

Vanguard Gas Booster Heater + Champion Dish Machine Save Energy, Cut Water Use and Bolster Dishroom Efficiency At Philadelphia Country Club

Twenty years of hospitality industry experience at some of the finest restaurants and resort hotels have taught Philadelphia Country Club's Executive Chef Nathan Wakefield to "stay cool under pressure, always lead by example and approach every day and every task with a positive, can-do attitude." It's that dedication that drives him to consistently meet and exceed the 1200 Club Members' and their families' expectations of food and beverage quality at the venerable country club he proudly describes as "a full-service resort without the hotel rooms."

Philadelphia Country Club was founded in 1890 by a group of socially prominent 'Main Line' Philadelphians as a club for riding and driving. Beginning with only a Polo field constructed on their initial 60 acre site, and a 9 hole golf course completed in 1892, PCC's property today spans two miles in Gladwyne, Pa. The member-owned, not-for-profit Club offers a complete resort experience: 27 hole golf course, tennis, squash and paddle ball courts, Olympic size swimming pool, shooting lodge and bowling lanes, plus Bridge lessons and tournament play with other clubs in the area. The expansive Clubhouse contains the requisite Pro shops, fitness center, locker rooms and administrative offices as well as the main kitchen and numerous dining, banquet and ballrooms equipped with state-of-the-art video capability and internet access for professional seminars and social receptions — from casual parties to formal weddings of up to 500 people. "Weekends are the busiest times," says Chef Wakefield. "We're feeding 900 to 1,000 people a day, taking into account three a la carte dining rooms plus weddings and other functions." He notes that Wednesdays are also bustling with hordes of golfers.

While a major renovation of the kitchen was accomplished a few years earlier, signs were emerging of a need to do the same for the dishroom. "Getting clean dishware out was becoming a problem," says Chef Wakefield. "Our 25 year old carousel-style dishmachine was on life support; the final rinse water ran constantly. The electric booster heater was expensive to operate, its heating elements given to imploding. From a labor standpoint, it was taking so long to get dishware washed and spots removed by hand wiping that dishroom employees often would be leaving at 4:00 AM, greeted by a 'good morning' from the incoming pastry chef." Chef Wakefield explains that after the costly kitchen renovation it was difficult to justify spending money on the dishroom when the members see clean dishes in the dining rooms. Convincing the Club's Board of Governors involved bringing them into the dishroom to see the spots on the glasses and dishes. "Would you want to eat from these dishes?" they were asked. "We were looking to go green," Chef Wakefield continues, "and looking for energy efficiency... how much water was being wasted... the increased labor costs. When PCC takes on a project they look at the long-term usage and savings." The project went forward with an enlarged dishroom and new hot water system and boiler for the building that feeds 120°F water to the kitchen and dishroom. Champion Industries was selected to furnish their Upright DualRinse™ Conveyor Dishwashing Machine that uses less water and energy than competitors' units. Vanguard Technology Inc. supplied the energy-efficient PowerMax 200™ Gas booster heater that works in conjunction with the dishwasher to provide for chemical-free dishware sanitizing. Steve Kujawa, president of Vanguard Technology Inc., explains that the dishware is sanitized with 180°F sanitizing rinse water. Energy-efficient PowerMax™ gas booster heaters can provide this 180°F rinse water for commercial dishwashers of all sizes at great savings for the operator. Vanguard gas boosters are utilized in clubs and resorts, schools, institutional operations, as well as restaurants and hotels to 'boost' a facility's typical 120°F 'house' hot water up to the required 180°F where dishware is sanitized without the need for harsh and costly chemicals. According to Kujawa, chemical-free sanitizing prolongs the life of the dishwasher, china, silver and glassware; dishware also dries faster, with a much cleaner result. "Chemical sanitizers can leave an unappetizing chlorine residue on dishware and glasses," he says. Since PCC recycles water into the lake at the golf greens, the use of bleach type chemicals is prohibited.

In addition to PowerMax™'s reputation for reliability, Kujawa says energy savings can be as much as 70% compared to electric units. "Switching to gas boosters helps cut utility costs significantly and benefits the environment." "PowerMax™ boosters are exceptionally versatile," adds Kujawa. Entirely self-contained, they install easily under the dish table or can be placed elsewhere in a kitchen or even in another room if it's more convenient. They can vent through the dishwasher ventilation system, eliminating the need for a separate roof penetration. Vanguard gas boosters are constructed with an all stainless steel welded frame, cabinet and tank and feature a patented water flow and temperature regulating heat transfer unit. A rugged, high-efficiency infrared woven ceramic fabric burner with excellent thermal properties and resistance to mechanical impact permits lower combustion temperatures and reduced CO and NOx emissions while operating at over 90% efficiency. Microprocessor controlled ignition and temperature control and factory installed pressure relief valves and regulating valves assure accuracy and consistency. Front access for service and single point electric, water and gas connection provide for fast, easy installation and servicing. All PowerMax™ gas boosters are hand-built and fire-tested before shipment. Five months after installation, Chef Wakefield and his staff are delighted with the results of the dishroom renovation and their equipment choices. "Champion's Dish Machine cut our water use by two thirds, and the fast throughput is saving on labor costs. Vanguard's PowerMax™ gas booster gives us a good, constant water temperature and chemical-free sanitizing. And both are saving energy. We couldn't be happier." Now the pastry chef has no one to greet when he arrives at 4:00 AM.