



ENCORE  
CATERING & BANQUET CENTER

# Encore Catering.

Dynamic catering in Motor City.



# RATIONAL iCombi Pro Scales Scales Up Operations, and Consistently Delivers Great-tasting Food Using Intelligent Programming.



## About Encore Catering

Encore Catering & Banquet Center in St. Clair Shores, Michigan offers distinctive weddings, private events, corporate events, memorial luncheons, showers, birthday parties and more. Encore also has a mobile kitchen for on-site catering. Led by Chef Bobby Nahra, Encore aims to make every event a unique and memorable experience with gourmet dishes and customize menus. Using intelligent programming of Encore's recipes, their team has been able to scale up their operation and add new menu items while maintaining quality.

## Encore Catering & Banquet Center

St. Clair Shores, Michigan, USA

### Goal

- › Prepare high quality food that maintains the highest degree of consistency and deliciousness across events

### Approach

- › Install RATIONAL combi-steamer banquet center kitchen
- › Adapt established recipes
- › Preprogram commonly used recipes for consistency

### Equipment

- › 1x RATIONAL iCombi Pro 10-full size

### Results

- › Outstanding consistency
- › Quantifiable back-of-house labor savings
- › Reduced training with new employees
- › Higher quantity production capacities

# Investing in new equipment amid a global pandemic.

Chef Bobby Nahra has been in a kitchen his whole life. From an early age, he learned from his mother the ins and outs of the banquet world as he helped wash potatoes. And while the ins and outs of the industry are fundamental to Encore's business, the heartbeat that has made Encore successful can easily be identified when speaking to Chef Bobby.

His passion and commitment come down to an important lesson his mother taught him - as a banquet owner and caterer you're in charge of someone's special moment. The trust that comes from that dynamic is something Chef Bobby takes incredibly seriously, whether that is catering a wedding or providing ready to eat meals to Detroit's local athletes - he strives for excellence.

While restaurants were closing their dining rooms and events like weddings were being postponed, Chef Bobby was looking to update his equipment. Investing in a new RATIONAL iCombi Pro in the middle of a global pandemic is not what his wife who has a background in finance recommended.

But Chef Bobby knew that they were struggling to keep up with demand pre-pandemic. He knew that as soon as things started to open back up, if Encore was to continue to grow, they would need to rely on their new equipment to be efficient and provide savings in the kitchen - be that materials or labor savings.



## Answering the call and helping front line workers.

“At first, I was a little nervous because it seemed like a hefty price tag. But once I realized that it's self-cleaning, that it did all these tasks for me, that I could throw the product in there and I could trust that it would be perfect, I knew I was not wasting money. So, on the front end, you get a little sticker shock, but I'm telling you that it's money well-spent.” he said.

Looking back, he says it was one of the best decisions he has made – for a few reasons.

When a local hospital called Encore looking for 2000 meals for frontline workers and hospital patients, Chef Bobby and his team were able to jump in action. Steaming thousands of pounds of tortellini and vegetables was easy with his recently purchased iCombi Pro 10-Full. Their new piece of equipment became an integral part of the team at Encore, assisting in growing that otherwise wouldn't have been possible.



“Making this update was key for us because our business really took off. And I noticed that we couldn't keep up with the volume we were doing.”

Chef Bobby Nahra, Owner and Chef of Encore Catering

# Maintaining quality and consistency.

Encore has saved money and time with their iCombi Pro while also establishing consistency in their offerings. In any given day, Chef Bobby and his team are working with a variety of menus. They can be working on 7 to 20 events in a single day with their three locations.

The staff at Encore has complete confidence in their ability to produce large quantities of high-quality food – including the smoked ribs Chef Bobby has on the menu at his lakeside restaurant, Port O'Call.

Chef Bobby and his team will tell you that traditional smokers aren't as consistent, forgiving, or as precise as the iVario Smoker. And his team loves that the smoker is easily programmable.

“You can monitor it and it consistently adds smoke to whatever you might be smoking that day. It takes all the guessing work out of it. I've never been able to keep our smoked chicken wings as juicy and tender as they are now with the Vario Smoker,” says Chef Bobby.

With their iCombi Pro, the team at Encore has been able to take their most popular wedding duet plate option – airline chicken breast and Wagyu short ribs – and create a program in their iCombi Pro that makes the items perfect every time. Chef Bobby says it really makes it bulletproof.

Adapting Encore's recipes to their new equipment was easy, too! The team was able to work with a RATIONAL Chef that showed them how to adapt their recipes to the combi. For new items that they are adding to their offerings menu, the team at Encore knows they can call the ChefLine®.

“Once we've trained somebody in a simple training process, it makes the process of making that entrée for thousands of people or 500 people consistent. It's the same every single time.”

Chef Bobby Nahra, Owner and Chef of Encore Catering



# A new team member in the kitchen.

If you ask Chef Bobby, he will tell you that his iCombi Pro is his sports car of an oven that does everything he could have dreamed of doing! It allows his team to deliver consistent results and has allowed them to expand their menus without compromising quality.

Before having a RATIONAL combi oven, Encore wasn't offering their Asian Glazed Sea Bass for weddings. "We didn't have equipment that could handle Asian sea bass entrees for 600 to 700 people." Now, the team uses the combi to pan sear the bass as well as to steam the black fried rice and bok choy that accompany one of Chef Bobby's favorite dishes.

If you ask the team at Encore what they love most about their iCombi Pro, hands down it's that their new oven is self-cleaning. They use the interim cleaning function often, especially when cooking starchy, dense products like ravioli or potatoes. And while Chef Bobby loves that he doesn't have to pay someone to clean it, too, he also loves the creativity and excitement that comes from having a RATIONAL unit in his kitchen.

"All of us were excited to cook with it. And we still are. Every time we get a new item that we haven't prepared in the iCombi Pro, it's exciting. We made poached eggs in it the other day just because we wanted to try the poached egg setting. It was amazing," he added.

The result? Maximum consistency, minimal waste!  
And Chef Bobby now plans to purchase iCombi Pro combi ovens for his other establishments.





**RATIONAL USA**

1701 Golf Road  
Suite C-120, Commercium  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

Tel. 888-320-7274 (Toll Free)  
Fax 847-755-9583

[info@rational-online.us](mailto:info@rational-online.us)  
[rationalusa.com](http://rationalusa.com)