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National Restaurant Association® Announces the 2018 Kitchen Innovations® (KI) Award Recipients

This prestigious foodservice industry award recognizes innovative new equipment that delivers advances in temperature control, food safety and more

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(Chicago) The National Restaurant Association today announces the recipients of the **2018 Kitchen Innovations (KI) Awards**, honoring progressive equipment that increases efficiencies and productivity for back-of-the-house operations and benefits restaurant operators. Each recipient and their product will be showcased in the interactive Kitchen Innovations Showroom at the [2018 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show®](#), to be held May 19-22 in Chicago at McCormick Place.

“The KI Award recipients are innovators in back-of-house operations and work tirelessly to improve the challenges faced by restaurant operators,” says Dickie Brennan, Convention Chair for NRA Show 2018 and owner/managing partner of Dickie Brennan & Company, whose restaurant group includes Tableau, Palace Café, Dickie Brennan’s Steakhouse, and Bourbon House. “For fourteen years, the industry has admired KI Award recipients and their contribution to making our foodservice industry even better.”

The 2018 KI Award recipients reflect the trends and topics most important to foodservice operators today. The 22 selected innovations address operator concerns from labor, energy and water efficiency to food safety, sanitation, cross-functionality and space-saving. New software and new materials continue to make new solutions possible.

The 2018 Kitchen Innovations Award recipients are:

Air Oasis Bi-Polar Ice BPI200

Unlike ice sanitizing technologies that use UV light or other sources that create ozone, which can be hazardous to health, the patent-pending BPI200 uses a small electrical housing and carbon-fiber brushes to release airborne positive hydrogen and negative oxygen ions throughout the ice machine without creating ozone. The compact unit greatly reduces mold, yeast, bacteria, viruses and other pathogens, enhancing sanitation and extending service cycles.

Alto-Shaam, Inc., in conjunction with Appliance Innovation Vector™ F Series Multi-Cook Oven

Last year the electric H Series introduced multiple cooking chambers independently controlled for temperature, fan speed and time, allowing simultaneous cooking of dissimilar menu items as well as patented Structured Air Technology™ high-velocity, focused heat for faster cooking. The new F Series builds on that with larger chambers to accept full size sheet or hotel pans AND a new, patent-pending innovation that adds the flexibility to combine two cooking chambers into one for larger items without disrupting the structured airflow design.

Antunes GST-1H Flatbread Toaster

The new Flatbread-Toaster brings innovative capabilities to the flatbread-pita-tortilla category with wide-mouth loading and dual platens located inside dual conveyor belts to heat a variety of products consistently—up to 200°F—providing quicker throughput. For example, it heats uncooked flour tortillas to 160°F in seconds. The integrated landing zone is heated, too.

Astra Shunsuke Peeling Machine

Fresh from Japan, this new machine automates labor-intensive fruit and vegetable peeling. Programmable for apples, kiwis, oranges, potatoes and more—nine different fruits and vegetables in all (and suitable for similarly sized items)—the unit allows different thicknesses of peeling. Comes in two sizes for smaller and larger operations.

Bizerba North America GSP H & HD Illuminated Safety Slicers, Manual, Semi-Automatic and Fully-Automatic Operation

This slicer line, introduced to foodservice a little over a year ago, caught the judges' eyes with its big emphasis on safety. These illuminated slicers use color-coded lights to indicate the machine's status—solid green is safe mode, with blade removed, etc., for safe cleaning. Flashing red is for pre-run, and solid red indicates blade is spinning and ready to slice.

Evo, Inc. MultiZone™ Plancha

Evo takes cooking-zone temperature control to the next level: Unlike anything else in the griddle or plancha category, the MultiZone™ features three independent cooking zones, each separated with IsoBar™ technology. IsoBar™ is a recirculating fluid thermal barrier that effectively mitigates temperature carryover between zones for precise and variable temperature control across a continuous cooking surface.

