



## NRA Highlights

### Gas Equipment Dominates New Technology at 2012 NRA Show



by Russell Bean, CFSP

In spite of the (then) upcoming NATO Conference that forced a date change for the 93rd Annual National Restaurant Association's 2012 Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show, the foodservice industry gathered in Chicago to see, hear and taste what's NEW in food, equipment, supplies and technology. The post-show numbers reported by the NRA were upbeat, with the attendee tally on the sunny side of 61,000, which was a six-percent increase from 2011; and that all important operator attendance was up just over eight percent. On the exhibitor side, the NRA sold out a reconfigured North Hall and South Hall to the tune of 540,000 square feet of exhibit space, which was put to good use by over 1,900 companies.

While PR pros are paid for their positive spin, the show aisles did seem more crowded to this attendee, on both Saturday and Sunday. The exhibit hall layout was good, with plenty of specialty pavilions or areas to focus interest, facilitate comparison and save steps. This year, they moved the Kitchen Innovations (KI) Pavilion to the middle of the South Hall, between the two blocky stairway cores that normally interrupt a logical, linear stroll of exhibit aisles.

Virtually all equipment booths we visited on behalf of *Cooking for Profit Magazine* were busy, with upbeat staffers talking about their new gas cooking or outdoor space-conditioning equipment.

#### Gas Equipment Earns Kitchen Innovation Award Recognition!

The new central location for the KI Award Pavilion was the perfect showcase for 21 innovative products and technologies, including five new or improved gas-heated cooking equipment lines. Typically, KI Award nominations must be submitted by the end of the previous year, so they often reflect one year old technology. In fact, several of these products have been covered in past issues of *Cooking for Profit*, including Frymaster's Triple Play HD1814 Fryers, which earned the 2011 Product of the Year Award from the Gas Foodservice Equipment Network (GFEN), and coverage in CFP's February 2011 Issue.

With the possible exception of our leadoff recipient, this year's crop of gas-fired KI Award winners deliver higher energy efficiency, lower operating costs and often higher production.

#### Alto-Shaam Grease Collection System –

Dealing with the high volume of grease generated when cooking big batches of chicken has always been a challenge with combis and other ovens. In answer, Alto-Shaam developed a grease collection system for their Combitherm Oven® that is electronically activated during cooking to separate grease from condensate water, pumping the former into a mobile sealed container, while allowing the water to go down the drain. Their Automatic Grease Collection System saves labor and improves employee safety by eliminating the use and handling of shallow drip pans filled with hot grease. The grease collection containers are capped when full and easily rolled to a disposal site as needed. It hasn't been that long since Alto-Shaam earned KI Award recognition for their user-friendly touch-screen CombiTouch™ controls.

Alto-Shaam, Inc.  
[www.alto-shaam.com](http://www.alto-shaam.com)



Grease Collection System

#### Frymaster's Large Vat Fryers –

Frymaster's 1814 Series Large Vat Fryers continue to earn accolades by maximizing oil conservation and energy efficiency, while maintaining high production capability. These gas fryers have 18" by 14" frypots that can hold up to three baskets at the same time. They come with SMART4U® three-lane controllers with ten



1814 Fryer

programmable buttons and a 40-product library. All 1814 Gas Fryers exceed current ENERGY STAR qualifications, use 11 percent less oil, 30 to 50 percent less energy, and require 10 to 15 percent less floor space, when compared to fryers with the equivalent production capacity.

Frymaster LLC,  
[www.frymaster.com](http://www.frymaster.com)

#### Lang's GHP Series On-Demand Burners –

Lang began showing the GHP Series Countertop Range Line with their On-Demand Burner control option last year and was recognized for their efforts at this year's NRA Show. Generally range top open burners are not very energy-efficient. Lang's On-Demand Burner option centers a rugged spring-loaded steel ball in the burner grate that connects to a gas valve/igniter system that turns on the burner when a pot or pan bottom depresses the ball. Take the pot off and the burner shuts off, saving energy and reducing waste heat into the kitchen. It is an elegant solution that should pay for itself in energy cost savings.



On-Demand Burners

Lang Manufacturing Company,  
[www.langworld.com](http://www.langworld.com)





### **Rational USA's whiteefficiency®, High Density Control® –**

Rational earned (another) KI Award for the introduction of their SelfCookingCenter®, with whiteefficiency® and HiDensityControl®. This next generation combi control technology delivers 30 percent more production capacity in the same size oven, and potentially reduces resource consumption (energy and water) by 20 percent when compared to “conventional” combi-steamers. This control package also includes Efficient LevelControl®, which shows the operator which products can be cooked simultaneously, so food can be produced up to 30 percent faster, and a new CareControl feature that increases operating efficiency by identifying how dirty the oven is and how much compartment cleaning is required. This can save an operator up to 40 percent a year in cleaning-related energy, water and chemicals.

**Rational USA,  
www.rational-usa.com**



**White Efficiency Units**

fragile ceramic tile infrared burners here. The VTEC burners are corrosion resistant, impervious to spills, and resistant to thermal shock. These broilers use up to 50 percent less gas than similar size broilers, deliver more uniform cooking surface temperatures, and more long wave (frequency) infrared energy, which we are told is ideal for cooking meat and seafood proteins.

**Vulcan**

**www.vulcanequipment.com**

## **MORE Great Gas Equipment at the Show**

### **American Range Introduces New Gas Models –**

The folks at American Range have been busy and the proof is the list of new gas equipment they were showing in Chicago. Their new offerings included an Infrared Griddle with one-inch thick cook top, electronic on-demand burner ignition, and a solid state temperature control of 20,000 BTU/hr. infrared burners spaced every 12 inches under the cook top. These heavy-duty broilers are available in 36", 48", 60" and



**Infrared Griddle**

72" wide models, with 4-1/2" high splash guards and a hinged cover to protect and conceal burner controls.

American Range was also showing a new heavy-duty pasta cooker featuring an aluminum tank with heat transfer fins, which is heated by an 80,000 BTU/hr. three-ring gas burner enclosed in a well-insulated combustion chamber. This floor model, fryer-style pasta cooker has 6.4 gallon water capacity and comes with a



**Pasta Cooker**

### **Vulcan's VTEC Infrared Charbroiler –**

Vulcan has addressed the challenge of making the charbroiler more efficient, with the help of technology acquired from Thermal Engineering Corporation (TEC). Vulcan's new VTEC Broiler takes infrared heat transfer to the next level, with a patented stainless steel conversion burner design that is

combined with a heavy gauge steel emitter panel under the cook grates. No



**VTEC**