



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, February 21, 2019

CONTACT: Christina O’Connell, Agency C5 Phone: 847.769.2453 Email: christina@agency-c5.com
National Restaurant Association Show on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

National Restaurant Association Show® Announces the 2019 Kitchen Innovations® (KI) Award Recipients

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, this prestigious foodservice industry award recognizes innovative new equipment that delivers advancements in speed, efficiency, safety, and more.

(Chicago)— The National Restaurant Association Show today announces the recipients of the [2019 Kitchen Innovations \(KI\) Awards](#), honoring progressive equipment that increases efficiencies and productivity. Each recipient and each product honoree will be showcased in the interactive Kitchen Innovations Showroom at the [2019 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show®](#), to be held May 18-21 in Chicago at McCormick Place. The KI Showroom allows attendees the opportunity see emerging back-of-house trends in one dedicated area.

The KI Awards program has earned a reputation for defining the gold standard of foodservice equipment innovations. “Forward-thinking and cutting-edge, this is the equipment that generates industry growth through a focus on factors such as automation, efficiency, safety improvements, sustainability, waste solutions, and more,” says Scott Redler, COO and co-founder of Freddy’s Frozen Custard & Steakburgers and Co-Chair for the 2019 National Restaurant Association Show. “We are honored to showcase their dedication to the industry.”

Chosen by an independent panel of judges comprised of industry leaders and internationally recognized food facility consultants, multi-unit executives, and design experts, the 2019 KI Award recipients reflect the trends and topics most important to foodservice operators today – and showcase the future of the industry. The 25 selected award recipients address operator concerns including labor, inventory management, cleanliness, energy and water efficiency, food safety, sanitation, cross-functionality and space-saving measures.

The 2019 Kitchen Innovations Award recipients are:

Antunes

Jet Steamer JS-1000

A blank-sheet rethink of countertop steaming: the Jet Steamer injects high-velocity steam into controlled bursts in a closed pitcher for complete penetration throughout the food within the pitcher, allowing for significantly faster cook times. The steam also mixes ingredients, saving operators time when preparing items such as soups, eggs, and chili.

Apex Supply Chain Technologies

AXCESS 2000.H Pick-Up Station

Co-developed with Little Caesars, the AXCESS™ 2000.H Pick-Up Station is the industry’s first heated, self-serve order pick-up station. As orders are placed inside the device, an app notifies customers. Customers skip the line, input their pick-up code, opening the customers’ secured compartment containing their order. Customers grab their order and leave the store in seconds.

Baxter Manufacturing

BV400G VersaOven

Presenting a new level of versatility, the VersaOven is a self-cleaning, programmable gas rack oven that offers convection and non-boiler steam to serve as a steamer, rotisserie, convection oven, and combi oven for fast cooking. A rotating rack provides even roasting or baking. A patent-pending grease separation system aids in the cleaning.

Bear Robotics

Penny

Meet Penny, a foodservice robot with artificial intelligence that drives autonomously. Designed to maneuver in tight, crowded quarters, Penny shuttles food from kitchen to tables and brings dishes back for cleaning. Tray shape, suspension, everything is optimized for foodservice needs. Penny 2 will feature an upgraded design a tablet, communicate with customers and take orders.

Bluewater USA

Bluewater PRO 400 Water Purification System

A tankless design streamlines the Pro 400 reverse-osmosis system, which filters a broad array of contaminants for one or more appliances, from dishwashers and ice makers to steamers and coffee makers. The system produces up to 1825 gallons daily. An optional storage tank accommodates very high demand use, without affecting the efficiency and performance of the purifier.

Chicago Bar Shop

SinkTech

Finally, someone automates the three-compartment sink. SinkTech uses sensors to determine water levels, temperature, and cleanliness. It automatically drains and fills sinks and saves time, energy, water, and money. It's compact, installs without plumbing, and doesn't interfere with washing or scrubbers. And it's connected to the cloud for data on usage and compliance.

