproom spotlessly clean.





Fresh bread being baked in a Bongard oven (top). Metro shelving keeps storerooms tidy (bottom left) and frozen treats come from a Carpigiani machine (bottom right).



Nevada thinks about beer, says Nelson. “The beers we have produced on a national scale — such as Pale Ale, Extra IPA, Porter, Stout — are purist beers,” he says. “We often don’t vary from the traditional style of what they are.” Along those lines, the food at the Taproom is “handmade with respect to where that style or ingredient came from,” he adds. Apart from the foods sourced from local producers, no major food item comes into the Taproom premade. For example, in an average year, the Taproom will hand-make and bake more than 100,000 hamburger buns and 180,000 pretzels. All the french fries served are hand-cut; sausage is made from whole hog butchering. Mushrooms used on the menu are grown on the premises, and there are 20 beehives on the property that produce honey.

A four-acre organic garden on-site furnishes produce for the Taproom, with the goal of producing 100,000 pounds of produce each year. “It takes a lot of intention to be certified organic,” Nelson says. “Our estate garden team has worked hard to get that certification and works hard to maintain it.”

The Taproom provides a number of seating options, including communal tables and booths, to accommodate groups of all sizes. But customers who just want to grab a quick bite can stroll outside to the Back Porch, which serves up a variety of smaller-plate options and such regional cuisine favorites as locally made potato chips with pimento cheese or a Carolina Bison hot dog.

Staying Green

The concept of sustainability is not something Sierra Nevada latched onto just recently. Environmental awareness has always run in the Grossman family bloodline. Years ago, says Nelson, when the Grossmans would be out driving, they would often stop to pick up beer cans that had

“The reason we went with the CMA [machines] is because they’re best in class. They wash the best.”

Brian Grossman
Sierra Nevada

been discarded by the side of the road.

That concern for the environment carries throughout the Sierra Nevada history. In 2007, the Chico brewery installed its first set of solar panels; the system has now grown to more than 10,700 panels and satisfies about 20 percent of the facility’s total energy needs. To replace trees harvested during the construction of the Mills River facility, Sierra Nevada replanted more than 1,000 native trees on the property.

In 2016, the Mills River brewery became the first production brewery in the U.S. to be LEED® certified to the Platinum level and is still one of the few breweries that can claim that designation. The facility’s landfill diversion is upwards of 99 percent, Nelson says, and post-consumer waste products are sorted into as many as nine different categories for recycling. The brewery offers zero-waste classes on-site for all employees. A sustainability team, with liaisons in every department, continually examines ways the brewery can become even more environmentally friendly.

As part of its community

outreach, the brewery shows its sustainability efforts to the public on a two-hour Trip in the Woods. While walking visitors through the trails on the brewery grounds, tour guides talk about the native plants and trees of the area and also discuss how the brewery minimizes its impact on the environment. Along those trails, the Sierra Nevada environmental team tagged the plants and trees to indicate their genus. “We want people to get outside,” Nelson says. “That’s what our company was founded on: enjoying the outdoors.”

The Right Equipment

Serving food to large groups of visitors is a daunting task, but the Mills River Taproom kitchens handle it effortlessly. When the Taproom kitchen was designed, Nelson says, “they designed it to have top-of-the-line equipment.” Much of that top-of-the-line equipment comes from Ali Group companies. “We bake our French baguettes in a Bongard oven,” Nelson says. “It’s an incredible piece of machinery.” A Paneotrad dough handling machine and retarding equipment, both from Bongard, help produce the baguettes. Shelving from Metro keeps the kitchen organized; Carpigiani ice cream makers produce frozen treats. And an Edlund Titan Series Max-Cut™ helps with vegetable and potato prep.

Clean glassware is essential for a company that focuses on beer. Sierra Nevada chose dependable washers from CMA Dishmachines, including the model 181GW, to ensure consistently clean glassware. The high-temperature 181GW glasswasher can wash up to 30 racks, or 600 glasses per

hour, using only 0.75 gallons of water per cycle. “Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. is truly one of the greatest success stories in the craft beer industry,” says Chris Arnette, President of CMA Dishmachines. “They’ve become renowned for brewing a top-quality product and for providing an unmatched customer experience at their Taprooms. We’re proud that they’ve put their trust in CMA Dishmachines and look forward to working with them for many more years.”

“Those dishwashers were hand-selected by the Grossman family,” Nelson says. “Brian Grossman, Ken’s son, said to me, ‘The reason we went with the CMA [machines] is because they’re best in class. They wash the best,’ which is huge respect to CMA. Our purpose is beer. For him to say that it creates a beer-clean glass — it’s a really magnificent compliment to what they do.”

annually. All weekend concerts are free. The Amphitheater also helps handle rush times at the Taproom, says Nelson, who calls it a “pressure release valve to get people outside. When they’re waiting for a table, they can go listen to some music. We often see families dancing in the grass in the lawn area.” During colder weather, the concerts move inside to High Gravity, which has its own kitchen facilities and can function as an overflow when the Taproom gets busy. It is also a rentable banquet space.

Great Beer, Great Food

Naturally, the Sierra Nevada beer is the star of the whole show. At any given time, the Mills River facility has 23 drafts on tap in the main dining room. Depending on the time of year, the brewery will have up to six separate bars operating on-premises. On an exceptionally busy holiday weekend, such as the Fourth of July, that can increase to nine bars and four foodservice areas on-site.

But food is definitely not an afterthought at the Mills River Taproom, with a menu that goes far beyond traditional pub grub. Many of the dishes

pay homage to the food of the western part of North Carolina, with such specialties as chicken and rice, Carolina Bison sirloin, and collard and kale slaw on the menu. “Part of our food and beverage goal is to buy local,” Nelson says. The Mills River facility buys produce, meats, dairy products and other food items from 30 farms in the surrounding area. Spending on products from local growers totaled nearly \$2 million in 2019.

The rationale for having a menu that skews more upscale than the usual brewery tasting room relates to the way Sierra



BRAND WATCH

Established:
1976

Manufacturing facility:
35,600 sq. ft.

Distribution centers:
**4 in U.S.
and Canada**

Years worked by longest
current employee:
46

cmadishmachines.com

02

Trends

Every segment of the foodservice industry, from the individual members of the supply chain to the various operator segments, feels their business is unique. And, to some extent, they are right. But when it comes to issues like applying technology, addressing labor challenges and the need to feed lots of people during peak periods, there's much each industry segment can learn from its peers. Here, a quartet of foodservice consultants share their insights about the trends shaping today's foodservice industry and what the individual segments can learn from one another.



CONSULTANTS' ROUNDTABLE

It seems like the lines between segments are blurring as competition grows and consumer preferences change. What are you seeing?

CG: Even though I work heavily in healthcare, lately I am seeing that the lines between industry segments are becoming increasingly blurry as trends and technologies catch up and consumers are more interested in wellness and fresh food across the board. We always try to look at what's happening in the college and B&I (business and industry) segments and even airports because there is a lot of crossover with trends, and all of these foodservice projects are starting to look similar.

EN: I agree. Since I started as a consultant, this is the most similar I have ever seen projects across different segments.

KS: I think the reason for the crossover is at the end of the day, everything still comes down to how many people you are serving, what you are serving, the period of time serving and the style of service. Because I work in different segments, I try to apply experiments and practices that have been successful in one segment to another.

PW: I do think a lot of segments can learn from designs in healthcare in particular. When working with fragile populations, how you design the way food moves from one area to another has many prerequisites that involve complete separation of soiled and clean wares as well as easy access to handwashing. It is so regimented in healthcare, but it works so well. When I am working with a chef at a high-end hotel, for example, all he might be thinking is how to put the most beautiful plate together. It's my job to help him ensure time and temperature control and all of the other standards of quality and safety are met. There are strong lessons to be learned from military and mass-feeding operations while also producing fresh and nutritious food. Mass feeding used to be more bulk cooking in large volumes that were put out in hot wells and scooped out onto consumers' plates. But now I'm seeing more demand for more à la minute cooking that induction stations and rapid-cook ovens can help provide. Blast chillers are playing a more prominent role, too. Now you can cook pans of lasagnas, blast chill

them and then bring them to temperature, pan by pan, when demand dictates. Many of the lessons learned here can be applied to catering operations, noncommercial foodservice operations, and even chain restaurants as they scramble to meet the growing fulfillment demands created by online ordering and third-party delivery.

What emerging trends do you see shaping the foodservice industry — both today and down the road?

KS: The restaurant market continues to drive the trends that impact other industry segments. People want fresh food fast, and they want an experience that might include some use of technology for convenience or interactivity. As consultants, we are all trying to accomplish the same thing: Feed people in a more efficient manner. In the sports market, we have been trying to apply some of the things that fast casuals have done. Lately, we're going beyond full-service, in-seat dining to platforms that allow fans to order from their phones and then receive a text letting them know when and where to pick up the food. Imagine how useful that would be in

the healthcare industry when nurses and staff are working all hours of the night or barely have a break and don't want to wait in line. The same goes for the visitors as well.

CG: Yes, we have been designing more remote pickup areas for online ordering in healthcare facilities. We have also worked on a hotel [project] that implemented a similar program, so no one segment is that far behind anymore.

Younger-generation consumers seem to be forgoing the big national brands — or at least want more options for independent and ethnic concepts.

Patrick Watt

PW: Another trend I am seeing is the growth and preference for independent concepts. Younger-generation consumers seem to be forgoing the big national brands — or at least want more options for independent and ethnic concepts. Gone are the days of the old food courts where you just have a bunch of national



The restaurant market continues to shape the trends in the noncommercial segment. Take, for example, this noncommercial operation designed by S2O Consultants. It features digital menu boards to communicate with consumers and a refrigerated display case.

brands; many colleges and universities and even B&I now include pop-up stations that can rotate in and out different area businesses like a local Vietnamese restaurant or local coffee roaster. That has a direct impact on how we design those stations. There is even growth in demo kitchens and self-service pantries where college students can cook from a few predetermined recipes. There might be three choices of noodles, and they can ladle in their preferred sauce and add-ins. They are not fully cooking their meal but have more control over what they eat.

Technology is everything these days. As it becomes increasingly important and ubiquitous in foodservice outlets, how do these new platforms and tools affect the designs, the way you approach your projects and more?

Christine Guyott

We are definitely feeling a need to know more about IT than in the past.

CG: We are definitely feeling a need to know more about IT than in

the past. Before, we designers could separate ourselves out from that discussion by easily just saying, “Well, that’s management advisory services (MAS),” but now technologies like online ordering and kiosks are affecting our designs.

EN: Yes, everything from digital menu boards to remote ordering systems and kiosks — we have to show all of that on the drawings even if we might not specify those pieces. We still have to provide the infrastructure for it so any operator can come in and hook everything up and make it work with the entire concept. And then there needs to be space or separate pickup areas for mobile and remote ordering so that when the customer comes to pick up the food, the flow and function in the kitchen all work together seamlessly.

CG: Even traditional queue lines are changing; where people are waiting for their food is different.

PW: None of these places, though, are truly built right to fulfill these app orders. Many have added a pickup counter or stand with cubbies, but what I see happening in the next 5 to 10 years is actually designing outlets that have full fulfillment counters, not just an addition to an existing counter.

KS: I agree; we as consultants need to at least know how these new technologies work so we can ask the right questions and put the right people together to solve all the new, more complex design needs.

EN: There is still a big disconnect between consultants and technology, in my opinion. Those are two different

sandboxes, and they didn’t cross over much until now. By going to conferences and learning from each other, we are starting to pick up some best practices when it comes to these things. Our job is to educate clients about new technologies and trends we are seeing so we can bring them up to speed in today’s foodservice world.

Other than technology, what are other issues coming up in the industry that will affect all industry segments?

KS: Labor is a big one; trying to get foodservice fully staffed with low turnover is a real challenge for many of our clients. But that’s where technology might be able to help. For example, moving from full-service in-seat dining to online ordering and customer pickup has really helped stadiums redirect that staffing need. By having customers pick up the food instead of staff delivering it, these operators can make more efficient use of the same amount of labor or require less. Self-service beverage stations also help in all segments. Handing someone a cup rather than taking the time to pour is worth the labor and time savings compared to a little more cost for syrup if you have free refills. More automation can also help cut down on the need for more square footage.

PW: The growth of nutrition and wellness is impacting all segments, in my opinion. In healthcare, dietitians have specific nutritional profiles that they need to meet and that ties into production and how menus are delivered. The same applies to special diets. Now, this is huge in colleges

Trends and Needs Reported by Consultants

- TREND:** online ordering apps
- NEED:** more technology integration, contacts and support from manufacturers and others in the industry
- TREND:** off-premises food
- NEED:** resources for developing separate, more enhanced fulfillment lines for pickup and delivery
- TREND:** independent food concepts and pop-up stations
- NEED:** solutions with multiuse equipment and plug-and-play to accommodate rotating restaurants and concepts
- TREND:** health and wellness
- NEED:** equipment and solutions for building separate stations to accommodate special diets and allergens
- TREND:** self-service and interactivity
- NEED:** smaller equipment stations that allow customers to do some of the cooking themselves; salad bars and counters with interchangeable hot-cold wells and flexible pieces

and universities with so many more students adopting vegan and vegetarian diets, and then you have many international students with religious-based diets like halal. Also — and this has been going on for some time now — our clients are dealing with a reduction of capital availability. It’s not like in the past when you would design and build an institutional kitchen to last for 30 years. With so many changes — in food trends and consumer preferences — projects and capital are always being reviewed, and we are seeing more value engineering happening.

CG: I think waste removal and management is a huge issue affecting all segments. Disposers help, but if you can’t use disposers in your area, you might be saving on plumbing, but then you have to find another outlet like

composting. And what if that is not available? Compostable takeout containers don’t always help, either. They just create more waste and end up in a landfill if not sent to composting or recycling. In my mind, one solution seems to cause another environmental issue when it comes to waste reduction, and there are not many great answers or a single solution for all. This is where our manufacturer relationships are important; we need to be able to educate and help customers reduce trash [in ways] that don’t have extra

More automation can also help cut down on the need for more square footage.

Kristin Sedej

mechanical, space or labor requirements.

How do you maintain open lines of communication in order to learn best practices from different segments?

KS: By belonging to organizations and going to and being involved in many conferences and other events throughout the year, many of my more casual relationships with other consultants have turned into real friendships. We can ask each other openly what we think of x, y, z or [find] different solutions for common challenges.

CG: Sometimes it’s as easy as picking up the phone and asking our opinions on things. For example, I have been wanting to do more with grab-and-go in healthcare, and Kristin told me about a few stadium projects that had really stepped up their retail outlets, almost like c-stores. So those were some examples I could look at for ideas.

EN: I agree, it all comes down to building contacts. If I have a healthcare question, I know I can call Christine, and if I have a question about stadium design, I can call Kristin.

PW: I am also seeing more independent consultants collaborating or aligning with other consultants and firms on projects.

How can individual members of the supply chain, such as consultants and operators, better leverage the knowledge and resources of manufacturers?

KS: It’s all about relationship building, getting involved and having a voice,

and then we become the person they call for questions or opinions. I do think our voices are stronger when we speak up together, however. It shows there is a need for something; classic supply and demand.

CG: I agree. The more we speak up about needs that are not being met, maybe the more innovation we will see. How we are feeding people is changing dramatically, and it’s important to work together as an industry to find and

Our job is to educate clients about new technologies and trends we are seeing so we can bring them up to speed in today’s foodservice world.

Eric Norman

develop the right solutions for those changes. Personally, I would love to see more equipment to help us with on-demand pickup stations and ticketing displays. We need to have solutions that help production move faster and improve efficiencies with food pickup and delivery.

EN: Connecting with manufacturer’s reps is so important, and some manufacturers overlook the rep-consultant relationship. If my rep calls on me once a year, I won’t know as much about their line as someone I am regularly in touch with. Relationships really are everything.

MENU OUTLOOK 2020

A menu expert weighs in on what’s on the horizon for menus in 2020.



When it comes to spotting menu trends, few people are more adept than Nancy Kruse. As President of The Kruse Company in Atlanta, she keeps a close watch on how menus are changing across all segments of the foodservice industry. Kruse writes a regular column for *Nation’s Restaurant News* magazine and is highly sought after as a consultant and speaker at industry conferences. Here, Kruse outlines some of the trends she sees for menus in 2020.

Going Meatless

“Certainly, the whole issue of ‘healthful or perceived healthful’ continues to be one of the driving factors in menu development,” Kruse says. “There are a number of trendy diet plans at the moment; I don’t know how long-lived those will be. What I do think will have a good long run on the menu are items that are vegetable-based or vegetable-oriented. In terms of creativity, we have a very long runway in front of us relative to vegetables.”

As far as specific vegetables that will be popular, Kruse sees a continuing interest in cauliflower, noting, “It continues to burst out all over, most notably as an alternative pizza crust.” But the vegetable she’s really keeping an eye on is the humble mushroom, which she says “is getting a kind of second wind. There’s nothing new about it, but there are some wonderfully new menu applications.” Kruse credits part of the revived interest in mushrooms to the Blended Burger Project, an initiative co-sponsored by the James Beard Foundation, which holds an annual competition among chefs to develop recipes for burgers comprised of at least 25 percent mushrooms. The

variety of mushrooms available adds to their appeal, she says. “There will be more upscale and specialized culinary types that may appear on menus, but in the mass market as a whole, there’s plenty to satisfy both the operator and the consumer.”

Even this increased interest in vegetable dishes, though, doesn’t mean that Americans are walking away from meat. “Last year, we consumed more animal protein — more meat — than at any time in our history. We like both meat and interesting vegetables,” she says.

Kruse calls plant-based meat substitutes “one of two or three megatrends at the moment.” This trend reaches across all segments of the industry, particularly casual chains and quick-serve restaurants. But those products come with some caveats. “From my point of view, there are some real issues relative to the handling in the kitchen and the ultimate quality of what’s delivered to the customer,” she says. Because these products don’t contain animal fat, proper preparation becomes tricky. Even so, she says, “this is one of those trends that at the moment is so hot, I think most restaurateurs need to at least consider it.”

The Equipment Angle...

One of the main drivers behind the increased popularity of vegetables is more careful cooking techniques. Methods such as roasting, braising and steaming all deliver maximum flavor without allowing the vegetables to get soft or mushy. A combi steamer can be a one-stop solution for preparing vegetables easily in a variety of ways to retain their flavor and nutrients.



