



Keeping Pace

As supermarket foodservice continues to play an increasingly important role, an array of new products is being marketed and adopted at retail to keep pace with this growth.

At K-VA-T Food Stores Inc., in Abingdon, Va., Director of Bakery Deli Operations David Haaf notes that his company has added fresh food bars — including soup, salad, wings, salsa, fruit, tacos, and antipasti and olives — to create a fresh food destination, along with pizzeria makeup units, among them brick-oven pizza ovens in limited locations, to help create a fresh image, as well as theater for shoppers. The grocer has added cook shack smokers, too, to provide ready-to-eat fare, as well as special-order selections.

According to Haaf, K-VA-T, which operates stores under the Food City banner, already has seven pieces of foodservice equipment in the front of the house and 11 in the back of the house, and has just added artisan cheese shops in a few locations, with accompanying refrigeration and food processors.

At the legendary Dorothy Lane Market, in Dayton, Ohio, Jack Gridley, VP of meat, seafood, deli and prepared foods, says that the company has added another blast chiller because

Retailers and manufacturers are both adding to their foodservice equipment lineups.

By Bob Ingram

“one of the secrets to our great food is making things in continuous small batches. Having enough chiller capacity gives us the ability to cook, chill and sell great food closest to the time of production, not days later.”

Gridley adds that Dorothy Lane’s most versatile piece of foodservice equipment is the Ruhl turbo dicer, which provides the ability to slice or dice large quantities of meat or vegetables in a uniform size at a high rate of speed.

Major remodels have just wrapped up in two of the company’s three stores’ kitchens, he observes, with more refrigeration to be added to one and dishwashers to be replaced in both with new energy-efficient ventless prep washers.

Among suppliers, Cheryl Beach, marketing communications manager at Hussmann Corp., in Bridgeton, Mo., says her company’s latest foodservice equipment addition is a three-zone high-volume vertical glass over/under merchandiser, with an interior cube design that allows for interchangeable merchandising solutions for bulk, fresh and packaged product.

“The all-glass front and top, hinged French front doors, and adjustable, multidirectional LED canopy light draw the shoppers’ attention to the product display,” she notes. “[It] is all about merchandising to enhance the shopping

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experience and encourage the shopper’s purchasing decisions.” Beach adds that retailer feedback has been “very positive” because the vertical front glass really pushes the product forward and closer to the shopper.

In the Balance

Glenview, Ill.-based ITT Food Equipment Group launched its HT family of service scales “because the trend in the service scale industry was moving from digital scales to PC-based scales,” explains Todd Hagopian, global marketing director of ITT’s weigh wrap division.

Hagopian says the service scale has really become a mini-computer, with the ability to control pricing, promotions and shrink, along with increasing revenue through merchandising, and decreasing costs through tare savings. The HT family has three models, with many variations that allow the customer to find the right scale, based on which features are needed in each department.

“Most of these products are operating at just 40 percent of capacity,” observes Hagopian, “which means we have built the scale to grow as we add new software features and enhancements.”

The scale has been “extraordinarily well received,” he asserts. “We actually sold more HT scales in 2016 than we sold in the first two-plus years after the launch.”

On the Menu

With growing demand for product information and increased regulations over what details retailers need to share about their food, digital signage is catching on among operators looking for a more



QUICK CHANGE

Tebo’s Digital Menu Board works with any web-enabled device.

flexible way to deliver these messages.

“We have catered our business to the needs of independent grocers by developing a new digital menu board system that is specifically designed to drive sales while keeping price in mind,” says Joe Michaels, VP of new product development at Denver-based Tebo Store Fixtures.

Michaels points out that the system is easy to use, engages customers and can make “on-the-fly” changes from any web-enabled device. Also, Tebo has partnered with LG to bring the ultra-stretch screen to cutting-edge grocery display. Of the 86-inch-wide screen, Michaels notes that “we add this to our artillery because the screen itself is a work of structural art that is digital décor.”

While there aren’t any metrics yet for the new menu board, Michaels says the current Tebo digital menu board has led to “proven increases in sales from 8 percent to 22 percent.”