Chowbotics

Sally the Robot

Imagine providing fresh made-to-order foods 24/7 virtually anywhere, without on-duty labor. Sally the Robot serves customizable salads, yogurt bowls, grain bowls, and snacks using sophisticated robotics and algorithms to dispense accurate portions of hundreds of different ingredients. Sally delivers precise portions in a 3' x 3' footprint with a 120V socket.

CM Systems LLC

ComplianceMate

ComplianceMate takes digital checklists and wireless temperature sensors to the next level with its first-in-foodservice LoRa (long range) communication protocol. Patented software and lower-cost LoRa transmits farther, using less battery power, than Bluetooth in difficult transmission environs like stainless steel deep freezers. Cloud-based data lets you identify trends across multiple locations.



Cornelius® Marmon/Berkshire Hathway Company

NitroPro™ Mini

Answering the challenge of bringing down the size of systems for nitrogenated coffee and other beverages, the NitroPro™ Mini goes tankless—no nitrogen storage needed—instead generating its own nitro onboard, and has reduced the size of air compressors, valves, and flow controls. The result: simpler operation, simplified supply chain, and more compact footprint.

Ecolab

Advanced Health Department Intelligence (HDI)

Ecolab's newly reinvented HDI program capitalizes on next generation technologies and a raft of new analytics for a whole new, greatly magnified view of health department activities across the country. It's expanded the database to over 1.5M locations from 65,000+. Real-time alerts on numerous categories, data retrieval, and customer-facing dashboards all are cutting edge.

Grindmaster

PrecisionBrew Air-Heated Shuttle Brewers

Grindmaster's new Shuttle Brewers step up with a new level of sophistication. An advanced touchscreen offers detailed settings for time, temperature, pulsing, and more to match roasters' specs. A magnetically driven agitator prevents suspended solids from settling, and shuttles are heated by recirculating hot air rather than electric coils that cause hot spots and scorching.

Henny Penny

FlexFry

The first of its kind, FlexFry offers a combination of open frying and pressure frying in the same battery footprint. The new combo includes Henny Penny's F-5 electric low oil volume platform and 2, 3 or 4 vats of pressure frying. Touchscreen interface, three-minute express filtration and auto top-off on the F-5 and for pressure frying an easy open/close lid and pressure assist technology.

Henny Penny

Space\$aver Team Combi

Unique in the U.S. market, the Space\$aver Team combi combines two stacked, independently operated combis in a single frame and shell, with a single power cord and all the serviceable components centralized below. The 22"- wide footprint is topped with an integrated ventless hood using four-stage filtration for grease and vapors requiring no catalytic converter.

Hobart Corporation

FT1000e Low Energy Series

Sometimes refinements are so comprehensive they amount to reinvention. This new flight-type warewasher features redesigned wash, airflow, and heat-retention elements, enabling use of lower electrical-draw components such as pumps, motors, heaters, etc. Result: 12%-20+% energy reduction depending on configuration, and smaller circuit breakers, all while maintaining wash quality.



Hoshizaki

MODwater

Small is good. Hoshizaki has found a way to dispense four kinds of water—chilled, hot, alkaline, and sparkling—in the smallest footprint ever. Patented technology chills and carbonates water on demand without a carbonator tank. No tank, no pressurizing pump needed. It all saves space and maintenance.

Jamix

Kitchen Management System

Choosing KMS software can be challenging, but Jamix sets itself apart on several points. Whereas many offer recipe and menu management and costing, Jamix also ties in inventory management and procurement. Plus, it's true cloud-based, and can be accessed with any browser, any operating system, any mobile device. Perhaps best of all, it's extremely intuitive.

Lancer

TwinPour Beverage Dispenser

Lots of unique features in this new dispenser. In a 44" counterspace, TwinPour offers two dispense points and 266 flavors, allowing two customers to be served simultaneously. Each side accepts any style of ice and offers two choices. TwinPour dispenses all ice types and can be configured to dispense two types at the same time. Additional chilled water lines serve as cooling system for ancillary pieces of equipment.

Manitowoc Ice/Welbilt Corp.

Indigo NXT

Ice production and efficiency. The Indigo NXT line achieves both, with refinements that enable a combination of efficient rotary compressors and environmentally friendly R410a refrigerant, neither seen before in U.S. icemaking. In fact, Indigo NXT produces roughly 50 lbs. more ice daily and is an average of 11% more efficient than models using R404a.

