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SPECIAL REPORT

2008 SUPPLIES COMPETITION Smallwares Go For The Gold

FER's annual Olympics of kitchen tools saw seven food safety-oriented products from four companies earn gold from a field of worthy contenders.

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- For the competition introduction, [click here](#).
- For judge biographies, [click here](#).
- For smallwares winners, [click here](#).
- For smallwares finalists, [click here](#).
- For tabletop/servingware winners, [click here](#).
- For tabletop/servingware finalists, [click here](#).

While athletes were descending on Beijing for the summer games, foodservice equipment manufacturers were submitting some of their newest and most innovative smallwares products to **Foodservice Equipment Reports' 11th Annual Smallwares Competition**. The event took place in August at our headquarters in Skokie, Ill.

In all, the 33 product entries that made the final cut included the latest developments in cookware, utensils, thermometers, scales and more. Of those, seven products, submitted by four manufacturers, emerged as winners.

To pronounce judgment on the most outstanding kitchen tools, we recruited a panel of six experts, three operators and three dealers. Our operator judges included John Ayaleanos, executive chef at Birch River Grill, part of the Doubletree Chicago-Arlington Heights; Gary Mann, Sodexo USA's retail and culinary support director for the Central area; and Pamela Stoner, dining room instructor at Chicago's Kendall College.



Sodexo's Gary Mann works his way down the table of Smallwares entries. In the foreground are submissions from Rubbermaid, Polar Ware and Nemco.

The three national dealer representatives who contributed their expertise included Marty Joyce, The Boelter Cos. Illinois & Michigan, Lincolnwood, Ill.; Nick Kariotakis, The Wasserstrom Co., Columbus, Ohio; and Michael Gold, Edward Don & Co., North Riverside, Ill.

We asked the judges to evaluate each product's innovativeness, its ability to solve a problem, its food or labor safety aspects and its durability.

As we shadowed judges, we found that viewpoints differed somewhat among operators and dealers. "As an operator, I look first at a product's usefulness, how long it'll last and how much it's going to cost," said Sodexo's Mann. And our distributor judges, who are constantly being invited to add new products to their lines, were very aware of how a given product compares in relation to other, similar items.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, products demonstrating convenience and flexibility—in addition to the all-important durability—caught judges' eyes. For example, silicone basting brushes were praised for holding sauce well, and because they're easier to clean than traditional basting brushes. Handles drew attention, including improved grips on knives, cool handles on cookware and anti-microbial handles on dishers and ladles. And a flexible spring whip drew praise for its product's durability and innovativeness.

Eligible smallwares consist of handheld, nonelectric kitchen tools created for commercial foodservice. This covers cookware and food prep items, cleaning devices, food safety items and so on. The products had to be new to the

market as of the May 2007 National Restaurant Association Show, and all had been prejudged by editors to eliminate those that didn't meet the criteria.

In the end, judges zeroed in on seven winning tools that collectively provide more efficient weighing, temperature taking, ice handling and food storage. Read on for full details of the winners, in alpha order by company.

And when you're finished reading about the winners, go out our Web site at www.fermag.com/2008smallwares for full writeups of the 26 finalist entries in this year's competition.

And The Winners Are...

The *Edlund Co.* fielded two winners this year: the **DOU-2 Dishwasher Safe Scale** and the **Poseidon WSC-10** heavy-duty digital portion scale.

First, the DOU-2 scale is so waterproof that you can run it through the dishwasher with no need to remove parts, says Edlund. The scale is built of stainless steel and high temperature-proof materials. It has a capacity of 32 oz., and offers a rotating dial and an over/under weighing feature.

www.edlundco.com



prevent corrosion and allows

Edlund's Poseidon WSC-10 digital portion scale scored points for being waterproof and self-calibrating. The Poseidon's stainless steel dual-housing construction helps you to submerge the unit in water for easy cleaning. The WSC-10 is also self-calibrating; all you do is flip it over and wait for the indicator light. Its "scale within a scale" design helps protect internal components against damage due to accidental shock. With six display options and adjustable feet, the WSC-10 can be customized as needed.



www.edlundco.com



safe, easy ice transfer, plus a pour without touching the bottom

Rubbermaid was our second double winner, impressing judges with recently redesigned ice-handling tools. The first star is the **Ice Tote**, which features an angled top surface and pouring spout to reduce spills and provide better pouring control. The tote holds 5.5 gals. (25 lbs.) of ice. Nifty features include the ergonomic handle that permits handy grip near the base that lets you lift and of the tote. A built-in hook lets you store the tote upside down, while the Ice Bin Adapter lets you hang it on standard or high-capacity ice machines. The tote is sized to fit commercial dishwashers.



www.RubbermaidFoodservice.com

Rubbermaid's second ice-handling winner was the **Scovel Two-Handled Shovel**. This generously sized ice tool combines the easy handling of traditional ice scoops with the capacity of a shovel—hence the name. Judges appreciated the dual handles and hand shields that reduce ice contamination while protecting employees from injury. High side walls help contain the ice during transfer to reduce spills. Since the Scovel holds about 7½ lbs. of ice., loading goes much faster than with standard scoops.

www.RubbermaidFoodservice.com

Moving down the line, judges admired *San Jamar's* recently debuted **SafetyWrap Station** for the way it combines the safe dispensing of film and foil with an integrated dating label dispenser. "This one-stop station saves time," noted one judge. Its features include a writing surface so you can fill out multiple labels at a time, built-in storage compartments for pens, side handles for easy carrying, replaceable safety blades and adjustable adaptors that accommodate 12" - to 18" -wide rolls. Suction cups hold the station securely on the tabletop, but you can also mount it on wire shelving or the wall.

www.sanjamar.com

Our final dual-winner was thermometer supplier *Taylor Precision Products*. The first winning entry, the **Temp-Taker HACCP Food Safety Solution**, is a comprehensive system that links to your computer to automatically log and record temperature data. You can use Temp-Taker to automate plan. The unit can also track the

cooking, cooling or being reheated. If a temperature is too high or too low, the unit offers "Action Steps" that help workers get the temperatures back into the safe zone. The data downloads to your computer into a secure database, and you can print or e-mail HACCP food safety reports and graphs.

www.taylorusa.com

Taylor's second winner was the **Quick Tip Digital Thermometer**. This speedy device gives accurate temperature readings in 5 secs. or less—about four times faster than traditional digital models, the company says. You can measure a broad temperature range (-40°F to 450°F) and retain the maximum temperature in memory. Since it's also waterproof, you can run it through the dishwasher to make sure your wash water is hot enough. To calibrate, simply run the self-set feature by immersing the tip for 30 secs. in slushy ice water, then pushing the self-calibration button.

www.taylorusa.com



all areas of your HACCP menu temperatures of product that's

