



Thomas Bakery's Compact oven, supplied by Tom Chandley

The modular nature of deck ovens ensures your equipment can grow with your burgeoning business, discovers **Andrew Don**

# Deck design

**A**zil Azhar is pioneering a new bakery line in the UK and Europe at his new Chewy Junior franchise at London's Charing Cross, a format that has been imported from Singapore.

Chewy Junior, which has only been open here for three months, specialises in 17 varieties of cream puff – similar to choux, but crispy on the outside and soft and chewy on the inside. Azhar's main objective was to ensure the pastry rose consistently – which he found it failed to do using many models of deck oven.

"When I checked back with Singapore to see what ovens they used, I discovered that the Sveba Dahlen is used in every franchise, so I contacted Benier UK, which handles Sveba in this country."

Now he says the puff pastry rises "perfectly" and everything comes out of the oven uniformly. "We have three decks and put up to two trays in each deck with excellent results."

He says the oven is pre-programmed to bake the products to a set time. "We do not employ any trained bakers, so to get such good results is a real testament to the oven."

David Marsh, managing director of Benier UK, part of the Kaak Group, the world's largest supplier of baking equipment, says the beauty of deck ovens is their flexibility, in that they can bake every type of bread, pastry and confectionery and can even be used to cook meat, fish and hams. "It is also possible to have two temperatures – one on the base of the product, the other at the top. For that reason, it is highly popular as a pizza oven, with heat from the plate giving a crispy base, while the cheese and other ingredients are melted and cooked slowly."

## Efficiency

Benier's sister company Daub supplies three models, the Thermo-Roll Oven, the Backmeister and the Hanseat. Thermal oil has allowed Daub to increase the efficiency of a radiator system and minimise the heat conveyance losses both internally and externally.

Marsh says not only do thermal oil ovens save significant sums of money, but they also produce a quality end-product with an even bake and first-rate crust. "Furthermore, they help reduce bakers' carbon footprint, which is a real boon in this day and age."

Flexibility is also the advantage Chris

Huish, sales manager for Mono Equipment, highlights with deck ovens. "When you look at a deck, the advantage is you can do traditional oven-bottomed bread and artisan bread, which are basically the same thing. It means you can bake the bread on the sole of the oven and you have control over the top heat and bottom heat."

Huish emphasises the importance of buying a deck oven with a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week clock, which comes as standard with Mono. "With our ovens we can individually set each deck to come on at different times."

This means if bakers want only two decks operating on a slack day, they can just programme the oven for two decks to come on. This is also useful if baking at high-peak demand for electricity, because decks can be switched on at different times to stagger the amount of electricity used. All the individual oven decks have a sleep function as standard – a great improvement on the past when the baker would either leave the oven on when not in use or switch it off.

"With our system, you can programme the oven if it's inactive, for, say, 15 minutes; the oven will go to sleep and it will drop down



to a temperature and maintain that temperature. As soon as anyone touches any button on the control panel it will switch on," Huish says.

Mono's deck ovens have a patented steam system, which does not require extra heaters or pumps. Huish says this works well, and gives "a lovely crust and lovely sheen" to the bread. The manufacturer offers anything from a one-deck, one-tray model up to a five-deck, three-tray model.

It has also developed a traditional one-deck and two-deck with a convection oven on top, which Huish says is popular for smaller bakeries. "It's all about functionality and efficiency now. You need service back-up and controls over the system. People have gone past bells and whistles now."

Mono owns Bongard, which has a range of bigger ovens in electric, gas or oil formats. The Omega, the electric model, has a controller that will look at each deck 22 times a second to decide if the oven is in use. If not in use, the machine will divert any power required to the decks that are in operation, saving energy.

Tom Chandley makes ovens from a single baking tray capacity to ones that hold 12 trays per deck. They can be manufactured from one to six decks in height, each of which can be 6ins, 8ins, or 10ins, or a combination of these. Steam injection can be added to any deck. Computerised colour controllers and an integrated canopy can also be added.

Bongard has a range of larger ovens in electric, gas or oil



The new Chewy Junior franchise uses Sveba Dahlen deck ovens; Below Mono deck models



Prover bases are available for small models. Martin Dyson, sales director, says the Compacta model is its most versatile and can be used to bake both light and heavy products.

He says a new Turbo controller, comprising a colour touchscreen can be programmed with the customers' products to give a consistent bake. Also, the ovens are a good energy saver in that if the bakery has a limited power supply of, say, 20kW, the maximum power limiter feature on the controller can be programmed so that the oven will never exceed this set amount. The ability also exists to inform the user of the amount of power the oven has consumed. "We regularly hear that by replacing older deck ovens, customers save at least 50% of their energy costs, an obvious benefit to any customers, particularly given the rising energy prices which we all face today," Dyson says.

Thomas Bakery, in Elland, West Yorkshire, which supplies independent shops, schools and garden centres recently bought a new Compacta 4-8-8 32 tray oven with Turbo colour touchscreen controllers from Tom Chandley.

Installation was arranged over a Bank Holiday to

minimise downtime. The old oven was removed on Saturday, Tom Chandley's engineers moved the new oven in the next day, allowing it to be "burnt off" on Sunday night. This meant the bakery was operational again by midday Monday to ensure customers' wares were ready for delivery on Tuesday morning.

It proved a vast improvement on Thomas' old electric multi-deck oven which it inherited when taking over the bakery in 1993. The age and style of the oven was costing the bakery financially because of its energy inefficiencies. Stuart Harrison, company secretary, says: "Tom Chandley was chosen because it is a respected name in the industry and has a proven history of energy efficiency." He adds that a loan from the Carbon Trust had helped counter rising energy costs.

Whatever deck ovens you chose, it is important to consider that buying equipment for a growing business can be rather like buying clothes for a growing child. Unless you buy something that can be grown into, or is future-proof, you have to keep replacing the old, the bigger you get.

But like a child with size two shoes wearing size six, it does not usually make sense to buy machinery that is much bigger than existing requirements. That is why the modular nature of deck ovens makes them a great option for any growing business: if you need more capacity you can add modules on. All in all they make perfect sense. **BD**