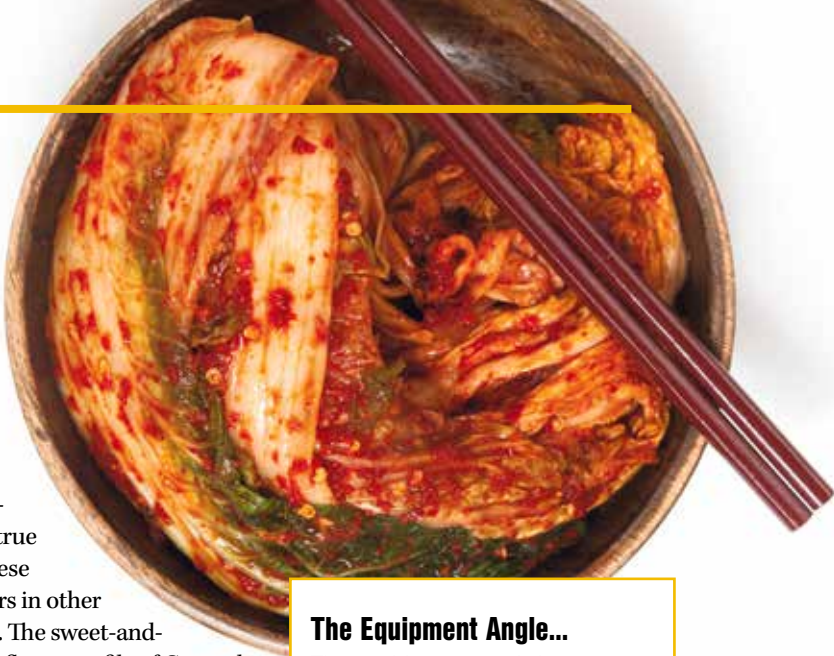
Eastern Influences

What Kruse terms “the big three” Asian cuisines — Chinese, Japanese and Thai — will continue to be popular, she says. But three more Asian cuisines bear watching: Korean, Indian and Vietnamese. American consumers are open to experimentation with these foods partly because of increased immigration from these countries and partly because “American diners have by and large become much more experimental, and restaurant operators have become much savvier in terms of how they introduce the unfamiliar,” Kruse says. One way operators are introducing new ethnic ingredients is by using them in familiar dishes. Kimchi, for example, is being used in everything from remoulades to Bloody Marys. The Korean hot red chili paste gochujang keeps popping up in condiments such as aioli, she says, where the fat in the mayonnaise tempers its heat. These Asian cuisines

also feature a variety of spices and spice blends which lend themselves to American dishes. The dried fish-based seasoning furikake and the citrus-and-sesame shichimi togarashi seasoning are two blends that Kruse sees making inroads on menus lately. These “small steps,” as she calls them, can be a gateway into further exploration into the cuisines, particularly for younger customers. Another trend Kruse sees in regard to Asian cuisines is what she terms the “2.0” phase. As authentic flavors or ingredients of the “big three” cuisines integrate themselves into the American menu, chefs now use them in different ways. “Wasabi came in with the first wave of sushi,” she says. “Customers are pretty comfortable with it, so now you turn it into a salad dressing.” She sees similar experimentation going on with miso, and Kruse predicts even more of that kind of invention with other Japanese ingredients. In the same fashion, operators

now use tried-and-true Chinese flavors in other ways. The sweet-and-spicy flavor profile of General Tso’s sauce keeps “turning up all over the place,” she says. “It’s a winning combination for American diners. We will eat almost anything if it has a sweet dimension.” Kruse also cites kung pao as a traditional Chinese flavor profile that’s being recycled “in the most unlikely places, as a bar snack or as a marinade.” Even with the wide range of Asian dishes and flavors already on menus, she believes “we’ve got a long way to go. We haven’t even scratched the surface yet of Laotian, Cambodian and regional Indian.”

The popular Korean condiment kimchi is being widely used on menus now.



The Equipment Angle...

The upside to most Asian cuisines for North American operators is that they don’t require specialized equipment to produce delicious results. Operators can use a standard flat-top grill to create many Asian dishes. A specialized wok burner or range can be considered for high-volume production; for smaller operations, a good commercial wok and wok ring may suffice.



Cannabis solutions from Metro include security cages.



High Times

Finally, what Kruse calls the “number-one biggest issue from a menu perspective” is also one of the thorniest: CBD (cannabidiol), an active ingredient in cannabis derived from the hemp plant. The 2019 “What’s Hot” Culinary Forecast survey from the National Restaurant Association listed cannabis- or CBD-infused drinks and food as the number one and two trends, respectively. Operators must deal with a host of issues when cooking with CBD. The first is legality, which “varies all over the map,”

Kruse says. Second is the fact that “there’s no research on how CBD performs in foods and beverages and how that performance might vary by gender, age group or body size.” That fact has other legal ramifications, she says. In the same way that “dram shop” laws hold operators liable when they serve patrons too much alcohol, “what if I have too much CBD?” she asks. “And how much is too much?” And for some operations, there can also be image issues associated with CBD. She cites the example of a quick-serve chain that tested a limited-time menu item called the Rocky Mountain High Cheeseburger Delight, which sold for \$4.20: a double-patty burger with the usual toppings...and a sauce containing 5 milligrams of CBD. “They got lots of publicity,” Kruse notes, “but if you looked at their Facebook page, you saw lots of [parents] saying, ‘Do you really think I’m going to bring my kid into your store?’”

The Equipment Angle...

At this stage, the question with CBD from an equipment standpoint seems to be not how it will be prepared; that will vary by the individual menu item in which it’s used. The bigger issue may well be storage and security. In the same way that operators have locked cabinets for alcohol, CBD-infused products may need a separate locked cabinet of their own in the kitchen.

Looking Ahead

Trying to keep track of trends can sometimes be overwhelming, Kruse says, “We’re being bombarded by inputs relative to all these trends.” Her advice to operators is simple and straightforward: “Think critically and strategically in terms of who the customer base is you are working with and think realistically about how these trends affect them... or don’t affect them at all.”

Zhug (or skhug) is a Yemeni sauce made from chili peppers, cilantro and spices.



Moving to the Middle East

The other region Kruse sees great potential for on menus is the **Middle East**, especially the Levant region, generally considered to be the area around Israel, Jordan and Lebanon. She cites an up-and-coming generation of young chefs from the area who are “talented, media savvy and have done a good job of putting a face on foods that might otherwise not be as familiar.” Kruse cites a number of Middle Eastern ingredients

poised to make their mark on menus. Toum is a simple Lebanese sauce made from garlic, lemon juice and oil. “It’s easy to prepare,” she says. “It’s wonderfully accessible. You can put it on all kinds of things.” As with the Asian cuisines, culinary professionals can easily incorporate a variety of spices and condiments in American dishes. Za’atar, a combination of sesame seeds and herbs, is both accessible and versatile, she notes. Zhug (or skhug) is a Yemeni sauce made from chili peppers, cilantro and spices.

It has a definite appeal for heat-loving customers and is already showing up on some American menus. Despite their familiarity with North American diners, Kruse says kebabs remain popular, calling them “a hands-down winner, no matter how you look at it.” Kebabs have a built-in familiarity for diners, and they also allow operators to control the amount of ingredients used (especially the more expensive proteins), thus keeping food costs in check.

The Equipment Angle...

For the most part, Middle Eastern foods do not depend on specialized prep equipment. Cook traditional single-skewer kebabs on a standard grill or broiler. For the gyro-style doner kebab, where culinary staff slice the meat off a “cone” and combine it with other ingredients, a specialized vertical rotisserie becomes necessary.

The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program Aids 14 Students

In partnership with The Berti Foundation, Ali Group North America proudly announces the recipients of its second annual round of college scholarships. The **Berti Foundation Scholarship Program** supports dependents of Ali Group North America U.S.-based employees. Named for Ali Group founder Mr. Luciano Berti and his wife, Giancarla, the Foundation supports education and the arts. More than 50 students applied for

the 2019 scholarships.

In 2019, the Foundation renewed the scholarships of six students who were awarded scholarships the previous year, making a total of 14 students to date who have received educational support from The Berti Foundation.

“One way to help create tomorrow’s leaders is to help them achieve their educational goals,” says Filippo Berti, Vice President of The Berti Foundation. “This scholarship is one way Ali Group North America strongly supports our employees and their children.

We are pleased to recognize these individuals and support their promising futures.”

The Berti Foundation Scholarship Program offers renewable scholarships of up to \$10,000 annually to cover qualifying tuition and fees. Awards are renewable up to three years or until a bachelor’s degree is earned, whichever occurs first, on the basis of satisfactory academic performance (maintaining a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent).

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be high school seniors/

graduates or college undergraduates who are dependent children of full-time Ali Group North America U.S.-based employees and planning to enroll in full-time undergraduate studies at an accredited two-year or four-year college or university for the entire academic year.

This year’s winners span a variety of studies and disciplines, but all demonstrated outstanding academic accomplishment. The scholarships were awarded to the following eight students, representing six Ali Group companies:



Jenna Rose Biago, Kingston, Pa.
Parent: Marianne Biago (Metro)

Evelyn Castro, Paramount, Calif.
Parent: Juan Castro (CMA Dishmachines)

Jazmyn Lansberry, Rossiter, Pa.
Parent: Carrie Lansberry (Beverage-Air)

Emily B. Parker, Hampton, S.C.
Parent: William Parker (Scotsman)

Darshaun R. Smith,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Parent: Yusef Smith (ACP Solutions, Inc.)

Dawn L. Toney, Blairstown, Iowa
Parent: Kassey Toney (ACP Solutions, Inc.)

Haylee Walker, Perry, Ga.
Parent: Tim Zirkle (Moffat USA)

Mia K. Zirkle, Toccoa, Ga.
Parent: Tim Zirkle (Moffat USA)





Jenna Rose Biago
Kingston, Pa.

School/college you plan on attending:
Misericordia University,
Dallas, Pa.
Major/course of study:
Nursing

What got you interested in that course of study?
I was always interested in the medical field since I was young. I am extremely interested in labor and delivery. I wanted a career that I would thoroughly enjoy and would challenge me.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I would like to get a job pertaining to my degree.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
Enjoying life. Having a job that I don’t see as a job but as a place to help and lift people up, physically and mentally. Continuing my life by being faith-filled and devoted to others.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I try not to follow the trends — mostly, the way everyone thinks. I don’t like to get caught up in others’ way of thinking. I am most proud of that!

Describe yourself in one word.
Different — but in the best way possible!



Evelyn Castro
Paramount, Calif.

School/college you plan on attending:
California State University Long Beach, Long Beach, Calif.
Major/course of study:
Criminal Justice

What got you interested in that course of study?
Ever since I can remember, I knew that I have always wanted to help others. What is fascinating about criminal justice is that you get to deal with both the suspect and victim of a case, and that is what most careers don’t do. Criminal justice is different from other majors because criminal justice careers are not a routine due to the different crimes that occur.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
After college, I would like to become a police officer.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself as a police officer while forming my pathway to becoming a detective.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
My parents are from Mexico, and neither of them received a high school diploma. However, that encourages me to get my degree so we can have a better lifestyle.

Describe yourself in one word.
Determined.



Jazmyn Lansberry
Rossiter, Pa.

School/college you plan on attending:
Mount Aloysius College,
Cresson, Pa.
Major/course of study:
Radiology Technician

What got you interested in that course of study?
Ever since I was young, I knew I wanted to work in the medical field because helping people was something I’ve always loved to do. With this course of study, it allows me to fulfill that dream and gives me the opportunity to give help to those who need it.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
After college, I would love to travel around the world while still pursuing my career and helping out those in need.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself finally on my way toward settling down. I hope to have a full-time job in a big hospital.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
My sister and I are not twins, but we are nine months and two weeks apart in age, which means that for two and a half months out of the year, we are the same age.

Describe yourself in one word.
Strong-minded.



Emily B. Parker
Hampton, S.C.

School/college you plan on attending:
University of South Carolina Salkehatchie, Allendale, S.C.
Major/course of study:
Business

What got you interested in that course of study?
I enjoy working with numbers, figures and organization. Therefore, I believe this degree is the best fit for me. I also like the broad horizons it offers. If I do strive for a change in the next 10 years, this degree opens a lot of doors.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I would like to work in banking and/or finance. My desired occupation would be a mortgage broker or loan administrator. In the future, I would like to become a financial advisor to help young adults to make good economic decisions.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself having graduated college with a degree in Business, working in the banking industry and possibly helping people in my community as a short-term financial counselor. Personally, I hope to see myself married with a family or with the possibility of starting one soon.

Describe yourself in one word.
Pragmatic.



Darshaun R. Smith
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

School/college you plan on attending:
University Of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
Major/course of study:
Sociology

What got you interested in that course of study?
I have always been interested in how people work, individually and as a group. I would find myself doing little social experiments on a frequent basis. A wise person once told me to make my passion my paycheck, so that is what I’m currently trying to do.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I want to do something where I can interact and help as many people as I can on a daily basis, whether that is being a counselor for young, misunderstood minorities or leading a social charge.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
By that time, I will be out of college and be well on my way in life. I look forward to staying in Iowa, but I’m not against moving out of state. But hopefully I’ll be in my first real job.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I am extraordinarily good with my words when talking to people.

Describe yourself in one word.
Charismatic.



Dawn L. Toney
Blairstown, Iowa

School/college you plan on attending:
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa
Major/course of study:
Advertising

What got you interested in that course of study?
I really enjoy looking at advertisements and locating their motive. I try to think of ways they could have done it differently.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I would love to work for a real estate company. That would include being in their advertising department as well as showing homes.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself living in a smaller city, working for a large real estate company before owning my own company.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
I love to write poetry. It comes very naturally to me.

Describe yourself in one word.
Motivated. I am working very hard now with school and part-time jobs so that I can set myself up for success in the future. I am also very excited to see what is in store for me.



Haylee Walker
Perry, Ga.

School/college you plan on attending:
Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Ga.
Major/course of study:
Accounting

What got you interested in that course of study?
I chose accounting because I have always loved working with numbers, and I enjoy solving puzzles. Creating financial statements can sometimes feel like putting a puzzle together, but it is so satisfying when everything is finished and in the right place.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
After I graduate, I plan to pursue my master’s in Accounting and take the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) and the CFE (Certified Fraud Examiner) exams. Then, I hope to work for an accounting firm.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I see myself having passed both the CPA and the CFE exams and working in public accounting.

What is one fact about you that is interesting or different?
My lifelong dream is to be a contestant on “Wheel of Fortune.”

Describe yourself in one word.
Determined.



Mia K. Zirkle
Toccoa, Ga.

School/college you plan on attending:
The University of North Georgia, Dahlonega, Ga.
Major/course of study:
Marketing and Supply Chain Management and Logistics

What got you interested in that course of study?
The summer before my freshman year of college, I had the opportunity to work as a marketing intern for a company in my hometown. This experience allowed me to gain insight into the business world and helped me realize my admiration for companies that invest in the world around them.

What would you like to do after you’re out of college?
I would like to work for a nonprofit company or ministry as their communications/ marketing director. I hope to be involved with a company that cares about the world around them and strives to be a partner in sustainability.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I hope to be working for a company that is as committed and passionate about helping people as I am. I also see myself working toward my dream to visit all 50 United States and starting a family.

Describe yourself in one word.
Tenacious.



SCALING UP TO SUCCESS

Peter Nordell, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Edlund Company, has been with the company for 30 years. But that's just part of a career that spans more than a half century. The depth of experience he brings to Edlund helps make the Vermont-based company a leader in every category it's in.

Starting Out

Nordell's first taste of the foodservice business came when he was 18 years old, flipping burgers and making milkshakes at a luncheonette after school. Northeastern University in Boston was his next stop, and after some work-study jobs there, he started tending bar while still a student. "I made more money tending bar in Boston back then than I ever had in a legitimate job," he says. After a few more short-term jobs, Nordell wound up in Sacramento, Calif., running the food and beverage operations at a harness-racing track, which gave him his introduction to management.

More moves followed, including a stop in Hawaii, and Nordell eventually came to New York City, where he landed a job with a major manufacturer of alcoholic beverages as its regional marketing manager. A stint at another alcoholic beverage producer got him into the national accounts side of the business.

By the early 1980s, Nordell moved to a foodservice equipment and supplies dealer. "I got tired of the liquor industry because it's pretty hard on your body," he laughs. He then transitioned to a scale manufacturer. Now with the "triple threat" of experience in management, national accounts and foodservice equipment under his belt, he was recruited by Edlund to be its Director of Sales and Marketing in 1990. In 2007, Nordell became President of Edlund and was promoted to the additional title of CEO three years later.

One of those major expansions is the segment for which Edlund is probably best known today: scales. In the past, the company had a reputation for primarily being a manufacturer of can openers and remains the top seller of can openers in foodservice. By examining the competitive set and filling the gaps with products that other companies didn't offer, though, Edlund soon owned the scale category as well.

"Whether it be mechanical, digital, receiving scales or whatever, we added more and more scales to the line to give the market the impression that we were as big in scales as we were in can openers," Nordell says. Eventually, Edlund became the top brand in the scale category, and now, he says, "we've actually reached the point where people say, 'You're the scale company' rather than 'the can opener company.' That was a very important milestone for Edlund." He also calls the fact that Edlund scales were named



Peter Nordell confers with David Sebastianelli, Vice President of Sales and Marketing.



"We've actually reached the point where people say, 'You're the scale company.'"

Peter Nordell,
President and CEO, Edlund



Top: Along with Nordell (left to right), David Sebastianelli; Amy Jones, Chief Financial Officer; and Ryan Whitney, Vice President of Operations, comprise Edlund's senior management team.

Above: Edlund Production Technicians like Mike Allen (left) and Mark Ryan help ensure product quality.

Best in Class by the readers of *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* magazine 14 years in a row “a significant achievement compared with all the brands that are out there now.”

Tough Competition
While Edlund has always had competition in the scales segment, that competitive matrix has changed greatly over the past few decades. Nordell notes that once there were three major players in the foodservice scale business: Edlund and two other U.S.-based brands. Now, with an

influx of imports coming primarily from China, “you can’t count the number of scale brands on two hands,” he says. That increased competition means Edlund must continue to innovate to remain at the top of its categories, a fact which Nordell says has been aided by the company’s acquisition by the Ali Group in 2010. “Since the acquisition,” he says, “the capital investment by the Ali Group has been more than significant in helping us reduce costs, add new patents, create efficiencies and continue to build better products than our competition.”

Competition also remains strong in the foreign territories where Edlund goes to market, and Nordell outlines two major opportunities the company has there. The first challenge is overcoming foreign manufacturers who produce their products in their home countries. “They push the fact that they’re nationalist brands against an import company, although that applies mostly to Europe. It’s the opposite of what happens here,” he says.

“Many of our customers have tried the cheaper brands, and just as many have come back to us.”

Peter Nordell

The second obstacle is one that many companies face: knockoff products produced cheaply overseas. With the brand equity that Edlund has across the industry and the advanced technology in its products, Nordell says that “the competition’s only way to compete with Edlund is on price. Everywhere we go globally, we hear, ‘It’s just like Edlund, only cheaper.’ We own the design of our products, so no competitor can copy our specs. Many of our customers have tried the cheaper brands, and just as many have come back to us.” This situation reminds him of a sign he once saw in an upscale retail store and still remembers to this day: “The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the cheap price is forgotten.”

The Outlook
Today’s North American foodservice operators face a variety of challenges, according to Nordell. Finding qualified workers who want to make foodservice a career makes hiring difficult, he says.

Calling the current hiring situation a buyer’s market, he says, “Both operators and manufacturers find it hard to find good talent that wants to forge a career in the foodservice industry.”

