

CASE STUDY – Almond Family Pubs

Vito Oil Filtration makes savings for Almond Family Pubs

With over 100 years of service between them, James Almond, his sister, Vicki and his father, who originally founded the business, run Almond Family Pubs, a selection of four pubs within the Stockport area. Renowned for serving top-quality food and drink in beautifully decorated surroundings, The Jolly Sailor, Spread Eagle, Puss in Boots and Fletchers Arms have built a loyal customer base both locally and from those further afield.

Popular for their carvery, Almond Family Pubs offers a modern pub menu with traditional British food from fish and chips to pie and mash. Talking about the family-owned business, Director James Almond starts:

"Open seven days a week, it's my father, my sister and myself that have been running Almond Family Pubs. We pride ourselves on serving the Stockport community, ensuring guests leave us feeling satisfied by serving top-quality food and drink by our excellently trained teams. We use a local butcher and greengrocers to ensure we have fresh produce delivered daily, from your burgers and steaks to salad and vegetables, what's been put onto your plate has been delivered that morning - it's good honest wholesome fresh cooking."



As with many hospitality businesses, increasing costs have had a significant impact on Almond Family Pubs as James goes on to say:

"It's no secret that the industry has faced loads of challenges every which way you turn, so every penny counts. We had six pubs pre-Covid, so it took a couple, but we're still going strong with four pubs in the Stockport area. Pre-Covid we were paying about £23 for a barrel of cooking oil, and after fluctuating over the last few years, reaching a high of around £40 a barrel, it's currently settled at around £28. So, in terms of energy, produce and waste, we're all looking eagerly to make savings. And while costs are one thing, as a business, we also try to be responsible for the environment and using oil and discarding it sooner than you need to has a direct impact on that."



With many traditional pub dishes including chips, chicken and fish requiring cooking in a fryer and with several sites enjoying a high footfall at peak trading times, the amount of oil being used was having a significant impact on the business. Continuing, James says:

"We would roughly have to change the oil a minimum of twice a week, sometimes three times a week, depending on the level of trade. We're using our fryers for a range

of products, like the batter on our fish, the coating on the chips and the coating on chicken which not only darkens but seriously shortens the length of the oil."

James first discovered the Vito Oil Filtration System after seeing it at the Northern Restaurant & Bar show. Discussing the technology with the sales team at Valentine & CuisinEquip, James decided it would be a great solution for their pubs. James clarifies:

"Following Northern Restaurant & Bar, Valentine & CuisinEquip came along to the Jolly Sailor and gave us a hands-on demonstration - we deliberately engineered a situation where we'd got to the end of the week at the natural end of the oil's life, where usually we would have then discarded it. We found that after using the Vito oil filter, it visibly increased the life of the oil. Since then, we have seen that by using the Vito system every day, before the oil starts to get a lot darker and starts to smoke a little bit, we can get at least a couple of days extra oil use. So, depending on how busy it is, each site is saving somewhere between £1,500 and £2,000 on oil per site annually. With these savings, we've actually paid for each machine in around 12 months, so you can see how quickly the investment is returned. And then when it comes to oil quality, by keeping the oil clean and filtered it's definitely made a difference to the quality of the food. It's things like your chips, your fish, they're coming out a much better, lighter colour."

When it comes to day-to-day use of the Vito Oil Filtration System, it's the back-of-house team that needs to be able to use it easily and efficiently. So, while savings are important, ease of use and flexibility is key. Adam, Sous Chef at the Jolly Sailor Pub explains:

"The Vito machine is incredibly easy for us to use. You open it up, take the filter paper out, and then it has a couple of components inside, and you can remove that bottom part. The bottom section of the Vito, where the oil is filtered and the crumb collected is actually dishwasher-proof, meaning cleaning is simple too. Once it's cleaned you can reassemble it with just two clicks on the side and then the filter paper just easily slots back into place - it's quite straightforward. It recommends that it runs at about 170 degrees so it's ideal for when the oil is still hot. We turn the fryers off, put it into the machine and it's just a case of lifting it into the centre of the fryer, pressing the button and the machine runs itself on a timer. Once it beeps and it's finished, we let the oil drain out, and then it's ready to pop straight into another fryer or back into the carry tray for cleaning and storage. It's just a four-and-a-half-minute cycle for it to clean the oil, so mid-shift, halfway through the day you can just turn the fryer off, drop it straight in and clean the oil and four and a half minutes later it's ready to go

- you don't have to wait for it to cool down, you don't have to do it first thing in the morning. If you wanted, you could do it any time during the day even if that's during service.



It's clear to see the advantage that Almond Family Pubs have received from adding Vito to their kitchens as James concludes:

"The benefits to us having the Vito oil filtration system are that it extends the quality of the oil, reduces the waste of oil, reduces our spend on the oil, it also improves the quality of the food and

improves safety in our kitchens. What's more, the service from Valentine & CuisinEquip has been superb. The installation and the training that they gave us when we first onboarded was very good - they went to all our sites and trained our chefs on how to use the machine so we're very satisfied with that journey. And, at the end of the day, if you do have any issues or advice that you need, the team at Valentine & CuisinEquip are at the end of the phone. I would recommend Vito to anyone in the trade - It's a really valuable piece of equipment that will save you money and can deliver a return on investment in as little as a year."

For more information on Valentine, & CuisinEquip and the Vito Oil Filtration System please visit www.valentinefryers.com or call +44 (0) 118 957 1344.

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