

## Organic Krush.

Cooking intelligence enables  
smart growth.



# RATIONAL iCombi Pro Scales Down the Kitchen, Scales Up Operations, and Consistently Delivers Great-tasting Food Using ConnectedCooking Technology.

Organic Krush, a fast-casual restaurant with eight locations in New York, Connecticut and Virginia, digitally manages kitchen operations using ConnectedCooking to upload, store and share its RATIONAL cooking processes to combi ovens at each store. Using the MyDisplay function in ConnectedCooking, the team designed custom touch screen configurations for their combis that show only the settings they use, and uploaded photos of the finished product to make it really easy for staff to flawlessly prepare food items. When opening a new store or adding or changing recipes, team members can download recipes and cooking programs to every connected RATIONAL in the network and immediately start cooking.



## About Organic Krush

With eight Lifestyle Eatery stores in Long Island, the Hamptons, Connecticut and Virginia, Organic Krush serves delicious organic food and cold-pressed juices that are free of pesticides, GMOs, hormones and artificial ingredients. Everything is certified organic, and health-conscious diners can select from an extensive menu of items that are pre-made or prepared to order, dine in or take out, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The newest locations include a smaller footprint eatery on the campus of the University of Richmond, and a fine dining concept, La Fin Kitchen & Lounge, in Montauk, New York. Two additional Organic Krush locations are opening soon.

**Organic Krush, LLC**  
Plainview, New York

## Goal

- › Prepare fresh organic food made to order that maintains the highest degree of consistency and deliciousness across multiple locations

## Approach

- › Install RATIONAL combi-steamer in central commissary
- › Install RATIONAL combi-steamers in service kitchens
- › Streamline workflow and replace single-function equipment
- › Use ConnectedCooking for recipe storage and management
- › Use MyDisplay to custom design touch screen

## Equipment

- › 3 × RATIONAL iCombi Pro® 6-half size
- › 2 × RATIONAL SelfCookingCenter® 202
- › 6 × RATIONAL SelfCookingCenter® 62 G
- › 1 × RATIONAL SelfCookingCenter® 61

## Results

- › Outstanding consistency across the chain
- › Quantifiable back-of-house labor savings
- › Reduced training time at new store openings
- › Faster store openings with recipes pushed to each RATIONAL
- › Smaller kitchen footprint saves space and real estate costs

Cover image: Grilled chicken with vegetables.



# The Freshest, Tastiest Organic Food, Customized for Each Customer.

Organic Krush President and Chief Operating Officer Alex Berentzen and Executive Chef Alejandro Duarte both immigrated to America and worked their way up through the ranks in the industry. Today they use their leadership roles at Organic Krush to help make it easier to find great food that is healthful, nutritious, organic and delicious.

"Our heart and passion is about the food," Berentzen said. "What is special about us is that we customize our food for the customer. We do what they want. We always say yes to the customer."

Organic Krush currently has eight store locations, one restaurant and two commissaries, one in New York and one in Virginia, where they do food prep and the cooking for catering and special events. In all, they serve about 1,800 to 2,000 meals daily. They have approximately 140 employees, with a lean corporate team of just six.

The commissaries provide the stores with about 80% of their food supply, which is delivered fresh daily so that each location is ready to turn around orders quickly, efficiently and with less staff.

At the center of each commissary is a RATIONAL combi oven floor model. Six of the Lifestyle Eatery locations have a RATIONAL SelfCookingCenter® 62G, and in November 2020, they bought their first iCombi® Pro for a new location in Westport, Connecticut. All new store plans include a RATIONAL iCombi Pro in the kitchen.

“It’s changed how we cook and how we prep; it’s now part of our team. When we open a new restaurant, the RATIONAL combi oven will be there. It has become part of our recipes.”

Organic Krush Executive Chef  
Alejandro Duarte with company co-founders  
Fran Paniccia and Michelle Walrath.



# An Environmentally Friendly Restaurant Powered by RATIONAL.



The Organic Krush menu is wide-ranging with specials like cauliflower pizza, sweet potato tacos, lemon ginger chicken, grilled shrimp, steak fajitas, as well as a breakfast egg wrap and huevos rancheros for breakfast. Before RATIONAL, the kitchen environment was a challenge. Loaded with single-function equipment, it included a grill, griddles, broiler, convection oven, and pots and pans for steaming and sautéing.

Organic Krush made the decision to buy their first RATIONAL in 2018 after co-founder Michelle Walrath and Chef Duarte attended a RATIONAL CookingLive demonstration at Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Tarrytown, New York. During the event, Marc Fugaro, RATIONAL Senior Regional Sales Manager and Executive Chef, demonstrated features of the RATIONAL cooking system designed to support the hub-and-spoke operation model Organic Krush planned to implement.

Once the first combi was installed, RATIONAL Corporate Chef Daniel Lessem worked alongside Chef Duarte, helping him to adapt ConnectedCooking to obtain optimal results. While the team at Organic Krush continued to work with Chef Lessem, much of their learning was self-taught. They watched YouTube videos, delved into the technology, and through trial-and-error mastered cooking in a RATIONAL combi-steamer.