Keeping up with the changing habits and tastes of the younger consumer can also be problematic, says Nordell, because “their tastes and loyalties are not the same as in the past.” He cites the example of the current plant-based protein trend as one that can present an obstacle for operators. “How long will it be successful? How much will operators spend to capture the taste changes that young people want today?”

That same group of consumers continues to influence the changing layout of foodservice operations, Nordell adds, forcing some chains to alter their unit prototypes. “They don’t always need 90-seat stores anymore,” he notes. “Chains can’t afford to put in large, freestanding restaurants at the level they have been with the number of seats they have had.” He says the average number of seats in many chain operations is dropping to 60 — with some even less due to increased usage of drive-through lanes and delivery services.

Finally, Nordell sees continued growth of in-store supermarket foodservice as being a threat to traditional foodservice operations. “Some supermarkets are taking foodservice to a different level,”

he says. “I don’t think that will slow down at all.”

At Ease

When he’s not traveling the world for Edlund, Nordell enjoys his family life with wife Rachael, three children and five grandchildren. In his spare time, he enjoys water activities and is an avid wine collector, “as most of the people in the industry know,” he laughs. For years, he was a motorcycle enthusiast with several Harley-Davidsons, and after a chance encounter with the chairman of a large chain who was also a rider, he founded a motorcycle club for foodservice professionals. The club did rides in conjunction with the biennial NAFEM Show to support food charities for the homeless. Nordell is also a supporter of the American Cancer Society and the Wounded Warrior Project.

Despite the thousands of miles of travel he logs each year, Nordell still enjoys it. “The countries I visit are great countries, and I have made many friends in my travels. I take something away every single time I visit them. It makes me feel good about the career I’ve chosen and the opportunities that are given to me each time I get on a plane to go somewhere to visit friends and customers who have made a difference in the success of my business.”



Keys to Success

Besides having top-quality products, other factors have contributed to Edlund’s long-term success. For example, one of the reasons Edlund enjoys the brand equity that it currently does is because of its consistent marketing and advertising activities. Nordell calls himself a “firm believer in the value of marketing your product and brand building.” He learned that lesson during his time in the liquor business when the big players in the industry would constantly advertise to keep their brands top of mind with consumers. “I will always believe marketing helped Edlund grow its brand acceptance in the marketplace and its image to being equal to or better than those 10 times our size,” he says.

Another reason for the company’s success has been its strong working relationships with all parts of the industry. Chains, for example, “like the fact that we can respond to requests for solutions because we still make most of our products in our factory,” Nordell says. And dealers like working with Edlund because “they know that 99 percent of the time, they can sell an Edlund product and not have to deal with a customer return or complaint,” he says. “That’s why several of our best reps have been with us for more than 25 years, and a few have been representing us for almost 30 years.”

BRAND WATCH



Founded: **1925**

Distributors and dealers worldwide: **850+**

Products sold under Edlund, Edvantage and Bravo! brands: **280+**

Acquired by Ali Group: **2010**

edlundco.com

04

Success stories

SETTING THE STAGE



Using display coolers, Del Taco is able to reinforce — and put on display — its commitment to fresh ingredients.

When Ed Hackbarth and David Jameson opened the first Del Taco restaurant in Yermo, Calif., 55 years ago, its cheeseburgers cost just 24 cents, and those looking for a less costly option could order a 19-cent taco.

By introducing The Del Taco Buck & Under Menu in 2013 and expanding it in 2017, the chain's diverse offerings of both Mexican and American fare continues to provide customers with affordable meal options, yet not at the expense of food quality. That's because the chain continues to use fresh ingredients that culinary staff chop, shred and grill on-site daily.

This approach remains a cornerstone of the success of a chain that grew six-fold from 100 restaurants in the late '70s to an anticipated 600 by the end of 2019.

Focus on Freshness

Even before implementing the Buck & Under Menu, Del Taco sought a refrigeration equipment partner to help put its fresh ingredients front and center in each location. "Our best-kept secret was our fresh food, and we didn't really tell anyone for 50 years," says Kevin Pope, Del Taco's Vice President of Operations and Innovation. "We wanted an opportunity to provide theater and show our customers how fresh our food really is."

The chain's transparency and dedication to eatertainment make it unique in the quick-service space. "As a QSR, Del Taco does interesting things," says Beverage-Air's Vice President of Sales Erica Motes. "They work with a lot of fresh product, prepping in the store.

When the fresh ingredient movement began, they wanted to promote the fact that they use real vegetables."

One of the largest Del Taco franchisees, Paul Hitzelberger, has a background in the grocery business and understands the value of an eye-catching food display. He began initial testing of a Freshness Cooler to highlight many of Del Taco's fresh ingredients. Based on his success, the brand decided to scale the idea and reached out to the chain's refrigeration partner Beverage-Air, who worked in conjunction with Western Pacific Distributors Inc. (WPD) in Fresno, Calif., to create a custom solution from an existing cooler line. Designed to display 40-pound blocks of cheese for shredding, whole tomatoes for use in pico de gallo, avocados, limes and lemons, among other products, the custom retrofitted stand-up cooler serves as both a working refrigerator as well as a showpiece.

"We developed Del Taco's Freshness Cooler about six years ago," Motes says. "We can make it with a single or double door, but most units are double doors with a bottom-mount condenser and LED lights to illuminate fresh products."

The Del Taco/Beverage-Air partnership makes sense as the two organizations have a long track record of working well together. The chain started using one to two pieces of Beverage-Air refrigeration equipment in each restaurant, and it now uses the manufacturer for all its refrigeration needs, including undercounter refrigerators, prep tables, work counters and chef's bases.

Del Taco is famous for its freshly made burritos.

“We have stayed involved with their refrigeration needs and continued to grow the relationship over the years, so we had a good idea of what was needed with the cooler design,” Motes says. “We worked closely with Del Taco to develop the Freshness Cooler, making it custom for them. This project also demonstrated how we can help save them money by customizing the unit for their operations.”

Because Beverage-Air understood Del Taco’s needs, it was able to present the chain with a variety of options to reach the operator’s goals. “Our company can modify an existing unit instead of recreating the wheel to help customers like Del Taco get exactly what they need for operational efficiency,” Motes says. “With modifications, we can start with a base unit and add on features, so it is more affordable than completely custom equipment.”

Del Taco’s Freshness Coolers now sit front and center in many of its stores, fulfilling the goal of spotlighting fresh ingredients while also functioning as convenient cold storage for ingredients. “Rather than in the kitchen, we’ve placed our Freshness Coolers right behind the register for storing our freshest ingredients in clear containers,” says Pope. “This placement, which is purposely near our taco bar, shows there’s no doubt what’s happening. It has reaped the shock and awe of our customers.”

In addition to all of Beverage-Air’s efforts, WPD played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of the Freshness Cooler. “We got involved in the conversation when Del Taco initially decided to go in this direction, using coolers to get fresh product front and center for customers to see,” says Scott Haag, WPD’s Vice President of Marketing.

Getting It Right

The process of creating these one-of-a-kind coolers wasn’t as easy as it would seem. It took some field tests and trial and error, which was to be expected, prior to the final design.

For example, after placing some test units at Del Taco’s sites, WPD determined there were challenges with the lighting and shelves. “From the get-go, I collaborated with our team of engineers to create prototypes and work on retrofit kits,” says Motes. “By being flexible and listening to our customers’ needs, we can accomplish really cool things.”

As a result, the team went through multiple variations of the Freshness Cooler over the course



“Rather than in the kitchen, we’ve placed our Freshness Coolers right behind the register for storing our freshest ingredients in clear containers.”

Kevin Pope
Vice President of
Operations and
Innovation

of six months. This was necessary to ensure the shelf spacing and lighting were just right.

The shelf spacing was the easy part. It was the lighting that took some time to perfect. For example, in the first design, it was determined that a single tube of standard fluorescent lighting didn’t emit enough light. Dual tubes were then brought in, but the case was still not appropriately illuminated.

“We then tried a tube on each side of the door but found the cooler’s center wasn’t well lit,” says Haag. “We also tried putting lighting in the back of the box, but that didn’t work, either. Neither did LED lights in the center of the unit.”

It was dual LED lighting strips placed on both sides of each door at the front of the box that illuminated the products for all to see. “It took several months to work through it,” says Haag. “My company worked with local contractors to retrofit the lighting and do testing in Sacramento, and we had Beverage-Air build a new unit for us a couple of times during the testing process.”

Beverage-Air’s flexibility, including the assistance of Motes to get new units made and make the necessary changes, was critical, according to Haag. “In some cases, Beverage-Air’s engineering department got involved with the power aspect, making sure the cooler was in compliance with UL and NSF. Once the Freshness Cooler’s design was confirmed, my company brought in 75 units to hold in our inventory, so they were in stock and ready to go for Del Taco’s rollout.” This accommodated the chain’s

timeline as it was picking up 5 to 10 coolers a week for their debut in its stores.

Another Project in the Works

After the successful Freshness Cooler rollout, Beverage-Air and WPD began working on a better solution for Del Taco’s fry freezers.

“We’re working on a freezer solution for our fries so the freezers can be located by our fryers,” Pope says. The chain’s fries were voted the third best in the country recently by a Los Angeles food columnist. “They’re important to us, and not having a great freezer in our newest builds to hold a large capacity is problematic.”

At press time, Beverage-Air was in the process of constructing a prototype fry freezer geared for Del Taco’s new builds and some existing sites with the help of WPD. “We have an auditing process for chain accounts where we go into multiple stores and observe the operation and the way they’re using the equipment in question,” Haag says. “Then, we identify issues in the processes, procedures or use of equipment, which we did with the fry freezer.”

When Pope and WPD identified capacity and accessibility issues with the previous fry freezer, Beverage-Air went to work immediately

on developing a new unit to solve the problem. “Kevin thinks about Del Taco’s stores, operators and equipment thoughtfully and wants equipment solutions to be more efficient and help overall workflow,” Motes says. “He looks at it in a unique way to develop a better system.”

Like the retrofitted Freshness Cooler, Beverage-Air is working to redesign the fry freezer. This custom unit will include a 36-inch work top and a 7-inch freezer drawer, which will help with Del Taco’s operational issues. “The fry packaging has been recently redesigned. If it is not discarded and is left in the unit, it can block airflow. We created baskets that will prevent operator error,” Motes says. “We’re currently putting in a prototype unit at one of Del Taco’s sites. Whenever Kevin has a problem, he asks me to walk through the store; it’s great to have that kind of relationship.”

From his perspective, Pope appreciates the time and attention to detail Beverage-Air provides. “Beverage-Air and WPD are both amazing to work with,” he says. “If we have a need, they jump to find a solution for us. From top to bottom, the Beverage-Air folks are terrific people, as are the distributors they work with. We couldn’t ask for a better partnership with a company and its people.”

BRAND WATCH



Established:
1944
Products:
1,000+
Product series:
31
Product categories:
10
beverage-air.com

A Beverage-Air cooler helps Del Taco convey the concept of freshness to its customers.



04 Success stories

Technology Makes Foodservice More Efficient at Montefiore’s Moses Campus

Sometimes, even the most efficient foodservice operation can get a boost by introducing new technology. That’s exactly the case at Montefiore Health System’s Moses Campus in the Bronx, New York.

The Montefiore Moses Campus has 658 beds and employs nearly 10,000 associates. The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM) is a 132-bed facility employing 890 associates. The two hospitals are part of the 10-hospital Montefiore Health System, serving patients in New York City and the surrounding areas. The campus also serves as the primary location for the Montefiore Einstein Centers of Excellence, which include centers devoted to cancer care, transplantation and two other specialties.

On an average day, “we serve approximately 800 to 900 guest and patient meals” during each meal period, says Nancy Deenihan-Gruber, Site Director, Food and Nutrition Services, Montefiore Health System. In addition, the foodservice department operates a full-service cafeteria, catering service, two coffee shops and two coffee kiosks.

Like many healthcare operations in major metropolitan areas, the Montefiore Moses Campus not only has to take patients’ medical needs into consideration but also has to cater to their individual cultural backgrounds. Deenihan-Gruber says, “We serve many diverse cultures. We draw inspiration from the community around us while maintaining a healthful aspect.” A typical menu at the hospital includes everything from a Spanish chicken stew to a

BRAND WATCH

burlodge

TOGETHER, WE WORK.

Countries in Burlodge’s network:

50

Exclusive partners:

14

Distributors:

25

Meals served per day on Burlodge equipment:

3.5 million

burlodgeusa.com
(USA)

burlodgeca.com
(Canada)

A delivery system upgrade helps an urban medical center serve patients and customers quickly and efficiently.

plant-based pasta primavera.

The Montefiore Moses Campus produces all meals for its patients and foodservice operations on-site and has a cook-chill operation. “The bulk of our patient menu is prepared Monday through Friday,” says Deenihan-Gruber. “Production on the weekends is focused on the cafeterias and catering services.”

Meeting the Challenge

The big challenge today for the Montefiore Moses Campus— and every other healthcare facility — is how to do more with less and how to provide exceptional, client-focused meal service at the same time. For many facilities, “quality meal service is more challenging because you have fewer and fewer people on staff,” says Paul Sico, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing for Burlodge USA.

The challenges that the Montefiore Moses Campus faces today resonate in healthcare facilities across country: how to do more with less while still providing exceptional client-focused meal service. “Efficiency and excellent food temperature retention at the point of service are critical,” Sico says.

For Montefiore’s Moses Campus, that technology has been Burlodge meal delivery systems. Montefiore has partnered with Burlodge to serve their patients for more than 25 years. In fact, Montefiore was Burlodge’s first major client in North America. After success with Burlodge’s Friogen and Novaflex



Above and right: The Burlodge B-Pod system is helping Montefiore Moses Campus deliver piping hot, nutritious meals to patients.

systems, the hospital made a technology jump and converted to the Burlodge B-Pod system in 2018.

“Since the addition of the B-Pod unit, we have decreased our meal delivery times and have been able to address patient satisfaction issues with the temperature and quality of the food,” says Deenihan-Gruber. “Because we do not need to open the doors to transfer the trays to a transport truck, we find that the food temperatures are better maintained and the integrity of the food is preserved.” The successful rollout of the B-Pod system at the Moses campus prompted Montefiore Health System to use it at two other campuses as well.

The advanced technology and compact size of the B-Pod system allows the hospital to better serve patients without taking up more space, Deenihan-Gruber says. “The new system has a much smaller footprint than the two systems used prior,” she says. “The smaller footprint allowed us to add additional units and increase the amount of meal deliveries. In addition, the design of the B-Pod system allows for easier cleaning of the system and the area around the units.”

Chris Trivlis, Senior Director, Food and Nutrition Systems for Montefiore Health System, says, “We have had three generations of Burlodge equipment. Burlodge has provided great customer service and the equipment has surpassed its life expectancy. We look forward to a continued partnership for years to come.”

“Upgrading to a system that saves on labor but maintains high-caliber service levels exemplifies why Montefiore remains a long-time leader in the healthcare food service sector,” Sico says. “It’s great to collaborate with an organization that always puts patients first while still being able to operate within today’s budgetary realities.”

“We draw inspiration from the community around us while maintaining a healthful aspect.”

Nancy Deenihan-Gruber
Site Director, Food and Nutrition Services



This Ames, Iowa-based university experienced so much success with its new gelato program that it decided to expand its offerings to multiple locations and formats.

Gelato Provides Cool Comfort to Students at Iowa State University

It doesn't get much colder than January in Iowa, and logic would dictate frozen desserts like gelato might not be popular with Iowa State University (ISU) students at the start of second semester. Yet, when the school's new gelato program rolled out during one of the state's record-breaking cold winters, the popularity of the dessert was evident from the get-go.

Located in the central Iowa town of Ames, ISU's campus of 35,000 students includes, on average, 11,000 meal plan holders. Its 26 foodservice locations include dining centers, fast-casual spots, retail cafes, convenience stores, a food court, vending and catering operations, and a food truck. Gelato was not a part of the university's menu until its introduction at the newly-renovated The Roasterie Café in January 2019.

"Gelato is a fantastic product that our students don't get to experience a lot in Iowa," says Jamie Lenz, Assistant Director of ISU Dining. "We are always wanting to be on the cutting edge, bringing our students new and innovative food options to experience unique flavors they may never have thought to order. This also gives our staff the ability to be creative in their work."

Despite launching the gelato program in cooler weather, it was hot immediately and stayed that way. "We sold over 29,000 scoops of gelato or 180 scoops a day between January 14 and May 10," says Chad Bauman, Communications Specialist for ISU's residence halls and dining department.

April 2019 was the busiest month for gelato at ISU, with close to 5,000 scoops sold, and its busiest day was April 8 with 224 scoops sold, according to Emory Telios, Assistant Manager of ISU Dining's gelato production facility.

The cafe features eight gelato flavors on a daily basis, which includes five standards — vanilla, chocolate, coffee, raspberry and salted caramel. Three new recipes debut each month. "The most popular flavor by far is the salted caramel, but the goat cheese and cherry, banana cream pie, Earl Grey sorbet and pomegranate also were hot sellers [as LTO flavors]," Bauman adds.

Texture represents a key attribute of ISU's gelato, serving as an indicator of quality. "It's based on being creamier, less icy and at the right texture and consistency that we're looking for," says Telios.

Exploring Its Options

Prior to establishing its gelato program, ISU’s dining department looked at several equipment options. While researching other operations, the ISU dining team found the majority of operators they saw were utilizing equipment from Carpigiani.

“As we were determining what equipment to purchase, we visited Carpigiani’s [training center in Vernon Hills, Ill.] so we could see firsthand how the equipment worked as well as the ease of operating and cleaning and flexibility of using it,” says Lenz. “In addition, we had the opportunity to take advantage of Carpigiani’s knowledgeable gelato chef, Baron Gottsacker, who has given us an extreme advantage in our startup process.”

The university chose Carpigiani’s Pastomaster 120 to make the gelato base in house, along with the LB-502 RTX Tru 2 Batch Freezer, READY 802, Mister Art Plus, Pastochef and blast freezers.

“We use both the batch freezer and pasteurizer daily, putting milk, cream and sugar in the pasteurizer for 12 hours before using the finished base, and we use the freezer to produce gelato and sorbets,” says Telios. “The equipment has features that make it easy to clean and operate, and the pasteurizer has a digital readout, so it’s easy for employees to know if it’s heating, cooling or aging and for how long. Also, the batch freezer runs pretty quickly.”

The equipment package ISU chose is not only easy to use but can also produce large quantities of a gelato in a very short time, says Gottsacker, who serves as a Chef/Instructor for Carpigiani. “ISU is very food oriented, with chefs cooking almost everything from scratch,” he says. “After they

“For us to have a contact available from the manufacturer to help us out with recipes, troubleshooting, etc., it has made it easy for us to put a successful program together.”

Jamie Lenz
Assistant Director of ISU Dining



Carpigiani machines are the heart of Iowa State’s gelato program.



Right: Gelato provides a welcome break from studies at Iowa State.

contacted us, we brought them into our Vernon Hills offices and made a couple of gelato batches to test the batch freezers.”

In October 2018, Gottsacker conducted a small training session on the equipment, and just three months later, ISU’s team was ready to go. “We did two days of training on campus and sent Telios to our Gelato University program,” says Gottsacker. “The learning curve is not steep at all.”

