

Why are ranges still popular?

I was asked for my thoughts recently on whether the traditional 6 burner oven range has had its day.

It was an easy question to answer because despite the economic downturn we're still selling many more traditional cooking ranges than we did a decade ago and the proportion of ranges sold, relative to other items of equipment, has also grown.

So, far from having had its day in busy kitchens, we believe the range is more popular than ever. Here are some thoughts as to why...

1. Tradition – generations of chefs have learned (and continue to be taught) to cook using traditional ranges.

2. Flexibility – a range allows you to roast, bake, boil, poach and pan fry - all at the same time.

3. Cost-effective – the market for six burners is both competitive and price sensitive. This means that you can often find an exceptionally good deal. Some manufacturers price their six burners lower than their four burner models!

4. The close proximity of the oven to the hob is very useful, for example, when sautéing a dish and then finishing it in the oven. There's no need to carry the pan across the kitchen to a separate combi or convection oven.

5. Many traditional chefs have learned to use the variation in temperature in different parts of a traditional gas range's oven for a variety of uses at the same time – e.g. holding dishes in the cooler lower section whilst continuing to roast in the hotter top part. Try doing that in a combi!

6. A separate oven range can be pulled out for cleaning – popular with many over fixed installations. All Lincat six burners, incidentally, can be supplied on castors at no extra cost.

7. Oven ranges tend to be part of modular equipment ranges which allow individual items to be changed when menu demands change. Whilst the six burner is likely to remain required, you may want to change, say, a griddle for a pasta boiler.

8. Electric models have become much more popular in recent years, probably due to the cost savings available by not needing to install interlocked extraction systems.

Just one last observation – some operators find that they do not actually use the hob top of their 6-burner range, but need plenty of oven space. That's why we introduced the single LMO9 and the two-tier LMD9 general purpose ovens. Based on our best selling LMR9 six burner range, they are designed to appeal to larger kitchens, especially those in the public sector. With powerful 8 kW ovens and sturdy construction, they offer quality and superb value for money.

