



THE KITCHEN THAT PAYS ITS WAY

How can you create a more efficient restaurant operation with cheaper kitchen running costs when energy bills are going through the roof? One solution is to convert waste heat from prime cooking equipment into a universal hot water supply. And that's exactly what the Living Ventures Group is doing at one of its newest sites in Glasgow. FEJ reveals the secret to a leaner, greener kitchen.

T

he Alchemist, Manchester House, Gusto, Australasia, Blackhouse... Living Ventures Group is

quite rightly the proud operator of some of the most exciting brands in the UK restaurants and bar market.

In fact, it now operates around 35 restaurants thanks to a spate of new openings that includes The Trading House in the heart of Glasgow. Like its sister restaurant in London, the concept is inspired by the East India Trading Company – and this is reflected in



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both the decor and traditional wood panelling, as well as the menu. Diners can expect deli, rotisserie and BBQ style food alongside an impressive drinks list including spiced-twist cocktails and a worldwide selection of gin and tonic, craft beer, ale and cider. The restaurant

serves up to 120 covers during its opening hours of 12pm to 12am and there is live music every night. But it's what the restaurant has done with its theatre-style kitchen and preparation



“LIVING VENTURES WILL SEE THE RETURN ON ITS INVESTMENT IN LESS THAN A YEAR WITH CONSIDERABLE CARBON SAVINGS”

kitchen that will impress advocates of a sustainable approach to foodservice. In a bid to increase efficiency and lower emissions, the chain has installed a system that takes wasted heat from the kitchen to create a hot water supply for the whole bar and restaurant.

The ‘Kitchen Energy Recovery System (KERS)’, which is designed and installed by Ecovery Innovations, the Buckinghamshire-based company that develops energy-saving and efficiency-driving products and services for the hospitality industry, collects wasted heat from the cookline and ensures that it is put to use elsewhere. The extracted heat warms the water in two

KITCHEN EQUIPMENT PRACTICES THE INSPIRATION FOR BUSINESS

Ecovery Innovations was launched four years ago to provide energy-saving products and services that lower carbon emissions and operating costs for the foodservice and hospitality industry.

Inspiration for the business came to founder Eric Phillips midway through his 30-year career designing and installing commercial kitchens. “Whilst the industry



has made progress in reducing carbon emissions, I could see that certain equipment may never become efficient because of the requirements

that operators put on them,” he explains. “So I set out to find ways of utilising the energy discarded by these appliances.”

Phillips claims to have seen a “huge spike” in the appetite for energy reduction products and solutions in commercial kitchens over the past few years, with concern for the environment as well as the bottom line at the forefront of every responsible operator’s mind.

In addition to KERS, Ecovery has developed products such as Controlled Ozone Systems and Grease Control Units, which also reduce emissions and utility bills. Phillips says the firm uses a proven matrix to show the potential emission savings and ROI for each individual project.

300-litre thermal cylinders from mains temperature to 75°C. This creates a hot water supply which is sufficient for the kitchen, the bar and the toilet

hand basins, eliminating traditional utility costs. At The Trading House, the KERS also heats the incoming air to the kitchens and feeds the dishwasher,



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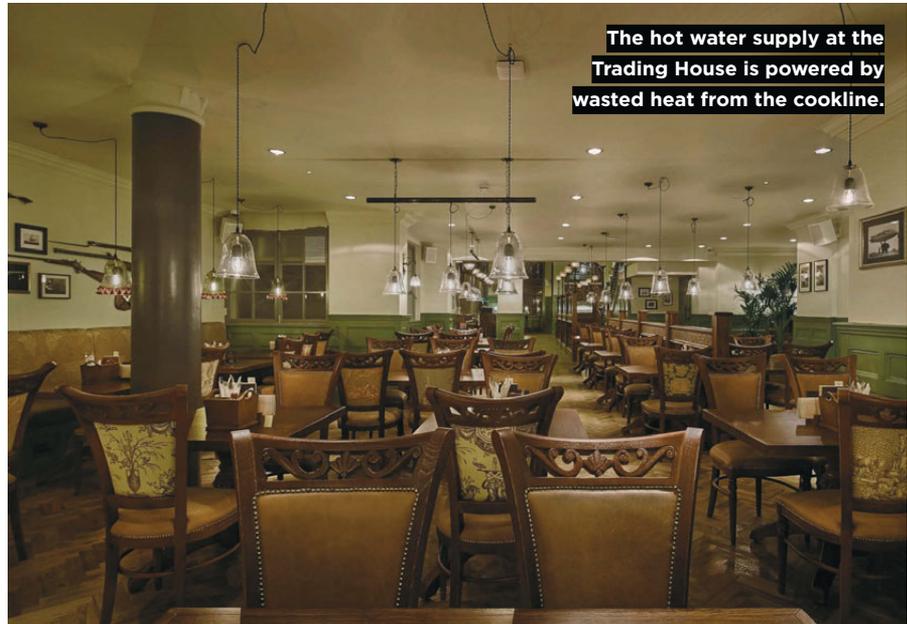
LIVING VENTURES CLIMBS HIGH

Restaurant and bar operator Living Ventures has high hopes for 2016 following a reorganisation that has seen co-founders Tim Bacon and Jeremy Roberts take up new roles within the business.

The company, which is now in its 17th year, announced recently that Bacon will become executive chairman of the group, while Roberts has taken on the group chief executive's mantle. He previously served as commercial director of the business.

Paul Moran, who is managing director of the Living Ventures Group brands, remains in his post and continues to hold the same title. Bacon told local press that from a leadership perspective nothing was likely to change, however he expects the restructuring to provide him with more time to develop the business as work that currently falls under his remit can be delegated to Roberts and Moran. Living Ventures employs more than 2,500 people and is understood to be on track to top the £100m turnover mark in its current financial year.

which has now been converted to a hot feed machine, representing an energy saving of 7.3 kW. In other restaurants, KERS has also been used to deploy heat for under-floor heating, radiators and heating troughs. While it can take years



The hot water supply at the Trading House is powered by wasted heat from the cookline.

for some energy efficiency solutions to repay their cost, Ecovery Innovations' chief executive, Eric Phillips, insists that's certainly not the case with the KERS. "The Trading House will see the return on its investment in less than a year with considerable carbon emissions savings," promises Phillips.

According to John Branagan, chef director at Living Ventures, reducing emissions and increasing energy efficiency is a huge priority for the chain. The set-up at The Trading House builds on a two-year relationship it has with Ecovery to reduce energy consumption in its kitchens. Areas such as cooking

odour and grease control have been a particular focus for the business.

The volumes of cooked-to-order meals served at The Trading House means the kitchen appliances are required to have fast recovery times and therefore tend to use high levels of energy. "Ignoring the solutions available to manage and utilise wasted heat was simply not an option," admits Branagan. "Investing in a KERS was the next logical step for us to reduce our carbon emissions and utility bills. The effect is remarkable and evident almost immediately after installation," he comments.

One of the advantages of the system is that it can be retro-fitted to any cookline without disrupting the operation of the equipment or the extraction systems. Says Phillips: "The Trading House is a new-build with no boilers installed, but KERS can be easily installed in existing kitchens with the same results," he says.

With firsthand evidence of how effective the system can be and the sort of financial savings it can offer, it is no surprise that Living Ventures is talking to Ecovery Innovations about rolling out Kitchen Energy Recovery Systems across other restaurants in its estate.

The kitchen, it seems, is going from being one of the chain's biggest energy guzzlers to one of its main generators. **FEI**



Investing in a kitchen heat recovery system has reduced utility bills for the Living Ventures Group.