A Seamless Grand Opening

As a result of this focus on training, ISU’s program launched without a hitch. “We were supplied the time we needed to work with the equipment and not just rush through a demo,” says Lenz. “We received training by their chef, and, we were able to test the equipment out ourselves, making sure we were comfortable with it. We had all our questions answered by the chef before he left.”

Because the Carpigiani staff was available for any and all follow-up questions as they came

up, this further increased ISU’s comfort level and helped ensure the university was making the best decision for its new gelato program. “For us to have a contact available from the manufacturer to help us out with recipes, troubleshooting, etc., it has made it easy for us to put a successful program together,” says Lenz. “Our gelato production facility manager has been able to visit the Ali Group [headquarters in Vernon Hills] twice for training events, and Carpigiani has had its staff visit our location before opening to work with our team to get started.”

Along with conducting training on the best processes of using the equipment, Carpigiani staff assisted ISU in developing gelato recipes. They also returned to the university’s gelato production facility to help

make its first batches to serve at the cafe’s grand opening. “They were there to help serve and talk to customers at our open house,” says Lenz.

The initial success of its gelato program has the ISU team vigorously exploring what comes next. “We are now in the process of planning a stand-alone storefront in which we will expand our gelato offerings,” says Lenz. “Our plan is to

have a large offering that can be served in a cup, various types of cones (such as cake, sugar, waffle), waffle bowl, waffle taco and waffle cannoli.”

The university plans to explore various ways to incorporate gelato into shakes, paninis, pops, bites and decorated cakes or as a scoop within a shot of espresso. “We will also be looking into adding take-home packaged options in a single-serve, pint or larger half-gallon option,” says Lenz. “Gelato has already been incorporated into our catering operations as a dessert, and we plan on expanding the options with this.” Ultimately, ISU hopes to take the gelato to an outdoor walk-up window, creating a popular campus community hangout.

“Our ultimate goal is for our gelato to become that destination place/item that every alumnus has to stop and get when they come back to campus for a visit because they miss it so much from their days as a student,” says Lenz. “The Carpigiani staff has been a great resource for us, finding and sourcing product for usage and service. They still check in regularly to see how things are going and if we have any issues or questions they can help us with.”

BRAND WATCH



Commercial branches: 8
Service centers worldwide: 500
Distributors worldwide: 180
carpigiani.com/us

Gardant Serves More than Food with Its Eloma Combi Ovens

This operator of senior living communities believes in serving people at all income levels. With the help of the GENIUS^{MT} combi steamer, its dining program plays a major role in offering care and dignity to all its residents.

For Gardant Management Solutions, caring for the elderly isn't just a business — it's practically a calling. Founded in 1999, Gardant is the nation's 10th largest operator of senior living communities with 56 locations in Illinois, Indiana and the Mid-Atlantic region. The company doesn't own these facilities. Instead, investors hire Gardant to run these communities that offer everything from independent living to assisted living to memory care for those with Alzheimer's and related conditions.

One factor that makes Gardant unique is the company's commitment to serve seniors at all income levels. Its communities welcome everyone from individuals who can self-pay to those who rely entirely on Medicare waivers. Gardant, its leaders say, simply believes that seniors deserve care and dignity, no matter their financial status.

"We are a for-profit business, but we are mission driven," says Gardant Vice President of Development and Positioning Rick Banas. "We know there are older adults who have a need for assisted living, senior living or memory care. We truly believe that what we do reduces their risk of needing nursing home care or developing other health problems."

This commitment translates to an operation where guests feel genuinely cared for. While investors partner with Gardant for its ability to successfully operate facilities for residents with different levels of financial flexibility, residents

and their families choose Gardant communities because of the love and dignity they offer, paired with the care and support services seniors need.

Naturally, the foodservice operations in these facilities play a big role in providing such a high quality of life. On one very important level, the dining areas Gardant operates offer residents an opportunity to socialize, build friendships and form communities. More and more research, noted Banas, shows that socialization is a key to healthy living for people of all ages.

The foodservice operation also serves as a way for Gardant team members to stay on top of the well-being of their residents. If there's a change in a resident's behavior or appearance or if a resident's appetite suddenly changes, foodservice staffers notify other Gardant team members, who can then investigate and address any problems.

Of course, to make the most of these opportunities, each Gardant facility needs a foodservice operation that's worth visiting for every



meal, every day. The happiness of residents — and of course the success of the company — depends on it.

"The food is the most important thing to the residents," says Tim Renner, Director of Culinary Services and Executive Chef for Gardant. "They're coming down to eat three times a day, and it's the same place. You've got to make it quality every time, or else they're going to get upset and possibly leave."

Gardant serves its people food you might not expect to find in senior living communities, from baby back ribs to made-to-order omelets to stuffed green peppers to pasta primavera and chicken pesto wraps.

One of the key pieces of equipment in producing this menu is the GENIUS^{MT} combi steamer from Eloma.

This unit is essential to Gardant-run kitchens as the culinary staff use it in executing the menus for all three daily meal periods, according to Renner and Scott Smolinski, both Directors of Culinary Services and Executive Chefs with Gardant. The team uses the combi steamer to cook bacon, sausage and quiche for

breakfast; grilled cheese and cherry pie for lunch; and baked chicken and fresh bread at dinner.

As chefs, Renner and Smolinski appreciate the quality of the food the Eloma combi steamer puts out, as well as its flexibility. The unit has cut steaming times by more than half, Renner says.

The Eloma also helps with Gardant’s daily rushes, the likes of which most senior care operations never have to deal with. “In our environment, we see 50, 60 people at one time. It’s very important to have all the food readily available. Being able to keep it warm — being able to keep it moist and not sitting on a steam table drying out — is another great perk of using the Eloma,” says Smolinski.

Consistency represents another important attribute for Gardant, which may need to serve the same dish multiple times a year across multiple locations. “We try to make everything the same at each property. Consistency is huge to the retired group and the people we service,” says Smolinski.

The Eloma combi steamer’s ability to store



Gardant prides itself on producing top-quality food, as evidenced by a daily menu board (far right).

The Eloma GENIUS^{MT} performs dependably in the Gardant kitchens.



BRAND WATCH



Established:
1975
Eloma USA launched:
2007
Acquired by Ali Group:
2008
eloma.com



programs for hundreds of recipes and then load those recipes from one unit to another via flash drive helps address this challenge.

In addition to its ability to help the Gardant team execute its menus, the Eloma combi steamer’s relatively small footprint means the unit fits well in the kitchens, where space is always tight, according to Thomas Stegmaier, President of Eloma North America.

The self-cleaning function on the GENIUS^{MT} allows kitchen team members to clean and sanitize a unit while they accomplish other tasks. “All of our staff, everyone, loves that it cleans itself,” says Renner. “It took probably three hours out of their week when they were cleaning a convection oven. Now it is a push of the button to clean it, so it’s saving some labor for us.”

David Hope, Owner of DMHope, LLC. Industrial Kitchens, which designs and sells the kitchen equipment packages for all Gardant facilities, says that compared to

other similarly performing combi ovens, the Eloma units simply cost less.

This is especially important for a company like Gardant, which serves residents of all income levels, according to Banas. “Given the amount a community can charge residents or the fact that we have to operate on reimbursement from Medicaid waivers means we have to pay very close attention to the operating costs,” says Banas.

As part of its ongoing efforts to lower operating costs, Gardant continues to explore ventless equipment, including Eloma’s ventless combi steamer. Hoods represent one of the most expensive aspects of any commercial kitchen and limiting the amount of equipment that goes beneath it helps manage build-out costs. “Even with makeup air, about 10 percent of the air that hoods pull out are from the rest of the kitchen,” says Hope. “That air is heated or air conditioned. Kitchens are all heated and

air conditioned, so by minimizing the length of that hood, the monthly cost of operating that kitchen’s HVAC is less.”

Aftermarket support plays an important role in Gardant’s ability to leverage its investment in Eloma’s technology and other products from Ali Group companies the operation uses. For example, during the installation of Gardant’s first Eloma units, Stegmaier — himself a trained chef — visited the facilities to help the foodservice team learn how to get the most out of their new combis. Since then, whenever Gardant has had an issue, Eloma has been quick to help.

That’s a key value of all Ali Group companies, including Amana (microwave ovens), Champion (dishmachines) and Scotsman (ice machines), which are also used in Gardant kitchens. In almost all situations, Eloma will arrange to have a service technician out within a day or even working to solve problems over the phone. In one case, says Hope, an Eloma service manager had the Gardant team text an image of the problem, allowing him to quickly identify it as a plumbing issue.

Fortunately, Renner says, these situations are few and far between. With 14 units and counting, Gardant’s Eloma combis are holding up and rarely need service calls. It’s this reliability, along with the ease of use, consistency and Eloma’s commitment to customer service, that makes the GENIUS^{MT} combi steamer one of the most important pieces of equipment in Gardant’s kitchens.

“It does exactly what they say — and sometimes a lot more,” says Smolinski. “It’s very easy to use for the majority of our kitchen staff. When you put that together with the consistency, it seems to be a perfect fit for what we need.”

04 Success stories



ELEGANT DINING IN THE MOTOR CITY



“Instead of repeating the old steakhouse standbys, we took some different approaches to things.”

Ryan Prentiss,
Executive Culinary
Director, Heirloom
Hospitality

Avibrant restaurant scene has been one of the most important factors contributing to the renaissance that downtown Detroit has been undergoing recently. Over the past few years, *National Geographic* magazine called Detroit one of six “unexpected cities for food lovers.” *The Washington Post* noted that the city “is undergoing a culinary transformation” and *Bon Appétit* heralded Detroit’s “rapidly changing restaurant scene.”

One of the restaurants at the forefront of this transformation is Prime + Proper, which opened in 2017. It calls itself “a modern interpretation of the classic steakhouse.” Situated in a 1912-vintage building, Prime + Proper capitalizes on the space’s timeless design elements, like an elegant marble staircase. Yet this is no retro steakhouse — everything about the restaurant honors the past

while keeping a solid eye on today’s trends. “Instead of repeating the old steakhouse standbys, we took some different approaches to things,” says Ryan Prentiss, Executive Culinary Director for Detroit-based Heirloom Hospitality, Prime + Proper’s parent company.

The restaurant offers many of the specialties one would expect from an upscale steakhouse and a few unexpected items, too. There’s an extensive raw bar — including oysters and king crab — plus specialties, like escabeche-style scallops and tuna poke. For a touch of extravagance, guests can choose the caviar selection.

All About the Beef

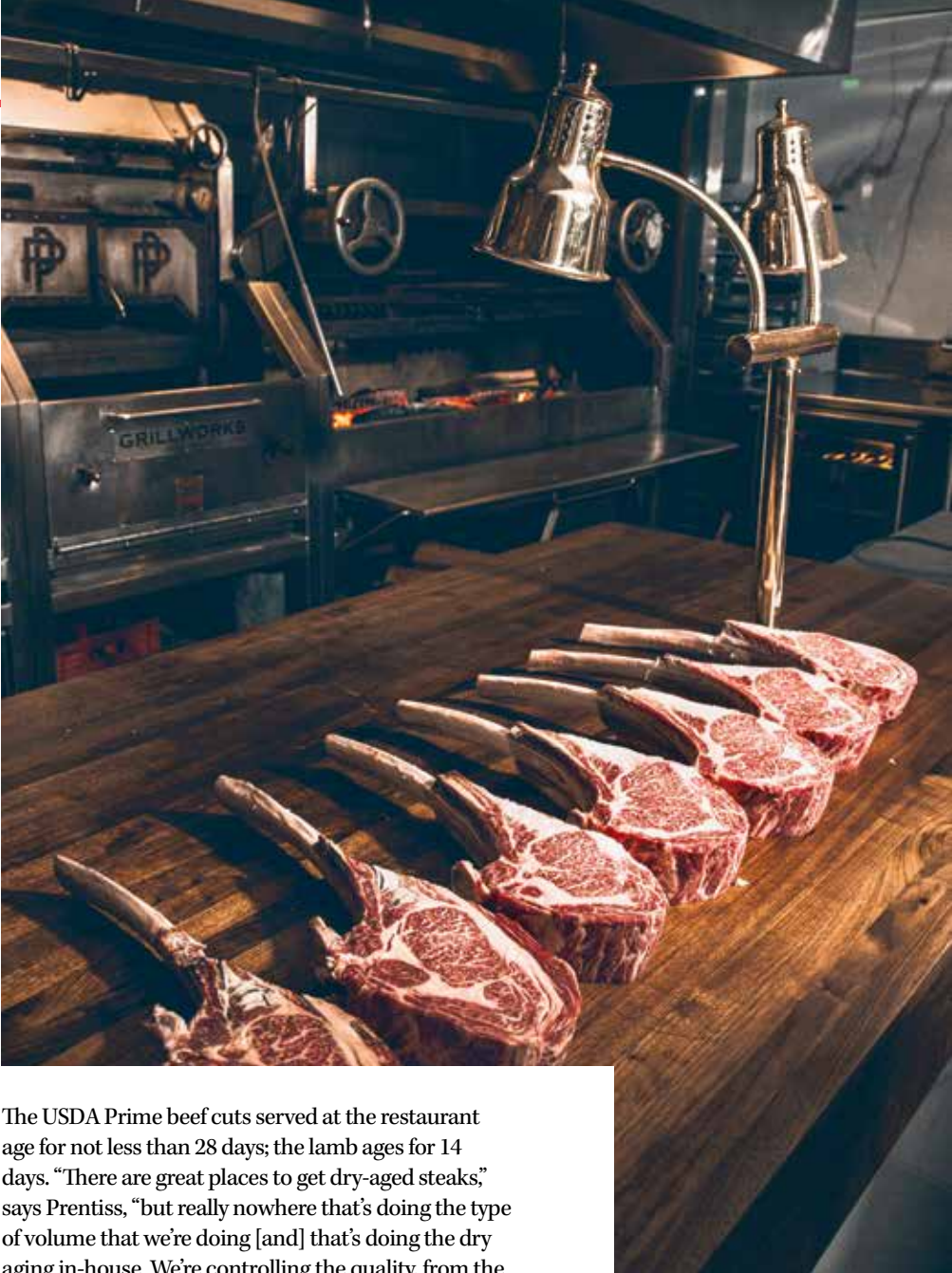
But beef is the really big draw at Prime + Proper. The restaurant prepares its steaks on a 14-foot-long wood-fired grill, made by a Michigan company. The grill brings out the flavor of the steaks, which — along with other menu items, such as lamb and duck — Prime + Proper dry ages on-premises. The proteins age in a large room where Himalayan rock salt lines the walls.



Primal cuts on Metro shelving in the Prime + Proper dry-aging room.



A floor-to-ceiling window provides a panorama view of the dry-aging room.



Steaks await their turn on the grill.

The USDA Prime beef cuts served at the restaurant age for not less than 28 days; the lamb ages for 14 days. “There are great places to get dry-aged steaks,” says Prentiss, “but really nowhere that’s doing the type of volume that we’re doing [and] that’s doing the dry aging in-house. We’re controlling the quality, from the sourcing to the dry aging to the butchery.”

Part of the mission at Prime + Proper is to educate customers on the advantages of dry aging. Joel Schultz, Design Director at Great Lakes Culinary Designs in Southfield, Mich., was on the Prime + Proper design team and says being able to show customers the dry-aging process was a conscious part of the design concept. Dry-aging cases on the upper level of the restaurant are “there to educate the consumer on the different meat products, the processes and what they do,” Schultz says. The larger dry-aging room downstairs “works hand-in-hand with the whole customer interaction part upstairs,” he says. A massive glass window (the largest ever used in a walk-in cooler, Schultz claims) allows customers to see the dry-aging process in action.

Unlike some other steakhouses which use only one purveyor, Prime + Proper sources its meats from many different vendors. “We source the best

beef from all over the country,” says Prentiss. “We use a broad outreach to find the best beef we can at the best times that we can.”

But what really sets Prime + Proper apart from the typical steakhouse is the fact that it also has an on-premises butcher shop with its own executive butcher. If customers don’t feel like dining in, they can select one of the restaurant’s dry-aged raw cuts to prepare at home. Prentiss says the reason for opening the butcher shop was to share the quality of the meat the restaurant ages and butchers. The typical customers for the butcher shop, he says, “tend to be guests who have dined with us a handful of times, and they come in knowing what they want. They walk right up to the counter and ask for what they’re looking for.”

At Your Service

Outstanding service represents another hallmark of Prime + Proper. The restaurant serves in teams, with two servers dedicated to each table. One server strictly handles the food; the other provides beverage service. Prentiss admits that the two-person service system has definitely been a little off-putting for some customers who aren’t used to it, but overall it has been a success. Prime + Proper encourages servers to bring their personalities to the table and spend a longer-than-usual amount of time with customers to ensure satisfaction. “They act almost as if they’re a sort of concierge to guide someone through the experience of eating at Prime + Proper,” Prentiss says. It can be difficult to find the right sort of person for the waitstaff, he adds, because the restaurant downplays upselling.

In a foodservice world that skews more casual each day, this emphasis on fine service can be a challenge to overcome, Prentiss says. “Guest perception is always a tough thing for us to battle,” he admits, so the goal is to give every customer the experience that merits the cost, convincing them they’ve just received a great value. “More often

than not, guests leave feeling they got a really great value for the time and money they spent,” he says.

Designing for Durability


The dry-aging room might be the centerpiece of Prime + Proper, but designing it presented some challenges. One of those challenges was finding the proper shelving that could withstand the corrosive environment of the dry-aging room yet still be easy to clean and move when necessary. Working with rep firm HRI of St. Clair Shores, Mich., Great Lakes Culinary Designs recommended Metro’s MetroMax® Top-Track® shelving, MetroSeal 3™ Top-Track® shelving and the SmartWall® wall storage system for Prime + Proper. The Metro shelving “helps us keep about 9,000 pounds of beef organized” in the dry-aging room, says Prentiss, “and [the crew is] able to move the rolling shelves back and forth to keep the airflow in the dry-aging room.” Cleaning is no issue, as the shelf mats can be sent through the dishwasher and replaced “super-quick and easy,” he says. Durability is also essential, as the cuts of meat — which can weigh as much as 70 pounds each — can have some sharp edges, which could easily gouge traditional shelving. Dry-aged meat’s mildly acidic coating can make standard shelves susceptible to corrosion and rust. “We’ve seen none of that with the MetroMax shelves,” Prentiss says.

“Normally, we’re behind the scenes but we get to be a bit more center stage with Prime + Proper, because our shelving is vital to the preparation, quality and taste of the prime steak the customer gets to enjoy,” says Kevin O’Boyle, Director of Marketing for Metro. “Dry aging requires plastic shelving that is rust-proof, easy-to-clean and strong-as-steel to handle the daily abuse of constantly rotating 70-pound slabs of meat. Their value proposition is delivering the perfect dry-aged steak and our MetroMax and rolling track shelving solutions are a critical part of that. That’s why they’ve been such a great customer to work with.”

"The Metro shelving helps us keep about 9,000 pounds of beef organized."