Merco, a Welbilt Brand

Visual Holding Cabinet with Tray Tracking Technology

Everyone knows how timers work. You set them, and they count down. Merco's new Tray Tracking Technology takes it up a notch. Insert a tray and the timer starts automatically and counts down—and if you need to move the tray, the timer electronically stays with it, tracks to the new location, and continues counting.

RATIONAL USA

UltraVent Plus

With the recirculating ventless hood market heating up, RATIONAL has come up with the UltraVent Plus, the first one that is retrofittable, incorporates four filters and requires no catalytic converter for grilling and roasting, and comes in a configuration that can be retrofitted even to RATIONAL Combi-Duo stacked electric countertop combis.

Tortilla Masters Equipment

TM-105 Ventura Flex PL Tabletop Corn Tortilla Machine

Filling a huge hole in the U.S. market, Tortilla Masters introduces Ventura Flex, the first electric tabletop corn tortilla machine. At just 2' x 2', with a small high-torque motor, Ventura Flex produces up to 840 corn tortillas per hour. Molds and settings produce different sizes and thicknesses.

Unox

Data Driven Cooking

Everyone has cooking software. Data Driven Cooking is different. DDC monitors oven usage, analyzing and recording cooking times, menu items, energy and water use, etc. And artificial intelligence uses that data to recommend operational patterns, new recipes, and more. Further, sensors in the oven calculate volume and mass and adjust cook times for different size batches.

Vollrath Company

Modular Induction Dry Well Drop-In

Induction dry well drop-ins are known for eliminating the water-related chores and expenses of traditional steam wells and slashing energy use by more than half. Vollrath's new system features two independent induction zones per well, and unlike any before it, uses capsules in each zone with fold-in, fold-out legs to accommodate both 2.5"- and 4"- deep full-size or half-size pans.

VT Burner Technology in conjunction with Venancio USA

VT Burner

Infrared cooking offers speed and other advantages, but conventional IR burners generate IR through ceramic shields that are prone to cracking and replacement. Retrofittable VT Burner is cast steel, with a patented layered design that requires no ceramics to generate IR energy. It's IR-fast, inexpensive, durable, and cuts gas consumption compared to standard burners.

Vulcan, a division of ITW Food Equipment Group

Versatile Chef Station

The new Versatile Chef Station is a compact multi-function cooking station that serves as a griddle, saucepan, braising pan, steamer, pasta cooker, rethermalizer, and fryer all in one—and with its patented multilayered cooking surface, it's faster, more accurate, more even, and easier to clean than a braising pan.



The 25 KI Award recipients were selected by an independent panel of judges who are distinguished leaders in the foodservice industry. The 2019 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)
- **Steve Otto** (Director, Capital Equipment Purchasing, Darden)
- **Jim Thorpe** (Senior Food Service Designer, Aramark)

As the global restaurant and hospitality industry's premier trade show, the National Restaurant Association 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 [2019 Kitchen Innovations \(KI\) Awards](#).

###

About the National Restaurant Association

Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises more than one million restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of 15.1 million employees. We represent the industry in Washington, D.C., and in partnership with 52 state associations, we advocate on our industry's behalf in states and locations across the nation. We manage the leading food safety training and certification program ([ServSafe](#)); a unique career-building high school program (the NRAEF's [ProStart](#)); and sponsor the industry's largest annual trade show ([National Restaurant Association Show](#) May 18-21, 2019, in Chicago). For more information, visit the Show on social at [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

About Winsight LLC

Winsight LLC is a business-to-business information, event and market intelligence company serving the restaurant and noncommercial foodservice, convenience and petroleum retailing and grocery industries. Winsight provides research and analytics, branding solutions, face-to-face opportunities, lead generation initiatives, and content marketing services through products including subscription data products, reports, research tools, research programs, fully custom studies, conferences, custom marketing services, meetings, print, digital trade media and tradeshows, including the National Restaurant Association Show.

Winsight LLC is a portfolio company of Pamlico Capital.