FLAT® Tech Inc. FLAT® Equalizers

Wobbly tables plague the industry. Unlike other solutions, Equalizers replace a table's existing screw-in feet with an adjusting, hydraulic compression and spring system; they also feature an ingenious locking mechanism (with patents pending) to create a rock-solid stance without any springiness. A rounded design allows for non-snap movement across floors and carpets. Easy to set and reset, too, for quickly aligning tables.

Garland, A Welbilt Brand, Instinct™ Induction Countertop Line

Instinct is the first multi-sensor induction countertop line to incorporate cook and hold functions under one unit, measuring

temperatures across the entire surface for increased accuracy. Duel-zone Instinct can adjust frequency on each cook zone to match pan requirements, adjusting for elements like ferrous content and pan quality; boosting performance and mitigating against temperature overshoots. A plug and play system with universal voltages.

Genius Pan, LLC Genius Pan

How much time do operators spend freshening customer-visible prep lines and salad bars? The Genius Pan uses an ingenious, patented threaded system that allows the bottom of the pan to adjust up or down in the well, keeping everything looking fresh, topped off and inviting, cutting waste and saving labor.

Hoshizaki America KMEdge Ice Machine Series

Finally, an inventive redesign of the icemaker evaporator. The KMEdge utilizes a one-piece, dual-sided stainless-steel evaporator that envelops the oval-shaped copper heating/cooling tubing, optimizing surface contact area for optimizing energy efficiency. The result is harder, clearer ice, higher ice production in fewer cycles, longer product life and greater reliability.

Markov Level RF Oven

Say hello to the next wave—radio frequency cooking. Building on autonomous-vehicles technologies, the ventless Level RF Oven “learns” to recognize food items and direct RF energy to cook them to prescribed standards for internal temperature, surface doneness, etc. And there’s more: The Level can identify multiple dissimilar foods and cook each, simultaneously, to its own standards, to finish at the same time.

Marra Forni Electric Brick Oven with Open Mouth

This powerful electric brick oven, while not the only Italian brick oven on the market, creates a new category for itself with cooking temps up to 1000°F with an open mouth. Efficiency and heat retention come from Sorrento refractory brick walls AND deck that retain the heat, a low dome and balanced heat from all directions. Cooks a pizza in 45 seconds—up to 200 per hour.

Marra Forni Rotator Deck Brick Oven with Double Mouth Opening

This first pass-through, rotating-deck oven uses two forced-air burners totaling just 84KBtu/hour to produce pizzas from both directions in under 90 seconds. Controls regulate heat, rotation speed from 0 to 180 secs, even separate temperatures for each side if so desired. An air screen keeps the heat in.

Multiplex®, A Welbilt Brand, FreshBlender™

What’s better than the boom in smoothies, shakes and frappes? A self-serve system that lets customers create their own in less than two minutes. In just a 20” x 39” footprint, the FreshBlender™ integrates refrigeration, ice making, blending, dispensing and digital controls for hundreds of self-served drinks per day. Realistic payback in well under a year.

Omni-Rinse Integrated Rinsing System

This innovative warm-water rinse station for barware tins, jiggers and tools incorporates rinsing as a step within the drink-

making process, saving time and eliminating the chronic problem of backlogged, unrinsed tools. The rinse process is hands-free and uses no electricity. The station mounts to a speed rack, wall or under bar.

Prince Castle Modular Holding Bin

True modularity is easier said than done, but Prince Castle has done it with its Modular Holding Bins. This holding innovation features a master base, allowing the system to expand horizontally and vertically, distributing power and communications to set and maintain desired serving temperatures. Stack, add, subtract and move them to suit. Build exactly the configurations needed. Amazing versatility.

Sealed Air Corporation Cryovac® FlexPrep™ EZ Dispensing

How much time and effort do staff members spend on BOH condiment systems? Conventional methods, from pails to paperboard containers, involve a lot of handling and wasted/lost yield. Sealed Air's new system uses prefilled Cryovac pouches with frangible seals specially fitted to load into the operation's dispensing equipment. Just pull the trigger. Less handling, better sanitation and better yield speed the payback.

Soda Gun Jetter LLC Soda Gun Jetter

Tired of dealing with sticky, unsanitary syrup residue and bar flies in and around the soda guns? Soda Gun Jetter is an automated system that includes a programmable control box, holsters and dedicated tubing to flush soda gun nozzles and drip cups during off hours with pressurized water.

Structural Concepts Corporation Foodscaping Wells

Creating attractive, unique buffet-style displays for a variety of foods and circumstances is always a challenge. Foodscaping Wells offer an imaginative modular system based on a refrigerated cabinet featuring a food well housing with multiple height-adjustable display platforms. The adjustability lets staff set food serving vessels at various heights for an eye-catching, inviting display.

Structural Concepts Corporation Reveal Frameless Glass Food Displays

Argon gas-insulated double glass panes have been used in other products to provide a thermal barrier and reduce condensation. Reveal Frameless Glass Food Displays now bring those advantages to foodservice in attractive merchandising cases with completely frameless vertical glass for a clean, uninterrupted view.

Vitamix Aerating Container

With emulsions, foams, whipped creams, meringues and other aerations becoming ever more popular, getting by with various chargers, whisks and mixers just isn't enough. The Aerating Container's specially shaped disc blade offers the solution, letting kitchen staff and bartenders fine-tune the texture of mousse, infusions and emulsions without pureeing.

Vulcan SonicSafe™ Ultrasonic Scale Prevention for Steamers

Limescale is early death to generator-style steamers. Filters and treatments work but require maintenance. Vulcan applies the same Ultrasonic technology to commercial steamers proven to combat scale build-up in large industrial boilers. Ultrasonic technology breaks up limescale particulates suspended in water, continuously preventing scale from adhering to heating elements and generator walls.

An independent panel of industry experts comprised of internationally-recognized food facilities consultants, multi-unit restaurant executives and design experts select the KI Award recipients. The 2018 Kitchen Innovations judges are:

- **Dan Bendall** (Principal, FoodStrategy, Inc.)
- **David Chislett, FCSI** (Executive Principal, Ricca Design Studios)
- **Jeff Cook** (Chief Engineer, Restaurant Solutions Group, McDonald's Corporation)
- **Richard Eisenbarth, FCSI** (President / COO, Cini-Little International)
- **Foster F. Frable, Jr., FCSI Associate AIA** (President, Clevenger Frable LaVallee)
- **Randy Homer** (Program Manager, Food & Beverage Operations Asset Management, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts)
- **Jim Krueger, Jr., CMCE, NRAMF** (Chief, Air Force Food & Beverage Policy, Procedures, Business Development & Strategic Initiatives Air Force Services Activity (AFSVA) Food & Beverage Branch)
- **Aaron Lamotte** (Senior Director, Performance Interiors, Sodexo Performance Interiors)
- **Steve Otto** (Director, Capital Equipment Purchasing, Darden)

As the global restaurant and hospitality industry's premier trade show, the NRA Show brings together more restaurant and hospitality buyers and equipment manufacturers than any other industry event. To register, please visit Restaurant.org/Attend/Registration. For more information about the KI program and this year's award recipients, visit Restaurant.org/Show/KI.

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Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises one million restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of more than 14 million employees. We represent the industry in Washington, D.C., and advocate on its behalf. We operate the industry's largest annual trade show (NRA Show May 19-22, 2018, in Chicago); leading food safety training and certification program (ServSafe); and a unique career-building high school program (the NRAEF's ProStart). For more information, visit Restaurant.org and find us on Twitter [@WeRRestaurants](https://twitter.com/WeRRestaurants), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WeRRestaurants) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/WeRRestaurants).