"After six months of using our new RATIONAL, we encountered a new problem: what were we going to do with all the equipment we don't use any more?" Duarte said. "We had a large room in our first store location filled with grills and empty pots and equipment we weren't using. We have a RATIONAL now, and we just don't need this stuff anymore."



**"RATIONAL combi ovens simplify your footprint and allow you to scale if you want to grow as a company."**

Alex Berentzen,  
Organic Krush president and COO

# Consistency and Simplicity are Key.

This fast-growing chain makes certain it delivers the same dining experience at every location. “People go back to restaurants for consistency, and that has really been the key for us. RATIONAL provides us with the ability to give our guests consistent food,” Berentzen said.

The RATIONAL also plays a big role in helping them more readily scale. Opening a new store used to require extensive training; now it’s much easier.

“I take my laptop and download the recipes to the combi oven, and we can start cooking in five minutes,” Duarte said. “You see the screen with a picture of broccoli, and you press it to make broccoli.”

According to Berentzen, this is very important because “Organic Krush customers are tremendously loyal and if they go to one store by their home and another store by their work for the same meal, it has to be consistent.” He noted that RATIONAL has helped us scale down our kitchen and operations and has supported us in delivering consistently great tasting food.”



## Small Batches, More Often.

Organic Krush follows a “small batches, more often” model, an approach that ensures the food’s distinctively fresh and crunchy taste and texture.

Small batches more often in the RATIONAL let them cook à la minute, so that everything is fresh and food waste is minimized. “Almost 85% of our food is cooked or prepped in the combi,” Duarte said. “We sauté certain items at the store, but they are prepped at the commissary.”

At the commissary, the RATIONAL roasts fresh organic chickens, bakes layered eggplant and vegetable lasagna, and makes fresh lentil soup and corn chowder. At the stores, they use the RATIONAL throughout the day for batch roasting fresh vegetables, grilling steaks and finishing.



“We are able to cook 60-70 chickens in the RATIONAL combi oven floor model and the color, as well as the temperature, is the same for every single one. We trust in the equipment as it is easier and faster. We can now cook chickens in 26 minutes versus three hours in a rotisserie oven.”

Alejandro Duarte, Executive Chef, Organic Krush



# Advanced Menu Management with ConnectedCooking.

Executive Chef Alejandro Duarte is an early adopter of RATIONAL's online ConnectedCooking portal. He uses the recipe management system to store recipes and cooking programs in one cloud-based library, and then sends them to the connected RATIONAL ovens at each location. ConnectedCooking lets him make changes to recipes remotely from his laptop, then push the updates to every oven.

When they open a new location, their personalized cooking settings are ready to be downloaded to the RATIONAL. It all represents a tremendous improvement from the past, when Duarte would travel to each site to roll out menu changes, or mail USB memory sticks to his store managers.

Organic Krush was one of the first RATIONAL customers to use the MyDisplay function in ConnectedCooking to customize the touch screen, giving team members a more streamlined interface that displays only Organic Krush cooking processes. They even included photos of their beautiful finished creations on the screen to make it simple and intuitive to use.

The result? Maximum consistency, minimal waste!



“ConnectedCooking helps with scalability when opening stores and makes it super simple when updating recipes. I don't have to get in my car or fly to another location to do this. All I have to do is go to my computer.”

Alejandro Duarte, Executive Chef,  
Organic Krush



# An Organic Mission Toward Health and Happiness.

RATIONAL equipment improves operations at Organic Krush on several levels: it brings about qualifiable back-of-the-house labor savings, reduces the kitchen footprint and consumes less utilities. It enables process improvements, streamlines the workflow and makes it easier to scale. It prevents food from burning, so there's a positive impact on spoilage.

"Less equipment means less kitchen space, and less money to open a store. It also means less training. We're seeing same store, double digit year over year growth now," Berentzen said.

Beyond the new store equipment cost savings, "RATIONAL plays a vital role when we open a new store and train new staff," Duarte said. "Before, we would have to train, train and train. But now, it is so easy because all staff members have to do is push a button on the screen we designed with MyDisplay."



## Driving New Concepts in a Post-pandemic World.

During the pandemic, the team at Organic Krush explored new concepts to drive sales. They had a wildly successful Thanksgiving catering offering, and established partnerships where they sold Organic Krush products in refrigerators in grocery stores. They introduced a three-day home meal plan program that provides breakfast, lunch and dinners designed by Duarte and a nutritionist, and they offer catered backyard and beach parties. They provided fresh juice cleanses for a Zoom yoga retreat. They also donated countless meals to hospital and healthcare workers throughout the pandemic. Their RATIONAL foodservice equipment enabled them to flexibly adjust their production to offer customers and healthcare heroes healthy food options.

“We can download the recipes to the combi oven, and we can start cooking immediately. And that is a beautiful and great benefit.”

Alejandro Duarte,  
Executive Chef, Organic Krush





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