

# RESTAURANT BUSINESS.

## **PURCHASING**

Keep food costs down in 2013 **PG.12**

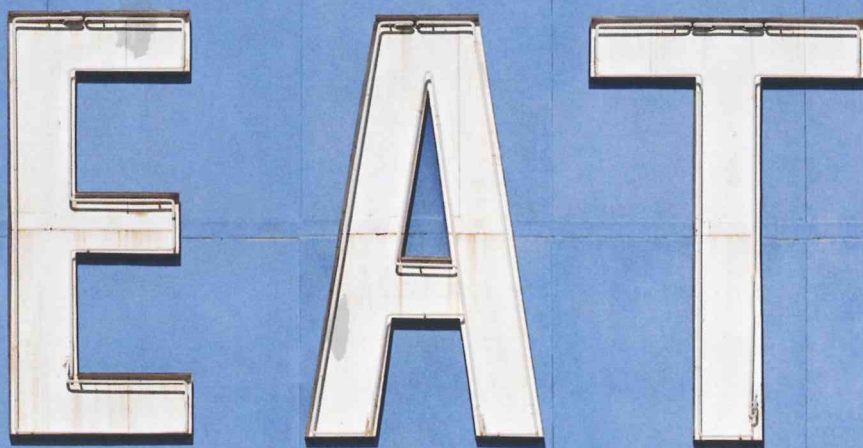
## **SELF-PUBLISHING**

A DIY cookbook release **PG.52**

## **GUN VIOLENCE**

Protecting employees **PG.16**

## The **BEST PLACES** to open a restaurant



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**PG. 22**



## Equipment

## Hot ovens and cooktops

**A**s you might expect, chefs have some definite ideas about what they want from an oven or cooktop.

## The chefs speak

The dependable standard convection oven is still the preferred type for most chefs, but for some, flexibility is important. Executive chef Gregory Webb of Tortilla Coast Logan Circle in Washington, D.C., prefers the option of turning off the convection function. "I love versatility—to have the option of selecting the high-heat, forced-air convection feature or the gentle heat of a conventional oven," he says. The ability to turn off the convection "in the same standard footprint is really empowering for a high-volume kitchen."

For Jerry de la Riva, executive chef at the Terrace Bistro in the Nylo Dallas South Side hotel, the oven becomes a sort of holding cabinet because it has "a special low-temperature feature [which] maintains food at serving temperature without continuing to cook it."

With all sorts of cooktop options available, from griddles to planchas to bains marie, chefs can customize their equipment to suit their personal taste. But there's one thing most chefs seem to agree on: They want the maximum heat out of their cooktop. The cooktop



VULCAN ENDURANCE 60-INCH RANGE

"must have major BTUs," says Jason Smith, executive chef at York College of Pennsylvania. "Why do I have to wait 10 to 20 minutes for a rolling boil with a lidded stockpot?"

Skip Julius, manager of culinary services for Sensient in Indianapolis, agrees. "I'd like to see more manufacturers produce ranges capable of 22,000 BTUs," he says. "To quickly and properly sear or stir-fry, we need that kind of power."

Having the maximum BTUs is also important to executive chef Patrick Russell of Max's Wine Dive in Dallas, especially "when cranking out 400-plus covers." Russell, though, is partial to the French top option for his cooktop. (A French top features a flat surface with concentric rings that intensify the heat toward the center of the rings, and reduce the heat toward the outside.)

Interestingly, what might seem like a

minor design consideration to non-chefs—the control knobs for the oven and cooktop—become vitally important during a busy rush period. "Give me a dial with tactile graduations I can easily get my hands on so I can set the flame without looking," says Julius. "I have huge hands," says Smith, who wants "over-sized knobs."

## A range of choices

Since every chef has his or her own idea of what makes a good oven and cooktop, it's a matter of deciding what features are more important and finding the right combination at the right price. Here are just a few of the options available:

- For chefs who need to crank up the heat, the Vulcan 60SS oven puts out 30,000 BTU/hour from six burners.
- For induction cooking, Electrolux Professional offers two- or four-zone cooking tops in its Thermaline series.
- Planchas are becoming more widely available as an option for cooktops, and Viking offers them in widths ranging from 18 to 36 inches.
- For holding, the Southbend Ultimate line of ranges features temperatures as low as 175°F (150° on its electric model)
- The Montague Legend range series offers both single and double French top options for its cooktops.

—TOM O'BRIEN

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## Hatco Spot On™ Tip of the Month—Dish Sanitizing Safety Tip

Commercial kitchens using hot water for dish sanitation are required to keep the water temperature above 180°F, according to the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF).