



Three Middleby Brands Chosen as 2026 Kitchen Innovation Award Recipients

April 22, 2026 – (Elgin, Ill.) – Three Middleby brand innovations have been selected as 2026 Kitchen Innovation (KI) Award recipients. The honorees are chosen by a judging panel recognizing foodservice equipment and technology designed to support day-to-day foodservice execution through smarter automation, sustainability, and operational resilience.

The Middleby solutions from Imperial, Marco and Southbend will be on display in the KI Pavilion at the National Restaurant Association Show, to be held May 16-19 at McCormick Place in Chicago.

“At Middleby, we are customer focused and driven to deliver innovative solutions that address the latest trends and operational challenges,” said James K. Pool III, Middleby Chief Operations and Technology Officer. “Due to the rigorous judging process, our advancement that receive the prestigious KI Award gain instant credibility in the marketplace with our customers and industry partners. As we have proven time and again, Middleby consistently delivers the next generation of solutions for commercial foodservice operators.”

The KI Awards program is judged by a panel of respected third-party experts across different areas of foodservice representing some of the industry’s best-known brands and organizations.

The Middleby Kitchen Innovation Award winners are:

- **Imperial MFG Pro Series Electric Wafer Plate Range:** This electric flat-top range provides heavy duty, high-performance equipment delivering full versatility. Wafer-style heating elements deliver rapid startup and recovery, reaching up to 650°F to cook food up to 50% faster than traditional burners. Large, 12" x 12" solid steel plates maximize pan contact and accommodate multiple pots simultaneously, while sealed elements protect against spills. Thermostatic controls prevent overheating, ensuring durability and safety. With powerful 3.75 kW elements, the range provides heavy-duty performance with precise, consistent results.
- **Marco Beverage Systems SYPP:** Operators craving freedom and creativity will be looking at this compact, flexible beverage dispenser. It can produce cold and sparkling beverages in up to eight flavors available as bag-in-box, bottles, or jugs. This solution is compact, sleek, and sophisticated sharing the modular design of Marco’s other undercounter hot, cold, and sparkling water systems.
- **Southbend Steam Shell Griddle:** This new griddle technology combines high-heat searing with integrated steam to deliver faster, more consistent cooking. An 8-inch vertically traveling, counterbalanced platen automatically accommodates products of varying thickness without manual adjustment. Steam Shell’s perimeter sealing gasket traps moisture while allowing controlled venting, accelerating cook times and improving yields. Operators have reported up to 50% faster cooking and 20% higher yields.

See the Middleby KI Award honorees in the KI Pavilion located in the South Building of McCormick Place in booths 3999, 4098 and 4099. Also see the award recipients and all Middleby technology at the front of the South Hall in Middleby Booth 4200. Visit the Middleby KI website [here](#).