

## They Take Their Own Kitchen To Catering Jobs

Red Barn Catering takes care of events with a 53-ft. gooseneck trailer that's filled with stainless steel counters, a double-door refrigerator, a freezer, double convection ovens, and sinks. Three slick slide-outs add high value workspace to the trim, 8-ft. transit width. Water tanks and waste tanks hide in the belly of the trailer. A 20 kW diesel generator provides power.

"We do wedding receptions, anniversaries, seed corn field days and farm appreciation events," says Dan Batdorf, who farms when he's not catering. "The end of August and early September, we did 8 separate events and fed more than 1,900 people. A local seed company brings in its customers, and we serve more than 500 people for them alone."

With most of the food they serve prepared on-site, having a semi trailer-sized kitchen is vital. However, neither the business nor the trailer happened overnight.

"We started out helping out with a pork producers stand at a local fair," recalls Batdorf. "We ended up taking it over for them, and things built from there."

Batdorf's wife Tawni had gone to school for food service, so running a catering business was a natural step. For the first 8 or 9 years, they used a 24-ft. trailer as their mobile kitchen. As the business grew, they knew they needed something bigger.

"The trailer had been used as a mobile

restaurant at a golf course, with the front half filled with 5 booths, a kitchen in the back half, and a bar in the center," says Batdorf. "We took out the booths and bar, recovered the walls and put in a new floor."

They got the state health department on board from the beginning.

"They were pretty good to work with and have even recommended us," says Batdorf. "They have strict rules that may not make sense, but you need to go along with them."

Deciding where to put things was the biggest challenge, followed by getting them there. In the case of double convection ovens, that meant taking them apart and bringing them in on edge and then putting them back together. The refrigerator also had to be brought in on its side.

"I did most of the work myself with some help from a neighbor who does welding," says Batdorf. "He fabricated the stainless steel counters and such."

By the time the trailer was finished, Batdorf estimates he had put \$50,000 in it. The investment made it possible to handle the growing business and necessary workers.

The trailer has air conditioning and room to work.

"The old trailer had room for 2 or 3 people," recalls Batdorf. "We can have a dozen workers in this one."

The 3 1/2-ft. slide-outs are key to work space. When in transit or between jobs, there



Red Barn Catering filled this 53-ft. gooseneck trailer with a big kitchen that's used for wedding receptions, anniversaries, and farm appreciation events. It has stainless steel counters, a double-door refrigerator, a freezer, double convection ovens, and sinks. A 20 kW diesel generator provides power.

are only 8 in. between them. Set up on site, the additional 7 ft. of workspace is priceless.

"We can have 15 people helping at an event if it is a big enough group," says Batdorf. "Tawni does all the planning and scheduling. My job is to get the trailer there, supply the water and power and cook the

meat. The crews are friends from church and elsewhere."

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## Heirloom Barley Back In Breweries

Long after other producers stopped growing it and malting companies stopped buying it, a famed malting barley is once again being malted, thanks to Bill Kozak. Once in big demand as a superior malting variety, Ollie couldn't compete with higher yielding varieties with stiffer straw that were introduced in the 1950's and 60's. When some producers sold blends of Ollie and new varieties claiming they were all Ollie, malting companies stopped buying it.

"The higher yielding varieties, which we also plant, take longer to mature, raising risk of frosts and bad weather at harvest," notes Kozak's wife Anne. "Ollie only produces 40 to 45 bushels per acre, compared to 130 with modern varieties."

Kozak says the low yields are part of a tradeoff he was willing to make. "We kept growing it for feed because it is such an early maturing variety," he explains. "It lets us spread our workload around because we can start combining it in mid July."

Kozak turned the farm over to his son Ken about 3 years ago. The family farm is 380 miles northwest of Edmonton, Alberta, making an early barley as valuable to his son as it was to him and his dad before him.

"We've planted it as late as June 20th and still harvested a crop. However, you can't combine it straight as the stalks are too weak," says Kozak. "It is easy to thresh out as it will shatter with a good wind."

Ollie was developed in Finland and brought to Canada in 1932 and registered in 1935. About that time, Kozak's dad started raising it. The family never stopped, even when the last certified seed was produced in 1973.

"We bought up all the seed we could at the time and still have some," explains Kozak. "Every few years I plant some



Bill Kozak says heirloom Ollie barley yields less than some other varieties, but he keeps growing it because it's such an early maturing variety.

of the original as foundation-like seed and replant from it. Unfortunately, as it gets older, the germination is falling off."

In hope of finding a malting market for their crop and rekindling the interest of other growers, Kozak contacted Canada Malting. Last summer they announced Alberta Heritage Select Barley malt, which is Kozak's Ollie. It is being used by 4 Alberta craft breweries for commemorative beers and by one distillery for vodka. It has also been used for a limited edition whiskey, but that has to age before it can be brought to market. The beers and vodka are being sold now.

"Ollie germinates within 3 days, which is why maltsters like it," says Kozak. "They can start drying it down on day 4. It also has a blue cast that indicates enzymes and sugars that make better malt."

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Brinsea is well known for its complete line of incubating and hatching equipment. Their Mini Incubator (left) holds 7 chicken eggs and is one of the company's biggest sellers.

## Where To Buy Do-It-Yourself Incubators

Frustrated with incubators on the market, engineer Frank Pearce came up with his own design for a do-it-yourself incubator in 1976 in England. Now run by Frank's son, Ian, Brinsea is well known for its complete line of incubating and hatching equipment. Their U.S. headquarters is in Titusville, Fla.

Brinsea focuses on customers with small operations with incubator capacities that range from 7 to 580 eggs.

"We provide quality at a reasonable price," says Pascale Deffieux Pearce, Frank's wife who's vice president of the company. "We are striving for something that offers stable temperature - that is key. And also automatic turning, proper humidity, and units that are easy to clean and that will last many years."

With growing interest from backyard hobbyists, the Mini Incubator, which holds seven chicken eggs, is one of the company's biggest sellers. Last year Brinsea added a slightly large Maxi version that holds 14 eggs.

The family-owned company prides itself in being incubation specialists and helping inexperienced and experienced growers have success hatching all types of eggs. Their

products are energy efficient and durable, made of quality stainless steel and molded plastics that incorporate antibacterial agents.

"The electronics are the new developments in recent years. Prices have come down so we offer nicer features like digital displays and controls to make them more user-friendly," Deffieux Pearce says. "Last year we launched 12 models, four new sizes each, with three different levels of sophistication."

Customers like the clear models that allow them to see the eggs. Schools, conservationists and zoos are some of Brinsea's biggest customers for table model incubators. Also, smaller hatcheries that breed rare and heritage birds purchase the larger cabinet incubators.

The company's products include everything needed to take the egg from hatching to about a month old, such as egg candlers and brooders.

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