

Understanding Island Suites

Island suites are the focal point of a busy kitchen. They are usually located in the centre of the kitchen with access to cooking surface on all four sides, allowing a kitchen team to work alongside and opposite each other for much of the prime cooking.

They have a glamour appeal, with a chunky, turbocharged appearance, but good looks are secondary to performance. Island suites are for kitchens where there is a high volume demand and a need for longevity of prime cooking equipment.

Island suites are the most robust, hardest-wearing of any suited piece of prime cooking equipment. The most demanding of kitchens should expect to get a minimum of 10 years, more likely 20 years from an installation of an island suite, such is the build strength. This is why an initial high investment is such a good long-term investment.

There are two principal forms of construction for an island suite – fixed and modular. Both deliver the same quality of performance, but from different construction routes.

A modular construction island suite is designed by the chef or the kitchen designer specifying what cooking functions are needed. Every cooking point is made as an individual unit in the factory, but all are compatible with each other. At the design stage, the specification will set out how the finished island suite will be made up

The combination of individual cooking systems are welded or bolted together to form a bespoke island suite. Because of the modular nature of the construction, the top can have individual cooking hobs in either gas or electric, or have a traditional solid top.

Configurations will vary according to the style of food the kitchen delivers. If it is a grill-based operation then there will be a char-grill, griddle salamander grill and deep-fat fryer in addition to hob heat and an underneath oven.

By contrast, if it is an Italian menu based kitchen then there will be pasta boilers or if there is an Oriental stir-fry element to the menu high velocity gas or induction wok burners can be incorporated. Modular units can be pre-assembled by the manufacturer but are normally assembled on site.

A fixed island suite is a one-piece construction made in the factory and transported and installed on site as one item. There is still some element of choice of construction, as most are made specifically to order, but being more traditional in design, they tend to stay with dry heat cooking functions. However, one-piece

constructions containing modern aspects of cooking such as induction hobs are now beginning to appear.

The top of a one-piece construction island suite is usually a solid top rather than individual burners so that many pans can fit on the top at the same time. There will be very hot spots underneath gas or electric radiants, but cooler areas where pans can just gently simmer. The top will be made from thick cast iron or steel which will conduct heat to areas of the top where there is no direct heat source underneath.

Why buy an island suite?

Construction is not just heavy duty, but extra heavy duty. They will work 24-hours a day, year after year.

Chefs are working in one central position, watching several cooking operations at the same time. The chef team are also working together on the same cooking station.

Heat output can vary from high velocity gas burners to gentle hobs which will simmer for hours without food breakdown.

How do I find out more about Island Suites?

Talk to the experts.

The Catering Equipment Suppliers Association
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