

Favorite GEAR

Five top designers reveal the essentials that kitchens—big and small—can't live without. Merrill Shindler reports.

They are the unsung heroes of the restaurant world. Where the public sees the front of the house, few—if any—see the kitchen. Or at least, what they *do* see, if the kitchen is open to view, are bright lights, lots of smoke, cooks working, and a pass in which dishes magically appear. The public does not really see the kitchen. Which is, without exaggeration, the very heart and soul of any restaurant. A restaurant without a kitchen is just a vending machine. And the unsung heroes are those who design the kitchens, so that work on the line or at a suite flows smoothly, and the equipment is just right, *en pointe*, a thing of beauty, efficient to use.

We asked some of the top names in the field of kitchen design to talk about their favorite pieces of equipment with us. Not just gear—but large hulking culinary machinery—major equipment for a large kitchen where space is unlimited, and major equipment for a small kitchen where space is at a premium. Their choices range from the familiar to the downright quirky. But in every case, it's equipment they find to be essential. And so, chances are, will you. ➤

All eyes are on the kitchen in the new Morimoto Mexico City in the Camino Real Hotel. "The altar is the glass-enclosed open kitchen," says kitchen designer Jimi Yui. The sushi bar is on the left because, Yui says, "In Mexico nobody sits at the bar." Interior designer Thomas Schoos tackled the cavernous space by fashioning what looks like a series of interlocking Japanese bento boxes. He then painted a series of 45-foot high canvases and installed custom-designed furniture—all tied together by a rope art installation that winds through the entire restaurant.



dreds of portions in an evening, then goes on rolling racks, which allow you to cook different ingredients for different pe-

riods of time. It's extremely versatile, which is what smaller kitchens need—equipment that can do many tasks.”

MORIMOTO, WAIKIKI



Jimi YUI

YuiDesign, Takoma Park, Maryland



Notable Projects:

Morimoto locations worldwide
Lincoln Ristorante, New York City
Nobu locations worldwide

Big Kitchens: Thermo Scientific Freezer: “It operates at minus 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Thermo makes a super freezer that’s

essential for storing expensive inventory like *toro* and Wagyu. **Morimoto Mexico City** has two.”

Custom-Made Paella Grill at **Jaleo in The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas**: “It cost an estimated \$2 million—with half of that going to the ventilation hood alone. It’s for making paella—nothing else. It’s the pride of my career.”

Small Kitchens: CookTek magnetic induction cooktop: “It alters the climate in a kitchen, especially compared to a gas flattop.”

VITO Oil Filter System from Germany: “This is a way to save up to 50 percent on cooking oil. The filtration system removes food and carbonized particles. It’s practical and the easiest way to clean your oil. It’s like a vacuum cleaner”

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