

# COOKING FOR PROFIT

Cooking With Gas

April 15,  
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"In the Kitchen  
With..." Five  
Seasoned Gas  
Equipment  
Manufacturers

High Note Café:  
Guests Are Served  
Dinner And A Song  
From The Singing  
Chef In South Philly

## Salads Sprout On Spring Menus

Are You Paying A Premium For Your Energy?

If You Take Just One Green Step...

Cutting Your Bar Costs

Peachtree Pork  
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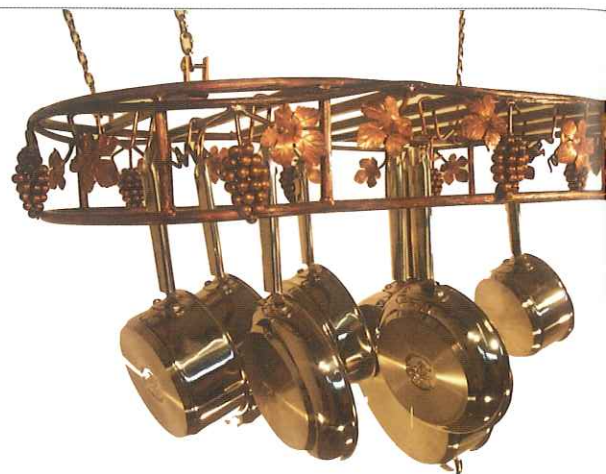
**ATMOS**  
energy

# In the Kitchen with ...

by Russel Bean, CFSP

As we continue our series “In the Kitchen With...” our equipment editor, Russell Bean takes us to the back-of-the-house to discover more about five innovative manufacturers: Viking Commercial, Flagro USA, Inc., Star Manufacturing, Holman and Champion Industries, Inc. We hope you enjoy the stories about the people and companies behind the appliances. We welcome your feedback about this new series and invite your comments on experiences you’ve had with any of these companies and their equipment. Write to us at [comments@cookingforprofit.com](mailto:comments@cookingforprofit.com) and reference “In the Kitchen With” in the subject line.

Colleen Phalen, Publisher/Editor-In-Chief



## Viking Commercial From Home Market to the Commercial Kitchen

Viking Range Corporation is one of the few equipment manufacturers that has successfully moved from the home/consumer market into the rough and tumble world of professional kitchens. Back when some foodservice range manufacturers began to sniff around the high-end home cooking market, Viking Range was a major player, with sky-high brand awareness and a line of “professional” ranges and outdoor grills that were the envy of the neighbors and competing retail appliance manufacturers.

The Viking success story begins in 1981 when Fred Carl (Junior) drew up the first plans for a range at the request of Mrs. Carl, who wanted a heavy-duty model for her home kitchen. But success didn’t happen overnight. In 1983, the Viking name was chosen, the iconic logo designed and Viking Range incorporated in 1984. The first range prototype wasn’t built until 1986. Their first production units were built by a California contract manufacturer in 1987. Then production moved to Tennessee and was ultimately brought in-house (1988) at the Greenwood, Mississippi facility. The popularity and cache of the high-end Viking range grew, along with the booming home construction market and interest in cooking, courtesy of The Food Channel®.

With such a strong brand position in the home market,

Viking introduced a long list of supporting kitchen appliances and chef-inspired technology in the 1990s, including dual fuel ranges, built-in refrigeration equipment, convection ovens, bigger-better ventilation hoods, warming drawers and wine coolers, even a Viking blender and convection-microwave.

With all their success in the home-residential market, it took courage to tackle the commercial range market, but Viking management felt many existing range lines were outdated, offering the same old designs and thinking. But Viking didn’t just rush in with an up-armored version of their home range. They did their homework, hired foodservice industry professionals and used major trade shows to gather consultant and operator feedback. The result of their efforts is the Viking Commercial product line, which was recognized by the National Restaurant Association (NRA) with a Kitchen Innovations (KI) Award in 2010.

The Viking Commercial product line was introduced with: free-standing ranges, modular cooking batteries and chef suites, a countertop cook line, cabinet bases and refrigerated bases, plus charbroilers, cheesemelters and fryers, even a charcoal smoker. Viking also brought a more stylish, Euro-style design esthetic and fresh ideas from the

*Viking Commercial Gas  
Modular Island Suite*



home market. An example of the former is their salamander, which is similar to some European designs, open on three sides with cantilevered infrared hood and a counterweighted cooking grate that easily moves up or down to control heat and browning. When used in their chef suite, these open salamanders allow access from the sides and a more open line-of-sight.

In their modular range tops they went with bent half-inch stainless steel rod grates, instead of the more typical cast iron star grates. They also introduced the industry's first sealed burners. These two-piece, lift-off 30,000 BTU/hr. burners mount in a stainless steel bowl to make cleanup easier. Their gas range tops are modular and can be used as a hot plate with four inch legs; or mounted on a range oven, cabinet or refrigerated base.

Another fresh Viking idea is their Sauté Station. Any range top can be used to sauté, but Viking has mounted a

front row of three to six 24,000 BTU/hr. open burners in front of a matching cold rail to hold cold ingredients, all mounted on an appropriate size drawer-style refrigerated base. This package is both attractive enough for display cooking and very functional.

In spite of all their success, Viking Range has remained a home town success story and good place to work. Over the years, founder Fred E. Carl, Jr. has been recognized by the State of Mississippi as Entrepreneur of the Year, and by the Mississippi Heritage Trust for the saving and rehabilitation of buildings in their home town of Greenwood. In addition, Viking has been named one of Mississippi Business Journal's "Best Places to Work in Mississippi" in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Viking is justifiably proud of their high performance, durable and beautiful American-made products, which are sold through traditional dealer channels. 