SaltCraft

Pleasanton, CA

Restaurant Case Study

SaltCraft is a small, independently-owned full-service restaurant in the heart of downtown Pleasanton. SaltCraft specializes in sustainable "farm-to-fork" new American cuisine including service for breakfast, lunch & dinner.

Chef/Owner Matt Greco came a long way to finally realizing the dream of opening his own restaurant. He pursued his passion for culinary arts by earning a degree at the Culinary Insititute of America and eventually cut his teeth in some of the top restaraurants in New York City. Matt, who is no stranger to running kitchens, understood the energy- and labor-related challenges he would need to address and overcome as he prepared to open his new concept in Pleasanton.

Matt opened SaltCraft in May 2018 after an extended partnership with the Food Service Technology Center (FSTC) in San Ramon, CA, where he was able to receive design advice from foodservice kitchen experts, develop prospective menu items, learn about the benefits of energy-efficient equipment, and test new energy- and water-saving technologies that could get his new business off on the right foot.

The FSTC assisted Matt early in the project design process, looking at options to make his planned kitchen operations more ergonomic. Securing a historical home for SaltCraft in Pleasanton meant that kitchen space would be at a premium. The footprint and functionality of each appliance would need to be carefully considered to make the most of the tight quarters without compromising kitchen workflow or product quality.

After several meetings with the FSTC's Chef Consultant, Mark Duesler, to outline the design of the SaltCraft kitchen, Chef Matt began utilizing the FSTC's *Try Before You Buy* program where he was able to test multiple emerging appliance technologies with an eye toward versatility, compactness, and reliability before committing to a purchase all while the SaltCraft site was under construction.

> *"Being able to test new technologies with actual food gave me the confidence to choose and build new processes for my restaurant that would have previously been impossible."* - *Chef Matt, SaltCraft*

With limited kitchen space, Matt could *not* choose the typical equipment lineup of traditional kitchens with such items like double-stack convection ovens, steamers, holding cabinets, gas range/oven combos, etc. He needed to develop and hone new cooking processes to streamline operations with as few equipment pieces as possible. With the FSTC's input, Matt decided to split his kitchen into two distinct, yet complementary cooklines—production and execution—that would delegate different kitchen processes effectively while allowing for flexibility and scalability. Generally, the production line would batch cook/bake prior to service whereas the execution line would finish dishes to order during service.

As a vital component of the SaltCraft concept, all breads needed to be baked in-house. To meet the challenges of a high-production bakery while answering the demands of a full-service kitchen, Matt tested and specified an energy-efficient mini-rotating rack oven for his production line. The oven's high capacity and even heat distribution gave his breads crispy crusts and soft interiors, while saving energy over a standard double-stack convection oven.

The FSTC also recommended pairing a 12-pan combination oven/steamer for the production line with a high-speed oven—a small, ventless countertop oven combining microwave and convection heating technologies—for the execution line. Together, these appliances could effectively perform the same duties as more

Half-Chickens in the Combi & High-Speed Oven

Stage / Process	Benefits
#1 Chickens are Broken Down & Seasoned	• Repeatability & Programmability • Temperature-Control • Chicken is Moist with Crispy Skin • Food Safety: Eliminates Raw Product on Execution Line • Saves on Labor: More Cooks can be Cross-Utilized when Busy
#2 Use "Chicken Roast" Setting on Combi to Cook Chickens to Ideal Temperature	
#3 Half-Chickens are Chilled & Held on Execution Line for Service	
#4 Half-Chickens are Finished to Order in High-Speed Oven in less than 3 minutes	

Chefs Mark Duesler (left) and Matt Greco review design plans for SaltCraft.

Mark (left) and Matt Greco surveying the future kitchen space of SaltCraft.

Chef Matt testing the energy-efficient 8-pan rack oven at the FSTC.

SaltCraft breads baked in the rotating 8-pan rack oven.

Savings By The Numbers

SaltCraft Energy-Efficient Equipment	Compared to Standard Efficiency Equipment	Benefits	Energy Costs Savings ($/year)[1]	PG&E Rebate[2]
8-Pan Mini Rotating Gas Rack Oven	Double-Stack Gas Convection Oven	• Direct Vent • Recipe Program-mability • Setback Mode	$293	$500
12-Pan Gas Combination Oven	• Convection Oven • Steamer • Hot-Food Holding Cabinet • Stock Pot Range	• Recipe Program-mability • Cooking Versatility • Self-Cleaning	$825	$700
36-inch Energy-Efficient Gas Griddle	Standard Gas Griddle	• Cooking Surface Uniformity • Thermostatic	$295	$300
		Total Savings	$1,413	$1,500

[1] Facility operates 360 day/year with utility costs of $0.17/kWh and $1.00/therm. Varying hourly assumptions were made based on appliance type.
[2] Visit: https://caenergywise.com/rebates/

traditional cooklines with less than half the equipment. Chef Matt could roast half chickens in the combi oven to the perfect temperature, chill and stage them on the execution line, then finish the chickens to order in the high-speed oven. The speed, functionality, and programmability of these ovens working in tandem help Matt and his team deliver consistent, quality product in little time all while saving on energy, labor, and space in his new kitchen.

House-made pasta was also essential to the SaltCraft concept. The FSTC encouraged Chef Matt try an electric induction range top for his pasta prep. Many cooks and chefs have long championed gas range cooking as the best (and *only*) option for their needs, so Matt was understandably skeptical of induction as an adequate alternative. Through practical demonstration, the induction range technology exceeded his expectations, providing precise and consistent temperature control, fast pan preheats and recovery times, less generated heat-to-space (critical for a small kitchen), and an easy-to-clean cooking surface, while being more energy-efficient than its gas-fueled counterpart.

During his development phase at the FSTC, Greco also specified an energy-efficient gas griddle for finishing/searing his house-made burgers and sausages.

Once the equipment was installed at the SaltCraft site, the FSTC played an integral role in commissioning the appliances to make sure they were ready for opening day. Ever since, Matt has been busy serving the greater Pleasanton community seasonal, sustainable, and home-crafted fare with a sleek, compact & energy-efficient kitchen. Recently, SaltCraft was awarded a spot on San Jose Mercury News' Top 50 East Bay & South Bay Restaurants. Congrats to Chef Matt and his team!