



Clockwise from left:
Wood Stone's Prezzo
oven; Benier's
Trendy mini deck;
Reiser's pizza
dough divider

Pizza power

Pizzas are a lucrative business, but do bakers need to buy bespoke equipment and, if so, what? Andrew Don investigates

Pizza made on-site and sold over the counter, or in the sit-down area, can be part of the mix for the high-street baker keen to make incremental sales.

At its most basic, the product can be home-made, using Italian breads in the style of a bruschetta or variations of the Welsh rarebit with added toppings. An offering like this will require minimal, if any, extra investment.

However, capital investment and thought may be needed for those who want a more sophisticated set-up, offering the sort of pizzas that make them a chosen destination for such fare, and for those who feel their existing ovens will not do the job adequately.

David Marsh, managing director of Benier, which supplies Sveba-Dahlen equipment, says traditional bakers should consider higher-temperature ovens that heat up to 425°C. "We've just delivered combination

ovens to small bakers where they have bread baking decks and pizza baking decks."

He says although bakers can make pizzas in lower-temperature ovens, they will not have the authentic crispy base. "If you have conventional ovens rated up to 350°C, you might have to buy pre-prepared bases or pizzas from third parties and bake them off. If you want to be a preferred destination because of the quality of product, an oven that will give you that authentic base will give you that edge."

Robert Done, Tromp's general sales

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manager for the UK and Ireland, who believes demand will continue to grow as new interest is generated through different products and toppings, says small outlets should be able to adequately use their existing ovens. But he says that, for large-scale pizza production, Tromp's bespoke industrial equipment will provide high output.

Nicola Burton, operations manager at Kingston Catering Repairs, says reliability is crucial when it comes to investing in pizza equipment, and conveyor pizza ovens take the hassle out of the process for those who make from scratch and want pizza to be a big part of their operation. "You put raw product in and it comes out the other end cooked," she says.

Such equipment will be more suitable for those who are really serious about pizza, rather than for small operators who want to offer slices over the counter at lunchtime. **B**

However, Burton says, whatever the size of the business, there is a pizza oven for everyone, from large bakeries that are big on catering down to the very smallest stores.

An alternative to ovens for smaller operators could be dry fryers, such as Valera's Quik 'n' Crispy, she says, especially for those who want to offer small pizzas or slices. Valera says its equipment cooks ovenable

foods quickly and safely and does not require expensive add-ons.

Wood Stone, meanwhile, has been manufacturing stone-fired cooking equipment using the kind of advanced ceramics preferred by the likes of Prezzo, Zizzi, Basilico and Pizza East. The range, available through Jestic, has several types of stone-hearth ovens. For busy pizza restaurant kitchens, where space is at a premium, Jestic has added a durable refrigerated pizza prep counter to its range, which comes in both two- and three-door configurations.

Reiser, which supplies the Vernag Robot dough dividers, believes there are opportunities for smaller craft bakeries to get into pizza. One of its bakery specialists James Fitch says the Vernag Robot 500 dough divider is a good starting point, offering high level portion accuracy and no need for divider oil. It requires minimal space and it is portable for easy storage when

not in use.

The next stages up from there are a high-speed servo-controlled Vernag HPE dough divider, which can provide dough pieces at

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easily adjustable weights from 5g upwards at 200-plus portions a minute in a single lane. Reiser can also make product in multiple-lane configurations.

When it comes to the toppings, Urschel suggests the TRS 2000 for the fine slicing of pepperoni for pizzas. Its CC shredding machine enables operators to put a block of cheese in the top end to produce shreds at the other end. Different cutting heads can turn out different kinds of shreds.

The company's M6 is a versatile dicer, strip cutter and shredder, which Dave Snow, sales manager for the south of England, says is good for chicken.

Tromp can supply automatic pizza decorating lines, like the one supplied to Avalon Foods, in Lancashire, which includes a tomato sauce enrobing machine and two toppings applicators to add whatever toppings are required.



Jestic
Express
pizza prep counter