

Warming up to ovens

Plan to invest in an oven but clueless on which one? **Aneeta Sundararaj** offers a few ideas

AT your aunt's dinner party, she serves the best roast chicken you've ever tasted. She generously shares her recipe.

But your roast chicken is dry and nothing like hers. Worse, your oven is so filthy it takes days to clean it properly. The problem, however, may not be your kitchen skill or the recipe. You may be using the wrong kind of oven.

Tobias Schweizer, general manager of Brandt kitchen appliances, launched recently in Malaysia, suggests that for many, their experience using an oven begins when they have to cook for themselves. For instance, when he was in university, using the oven in the hostel was probably the easiest and most convenient way to prepare a meal. Still, adds the 27-year-old, "...most of the time, my food was burnt."

Brandt offers many choices when it comes to ovens. The basis for this lies in its intelligent control system. To recreate your aunt's roast chicken, for example, you place the marinated chicken in the oven and select from a range of commands.

Electronic sensors pick up the chicken's weight and humidity level to determine the ideal cooking mode, temperature and duration. When it's done, the chicken is roasted to perfection.

You don't even have to open the oven mid-way to turn the baking



A built-in oven saves space and looks sleek.



tray around or flip the chicken to make sure it is roasted evenly. At the bottom of each oven is a fan to ensure heat is distributed evenly.

"There is one drawback," Schweizer says. "Here, there is a tendency to cook very small birds, like quails. These ovens will not be able to detect the weight of these birds and they're unlikely to cook well." In such cases, he recommends you use the manual override.

Which oven, then, should you choose? Should it be a built-in oven or a free standing one? Schweizer says this usually has to do with aesthetics. "It's now a status symbol to have a built-in oven in the dry kitchen. It saves space and looks sleek."

A prudent buyer should first determine the kind of cooking involved. "If you do a lot of steaming (vegetables and fish, for example) invest in one of our steam ovens," advises Schweizer. "In fact, this is one of our most popular models in Singapore and Hong Kong." And vegetarians only require a smaller oven.

With the steam oven, a thin stream of cold water flows into a heating element inside the oven to create steam which fills the

interior within minutes. The steam is produced at 100°C, so food cooked this way will retain most of its vitamins and minerals, flavours, textures and colour.

If you're into roasting chicken and meat regularly, choose an oven that has catalytic cleaning. Described as a continuously cleaning oven, this has three partitions covered with catalytic enamel, which allows self-degreasing. As soon as grease appears, it spreads out and is dispersed into the microporous contact side. Grease is immediately oxidised on both sides and disappears.

The ovens cost between RM2,000 and RM6,000. Schweizer says there's also a new range called pyrolytic ovens. These self-cleaning ovens, which will be in most major stores here from August, use pyrolysis technology.

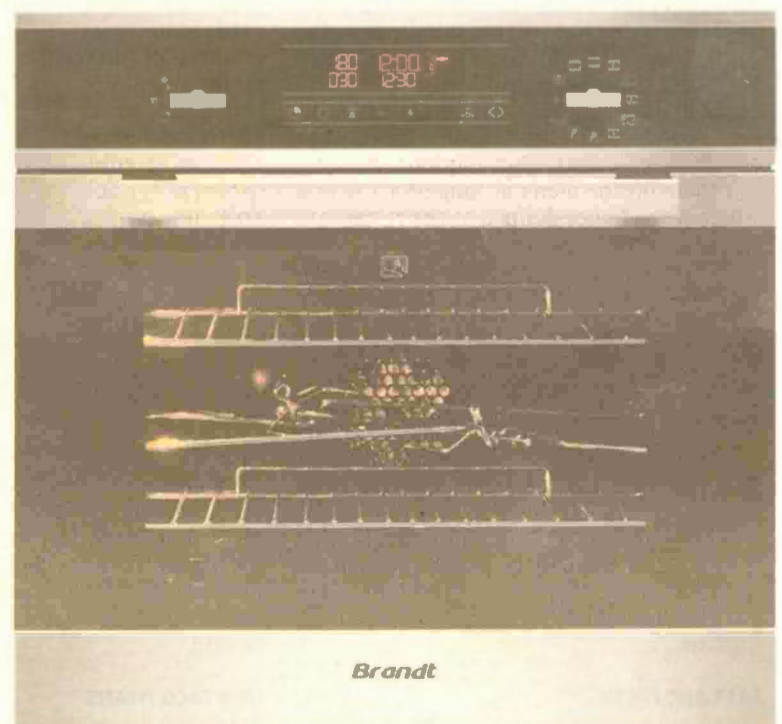
He explains: "The oven is heated to 500°C. All the dirt that remains — mainly sugar and flour — will burn. After the cycle (which lasts about an hour), all you'll find in the oven is ashes which you can throw out. It will make the inside of the oven look like new. You don't need to spend time and energy scrubbing the insides of the oven with potentially toxic cleaning solutions to keep it clean."

For protection, pyrolytic oven doors lock during the cleaning cycle. Furthermore, the four glass panels, two of which are iridescent, will ensure that the temperature of the outer glass never exceeds 65°C to prevent burns should you touch it.

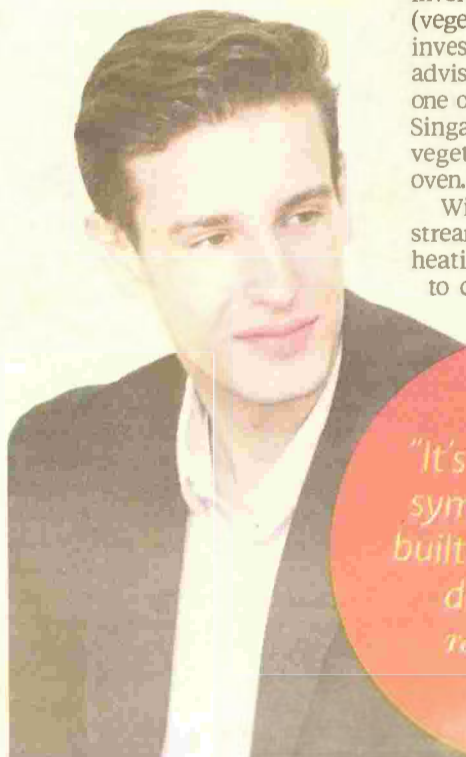
Now, after all this investment in time, effort and money, your roast chicken should turn out exactly like your aunt's, or even better.

If it doesn't, blame the chicken!

Details at www.brandt.com.sg



(Above) A steam oven and (below) a pyrolytic oven.



"It's now a status symbol to have a built-in oven in the dry kitchen."

Tobias Schweizer