

IDEAS FOR FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS

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Restaurant

HOSPITALITY

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What's New at NAFEM?

MY TWO-YEAR WAIT for the unveiling of new and improved kitchen equipment at the NAFEM (North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers) show finally came—and the wait was worth it. What I witnessed in Orlando, FL, was the culmination of most of the industry's R&D efforts for the past two years.

One of the traditions at the show—the nation's biggest foodservice equipment show with more than 550 manufacturers—is the introduction of new equipment and innovations. So there's a lot to see. Here is a sampling of what is new and now available on the market.

One broad and reoccurring theme was improved efficiency, either in reducing waste, energy savings, labor savings or increased output speed. Let's look at some of the new introductions.

The new Vulcan PowerFry series of fryers feature a highly efficient burner that offers energy savings and a fast cook time. The PowerFry allows more heat transfer to occur from the burner to the cooking oil compared to other fryers because of an innovative gas burner design. In a typical burner ignited gas is passed through a tube in or alongside the oil tank and then released up a flue. The Vulcan burners double the tube back and forth through the oil, extracting more heat from the burning gas before being released up the flue. Simply put, more heat energy goes into the oil than a typical fryer, which allows less gas to be consumed while getting more heat energy into your product.

The G5 oven from TurboChef Technologies is a new high-speed oven that combines air impingement with microwaves. It's made to handle up to five metal full size steamtable pans (12" x 20") or half-size sheet pans (13" x 18"). Previous high-speed oven models have not had this sort of volume capacity. TurboChef claims the unit can cook three to four times as fast in the same footprint as a typical convection oven of compa-

able pan capacity. The unit has touch controls and can store well over 3,000 recipes.

Using RFID equipped collars in coffee decanters, Bunn-O-Matic now provides operators a way to manage coffee freshness. Basically, the new AXIOM BrewWISE system enables the brewing unit to automatically "write" the exact brew time to the decanter RFID chip. The status of the coffee in each unique decanter is visible on an LCD screen on the brewer unit. When the coffee hold time exceeds what's recommended for a quality cup of coffee, the brewer emits an audible alarm to prompt the operator to discard the coffee and make a new batch. RFID collars can be used over and over and even reused on a new decanter if one is broken or damaged.

The Kolpak ArcticFox unit allows operators to control many aspects of their walk-in refrigeration units. The controller is easily installed on new or existing units. It features easy programming, along with a variety of energy saving



Equipment expert Dan Bendall scoured the aisles of the recent North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers Show and what follows are some of the more interesting things he found.

Well-Equipped

features for you. A defrost system control initiates defrost cycles only when needed, not just on a time clock like most. A typical walk-in with this unit may be able to run with less than half the defrost cycles compared to a traditional system. Defrost cycles waste energy and can damage foods. Many other useful accessories usually purchased separately can be eliminated, such as light switches, door ajar alarms, thermometers and temperature tracking devices.

How about a sneeze guard with mini video screens on them? BSI Designs just introduced a new salad bar or buffet sneeze guard feature sure to get some operators excited. The sneeze guard or protector case top can have an approximately three-inch high video screen or series of screens. You can download anything from your computer to these screens. For example, you could display a changing menu, nutritional information, short clip videos, logos or anything you want right at the point of use. You control the content.

Hatco showed off some new compact LED display lights

How about a sneeze guard with mini video screens that can display menu and nutritional information?



that are great for use under a sneeze guard at a salad or buffet station. Because they are LED, the lights emit little or no heat, so they work well for cold food displays. LED also offers brilliant white light, low-energy consumption and long bulb life. These units are also small, only two-inches high, so you keep the focus on the food. The lighting units come in lengths of 30 to 60 inches and housings are available in a variety of colors to match your decor.

Refined



Hatco's NEW Flav-R-Savor® Curved Display Case, utilizing the same proven convected hot air technology as our Holding and Display Cabinets, lets you showcase your food with curve appeal. The elegant curved glass front and lighting of this sleek display presents food from all angles, whether you're serving on plates, casserole dishes, platters and even hotel pans. It's the perfect solution for adding a profitable hot food station to your operation or for presenting to-go meals. Available with many quality features like humidified and non-humidified models, you'll enjoy years of fine performance from the Flav-R-Savor® Curved Display Case. A refined serving area is yours with Hatco.

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Well-Equipped


More varied induction cooking equipment is here and coming. Garland introduced some heavy duty, high-wattage induction cooking-in-pan units that are available in traditional flat styles or bowl shaped for receiving woks. These units offer high-quality components and controls to precisely monitor temperatures. Garland also has a new induction griddle that offers very uniform heat distribution over the cooking surface

A new collar for coffee decanters can alert you when the hold time exceeds the recommended time for a quality cup of coffee.

and puts out less radiant heat than typical griddles because of a special surface coating. Its griddle heating is so responsive that placing fresh product on the griddle causes only minimum cooking surface cooling and fast recovery for high volume. In addition, it has a counter-mounted braising unit with the pan in 2, 4, and 6" depths, which is great for sauced items or stews.

Here is a great new feature for reducing the risk of exhaust duct fires and improving safety. The Halton Company has devised a signaling device installed in an exhaust hood duct. The sensor monitors the grease buildup inside the duct and alerts the operator when the ducts should be cleaned. The alert avoids a potentially hazardous situation with grease buildup. You could also save money by deferring unnecessary and costly duct cleaning.

There are also those manufacturers developing new greener technology. One on that list is True Refrigeration, one of the big reach-in refrigerator makers. It has developed a line of refrigerators that use a new type of refrigerant, R-290, that has almost no global warming potential. The equipment is still in testing, waiting for government approvals, but expect to see these units hit the market later this year. Other manufacturers are likely to follow suit. This writer expects R-290 and other new refrigerants to be the standard for refrigeration equipment in the U.S. in the next few years as they already are in Europe.

All of the above and so many more great improvements and new equipment were at NAFEM this year. It was great to see manufacturers thinking about the operators and improvements that will better your establishments. 

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