Ryan Prentiss,
Executive Culinary
Director, Heirloom
Hospitality

BRAND WATCH



Founded:
1929

Products:
30,000+

metro.com

CAFFÈ NERO

Bringing European Coffee Culture to the Neighborhood

When Caffè Nero landed in Boston from Europe in 2014, U.S. coffee culture was already well established. Coffee shops were seemingly on every city corner and

quick-service chains were giving consumers anywhere, anytime access to lattes, iced coffees and café mochas. But Caffè Nero founder Gerry Ford saw an opportunity to fill what he saw as a gap in America's mainstream coffee culture.

Founded in 1997, Caffè Nero offers Ford's vision for an authentic European coffeehouse experience, with the emphasis on experience as strong and as smoothly executed as the Italian-style espresso for which the brand is known. In addition to premium handcrafted coffee and espresso beverages, the concept's cornerstones include a menu of fresh-baked pastries, salads, grain bowls and sandwiches prepared in-house on fresh bread delivered from local bakeries — all delivered in an inviting, neighborhood café aesthetic. It's a proven formula: Over the past 20-plus years, the company has grown to become Europe's largest independent coffeehouse group. Internationally, Caffè Nero (which means "black coffee" in Italian) now operates more than 1,000 units in 11 countries.

Its entry into the U.S. market hasn't been timid. Caffè Nero America expanded to more than 30 units in its first 5 years. As of late 2019, there were 31 units and growing, the majority of which are operating in the Greater Boston area.

"We've been very happy with the way we've been received in the United States," notes Jeff Cotter, Head of Marketing for Caffè Nero America. "The coffee and food are great, and the atmosphere in our coffeehouses is inviting and authentic. Our branding is consistent, but the layout and design of each store is a little different and is tailored to its neighborhood so that it looks like it's been there a while and it belongs. We really want our coffeehouses to serve as comfortable neighborhood gathering places."

Caffè Nero units in the United States average 2,500 square feet, and common design elements include exposed brick, walls lined with bookcases, an eclectic and comfortable mix of seating, communal tables, large chalkboard menus, warm wood finishes and, in many units, Old World-style carved wooden back bars. Many of the furnishings and decor elements are antiques imported from Europe.

The net result is a cozy yet sophisticated ambience well suited for meeting, socializing, working, lingering and/or reading. "What you see is real, and people notice and appreciate that," Cotter says. "It's the antithesis of what you find at most quick-service coffee chains in the U.S. today."



“Our goal is for all of our pastries to be freshly baked no more than two hours before they’re served.”

Michael Halkiotis,
Head of Food and
Procurement for
Caffè Nero America

Service, Food as Differentiators

Caffè Nero’s service style helps to set it apart from the fray as well. In the European tradition, customers approach the main bar, the focal point of every unit, and are greeted by a barista who takes, prepares and serves their order to them before they pay. “It’s how authentic Italian coffeehouses operate,” Cotter notes. “Our one-on-one service, as opposed to more common assembly-line, counter-service format where you order, pay and then get passed off to someone else down the line, sets Caffè Nero apart.”

Like its premium coffee and high-touch service model, the brand’s food strategy also reflects its traditional European coffeehouse roots and authentic Italian flavors. Each unit’s expansive front counter incorporates display cases filled with grab-and-go choices such as fresh fruit and yogurt, as well as all-day breakfast, lunch and snack items that highlight premium ingredients simply prepared. Menu highlights range from classic croissants, muffins, kouign-amann (rustic croissant dough baked with layers of caramelized sugar) and pain aux raisins to a variety of



Top, bottom: Caffè Nero’s freshly baked goods appeal to both the eye and the appetite.

Center: Moffat Turbofan ovens deliver consistent results for Caffè Nero.

breakfast sandwiches and crustless frittatas copas. Sandwiches include standouts such as Fig and Brie Baguette, Prosciutto Baguette with Mascarpone, Italian Ciabatta and Chicken Caprese Baguette, while signature salads include Smoked Salmon Niçoise Grain Bowl and the Mediterranean, featuring stuffed grape leaves, tabbouleh and hummus.

All menu items are prepared fresh daily in each unit’s back-of-house kitchen. Nothing comes in pre-wrapped from a commissary, notes Michael Halkiotis, Head of Food and Procurement for Caffè Nero America.

Muffins and pastries, for instance, are baked off throughout the day. To do so, each kitchen is equipped with one or two Moffat Turbofan® 20 Series E27M2 full-size sheet pan manual electric convection ovens.

“All of our pastries and croissants are baked in those ovens. We bake off larger batches first thing in the morning, usually four half-sheet pans at a time, and then follow with smaller batches as needed throughout the day,” Halkiotis says. “Our goal is for all of our pastries to be freshly baked no more than two hours before they’re served.”

South Attleboro, Mass.-based foodservice equipment and supplies dealer TriMark United East has been servicing Caffè Nero America from the beginning, supplying equipment and smallwares and doing designs and installations. Steve Biafore, National Accounts Manager, recommended the Moffat E27M2 to the start-up team. “They were just launching in this market and needed a simple, affordable, reliable oven. And they needed to partner with companies known for great service,” he says. “I’m a big fan of Moffat, in part because after-the-sale service calls are almost nonexistent. On the very rare occasion that there is an issue, the reps are responsive, there’s local service available and it’s taken care of quickly. Wherever it makes sense for the operator, I always try to go with Moffat.”

In Caffè Nero’s case, the E27M2 oven made sense for a number of reasons. Halkiotis, like Biafore, places a high value on reliability, but ease of use was important as well. “It’s a very simple oven,” he says. “You just set the temperature, set the timer and you’re done. It heats up and recovers quickly, and there’s no complex programming involved, which is important for our employees. Most of the items that we’re using the Moffat ovens

for are baked at 350 degrees F for 20 to 25 minutes.”

Jimmy Droter, Regional Sales Manager and USA Executive Chef at Moffat, points out that the E27M2 isn’t a speed-bake oven, making it an ideal choice for operations such as Caffè Nero and others for whom a consistent, high-quality bakery program is mission critical. “It’s a traditional convection oven that’s ideal for batch baking in small kitchens,” Jimmy Droter, Regional Sales Manager and USA Executive Chef at Moffat says of the E27M2. “A key feature is its auto-reverse fan, which changes direction every 90 seconds. It helps to ensure that every item in the oven has an even, golden bake on all sides.”

Compact but high capacity, the ovens can hold two full-size sheet pans and can be placed on a countertop, table or stand with pan storage below. In higher-volume stores, they can also be stacked, doubling production capacity within the same basic footprint.

As the brand continues its march into the U.S. market, and as new initiatives such as mobile app ordering are implemented to boost convenience and average unit volumes, Caffè Nero will continue to rely on just those types of simple, proven operational solutions. Says Cotter, “Our goal is to maintain and protect our traditional European neighborhood coffeehouse model and our product quality as we grow.”

That growth going forward, Cotter adds, will be organic and deliberate. “We’re not out to open as many units as we can,” he emphasizes. “We’re looking at opportunities within each individual market, carefully considering the neighborhood and whether we feel there’s a clientele that will appreciate our European heritage and our distinct points of difference. Based on our success and our reception in the Boston market so far, we feel there’s a lot of room for expansion in New England and beyond. But we’ll do it one coffeehouse and one neighborhood at a time, making sure it’s the right fit for the brand and for our customers.”

Caffè Nero units have a warm and inviting decor.



BRAND WATCH



Countries in Moffat’s network:

193

Number of U.S. states currently using Moffat products:

50

Acquired by Ali Group:

2000

moffatusa.com

04 Success stories

A Fully Accessible Coffee Fix

An Egro BYO Flex espresso machine helps foodservice operators meet ADA accessibility requirements with tablet-friendly tech.

Al Avolicino, Owner of Ameritalia Espresso, the San Carlos, Calif.-based distributor of coffee and espresso-related products, needed a solution for his corporate clients that wanted ADA-compliant equipment. He turned to his espresso machine partner, Rancilio Group North America, located in Woodridge, Ill., which serves as the technical support, warehouse and distribution center for the Rancilio, Rancilio Specialty and Egro brands throughout North America.

Here, Avolicino provides insight on his company, how he successfully solved his clients' needs and more.

A touch screen makes the Egro BYO Flex machine easy to operate.



Q. Tell us about Ameritalia Espresso.

A. Ameritalia was founded as a subsidiary of Bay Area Coffee Service in 1989. I've been in the coffee industry since 1970. After serving businesses in the San Francisco Bay Area for 10 years with coffee and beverage services, I saw a new trend in coffee taste emerging with the advent of espresso and coffee bars. This led me to create Ameritalia, and we began importing espresso machines from Italy. Espresso bars and other equipment soon followed, and a complete gourmet beverage business was born. We then established a modern espresso bar showroom in Belmont, Calif., to display equipment, coffee bars, coffee carts, imported coffees and accessories. In 1993, I designed and built a modern Italian-style coffee bar with roasting facilities in Dublin, Calif., known as Celebrity's. I eventually sold Celebrity's to devote myself full time to the sale of espresso machines and related products as well as design/consulting services for potential owners/operators of espresso bars.

Q. California, where you're based, has specific equipment accessibility requirements. How do you accommodate these?

A. California has a lot of restrictions. When customers remodel a kitchen or design a new facility, inspectors are very strict on regulations. Locations must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by having lower counters and/or controls that can be no higher than 48 inches from the floor. One of my clients, a large biotech company, expressed interest in my finding an ADA-compliant espresso machine for its numerous kitchens they were upgrading. Initially, I told them they could lower a section of their countertops to accommodate the ADA rules as

there was nothing on the market that would meet those requirements. Unfortunately, all their kitchens had flat countertops and, to change them, would cause a lot of remodel expense. Items could fall in between the lowered section of the counter around the espresso machine. Because of this, the plumbing and gravity feed drains ran the risk of not working well. In other words, it would take a lot of adjustments to accomplish this, and they didn't want to deal with that. I reached out to Don Berquist, the Area Manager for Rancilio, my espresso equipment provider, and we met in San Jose. I discussed my situation with him to see what equipment Rancilio had that could meet the necessary requirements for ADA. That is when he introduced me to the Egro BYO machine.

Q. How did the Rancilio Group work with you to meet your and your client's needs?

A. They were experimenting with the company's Egro BYO Flex espresso machine. This medium-to-high-volume fully automatic espresso machine features an app-controlled user interface that's as simple to use as a smart phone. The unit also includes a one-piece drink outlet spout, stainless-steel 18-gram brewing group, self-adjusting dual grinders, centralized hot water with different temperature options and an easy three-step automatic daily cleaning program. With Egro BYO Flex, anyone can fulfill an order at a lower height, including people in a wheelchair. It's consistent in preparing a full coffee shop menu, including cappuccino, espresso and Americano. I installed a unit to allow our biotech client to test it. They used the machine for about two months and already bought additional units.

Q. How did the implementation process go?

A. We replaced the current Super Auto espresso machines with the Egro BYO fully automatic units. The client has a total of about 120 machines on location, and we have so far replaced more than 35 or 40 of these units. They plan to replace the remaining machines with the Egro BYO machines.

Q. What makes this machine unique in its accessibility attributes?

A. It's unique due to the detachable tablet. This can lie flat on a counter, but for this client, I designed a bracket that's located on the side of the machine. It's very accessible and meets all the ADA requirements. And the tablet can be placed anywhere within a 48-inch reach.

Q. What are the biggest benefits with this equipment?

A. Everyone out here in Silicon Valley loves electronics, and I think the unit's ultra-modern technology is impressive compared to traditional espresso machines that utilize displays and buttons. The Egro BYO Flex's controls provide photos of different beverages. The user only has to touch the picture on the screen that depicts the type of beverage they want, and the machine makes it. The newer Egro model has been improved; it not only has a detachable screen option but also a touch screen built in.

Q. Will Egro BYO Flex be an option for your other clients?

A. With Egro BYO Flex's capabilities, these units will eventually be in high demand. I predict that our clients who see them in action will want them installed in their businesses.



"Everyone out here in Silicon Valley loves electronics, and I think the unit's ultramodern technology is impressive compared to traditional espresso machines."

Al Avolicino
Owner, Ameritalia Espresso

BRAND WATCH

R RANCILIOGROUP

USA office opened:

1999

Acquired by Ali Group:

2013

Number of service providers:

600+

ranciliogroupna.com

04 Success stories

The GreatHorse: Off to the Races

Private club's rapid rise demands enhanced, higher volume solutions – right down to the ice cubes

After a substantial investment to renovate and upgrade a shuttered country club bought at auction in 2012, Guy Antonacci and his family debuted GreatHorse, their unique take on the luxury private golf club experience, in 2015. It is, in a word, different: world-class and refined but at the same time laid-back and family-friendly, a club intent on ensuring that member relaxation and enjoyment trump attitude, dress codes and stuffiness.

Brought to market in first-class facilities overlooking the Connecticut River Valley in the small western Massachusetts town of Hampden, the GreatHorse concept resonated right out of the gate. In its first five years, the club signed on more than 350 member families. Its award-winning golf course hosts annual, high-profile tournaments. In addition to a new mountain-lodge-style clubhouse, outdoor pool, spa, fitness center, tennis courts, large event venue — even a private jet available for member rental — the property now includes lodging and a

300-acre farm, which hosts farmer's markets and culinary events, and which supplies GreatHorse chefs with fresh, seasonal produce.

The club's rapid rise to prominence among elite private golf resorts and its fast-growing membership base has also necessitated ramp-up and expansion of its food and beverage programs. And some behind-the-scenes systems critical to providing top quality and service have been enhanced to meet increasing demand. Among them is ice production.

Overall, the club's F&B program at The Clubhouse includes a 120-seat, three-meal-a-day restaurant with raw bar and adjacent 130-seat patio, a lounge with a 22-seat bar and a private dining room. The main kitchen and bar provide service to the pool area, as well. The Starting Gate, a separate banquet facility, has a dedicated kitchen and four mobile bars used for private, public and corporate events.

GreatHorse Executive Chef Denis Griswold notes that when the initial equipment package was selected, the team didn't anticipate the amount of ice that would eventually be needed as membership and volume grew.



“It was a brand-new business and we didn’t know what to expect,” he says. “We started with a 700-pound Scotsman ice machine in the main kitchen, a small machine under the bar, and another 1,000-pound Scotsman in the banquet facility. We also have a machine at the golf course, for filling cart coolers and keeping water cold, but it produces larger cubes that we can’t use for drinks and general foodservice purposes,” Griswold says. “Once we started growing and generating more volume with members and events, we knew we’d underestimated what we’d need. We were always running out of ice and having to fill buckets from the machine in the banquet facility to haul over to The Clubhouse. But banquet’s business picked up quickly, too, so we couldn’t always count on being able to do that. Our solution for a while was to bag ice and store it in the freezer, but it would freeze into solid blocks that were difficult to deal with. It really just became a big hassle.”

Ultimately, after just one busy summer season, Chef Griswold made the request to add funds for a new ice machine to his operating budget. Working in partnership with regional dealership Kittredge Restaurant Equipment and Scotsman Ice Systems, GreatHorse installed a new machine that more than doubles the amount of ice that’s readily available to the various venues in and around The Clubhouse. “It solved the problem and we haven’t run out of ice since,” Griswold says. “We had to get creative in terms of where we located it, but the stars aligned and everything worked out perfectly.”

Winning Trifecta: Location, Technology, Convenience

The solution for GreatHorse hinged on three key elements: finding a location that could house a machine designed for higher volume production; selecting the right machine; and considering not just production capacity but total ice-system efficiency and convenience. The project team identified a location near the loading dock and freight elevator, choosing Scotsman’s high-tech, Prodigy

Plus® C1848-1800lb cube ice machine, and moving away from messy, labor-intensive buckets for ice transport to self-contained, easily rolled carts.

Doing so, however, took some outside-the-box thinking, particularly in terms of location. That’s because the Clubhouse has three levels, with main kitchen, bar and restaurant on the lower level and offices, locker rooms, spa facilities and other member- and staff-serving areas on floors two and three. The loading dock is on level two.

“I kept looking at this spot up by the loading dock,” Griswold says. “It’s central to the dock and adjacent to the elevator to easily service the kitchen and bar downstairs, and has easy access to the golf course. When we do events, we’re constantly moving a lot of ice over there. I felt if we could find the right machine we could make that location work.”

The Prodigy Plus C1848 fit the bill, both for its 1800-pound production capacity and for its compact footprint. The ability to utilize a remote condenser helped to seal the deal.

“That corner in the hallway is a very tight spot, but we were able to mount the machine there and then go through the ceiling to install a remote condensing unit on the roof,” says Dennis Reardon, Equipment Specialist



Elegant dining is a hallmark of GreatHorse.

BRAND WATCH



Machines installed worldwide:
1,000,000+
Tons of Scotsman flake and nugget ice produced daily worldwide:

12,500
Scotsman ice cubes produced daily worldwide:

6 billion
Crystal-clear ice cubes introduced:

1950
The Original Chewable Ice® Nugget ice introduced:

1981
scotsman-ice.com

at E3 Commercial Kitchen Solutions, Scotsman’s representative in the New England market. “It’s about 50 feet away and it has plenty of room to breathe up there, which cuts down on energy use and maintenance. It’s also hidden from view and, because it’s on the roof, guests in the nearby pool area aren’t bothered by noise generated by the compressor.”

Along with Kittredge Sales Representative Laura Clark, Reardon led design and installation of the system which, while compressing above, is configured to drain below.

Ice Intel



Left: Scotsman ice machines produce ice dependably for GreatHorse.

Below: The atmosphere at GreatHorse is comfortably clubby but never stuffy.



FORM: Cube ice, such as that used at GreatHorse, is the most common form used in commercial foodservice applications. Cubes are versatile and considered the ideal for restaurant and bar use. Soft, chewable **nugget ice** is often selected by healthcare operators and for operations where volume of blended drinks and cold beverages is high. **Flake ice** is sometimes also used in blended drinks as well as in healthcare operations, but is especially popular for use in and around chilled food displays.

CAPACITY: Ice machines are typically sized by the number of pounds of ice that they can produce in a 24-hour period. As the GreatHorse team discovered, estimating volume of ice needed and what size machine to select can be tricky, especially for new operations. To avoid situations in which demand exceeds capacity, consider all possible applications, figure anticipated table turns and peak period volume, and allow for business growth. Dennis Reardon, Equipment Specialist at E3 Commercial Kitchen Solutions, says when consulting with operations like GreatHorse on ice-production needs and suggested machine size, he applies the following formulas:

- **Restaurant Dining** — 1.5 pounds per customer. A 150-seat restaurant doing two turns at dinner should anticipate needing 450 pounds of ice per night in the dining room.
- **Cocktail Bar** — 3 pounds of ice per customer, or 90 pounds of ice per night for a 30-seat bar. For particularly busy nights, or if overall bar volume is expected to be high and hours are long, he suggests increasing the estimate by 20 percent.
- **Events** (i.e., weddings, golf outings) — 2 pounds per person

“The wall where the machine is installed is actually load-bearing, so we were able to drive right down through so it can drain in the main kitchen’s walk-in cooler drain right below. Thanks to Kittredge, the installation went like clockwork,” Griswold notes.

