

CT PROformance™ Combitherm®
CASE STUDY



LA MERENDA, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

“This oven is a game changer ... There is literally nothing we can’t put on the menu.”





HAVING NEVER USED A COMBI OVEN BEFORE,

La Merenda restaurant was able to decrease cooking times and increase both production and service capacity of their many small plate items by integrating an Alto-Shaam CT PROformance Combitherm into their busy and stressed kitchen.

CHALLENGES

La Merenda is a true tapas restaurant. With plates including slow cooked and braised items from around the world, the kitchen was only ever able to prepare one dish per day out of their one convection oven and range. The small kitchen would struggle to keep up with the wide range of small dishes offered. With each table ordering an average of five to 10 items to share, an increase in production speed and capacity was needed.

“Before using the combi, we would have to fight for space on the line.

Constantly checking the oven to see if items were done was challenging and really slowed us down during prep and service,” said chef and owner Peter Sandroni.

To add to the need for more fire-power, the restaurant recently added a beautiful new back patio with plenty of seating for the warmer months. “When we host parties out there, we would need to shut down the whole restaurant. We couldn’t do both,” said Peter.



ABOUT LA MERENDA

Named “Best Small Plate” restaurant by *OnMilwaukee.com* for the fifth year in a row, and one of the top 30 Restaurants in Milwaukee by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, La Merenda is a popular casual tapas bar and restaurant located in Milwaukee’s historic Walker’s Point. The international menu is comprised of a wide variety of sharable small plates ranging from Spanish, to French and even German specialties.

“WE WERE NEVER ABLE TO DO THINGS LIKE SMOKED ITEMS BEFORE BECAUSE WE ARE ALL ABOUT SMALL PLATE PRODUCTION AND KEEPING UP WITH THE LINE.

CT PROformance™ Combitherm® EXPANDS MENU AND INCREASES PRODUCTION

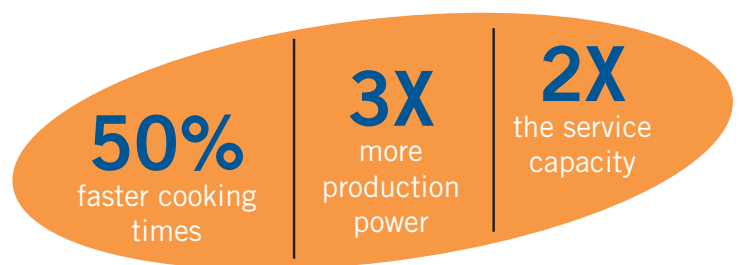
THE COMBI DIFFERENCE

“Now, instead of having to guess and check, we use the oven to achieve the perfect finish on every item. The precision you can achieve is amazing,” said Peter. “We can get so much more done in a day. Instead of fighting to use the oven, now we can make three dishes in six hours.”

More than just time, the CT PROformance Combitherm from Alto-Shaam has allowed La Merenda to increase their production capacity enough to now fully utilize their new outdoor space for parties while still operating the restaurant at full capacity. “We now have the ability to have two separate services going with the same number of people. We have never been able to do that before,” said Peter.

By moving away from traditional convection and range cooking, the restaurant has been able to dramatically reduce cooking times while increasing quality. From roasting a chicken to duck confit, to even making a stock inside the oven, the PROformance Comitherm has changed the way this kitchen runs, and has given the La Merenda chefs more versatility than any other piece of equipment in their kitchen.

The restaurant is now able to feature smoked items. “You can get so much flavor so quickly,” said Peter. And, since the smoking function is fully built into the oven, a quick cleaning cycle allows for the chefs to go from smoking meats to poaching fish without missing a beat.



NOW, THIS OVEN IS A GAME CHANGER AND
THERE IS LITERALLY NOTHING WE CAN'T PUT ON THE MENU.”

Chef & Owner, Peter Sandroni

“IT IS DEFINITELY *MORE CONTROLLED, MORE EFFICIENT* AND MORE COMFORTABLE. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE *FOOD IS BETTER* SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE PRECISION.”

Chef & Owner, Peter Sandroni

COOKING RESULTS

MENU ITEM	OLD COOKING TIME	COOKING TIME IN CT PERFORMANCE	DIFFERENCE	CHEF COMMENTS
DUCK CONFIT	4 hours	4 hours	No change	“While we don’t save any time on this preparation, the overall flavor is more intense and the meat more delicate. It is never dry, which would happen occasionally in the old oven.”
POTSTICKERS	8 Minutes	4 minutes	50% Faster	“We can now cook 224 pot stickers at once so we don’t have to do batches anymore.”
HANGER STEAKS	8-12 Minutes	4 minutes	60% Faster	“Not only much faster, but the internal temperature was better distributed.”
TART SHELLS	25 Minutes	8 minutes	70% Faster	
QUARK TARTS	1 Hour 15 Minutes	28 minutes	63% Faster	