Oil Change

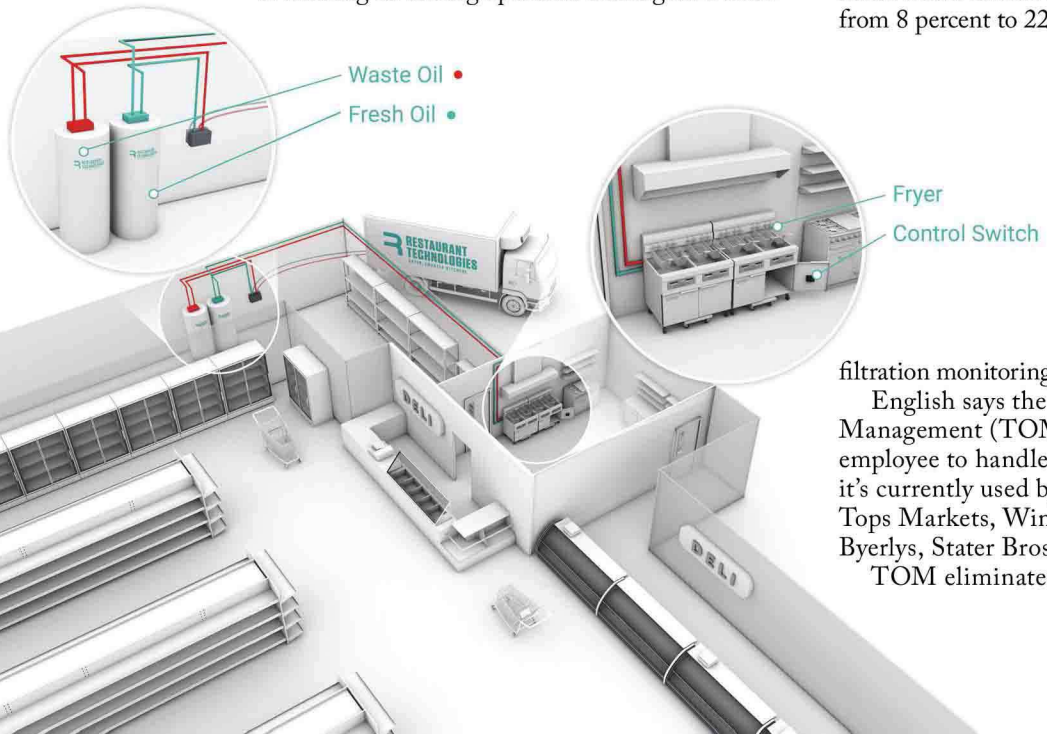
At Restaurant Technologies, in Mendota Heights, Minn., Jim English, director of national accounts, notes that more than 2,000 grocery delis use his company’s cooking-oil management system, which features automated oil storage, handling, filtration monitoring and disposal management.

English says the system, known as Total Oil Management (TOM), eliminates the need for an employee to handle cooking oil. He notes that it’s currently used by such retailers as Wegmans, Tops Markets, Winn-Dixie, Hy-Vee, Lunds & Byerlys, Stater Bros., Raley’s, and Albertsons.

TOM eliminates the transportation of hot



NO HANDS
Restaurant Technologies’ Total Oil Management (TOM) system eliminates the need for associates to handle cooking oil.



waste oil through the store and any potential back strain and slip-and-fall injuries from lifting and dumping heavy buckets, English says.

“We know that maintaining a clean and presentable environment behind the deli counter is critical to grocery foodservice operators,” English adds. “Restaurant Technologies aims to help deli operations function as efficiently and safely as any commercial restaurant kitchen, in order to keep up with prepared food demands to offer quality fried foods, while maintaining a transparent back of house.”

The Grocerant Experience

With supermarket prepared foods on the rise, suppliers that historically cater to the needs of foodservice operators are increasingly adapting their products for grocery applications.

Among them is Structural Concepts, Muskegon, Mich., whose specialty merchandisers are designed “to create the grocerant experience, which we define as a grocery store that offers a restaurant-quality experience for dine-in or take-home meals,” says SVP Jeff Schneider.

The company’s understated design puts the spotlight on food and high performance, Schneider explains, and temperature integrity ensures a grocer’s reputation for the freshest and most flavorful foods. Customization, he adds, gives a unique appearance.

Schneider notes two recent innovations: first, the Grocerant Series of modular front-line food bars, which allows mixing and matching to support specific menus. “You can create your own custom yet cost-effective food lines,” he observes, “and the Grocerant Series is designed to integrate seamlessly with all of our other merchandisers.”

The second innovation he mentions is the platform that all of the merchandisers are built on, known as alignext.

With alignext, “the deli and prepared foods departments no longer look hodgepodge or disjointed,” Schneider says. “Every merchandiser, including food bars, is designed to seamlessly flow using a minimalist design that eliminates unnecessary end panels, mismatched case profiles, gaps and extra hardware. The result is departments where the eye is immediately drawn to the

food, not the equipment.”

Whole Foods Market has been a big supporter of both the Grocerant Series and the alignext platform, he notes, and “we are helping many other retailers to build their grocerants.”

The growth of retail foodservice continues, as does the equipment to support it. Stay tuned — there’s doubtless much more to come. **PG**