The air-cooled machine itself produces small “dice” ice cubes Griswold says he prefers for use in drinks. And with ice production now done outside of the kitchen, he appreciates the fact that staff members aren’t constantly coming in and out to access ice and fill buckets from the old machine there.

“The new Prodigy Plus came with two thermal shuttle carts as accessories. Staff can just roll a cart right up underneath it, slide the cover open, pull a lever and ice drops directly in,” he says. “They roll them out to the golf course or take the elevator down to the kitchen, restaurant or bar or wherever they need to go on the property. They’re

fully self-contained and stainless steel, so they’re easy to clean.”

A similar cart system is used with the original 1,000-pound Scotsman machine in the GreatHorse banquet facility. There, four carts can be filled with ice and rolled into position next to mobile bars used during events on the outdoor deck.

Since installing the new system, Griswold adds that not only has the operation not run out of ice, it has required no service or maintenance beyond regular, basic cleaning. With ample ice production and easy access upstairs, he’s now considering dedicating the kitchen’s original 700-pound machine to another fast-growing area of the GreatHorse’s business, the farm.

“We’re starting to do a lot of farm-to-table activities and events like our fall Harvest Dinner are becoming very popular,” he says. “It’s looking like we’ll soon need some type of ice support there, as well.”

04 Success stories



BRAND WATCH

VICTORY

Established:

1945

Products:

800+

Product series:

22

Product categories:

9

victoryrefrigeration.com

Victory equipment helps keep the foodservice operations at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport keep pace with heavy customer loads.



Cheryl Evans



Q: Is today a nice-and-easy “Proud Mary” kind of day or the fast-paced version?

A: A water line started leaking last night in one of our Popeyes locations that happens to be right above an ops center for Delta Airlines, and we’d be liable for all those computers, so I had to act fast. The day before yesterday, a restaurant’s grease interceptor overflowed — not one of Mack II’s — and the Department of Aviation (DOA) decided to crack down on all concessionaires. They issued a directive that had me scrambling to produce proof that our own grease traps are being pumped and the waste disposed of properly by our service provider. The paperwork was due at noon yesterday and I handed it over at 12:01 p.m. Curveballs like that aren’t daily occurrences, but they are not atypical.

Sorry about the background noise, by the way. I walked down the concourse to a gate that’s usually quiet, but the airport is a noisy place. There’s no escaping it.

Q: You don’t have a corner office to go along with your two titles? Or even just a corner?

A: Not even to call technical support about a piece of equipment. There’s no room! Actually, I have a little cart with files. When I’m not working out of my truck, I work wherever I can find a place to recharge my cell phone.

Q: What are some of the challenges associated with working at the world’s busiest airport?

A: The challenges can be sorted into buckets, but in reality they’re inseparable — security, logistics, hiring, the cost of doing business, safety. Let’s start with security because it cuts across every aspect of the business. Before anyone can work at the airport, they undergo a 10-year FBI background check. We go through a slew of employees who don’t last.

As for the technicians who work on my equipment, they can’t just carry a toolbox into the airport; we need to itemize the tools and prearrange for them to be on the tool exemption list. An example when it

Ready for Takeoff!

As if operating multiple restaurant concepts is not challenging enough, doing it in an airport environment only increases the degree of difficulty. By leveraging a focused equipment package, though, Mack II is able to streamline its operations.

Serving food in a hurry at the world’s busiest airport, Mack II Inc. can’t afford equipment failures. The company owns and operates eight restaurants at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport: three Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen locations (one of them is among the world’s busiest by volume), Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, Phillips Seafood, Atlanta Bread, Famous Famiglia Pizzeria, and We Juice It.

Responsibility for every piece of equipment falls on one person, Cheryl Evans. Her title is Equipment Manager or Maintenance Supervisor, depending on who asks. As with everything she does,

Evans tries her best to describe what it’s like working at the airport. She wants to get it just right.

Evans remembers the live recording of Ike and Tina Turner performing “Proud Mary.” The first part of the song is languid, matching the airport’s tempo on Thanksgiving and Christmas days, she says. The second part is frenetic, or what Tina Turner calls “nice and rough” before launching into a frenzied spectacle of song and dance. This part, Evans says, describes the airport the rest of the time.

Having the right restaurant equipment for this type of environment eliminates some of the stress of the job. Three Ali Group products — Victory Refrigeration’s R290 propane refrigerators, Beverage-Air reach-in refrigerators, and Scotsman ice machines — help keep turbulence to a minimum.





comes to safety: Using a torch to repair an expansion valve or leak should be a quick fix, but at the airport, we need a hot work permit and a two-hour fire watch.

That's why I buy durable equipment that's not going to spring refrigerant leaks. Repairing or replacing any sort of equipment isn't easy in this environment. We also have space limits. Because you're trying to fix something in [one of] the busiest Popeyes in the world, people are dropping french fries on your head.

Q: What are the expenses associated with operating in an airport?

A: Everyday operations are more expensive, which is reflected in the price of food. Rent is sky high. They figure it out based on the amount of people flying in and out. We carry an exorbitant amount of insurance — I believe the vehicles are insured for \$10 million each, which the airport requires if you drive on the grounds.

On the other end of the spectrum, I pay \$1,028 a year to buy, just for me — I'm the only one in my company who can use it — this software that the airport requires

Phillips Seafood is one of the restaurants Mack II owns and operates at the airport.

us to use in order to request roof access. We have equipment up on [the airport] rooftops!

Q: We're fleshing out the behind-the-scenes cast of characters, aren't we?

A: We haven't talked about the star of it all and that's Mr. Mack. I've only ever known him as Mr. Mack, but his full name is Mack Willbourn. He's larger than life and has such a presence in the airport. As far as our working relationship, the only thing he wants to know is if I run into a brick wall and can't get over without help. Otherwise, he trusts me to take care of things.

I'd also put Ali Group companies with the good guys, although they're not in the airport. Mack II is a relatively small company, but the Ali Group companies I work with never make me feel that way.



Q: How hard is it to install and service the equipment for eight different restaurants?

A: We may be bound by a warranty to use an approved technician. Anyone we call from the outside generally needs to be badged and permitted, but we do have a process called escorting. You've got to pray that the person who did the paperwork didn't misspell a name or make a typo because if anything doesn't match the driver's license of the person

on the escort list, that person is not coming into the airport no matter what.

A lot of service providers don't like working at the airport because of the security process. Before a vendor can even start a job, he's got to get his vehicle searched and find parking, and he might drive around a bunch of times before taking a spot that's nowhere near where he needs to go so he ends up schlepping all his equipment. It's just not an easy process.

Q: Perhaps there's not much you can do about that particular process, but in your own sphere of influence, what have you done to make things easier?

A: I've standardized the equipment across all eight restaurants. When I joined Mack II 15 years ago, I inherited lots of different brands of equipment. I learned early on that it would make so much more sense to standardize all of our equipment, which we had an opportunity to do in 2012 when we rebuilt all of our stores. Mr. Mack trusted my judgment when I suggested we figure out what works best for us and standardize that equipment across the enterprise.

Durability is a top consideration and the reason I chose Victory Refrigeration. We tore up doors on other refrigeration

brands and were constantly trying to fix them, whereas I never had a problem with a Victory door other than to replace the gasket. The hinges are fantastic, but should they ever need replacing, all our stores are equipped with Victory so we can stock the same replacement hinges. Victory is the only brand that consistently passes the airport's inspections as far as temperature because if the door doesn't close right, you lose your cool air.

The airport is one of the dustiest places in the entire world, and as the dust accumulates, it's as thick as the lint you pull off the lint screen after drying a load of towels. Where we use a lot of flour, it's even worse. We've come to rely on using a product that allows us to blow out and vacuum up dust during regular work hours instead of overnight because the dust doesn't scatter.

It's so much easier having all the same equipment. That way, if you know how to fix the ice maker at Popeyes, then you can fix the ice maker at Atlanta Bread because they use the same sensors, controls and the same pump. It reduces down time and cuts down on the stock we carry. If you have all different brands of equipment with different parts and try to train people to service them all, their brain gets fried and they think, "This is too technical for me. I need to find a job doing apartment maintenance."

Q: What do you lose sleep over?

A: As the emergency contact person, I don't get much sleep ever. If one of my grease traps overflows in the middle of the night, the airport will call me. I dread that dead-of-the-night phone call. You know when the DOA calls you, it's not to say, "Hi, Cheryl, how are you doing?" If the store doesn't open on time in the morning, we're slapped with a fine. You have to open according to the lease agreement.

Q: Yet you're like second-half "Proud Mary" Tina Turner. You have tons of energy for someone who lies awake worrying about grease traps.

A: I'm an Edith Bunker type — I can go on and on about my work life because I enjoy my job and my employer.

These Ali Group companies provide Mack II restaurants with durable equipment that withstands the rigors of the airport environment. Equipment Manager Cheryl Evans chose each for a reason.

Victory Refrigeration (R290 propane refrigerators) —
"The only destroy-proof doors I've found."

Beverage-Air (reach-in refrigerators) —
"The racks hold 60-plus pounds of marinating chicken at the optimal temperature for food safety."

Scotsman (ice makers) —
"The warranty and aftermarket services are huge selling points."



05

Innovation

MAKING GLUTEN-FREE DOUGHNUTS DELICIOUSLY

Until recently, doughnuts were one of the foods that were verboten for people with gluten sensitivity. But **Freedom Gluten Free Doughnuts** is out to change all that.

While it may not be a huge number, the percentage of people who are gluten intolerant is nevertheless significant. According to the Gluten Intolerance

Group, approximately 1 out of every 100 people worldwide has celiac disease, but the number of people who are sensitive to gluten, while not definitively established, may be significantly higher. It has often been difficult for those with a gluten intolerance or allergy to find a replacement for those foods to which they are sensitive.

With his Freedom Gluten Free™ Doughnuts, Steve Weinstein works to bring delicious doughnuts back to the plates of the gluten sensitive. But Weinstein says that Freedom's mission doesn't stop with making a great gluten-free doughnut; it's out to create a doughnut so good, everyone will want to eat it.

Weinstein and his partners have a long history in the doughnut business. "Freedom is a partnership of three families who are third generation in the doughnut business working together," he says. "Our grandfathers and fathers all did business together." Collectively, Weinstein and his Freedom partners Paul Delios, Maria Delios, and Bob and Mike Ogan have 140 years' experience among them in the manufacturing, production and retail doughnut business.

About three years ago, Weinstein and his partners noted that families would come in to a doughnut shop, and one child — who was gluten sensitive or allergic to an ingredient — would not be able to partake of the doughnuts that were available. Thus, the idea for Freedom Gluten Free Doughnuts was born.

The first challenge for Weinstein and his team was to come up with a doughnut that the gluten-free community could eat and that would allay a parent's greatest fear — namely, "my child's going to eat something that's going to trigger a reaction." Once that was accomplished, Weinstein gave his team a further challenge. "I said, 'These [doughnuts] are really good, but they're not good enough.' They looked at me and said, 'You know these are gluten free.' I said, 'We don't use this term here. We are not just good for gluten free; we are good, period.'" Weinstein's measure of success would be that everyone — not just the individual with the gluten sensitivity or allergy — would want to eat his doughnuts.

The Freedom team eventually came up with two flavors of doughnuts: devil's food and old-fashioned.



Weinstein says that Freedom's mission doesn't stop with making a great gluten-free doughnut; it's out to create a doughnut so good, everyone will want to eat it.

Besides being gluten free, the doughnuts are also free of dairy, soy, tree nuts and peanuts, making them acceptable for people with a wide range of allergies. The doughnuts are kosher certified as well.

Once the recipes were developed, the next step was finding a manufacturing facility. With the special requirements needed for producing gluten-free products, a shared facility was out of the question, so it was a matter of starting from scratch. “We spent almost 18 months finding a location,” Weinstein says. “Through much trial and tribulation — and negotiating with the city and our landlord — we were able to build a 9,000-square-foot dedicated facility for Freedom.” Based in Woburn, Mass., a suburb of Boston, the facility is certified gluten free by the Gluten Intolerance Group — “the hardest certification to get,” Weinstein notes.



Belshaw equipment produces doughnuts quickly and consistently at Freedom Gluten Free Bakery.

The first Freedom Gluten Free Doughnuts went on sale in May 2019, and one might easily say they filled a “hole” in the market. Within three months of the introduction, the doughnuts were already in 100 retail locations. As of November 2019, Freedom Doughnuts were in 500 retail locations. Bake’n Joy Foods, a mix and frozen product manufacturer, handles the distribution for Freedom Doughnuts. “We ship our products frozen to the Bake’n Joy distribution center, and they distribute them along with their regular products,” says Weinstein.

One of Freedom’s other primary selling outlets has been Amazon.com. As Weinstein explains, the gluten-free and allergen-free community is very active on social media. Once the word got out that there was a delicious gluten-free doughnut on the market, he started

getting calls about the product from all across the country. “This is how parents find out about these items,” he says. If it weren’t for social media, he says, “who would know about Freedom Gluten Free Bakery in

Arizona or California?” Partly as a result of this social media buzz, Weinstein says Freedom averages between 40 and 50 Amazon orders per week.

The popularity of Freedom Gluten Free Doughnuts has now spread beyond the gluten-free community. In 2019, they were named as a Best New Product by the editors of *Progressive Grocer*, a trade magazine for the supermarket industry.

Team Building

Weinstein credits much of Freedom’s success to the team he has assembled, among them Operations Manager Molly Winsten. A registered dietitian with a master’s in Nutrition, Winsten lives the gluten- and dairy-free life herself. She was diagnosed with a wheat allergy in 2011,

The facility is certified gluten free by the Gluten Intolerance Group



Top: Freedom Gluten Free Doughnuts on the production line.

Left: The doughnuts are packed and ready for distribution.

The Production Line

To make his doughnuts, Weinstein depends on Belshaw equipment. Freedom currently uses a Belshaw CENTURY C6-24G automated doughnut fryer, MDDRF doughnut depositor, screen loader, shortening filter and heated glazer. Freedom can produce as many as 4,500 mini-doughnuts per hour with the Belshaw system.

“Belshaw was really the only name in consideration that came up when we were looking at this product moving forward,” Weinstein says. “I’ve been around the bakery, doughnut and bagel business my whole life. Basically, to get into the automated doughnut business, Belshaw was where we started.”

Even with a full Belshaw system to make the gluten-free doughnuts, getting all the production details right was not a simple process. “When we decided to take this product forward,” Weinstein says, “we shipped all our ingredients out to Belshaw [headquarters] in Auburn, Wash.” Partner and Chief Formulator Paul Delios and the Belshaw team spent three days working together at the Belshaw factory, experimenting with different doughnut recipes. “The technical people there were fantastic,” he says. “We found out a lot of different things about our product.”

Irene Kimmerly, Vice President of Sales for Belshaw Adamatic Bakery Group, says that she and the Belshaw team “all quickly realized the doughnuts were really good. They had a great product.” But besides that, she says, they were impressed that “Steve Weinstein is very passionate about doughnuts and the joy they bring people. He spent a lot of time working with his team on finding the right recipe to make a great gluten-free doughnut. He has the enthusiasm to make Freedom Doughnuts a top producer of the highest-quality, gluten-free doughnut...and to put smiles on the faces of all those kids who couldn’t have a doughnut in the past.”

and back then, she says, “there was so much that was lacking in the market” in terms of good, gluten-free products. Even now, she says, “there are lots of products that are available, [but] they’re not very good; they’re not very creative.”

Next on Freedom’s menu is product evolution — a phase which Weinstein terms “Freedom 2.0.” “The one thing people who abide by a restricted diet don’t get is seasonal specialties,” he says. As the first step in remedying that situation, Freedom developed an apple cider doughnut. The bakery contracted with a local apple farm to provide cider for the doughnut because, as Weinstein says, “it is a true apple cider doughnut. There’s not a bit of liquid in that doughnut that’s not apple cider.” With a supply of cider now available year-

round, Weinstein says that the bakery will produce the doughnut as long as people want to buy it. A pumpkin spice sugar-coated doughnut is also on the drawing board.

Winsten sees these products as a big step forward for both the company and the allergen community. Seasonal products, she says, are something that “the dietary restriction community doesn’t often get because [producers are] working so hard to create any option at all.”

Weinstein agrees, adding that “you have a tremendous amount of gluten-free, dairy-free products out there that in my mind are just there to give somebody an option. The next level, the next generation, is really good products that happen to be gluten free but are great products on their own.”

BRAND WATCH	Founded:	Acquired by	Distributors	Number of countries with	belshaw-adamatic.com
Belshaw Adamatic	1923	Ali Group:	worldwide:	Belshaw doughnut-making equipment installed:	
		2007	20	123	



For the second year in a row, Metro sponsored *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies'* Kitchen Storage Makeover Contest. The winner — **the Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus** — received a refresh by the Metro team in early August 2019.

Freshness permeates the roughly 900-square-foot kitchen at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Greater Columbus in Columbus, Ohio, since the facility's kitchen received a refresh in early August 2019 driven by the Metro team after winning *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies'* Kitchen Storage Makeover Contest.

"It was an old kitchen with a lot of hard-to-get-to areas," says Matan Gutwaks, Catering and Rentals Manager at JCC.

"The workspace was far less than optimal," says AJ Zambetti, Director of Creative and Brand Communications for Metro. "It was difficult to walk through the space easily let alone prepare food easily."

Originally designed as a support kitchen for the preschool when the building opened in 1983, today the kitchen supports a daily lunch program for 400 preschool students and approximately 80 seniors, a kiosk-style cafe and a seasonal poolside snack bar. Additionally, the JCC supports an off-site Jewish preschool with another 25-plus lunches as well as a catering business that handles orders ranging from kosher boxed lunches for local businesses to private events for up to 300 people.

"That kitchen was never designed for what it is doing today," says Brad Wasserstrom, President of The Wasserstrom Company, an equipment and supplies dealer in Columbus, that has supported the JCC from its inception. "They are doing far more — and far more variety — now than the kitchen was ever designed to do."

Brad Wasserstrom formed a connection to the JCC early on, when he attended preschool there and spent summers at the JCC day camp and the pool. His wife was a teacher there for a time and their children attended preschool at the facility. "It's a special place for myself and the entire community," he says.

The kitchen aged right along with Wasserstrom and his family over the years. Output also grew, although the physical

space and organizational components did not. Wasserstrom likens it to watching the 1962 animated TV show *The Jetsons*. He recalls the memorable closing scene of that show, where George Jetson couldn't quite keep up with the moving walkway he was on and eventually gets sucked into the conveyor. "It became a bit like that," he says of the JCC kitchen space. "That downward spiral of disorganization, where it's hard to catch up because the world keeps moving. Things began piling up on top of equipment."

There was talk of a remodel of the space at one point. "We actually talked about renovating the kitchen space years ago and even had some early preliminary plans drawn up," Gutwaks says, adding that the desired new kitchen space would have meant a nearly half-million-dollar price tag.

The high cost deterred the project. Instead, Gutwaks focused on prioritizing what he could to improve the kitchen over time, including purchasing equipment at auctions and seeking equipment donations.

