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**Sam Axworthy,**  
Project Manager,  
Simmons Bakers

## **Bakery success story**

### **"Simmons Bakers"**

# “Simmons Bakers”

## Proving itself an asset within the grab and go market



For over 170 years, Hertfordshire has been home to the prestigious family owned 'Simmons Bakers'. Now, with 35 stores throughout Hertfordshire and employing 400 staff, the success of Simmons Bakers has been led by the family's passion for producing a variety of fresh, and delicious baked goods which are made and served by local people to local people.

Four years ago, Simmons Bakers enlisted Sam Axworthy, now Project Manager, as development chef in order to continue to develop its food offering. Sam explains:

*“Simmons Bakers is a unique and modern concept within Hertfordshire. We try to provide something different and don't compare ourselves to other bakeries. Over the last few years we have focussed on developing our 'grab and go' menu largely driven by customers wanting to get a quick breakfast on their way to work, or to buy their lunch in advance.”*

As this 'grab and go' market continued to expand the business required equipment that could cater for each shop's needs. But the equipment at the time was struggling to perform.

*“Initially, we were using two or three panini grills for the majority of our hot food. But they weren't really up to the job. Not only were they slow, but have no control over the cooking functionality so the quality of the finished products we were serving was extremely varied.”*

Keen to eradicate this problem Sam and the team at Simmons Bakers invested in Welbilt's Merrychef concept. After a number of conversations with Welbilt and with a couple of years using a previous Merrychef model, Simmons were offered a field trial of the new Merrychef eikon e2s:

*“When the Merrychef brand manager from Welbilt approached us about trialling their new Merrychef eikon e2s ovens, we jumped at the opportunity. Once we'd tried the e2s we fell in love with it.*



*It's faster and easier to use whilst it is also better aesthetically from a customer facing perspective. Once Welbilt confirmed that they were launching the e2s into the market, was a no brainer for us to upgrade. As such, we now have 23 Merrychef e2s' in total!”*

But it wasn't just the fact the Merrychef eikon e2s has a more pleasing look about it, the fact that it really delivers on speed and of course, quality was extremely important, as Sam highlights:

*“Speed is really important to us. When we were using the old panini presses it was mayhem, but now we have the Merrychef e2s' in place, the whole serving process is incredibly smooth. We are now able to maintain an efficient and fast turnaround every time. Everyone's a winner as customers receive excellent service and the shop can serve more customers per hour!”*

*“Quality has also improved. When we were using a combination of panini grills, a toaster (for teacakes) and a microwave (to heat baked goods), the quality we were achieving wasn't up to standard. For example our toasted tea cakes are really popular, but when we put them into the toaster, the tops would either burn or get stuck, so we ended up wasting a lot of product. Now we're using the Merrychef, this doesn't happen at all.”*

Because the Merrychef eikon e2s is simple to use, any member of staff can operate it daily, as Sam explains:

*“Any member of staff can use the Merrychef e2s, thanks to its ability to have unique pre-programmed menu items uploaded onto it. This means that staff can simply press the menu item button and go.*

*Every menu item has its own dedicated programme, with some also having 'how to' instructions which are displayed on the e2s' user interface. We use this a lot with our filled croissants where the programme will instruct the operator on how to complete the process properly, including removal of the croissant lid prior to the first stage of cooking. Because it's so intuitive, the oven will prompt the operator to 'remove the lid and set aside' to ensure correct cooking procedure is always followed.”*



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Having been part of the project since its first conception, Sam has seen waiting times reduced, quality improve and both customer and staff satisfaction maximised thanks to the introduction of a small, but mighty high-speed oven:

*“As the Merrychef is such a flexible cooking unit it allows us to put many of our popular items through it. We can cook pizzas from fresh, we can heat up sausage rolls, croissants or even crisp up bacon in no time at all. It's made the cooking process far more consistent and eradicated the risk of over cooking or undercooking food. In a nutshell, it gained us consistency, quality and efficiency.”*

The oven itself has certainly proved its worth, but what really struck a chord with Sam was Welbilt's commitment to providing quick support and service:

*“The aftercare has been brilliant - the brand manager visits us regularly and has an interest in not only building but maintaining his relationship with us on a face-to-face level which is so important to both myself and everyone at Simmons Bakers - it's fantastic.”*



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