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The best of the Restaurant Show

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Jackie Mitchell speaks to those behind the world's best eateries at the The Restaurant Show in London this week

Reaching number one in *The World's 50 Best Restaurants* was "a great accolade representing many years of hard work," said Joan Roca from El Cellar de Can Roca, Girona, Spain at The Restaurant Show, held this week at Earls Court London.

"I can't think of a better way of achieving international recognition."

The 27-year-old restaurant, run by Roca and his two brothers, specialises in modern cuisine with its roots in Catalan cooking "with modern techniques and a dialogue with science," he said. "We work with small producers to get the best ingredients, using techniques from all over the world. We learnt about a method of fermenting garlic in Korea and now we use it. Warmth and hospitality is key to our success. That's why we haven't opened restaurants all over the world – we want to be there to welcome everyone."

New and innovative products were on display at The Restaurant Show, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

The P300 baby indoor charcoal oven from [Inka](#) (<http://www.inka.co.uk>), made in the UK, provides the flavours of the barbecue in an enclosed oven. It has a glass front so you can watch the cooking in process. Franco Sotgiu, managing director, Inka, says "It's made from stainless steel with a modern design and is small enough to stand on a table top." Larger models are available.

AUTHOR BIO

Editorial Team

(<http://www.foodserviceconsultant.org/author/admin>)

editorial@foodserviceconsultant.org

@FS_Consultant

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The PolyScience Anti-Griddle from [Sousvide Tools](http://www.sousvide.com) (<http://www.sousvide.com>) was inspired by Grant Achatz, chef from Alinea restaurant in Chicago. Instead of cooking food, the frozen griddle plate on top of the machine freezes it. It can be used to create taste sensations such as frozen paté, starters and desserts. Alex Shannon says, "It's all about theatre and wowing customers with preparing a frozen starter in front of them."



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No more cold toast with the new Stay Warm Bread Sack, devised by Gesine Schreiber from [Merlin Buffet Systems](http://www.merlinbuffetsystems.com) (<http://www.merlinbuffetsystems.com>). The outer bag, filled with cherry stones, is microwaved for two minutes and the inner bag containing the toast goes inside, keeping it warm for 40 minutes.

The new multi-purpose Magic Mobile Induction Table, also from Merlin, can be converted to an induction unit with three stations by means of pulling down a flap. Schreiber says "When restaurants serve a hot buffet, the units are often ugly and can't be used for anything else, whereas this table can be used as a piece of elegant furniture as well." The oak version was on display, but is available in other finishes.

The latest chef's gadget The Smoking Gun by Polyscience, a hand held food smoker, was displayed on the [Lockhart Catering Equipment](http://www.lockhartcatering.co.uk) (<http://www.lockhartcatering.co.uk>) stand. It means that delicate foods such as cheese can be smoked and different flavours created by using wood chips such as applewood and hickory, which are placed inside the device.

The whole range of CookTek induction cooktops was on view at the [MCS Technical Products](http://www.mcstechproducts.co.uk) (<http://www.mcstechproducts.co.uk>) stand, including a wok version and an induction plancher which can be added to island ranges. Steve Snow says "Induction heats the pan, not the air or the unit. As the surface remains cool, spills don't burn on and as there's no flame the kitchen keeps cooler." The Dolphin range of induction compatible stainless steel chafing dishes were also exhibited.

Visitors crowded round [The Clay Oven Company](http://www.clayovens.com) (<http://www.clayovens.com>) stand as freshly cooked pizza was produced from its gas fired pizza oven, the Clayburn Fornette. These ovens can be tailor made with different finishes and as it has an inner clay dome, there are no cold spots or moisture within the oven. The Shahi Tandoor and Shahi Mosaic ovens were also on view. Dr H L Gulian said "We've seen a huge increase in exports of these tandoori ovens to India. That's because the clay used is more durable than in traditional tandoori ovens."

New exhibitor [ChoppingBoards.com](http://www.choppingboards.com) (<http://www.choppingboards.com>) not only makes colourful HDPE (high-density polyethylene plastic) chopping boards of all sizes, but it also collects old ones and then reuses them to make new boards.

"Having the old boards enables us to recycle and endlessly reuse the plastic," says Patrick Edwards, who invented the concept. "We never use landfill."

Swedish company [StableTable](http://www.stabletable.co.uk) (<http://www.stabletable.co.uk>) was demonstrating its wobble free table system, which adjusts the table to any uneven surface, maintaining the table's stability. New is the light Flip Top table, which folds up for easy carrying.

Jackie Mitchell

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Foodservice Consultants Society International Progressive Customer Publishing

P.O. Box 4961
Louisville, Kentucky 40204, USA

Phone: +1 502 379 4122

E-mail: info@fcsi.org (<mailto:info@fcsi.org>)

Web: fcsi.org (<http://fcsi.org>)

7 Carmelite Street, London
EC4Y 0BS, UK

Phone: +44 (0)207 936 6400

E-mail: info@progressivecp.com
(<mailto:info@progressivecp.com>)

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