



Choosing the right appliances is vital, says Malcolm Ball, sales manager at Space Catering Equipment

When it comes to selecting kitchen products and equipment, it pays to measure everything against one basic rule – does it provide you with what you and your business needs? For busy hotel environments, the build quality of any piece of equipment is paramount. With doors to any appliance being opened and closed frequently, ensure you choose something robust enough to suit your needs.

Keep your running costs down by selecting suitable products and positioning them in the best possible place. This can make a big difference to how much energy your kitchen consumes and how green your operation is, so it is important to look at the

area you have to work with. Do you need to have all your storage within the kitchen itself, or can you look at alternative areas? If so, your scope for installing new equipment could be different to what was originally planned.

Make good use of the room you have and, if necessary, utilise the services of commercial kitchen design companies to ensure you maximise your kitchen's potential. One other crucial thing to think about is pricing for supply and fit. The advantage of using businesses that have been buying and installing equipment for a considerable amount of time, is that they have an accurate idea about where to go for the best overall packages, as well as one-off purchases.

Top Tips!

Whether you improve or completely refit your kitchen, here are some things to think about and questions to ask to make any investment in new kitchen equipment really pay off.

1. Cooking Equipment

If it's time for a new oven, the first thing to think about is what you need it to produce and in what quantity, in order to determine the size of unit required. Then consider what space and power sources you have in your kitchen and whether you will need extraction to go with it.

For cooking, take a look at the latest generation combi ovens which replace the need for separate ovens, steamers, hobs and grills, offering a major saving on both space and energy. These ovens can be turned on minutes before they are needed, and retain the heat generated within the compartment. Models like the Rational Self Cooking Centre are practically intuitive – almost like adding another chef to the team!

2. New Energy Sources

Also think about some of the newer energy sources, like induction cooking, which results in little wasted heat, as energy is supplied directly to the cooking vessel – less wasted heat results in cooler kitchens, work tops and stoves. Safety is improved as there are no flames or heated elements, and the cooker can't accidentally be left on as it only works on contact. The cooking is also 'cleaner' – induction

does not result in vapourised by-products, unlike burning gas.

3. Fridges...

Make sure you site the refrigeration close to where the chefs work, and buy it with your food offer in mind.

Localised refrigeration, with dedicated production space right next to the area you need it, is a big plus – not only is there less to-ing and fro-ing, but you can speed up everyday tasks and make the team work more efficiently, in some cases with fewer people.

Being able to have product ready to hand at the correct temperature is a big bonus for the chef in particular, which is why an increasing number of kitchens now have refrigerated meat drawers underneath the charrill or griddle. All the chef has to do is reach in, take the protein and put it on to cook. This little time-saver can really make a big difference and quickly justify the cost.

In fact, counter refrigeration is a good idea all round. It means there is no dead space in the kitchen and makes practical tasks, like adding garnish to dishes, a whole lot easier, too. Chefs can load their saladette – a table top refrigerated well for salad and handily sited on the counter – in time for service with garnish that's perfectly chilled and ready to go – a far cry from the days of limp lettuce leaves lying around in old margarine tubs.

4. ... and Freezers

Similarly, having a counter freezer with a work surface above it and sited right next to the fryer,

is a good idea. This maximises work space, which is particularly important in smaller kitchens, and means jobs like batter work can be done alongside the fryer. Frozen products, like breaded fish or chips, can be taken straight out of the freezer to cook as and when needed, with no temptation to take large batches out in advance and leaving it to defrost.

Whether for freezers or fridges, look for machines that appear on the Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) list as they will not only reduce running costs quite considerably by using less energy, they also qualify for tax incentives from the Government.

5. A Sparkling Finish

For dishwashing, go for the modern machines like the Winterhalter Energy Plus, which uses the condensation generated from the machine to reduce water and energy consumption by capturing the steam, channelling it through heat exchangers and recycling water for the next cycle. Another clever energy and cost saving feature to build into your kitchen.

And keep on top of waste and deal with fats, oils and grease (FOGs). There are now new bio-remediation systems on the market which avoid the need to manage grease removal from under or over-ground grease trap systems. Enzymes dosed into the waste channels break down the FOGs over time, preventing build up and reducing the need for vehicles to take them to landfill, which is kinder on the environment, too.

Case study: The Scarlet in Cornwall

Space Catering Equipment was appointed by development director Simon Baldwin, to bring to life the design of the kitchen at The Scarlet – a new 37 bedroom luxury eco hotel at Mawgan Porth on the North Cornish coast.

The hotel itself is cut into the cliff behind the building



and has an interesting layout comprising numerous floors and features. This design allowed for one central kitchen, cut into the hill side at restaurant level, which would need to produce all the food for guests as well as staff.

As there is no gas in the kitchen, Space specified induction cooking with a central island comprising the Dawson Mareno 700 Series of modular components bolted together to look like a bespoke run of equipment, with a Vario Pans induction cooker, Hatco rise and fall electric contact grill, and a Rational 10 grid combi oven under its own canopy, for steaming and roasting.



Divide and Conquer

There are separate preparation areas for meat, fish, deli and pastry, divided by low walls to provide order and flow, but still allowing the chefs to communicate with each other. These areas have a

range of preparation tables and Gram counter fridges which are highly energy efficient and maximise the work area, meaning everything is close to hand as the chefs work.

Other equipment installed includes upright freezers by Gram, a Storer floorless walk-in cold room, which is excellent for bulk refrigerated storage and is fitted with a large hanging rack for curing meat, and a separate Gram blast chiller for rapid cooling of food products before they go into the cold room. Two large passes – one for cold and one for mains and hot food – help keep the finished dishes moving swiftly out of the kitchen and there is a waitress

pick-up and collection point, again to ensure a good flow in the space overall.

Dishwashing and waste management are two further aspects of the kitchen which boast impeccable green credentials. This area comprises a large, u-shaped configuration of a series of dumps and sorting stations incorporating a waste disposal and de-watering unit from IMC. Dishwashing is catered to by the Winterhalter GS502 Energy Plus, which has an energy-saving hood and re-uses power from steam and drainage water to help heat the input water.