Back-of-the-house funding represents a challenge many operators face as kitchens tend to fall lower down the list than customer-facing areas. "It's the not-so-sexy back-of-the-house space," notes Gutwaks.

It's something Wasserstrom sees happening at other businesses as well. "If you only have a few thousand dollars to spend, people will spend it where it makes the most impact for the guest and simply make do with what's in the kitchen," he says. In the case of a nonprofit like JCC, donors tend to prefer to see funding go toward a new gym, for example, than a behind-the-scenes space, he adds.

Fast forward to the day news arrived that contest judges selected JCC as the winner of *FE&S'* Kitchen Storage Makeover Contest sponsored by Metro. "We were ecstatic," Gutwaks says. "At the same time, I was thinking \$50,000 worth of components isn't really that much next to the half a million that was in my head to redo the whole space."

"This was a huge challenge from a storage and productivity perspective,"



KITCHEN STORAGE MAKEOVER



Matan Gutwaks, Catering and Rentals Manager, seen here at far left, and Toney Robertson, Executive Chef, lead the culinary efforts at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus.

says Zambetti. “The best solution was to optimize and maximize what the current layout would allow.” Metro provided a complete range of solutions to help, including a variety of wire and plastic shelving, high-density track shelving, C5® holding and proofing cabinets, Mightylite™ insulated food carriers, SmartWall® productivity systems, PrepMate™ mobile prep stations, stainless-steel worktables, and ware handling items like dish dollies, drying racks and utility carts.

While observing employees working in the space, the Metro team began to quickly understand which Metro solutions would maximize the space and how to position those items in the right spot for the right reason.

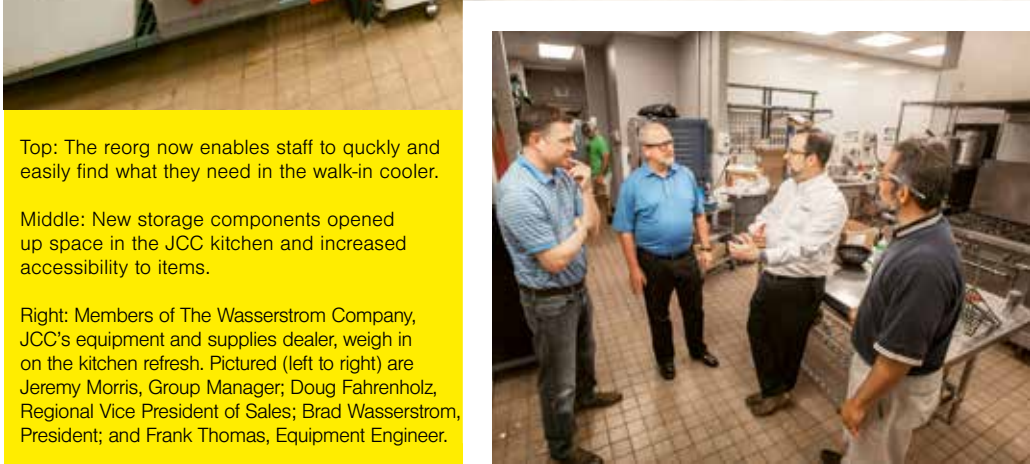
“It’s so much more than I thought it would be,” Gutwaks says of the finished space. With an improved workflow and an optimized space, the kitchen team has a new outlook on workspace. “This facelift revived everything. I feel like we are now almost beholden to a higher standard in the kitchen space. It’s inspiring.”

Four different areas of the kitchen were outfitted with new storage components: the main prep area in front of the cookline, the walk-in cooler that sits directly behind the cookline, the prep and sink spaces that are situated around the outside of the walk-in cooler, and the adjacent dry storage room. Specific organizational components added include wall grid shelving systems, four glass rack dollies, a drying rack, a dunnage rack and track shelving units that maximize space for paper products.

Refresh Prep

Gutwaks admits that, before the refresh began, there were some concerns and reservations about handing over the reins to an outside project team. “It’s not always easy to give up the authority over your kitchen space,” he says. That hesitation faded quickly when conversations began to center around how the kitchen team wanted to function. “The project team then told us what we need to get that done — and gave it to us,” he adds.

Physically moving pieces of equipment to rearrange existing kitchen components and clear out unnecessary



Top: The reorg now enables staff to quickly and easily find what they need in the walk-in cooler.

Middle: New storage components opened up space in the JCC kitchen and increased accessibility to items.

Right: Members of The Wasserstrom Company, JCC’s equipment and supplies dealer, weigh in on the kitchen refresh. Pictured (left to right) are Jeremy Morris, Group Manager; Doug Fahrenholz, Regional Vice President of Sales; Brad Wasserstrom, President; and Frank Thomas, Equipment Engineer.

boxes prompted a deep cleaning of the entire space. Old shelving was moved out of the space and was replaced with new pieces, many of which are mobile. “We’ve made things so much more accessible,” Gutwaks says.

The Metro team took advantage of unused wall space, maximized space with more shelf tiers based on the size of common orders and added multifunctional options so it’s more flexible.

“We found places for things, so there is virtually no clutter or boxes in the kitchen space,” Gutwaks adds.

Kosher Connections

An extra component came into play when assessing the needs for the JCC kitchen since the kitchen is kosher. “The rabbis came in when they found out we were doing the makeover and provided input,” Gutwaks says. For example, in the original design, the two main prep tables in the center of the

kitchen were connected, as they had always been. But, with the opportunity to redesign the space, the rabbis suggested creating space between those tables.

Now, a small aisle divides two separate kosher prep tables, which creates a greater distinction between the meat and the dairy sides of the kitchen. “The aisle has the added benefit of giving some mobility to the room,” Gutwaks says.

The old prep line was often too small for staff to do their required prep work on. That left them continuously searching for any open spot that could serve as additional prep space, such as a cart or countertop. Two new stainless-steel worktables tripled the available workspace. In addition, staff can use two newly added mobile carts — one for meat and one for dairy — as additional prep space. The mobile carts nest under the larger prep tables, leaving them out of the way during off-peak periods.

Larger pieces that were added include three C5 heated cabinets and four Mightylite insulated food carriers, each color designated in blue for dairy, red for meat and gray for general purposes. The dry storage area, once an overloaded space with rusty shelving, now has a new floor to match its shiny new shelving.

The kitchen space includes a walk-in cooler and two small reach-in freezers; a

walk-in freezer and smaller walk-in cooler in the basement store overflow. “It’s not ideal to have a kitchen span between two floors,” Gutwaks says. “We just have very limited space, so we store as much as possible in the basement.” Two more refrigeration units sit upstairs on the back loading dock.

Mini Kitchen, Maxi Output

While the new storage pieces take center stage in the kitchen, old items did not wind up in the trash pile. Instead, Gutwaks continues to evaluate what he can repurpose. Rethinking and reorganizing the kitchen space led to product consolidation and removing a reach-in freezer from the main kitchen.

“I might be able to tackle some things differently now,” Gutwaks says. “We could repurpose that walk-in freezer in the snack bar.” Adding refrigeration to that area may allow Gutwaks to fulfill some seasonal requests from those who request salads during their visits to the snack shop at the pool. That was not feasible in the past since the facility didn’t have the proper storage pieces to hold items like salads outside.

To date, the equipment lineup at the snack bar includes a grill, a fryer, a snow cone machine and a roller grill. Menu items include hot dogs, burgers, chicken sandwiches, black bean burgers and

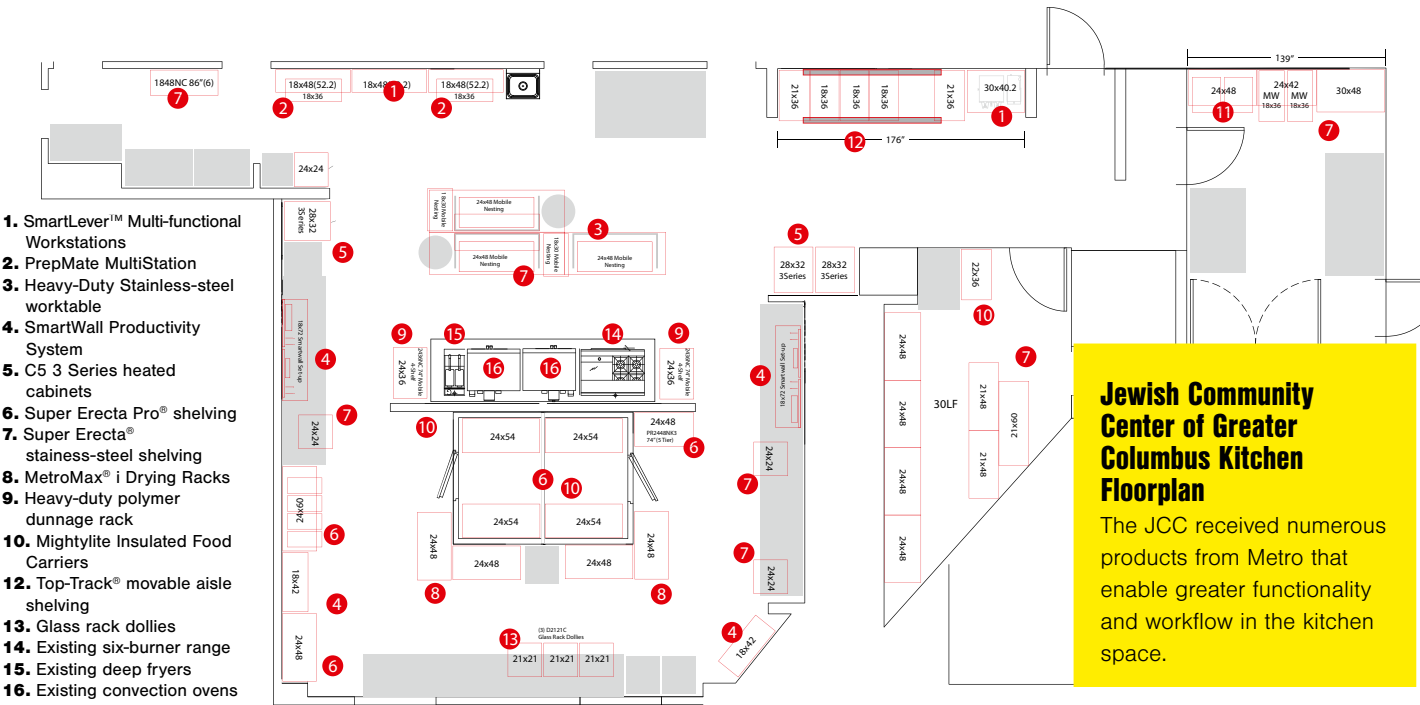
other traditional poolside items. Most are cooked to order.

The pool snack bar takes a back seat to the daily lunch programs for the preschool and senior center. That main kitchen operates with a minimal equipment package that includes a range, a fryer and a pair of combi ovens. That suffices since the main kitchen does not operate cook-to-order service; staff prepare bulk items from set menus for the JCC kitchen’s two primary foodservice support areas: preschool and senior lunches.

Post Refresh

“One of the benefits of the kitchen renovation is that certain things will now be easier to do and will take less time to do. No one has to find a place for something anymore,” says Gutwaks. He’s considering how the more efficient kitchen space may even prompt an adjustment in labor shifts. “Time will tell,” he says.

No one would call what happened in the space a complete remodel. Everyone involved, however, does agree a mature facility was brought back to life. The process went beyond bringing the JCC kitchen up to standards. What started as a dysfunctional kitchen space now functions as an efficient workspace with everything in order and a workflow setup that maximizes every inch.



Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus Kitchen Floorplan

The JCC received numerous products from Metro that enable greater functionality and workflow in the kitchen space.

05 Innovation



How training and education led one entrepreneur to open the gelato shop of his dreams



Brandon Choi knew he wanted to get into the gelato business. So, he embarked on a journey to learn gelato, making his living at it and changing the way lovers of the creamy treat indulge in it. And this led him to create Gelato by Stick Station.

Choi's journey began in 2012. Despite having more than 15 years of experience in the foodservice industry at the time, he went back to school to learn more about gelato. "I went to a gelato ingredient company's one-week class but realized I needed a more comprehensive course on making this product," he says.

In 2013, Choi headed to Carpigiani Gelato University in Bologna, Italy, taking a course, and then interning at a gelato shop to learn as much as possible. "It was a great experience," he says. "The education on gelato making was top to bottom, with details on the ingredients and calculations. I would recommend it to anyone getting into the gelato business."

A Bar Inspiration

Upon returning from his studies, Choi spent two additional years in training, interning under master dessert chefs and testing his new skills. The schooling and practice paid off as Choi was ready to open his shop, Gelato by Stick Station, in 2014 in Pasadena, Calif.

Choi drew from his time in Italy to help his entrepreneurial vision take shape. "During my training period in Italy, I was inspired by a gelato bar that was served on specially designed paper trays with a variety of toppings," he says. "This was when I decided to incorporate my own version into the gelato bar business."

And it's this approach that makes Stick Station so unique. The company prepackages and seals gelato bars one by one, which prevents air exposure. As a result, the product has a shelf life of more than 200 days in the freezer. In addition to gelato bars, Stick Station offers gelato in individual scoops and prepacked pints and gallons that customers can take home. Customers can have Stick Station cater their events, too. The company also has a wholesale operation that allows other operators or retailers to offer their own private-label gelato.

Stick Station's gelato uses organic milk, minimal sugar, no eggs or buttermilk and — depending on the flavor — fresh fruit. It also is available in a vegan version that includes sugar-free products made with 100 percent pure agave syrup. Rice milk and almond milk gelato also are options. The brand even offers gelato flavors with alcohol.

"Brandon makes gourmet bars using very high-quality ingredients," says Juan Ortega, Regional Area Manager for Carpigiani North America. "Our equipment allows Brandon to make gelato sticks with ingredients of his choosing without having to add chemicals or preservatives as is required with

On a stick Innovation

industrial equipment. The appearance of his product is very special, and it's something you don't typically find."

In addition to limited-time-only seasonal varieties, Stick Station offers a number of flavors, including Premium Hazelnut, 100% Pure Pistachio, Stracciatella, Bourbon Vanilla, 72% Cacao Dark Chocolate, Honey Cheese, Mint Chip, Matcha Green Tea, Mascarpone Cheese, Peanut Butter Chocolate, Strawberry, Coconut and Mango. "Pistachio Cheesecake is the most popular flavor, and we're the only ones who have it," Choi says. "We specialize in a variety of pistachio and tea flavors."

Indeed, operating in a large metropolitan market such as Los Angeles means being able to meet the unique tastes and dietary requirements of a very diverse population. Along those lines, Stick Station offers gelato bars made with an organic milk base, sugar-free gelato, vegan and nonvegan paletas, and even a vegan paleta with alcohol.

The Right Equipment

Choi was fortunate to take over a space formerly occupied by a gelato shop, so no major renovations were needed. But he knew right off the bat what equipment was necessary for his innovative gelato product line. "I learned all about Carpigiani's equipment at the school, so I chose a basic gelato maker and blast chiller," he says. "This equipment provides the product consistency and texture I need."

Choi says he has a particular affinity for the base machine,

Pastomaster 60, because the pasteurizer is a key component to making Stick Station's gelato.

"Brandon reached out to me in 2014 prior to the National Restaurant Association Show," says Mike Girgis, Vice President of Rosito Bisani, the distributor that provides Stick Station with its equipment. Rosito Bisani has offices in Los Angeles and King of Prussia, Pa. "He visited our showroom and said he'd be attending Carpigiani Gelato University and would be buying, not leasing, equipment. He was obviously all in."

Girgis says Choi knew exactly the type of equipment he wanted for his shop. "He was trained on it, so he knew what he needed," Girgis says. "From my side, there wasn't much selling."

Choi purchased Carpigiani's LB-302G RTX batch freezer, Pastomaster 60 pasteurizer and Nordika blast freezer. "We received a lot of support from Rosito Bisani," Choi says. "They have been great to deal with in terms of follow-up and maintenance and have supported my business from day one."

Getting Noticed

To further distinguish his product, in 2015, Choi received design patent rights for his Paper Ice Cream Plate, a tray that holds the gelato bar to prevent drips. "Brandon has patented a tray that prevents the gelato from making a mess," says Girgis. "He began working on the patent four years ago. It's a square tray with an indent to hold the stick in place that has his logo on it."

Gelato by Stick Station is ready for its next chapter. "We're going



Back to School with Carpigiani Gelato University

In 2013, Brandon Choi attended Carpigiani Gelato University in Bologna, Italy. This decision would serve as a cornerstone for his business Gelato by Stick Station by giving him the baseline knowledge necessary to make informed purchasing decisions when developing his recipes and his equipment package.

Gelato University's curriculum covers much more than the equipment. "Attendees learn about ordering raw materials, production, flavor changes, displays and financials," says Juan Ortega, Regional Area Manager for Carpigiani North America.

Also available at the company's Winston-Salem, N.C., location the program includes both a classroom component and hands-on experience, with students working side-by-side with professional gelato makers. Instructors explain the differences between ice cream and gelato, discuss the different types of sugars and the freezing aspects, as well as balancing recipes, Ortega adds.

The curriculum can help operators learn how to better maximize the shelf life of their gelato or ice cream products. "For product that requires a longer shelf life, balance is required so the product doesn't break down over time," says Ortega. "At Gelato University, they teach how to balance recipes so the product doesn't melt too quickly, change appearance or texture, or get rock hard. It's all about retaining the quality and appearance."

Over the years, the school has created and developed academic collaborations with schools, institutes and universities in the gastronomic sector. Carpigiani Gelato University offers four-week basic, intermediate and advanced courses

followed by a one-week internship working at the university's gelato shop.



Gianpaolo Valli (left), Senior Instructor, and Brandon Choi at Carpigiani Gelato University.



BRAND WATCH



Commercial branches: 8
Service centers worldwide: 500
Distributors worldwide: 180
carpigiani.com/us

to add more Carpigiani equipment lines soon, including the READY gelato machine, to accommodate our wholesale business," Choi says. "We plan to make all product in one location and ship it to our other sites, ramping up production in 2020."

With Stick Station's volume steadily increasing, the company is ripe to update its equipment package to include items that not only increase capacity but also offer enhanced features and functionality. Take, for example, Carpigiani's READY gelato machine. What makes this piece of equipment unique is that it handles aging, pasteurization and freezing in one stand-up unit. Choi also plans to purchase a larger blast chiller and pasteurizer.

In his short time as a gelato maker, Choi has already made a name for himself. In August 2019, he participated in the annual Gelato Festival, a traveling competition crossing Europe, the U.S. and Japan that recognizes the world's best gelato chef.



Part of the Carpigiani equipment package used by Stick Station is the LB 302 RTX (left) and the Pastochef (below).



And thanks to Choi's attention to detail and dedication to his craft, Gelato by Stick Station continues to scoop up one accolade after another. It was named the best gelato shop in Pasadena by *Gelato Magazine* in 2015 and 2016 and was also recognized as one of the top three gelato shops in Los Angeles county by *Voyage LA* magazine. "Brandon's bars are top shelf," Girgis says. "I would put them up against anybody else's because he pays attention to detail and is very hands-on. In fact, he is the only one who makes the bars in his shop."

