

# MARKET INSIGHT



TUCO

## Conference and Banqueting

Questions by TUCO magazine, answers by Jon Walker, MD, BGL Rieber



Rieber Catering Kitchen in use outdoors. This modular system uses stainless steel components to securely hold mobile ovens, hot food transport boxes, and other equipment in place during service. Varithek cooking and hot-holding modules, as well as K-Pot chafing dishes, can be integrated into the steel framework, offering a wide range of cooking options including frying, Teppanyaki, boiling, griddling/grilling, and pasta preparation.

### What are the latest trends for banqueting menus?

Two major trends are shaping university banqueting today: interactive food stations and pop up catering concepts. These approaches are increasingly replacing traditional passive buffets, bringing food preparation closer to diners and creating a more engaging experience.

For universities managing busy and varied events calendars, often across multiple buildings or temporary locations, mobile catering equipment offers a highly flexible solution. Whether indoors, outdoors, or in temporary spaces, mobile systems allow caterers to respond quickly to different environments while maintaining presentation and service standards.

### How important is sustainability in conference menus? Should caterers show a meal's carbon footprint?

Sustainability has become a defining priority. Universities are increasingly focused on local and seasonal sourcing to support regional suppliers, reduce food miles, and lower environmental impact.

Catering operations are a visible demonstration of a university's environmental values. While measuring carbon footprints is growing in importance, the strongest message often comes from practical actions, responsible sourcing, energy efficient equipment, and reducing food waste — all of which resonate strongly with students, staff, and visitors.

### What products help ensure a smooth and flexible banqueting operation?

Mobile front cooking equipment plays a key role in modern banqueting. It allows chefs to cook in front of guests, encouraging interaction and enhancing the social atmosphere. For universities that want to enhance existing fixed buffets rather than replace them, **Rieber Varithek** provides a powerful upgrade option.

Uniquely, Varithek can be used almost anywhere thanks to self ventilation and optional fire suppression, eliminating issues with smoke alarms or cooking fumes.

Already in use across multiple UK universities, Varithek units are mounted on heavy duty castors,

Continued overleaf



The Rieber Varithek ACS front cooking station offers induction hobs up to 5kW, an induction wok, single or double griddles for steaks, fish or BBQ, Teppanyaki options, plus fryer and pasta cooker configurations.



Stir fries and pasta are two key ingredients for university events.

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allowing them to be wheeled anywhere on campus and positioned as the centrepiece of an interactive buffet.

For larger or more complex events, **Rieber's Catering Kitchen and Catering Circle** concepts provide complete flexibility. These modular systems can be tailored by chefs to suit any event size and work equally well indoors, outdoors, in marquees or on patios.



30 minutes and can operate up to +100°C.

High quality castors help protect delicate dishes during transport, even over uneven paths, something as simple as 50 metres can affect a plated dessert. Optional quiet, soft castors also ensure discreet movement through corridors. Double wall insulation and optional humidity control deliver energy efficiency and consistently high food quality, with capacities of up

to 180 plates in two door models.

**Why should university caterers upgrade their banqueting equipment?**

University caterers are upgrading because flexibility is no longer optional. Events vary in size, format and location, and modern equipment must adapt quickly without compromising food quality or presentation.

A modular, mobile equipment package from BGL Rieber allows catering teams to scale up or down effortlessly, respond to last minute changes, and deliver engaging, sustainable events across campus, all while protecting long term investment and operational efficiency.



Catering Circle components include prep stations, serving counters, buffets, hot holding boxes, mobile ovens, Varithek cooking stations and electric chafing dishes — all designed to break down easily for transport in a van.

To ensure food quality from kitchen to service point, **Rieber banquet trolleys** are a proven solution used by universities, hotels and professional event caterers alike. Heated and refrigerated models maintain precise temperatures, with cold and frozen applications operating between -12°C and +8°C. Hot holding reaches +80°C in just

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