With his passion for gelato making and the proper equipment, there's no limit to where Choi's gelato may take him next.



Operating in a large metropolitan market such as Los Angeles means being able to meet the unique tastes and dietary requirements of a very diverse population.

06

Events

Ali Group Hosts “A Taste of Italy” Party at HostMilano Exhibition

Guests of the Ali Group were treated to “A Taste of Italy” at a grand party held in conjunction with the HostMilano 2019 trade show and exhibition in Milan, Italy. Ali Group Chief Executive Officer Filippo Berti welcomed the many attendees who sampled delicious food and drink at the party, which was held at the elegant Congressi Stella Polare conference center. Musical entertainment was also provided to give the attendees a chance to mingle and network in a relaxed, convivial atmosphere.

Forty-eight different Ali Group companies from around the world, as well as the Ali Group itself, exhibited at the HostMilano show. The Ali Group company booths displayed a wide range of products to help foodservice operators perform their jobs more efficiently and profitably.

More than 200,000 visitors from 171 countries attended the show, which featured the latest in foodservice equipment. In addition, there were more than 800 separate events at the show in all categories, ranging from food-related topics such as coffee and breadmaking to trend-making technological developments.



John Nackley, President & CEO, InterMetro Industries Corporation and Michelle Nackley



Party guests raise a toast.

Left to right: Anna Pata, Director of Sales & Marketing, PreGel America; Penny Klingler, President, Carpigiani North America; and Leandra Olivotti, Area Manager, ISA S.p.A.



Smile for the camera!



A quick break from partying for a photograph.



Filippo Berti, Chief Executive Officer, Ali Group; Ryan Blackman, Director of Marketing & Communications, Ali Group North America; Brittany Black, Senior Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Ali Group North America; and Zachary Childress, RN, Access Aesthetics.





Left to right: Allen Hasken, Vice President, New Business and Product Development, Champion Industries; Christine Guyott, Principal, Rippe Associates; Ryan Blackman; and Will Means, President, Champion Industries

Left to right: Jane Fraser, Business Development Manager, Foodservice Equipment Spares; Tom Hotard, President, Electro Freeze/H.C. Duke & Son; and David Sebastianelli, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Edlund Company



Left to right: Sarah Giffard, Project Manager, Ricca Design Studios; Brittany Black; Maciej Ostrowski, Coffee Specialist, Rancilio Group North America; Armand Iaia, Regional Manager, Cini-Little International; Rob Geile; Wade Koehler, Executive Director, FCSI The Americas; Eric Norman, Vice President, Clevenger Associates Midwest Division; Robin Ashton, Principal, Ashton Foodservice Consulting; James Camacho, President, Camacho Associates; and Brad Pierce, President, Restaurant Equipment World



Left to right: Michael J. Hawkins, President, Michael J. Hawkins, Inc.; Ryan Blackman; Joan Hawkins; Rachael Nordell; Rob Geile, Vice President, Consultant Services, Ali Group North America; and Rob August, Senior Vice President, Ali Group North America



A good time was had by all!



Adriano Cenedese, Managing Director, Silko and Filippo Berti.



The party provided a welcome break from business at HostMilano.



Left to right: Natascha Di Gennaro, Receptionist, Ali Group; Mohamed Abdeen, Commercial Export, Friginox & Rosinox Grandes Cuisines; and Debora Guidara, Executive Assistant, Ali Group



Food and drink were the order of the evening.



Team members and guests from Silko and OEM enjoy the evening.



Ali Group University Held at Ali Group Headquarters

The Ali Group North America Training Center in Vernon Hills, Ill., welcomed 18 foodservice consultants from the U.S. and Canada to Ali Group University.

The three-day seminar began with a hands-on cooking module presented by Eloma and Victory Refrigeration. Over the next two days, attendees saw presentations by ACP, Aladdin, Belshaw Adamatic, Beverage-Air, Carpigiani, Champion, Metro, Rancilio, Scotsman and Victory. On the final day, attendees took a “field trip” to Rancilio headquarters in Woodridge, Ill., for a special presentation on the latest trends on coffee and equipment.

“Consultants are important stakeholders in our success,” says Filippo Berti, Chief Executive Officer of the Ali Group. “By providing them with the most current industry information and trends, we hope that we can help them achieve success in their business.”



07

Ali Group

The “go-to-brand” in the U.K., Falcon has been setting the pace for foodservice innovation for years.

Below: The F900 Series Induction Range was introduced in 2015.



Falcon Celebrates 200 Years

In 2019, Falcon reached a major milestone: its 200th anniversary. Today, the company sells more gas ranges in the U.K. than all other manufacturers combined, but at its start as the Falkirk Iron Company in 1819, it manufactured all types of cast-iron items such as bathtubs and pots. In 1860, it produced its first line of coal-fired cooking ranges. During the First World War, Falkirk produced over 3 million tons of munitions. In 1929, it joined other U.K. foundries to become Allied Ironfounders Ltd. After a long period of disuse, the Falcon brand name and logo were brought back into service in 1969, and ever since then, they have stood for the highest-

quality cooking equipment. The company became part of the Ali Group in 2007.

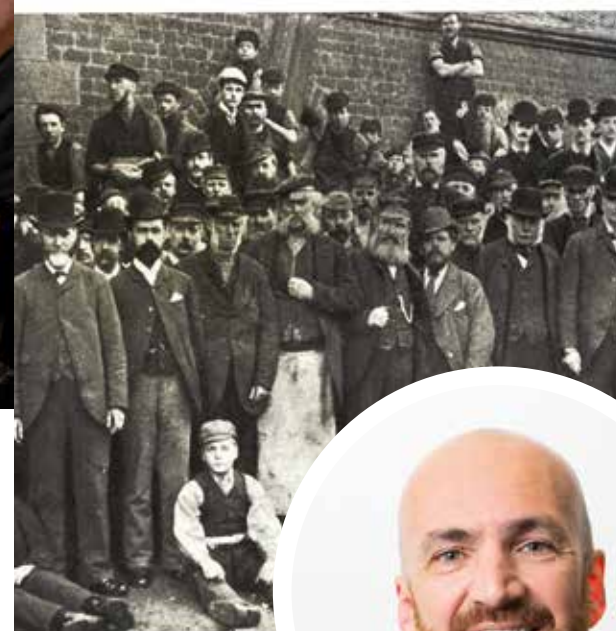
With its roots firmly in central Scotland, Falcon has strong ties in the local community. Many of Falcon’s current employees have had siblings or parents who worked for the company in the past.

The company has maintained long-term relationships with many of its customers as well. For example, Julian Shine, Managing Director of Shine Catering Systems, has been a Falcon customer for more than 30 years. “We have dealt with Falcon for a long time, and we trust them,” Shine says. “When I started in the business, we were working with Falcon but not



Above: Falcon built munitions during the Crimean and First World Wars.

Below: Falkirk, Scotland has a rich history of foundries.



Peter McAllister,
Falcon Managing
Director

to the extent we are today. It soon became apparent that Falcon [was], and indeed still is, the strongest of the U.K. manufacturers.”

Falcon Managing Director Peter McAllister calls Falcon the “go-to brand” for ranges in the U.K. “Our products have been an integral part of the industry in the U.K. ever since we began producing cooking equipment in the 1860s,” he says. “We are renowned for delivering excellence, and we have set the standard for others to try to match.”

falconfoodservice.com

EL&N Bakes Up Fun in London

The EL&N group of cafes in London boasts fun decor with delicious pastries. Its founder, Alexandra Miller, combines her fashion background with a passion for using only the freshest ingredients to create a stylish yet fun environment.

To produce some of their stunningly beautiful, hand-finished treats, MONO Equipment has supplied a wide variety of equipment to EL&N, including mixers, blast freezers, refrigerators and dough sheeters, as well as the MONO Omega Plus Confectionery Depositor. Giuseppe Lombardo, Head of Pastry at EL&N London, says, “I really enjoy experimenting and researching to develop new products. Our concept at EL&N is focused on creating the highest-quality pastry with consistency and accuracy. We use MONO’s Omega for biscuits, sponge layers, choux, Paris-Brest and éclairs as it enables us to create the exact shape and size of product we need.”

monoequip.com

MONO Equipment has supplied a broad range of specialist patisserie equipment to EL&N London for its stunning cakes.





Brisbane Waterfront Becomes Dining Destination

A major redevelopment is breathing new life into the waterfront area of Brisbane, Australia, with some help from Moffat. The Howard Smith Wharves development, located under the city's Story Bridge, is a multifaceted entertainment and dining destination.

Under the lights of the bridge, customers have a variety of dining choices, ranging from a traditional fish-and-chips bar to an upscale farm-to-table restaurant. In all, the development comprises 11 kitchens run by a single operator, so it was essential that the cooking areas be able to work together smoothly. "The main thing was to have as much flexibility

as possible," says Terry Brennan of Food Service Design Australia, who worked on the kitchen designs. "The designs needed to be very efficient to allow the front-of-house areas to be as large as possible within the existing historic buildings."

Moffat Waldorf Bold cooking suites were chosen for their performance and efficiency. Moffat Account Manager Daniel Clare says, "We supplied a heavy-duty cookline in each kitchen, which included gas ranges, fryers, solid fuel and gas char grills, and target-top ranges. Using Waldorf Bold heavy-duty gas cooking equipment returns a 25 percent gas savings

compared to other leading brands." Moffat Blue Seal Evolution ranges, Washtech warewashing machines and Metos kettles are also helping the kitchens operate efficiently. moffat.com



Making the Perfect Cold Brew Coffee

Cold brew is hot these days, but making a perfect cup of cold brew is more than just a matter of combining coffee and water. It takes a combination of knowledge, skill and the perfect ingredients to make a really masterful cup of cold brew.

Michalis Dimitrakopoulos knows that better than anyone. As the winner of the 2016 World Coffee in Good Spirits Championship and runner-up in the 2019 World Barista Championship, he knows that every ingredient in cold brew coffee is critical to its flavor — including ice. "A good cold brew is all about the recipe, the quality of the ice and the water," he says. "If you are selling cold brew, it is nothing if you don't make sure you use nothing but the best ingredients." That's one of the reasons he joined Scotsman Ice as a brand ambassador in 2018.

"It is very important to have a piece of ice that will not melt too fast. Otherwise, it will just water down the beverage and compromise the aroma," Dimitrakopoulos says. He claims that the technology Scotsman uses to produce its ice makes it a better product to use in cold brew. "The spray system that is used produces very clear ice — like glass — with low levels of minerals, calcium and magnesium. The quality is better," he says.

Scotsman Key Account Manager Andrea Dellacà says the relationship is beneficial for both parties, noting that Dimitrakopoulos "gives us suggestions on how to fine-tune machines in order to be closer to the expectations of the barista."

Specialty coffee — particularly cold brew coffee — is a gourmet product, says Dimitrakopoulos. "There is so much attention on the selection and in the preparation and storytelling, so it makes sense the barista uses the best type of ice, too," he says.

scotsman-ice.it



New Concept Combines Tradition and Innovation in Italy



The new Bottega Portici dining concept is combining traditional preparation with the ease of takeout for customers in Italy who might not have time for a full sit-down meal. It offers fresh pasta, handmade in the shop window and cooked quickly by chefs in an open kitchen. Patrons can either eat in the airy, open restaurant or, if they're time-pressed, get their food packed to go in 100 percent compostable packaging.

Olis provided Bottega Portici's cooktops, made of high-quality materials to help prevent contamination and make cleanup easy. The clean lines of the Olis cooktop add visual interest while making effective use of the kitchen island design. The layout of each kitchen in the Bottega Portici chain is adapted to the available space. olis.it



Rapid Growth for Russian Pizza Chain

When you think pizza, you most likely think Italy, or perhaps the United States. But Russia is the home base of one of the hottest new pizza chains in the world, Dodo Pizza. Dodo is the largest takeout pizza chain in Russia and one of the fastest-growing QSR chains worldwide. With 496 shops in 12 countries in Europe, Asia and North America, it has already surpassed many of its established competitors in its home territory.

Prior to starting Dodo Pizza in 2011, founder Fyodor Ovchinnikov ran a successful chain of bookstores. He based his business model on an IT platform, now known as Dodo IS, which allows for data transparency across all units. This lets franchisees compare their performance against other units in the chain with the shared goal of constantly improving their stores. “We strongly believe that trust, as one of [the] core values at Dodo Pizza alongside transparency, makes us stronger and better,” Ovchinnikov says.

In 2016, Dodo Pizza made its first purchase of Metro shelving to install in a unit in Oxford, Miss. The following year, Dodo started ordering Metro Super Erecta® storage systems for its Russian stores, and Metro shelving has been standard equipment in all Dodo stores built since 2017. Dodo’s Head of Kitchen Design, Dmitry Mikhailov, praises the Metro shelves for their durability and flexibility. “All the sizes can be adjusted so that the workers can always see all their supplies,” he says.

Simon Merrick, InterMetro Industries Sales Director, says, “Dodo has been a great customer to work with. They wanted solutions to their lack of space, and Metro was able to cover their needs.”

metro.com



Atlantis Resorts Brings Dining Elegance to Hainan

A stunning hotel development is bringing excitement to the Chinese island of Hainan. Three and a half hours by air from Beijing, Hainan has been called China’s Hawaii because of its white sand beaches.

While there are already a number of luxury hotels on the island, the Atlantis Sanya stands out. With a concept based around the lost city of Atlantis, this sail-shaped development features more than 1,300 rooms including 5 underwater suites, a waterpark and 21 restaurants. The dining options include two all-day restaurants, the first Bread Street Kitchen and Bar branded by Gordon Ramsay in China, and even an underwater restaurant.

One of the restaurants, the Saffron all-day-dining restaurant, features eight live cooking stations serving a range of Western and Asian dishes. To handle this wide range, two Ambach System 850 cooking suites were installed. One of the suites includes the first grill station Ambach has ever provided in China.

In the Ossiano Underwater Bar & Restaurant, the challenge was to integrate both Western and Chinese equipment into one customized System 850 block. Ali China assisted in the development of a unit containing a gas pasta cooker, salamander, charcoal grill, electric plancha, wok range, gas fryer and gas solid top. Ossiano also has a pizza oven supplied by Ali China. Atlantis Sanya also chose Metro shelving for its shelving needs. “Historically, resorts in China have almost always served American-style pizza,” says Ali China Managing Director Andy Zhang. “This is the first project in China to include a full pizza system, including mixer, rounder, divider, dough presser and pizza oven.”

ambach.com

Ambach provides its customers with a total service because it can design, test and produce all of the equipment.

A Healthy Partnership

The Orthopaedic Centre in Dracy-le-Fort, France, is the first French health establishment to use Burlodge’s RTS CT TransRack meal delivery system. The system is designed for usage in cook-chill, cook-freeze and cook-serve applications.

When a new hospital wing was constructed in 2010, the local health authority recommended that Orthopaedic Centre patients be able to choose where they eat their meals. The Burlodge system gives the Centre the flexibility to serve meals to patients in their rooms or in the dining hall.

The system has worked so well for the Centre that in 2014, a production kitchen was built next to the Centre that also serves neighboring health facilities. This central kitchen produces up to 2,500 meals a day using a fleet of Burlodge RTS CT trolleys and TransRacks.

burlodge.com



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Ali Group Global Headquarters

Via Gobetti, 2a | Villa Fiorita
20063 Cernusco sul Naviglio
Milan | Italy
Phone +39 02 921991
italy@aligroup.com

Ali Group Australia

740 Springvale Road | Mulgrave
Melbourne Vic. 3170
Australia
Phone +61 3 95183888
australia@aligroup.com

Ali Group Brazil

Alameda Franca, 447
Jardim Paulista
São Paulo - SP, 01422-000, Brazil
Phone +55 11 20618207
brazil@aligroup.com

Ali Group Canada

2674 North Service Rd.
Jordan Station | Ontario
LOR 1S0 Canada
Phone +1 905-562-4195
canada@aligroup.com

Ali Group China

MTR Cloud Center, 3rd Floor, Suite A
619 Caoyang Road Putuo District
Shanghai 200063 | China
Phone +86 21 6285 5858
china@aligroup.com

Ali Group France

17-19 Avenue Gaston Monmousseau
93240 Stains
France
Phone +33 1 48216325
france@aligroup.com

Ali Group Germany

Lochfeldstraße 28
D-76437 Rastatt
Germany
Phone +49 7222 90470
germany@aligroup.com

Ali Group Hong Kong

Unit C, 12/F. | Roxy Industrial Centre
58-66 Tai Lin Pai Road
Kwai Chung, N.T. | Hong Kong
Phone: +86 852 2407 5422
hongkong@aligroup.com

Ali Group Japan

Toei Mishuku Building
5F 1-13-1 Mishuku | Setagaya-ku
1540005 Tokyo, Japan
Phone +81 3 5779 8850
japan@aligroup.com

Ali Group Middle East & Africa

Unit 603 & 604, Building 1B
Dubai Design District
Dubai, UAE
Phone +971 4510 8200
middleeast@aligroup.com

Ali Group New Zealand

45 Illinois Drive
Izone Business Hub | Rolleston, 7675
New Zealand
Phone +64 3 9836600
newzealand@aligroup.com

Ali Group Russia

Novodmitrovskaya St. 2, Building 1, Floor 8,
Office LI, Room 1D
127015 Moscow
Russia
Phone +7 495 481 60 33
russia@aligroup.com

Ali Group Singapore

140 Paya Lebar Road
#08-09 AZ @ Paya Lebar
Singapore 409015
Phone +65 6738 5393
singapore@aligroup.com

Ali Group South Africa

P.O. Box 30072 Jetpark 1467
Unit 4 Lakeview Business Park
8-10 Yaldwyn Road | Jetpark | Boksburg, RSA
Phone + 27 11 826 6742/1
southafrica@aligroup.com

Ali Group UK

Bryggen Road | North Lynn Industrial Estate
Kings Lynn, Norfolk
PE30 2HZ | United Kingdom
Phone +44 1553 817 000
uk@aligroup.com

Ali Group USA

101 Corporate Woods Parkway
Vernon Hills, IL 60061 USA
Phone: +1 847-215-6565
usa@aligroup.com



**Ryan Blackman
Managing Editor**

Ali Group North America
101 Corporate Woods Parkway
Vernon Hills, IL 60061 USA
Phone: (847) 215-5090
Email: rblackman@aligroup.com

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Editorial Office

101 Corporate Woods Parkway
Vernon Hills, IL 60061
USA
(847) 215-6565

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Ali Group is the largest, most diversified global leader in the foodservice equipment industry. An Italian corporation founded 56 years ago, the engineering heritage and traditions of several of its companies stretch back more than 100 years and include some of the most respected names in the industry.

Ali Group designs, manufactures, markets and services a broad line of equipment used for commercial food cooking, preparation and processing. With 57 manufacturing sites, over 10,000 employees in 30 countries and 76 brands, it gives life to the most extensive product portfolio in the industry, operating in almost every hospitality and catering sector.

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