

“Top Chef” Lures Viewers to the Heat of the Kitchen

Bravo’s hit show “Top Chef” keeps fans wanting more food and feuds

By Ryan O’Callaghan
Staff Writer

REVIEW

In theory, I should hate “Top Chef.” Like a greek ship to a siren, I am tantalized by and drawn to Bravo on Wednesday nights.

In my apartment living room, I sit salivating over foie gras and saffron, ingredients I have never even heard of.

As the judges rave over Mike Isabella’s braized pork shoulder with pepperoni sauce, I sit with a bowl of Cap’n Crunch’s Crunch Berries, wincing in pain as I slowly peel layers from the roof of my mouth.

It’s torture. Forget the grueling games of “Saw,” or our country’s favorite form of torture: water-boarding. Sit a criminal in front of an episode of “Top Chef” with a glass of water and whole grain spaghetti; he’ll be talking in no time.

Despite the self-harm that goes along with watching “Top Chef,” millions of viewers tune into see the “chef-testants” duke it out with artistic and sometimes whimsical dishes.

They marry flavors that don’t seem conceivable in a normal person’s head: Bacon Licorice Peanut Butter Hors D’oeuvres,

anyone?

I started watching “Top Chef” the day of the season one finale. They had a full day marathon; I watched it straight through. From that moment on I was hooked.

There’s some strange excitement that goes along with an episode of “Top Chef.” Like any reality show, there’s drama, but the drama comes from the extreme passion in these chefs.

“Top Chef” takes cooking to the next level, putting the chefs in crazy cooking circumstances. It’s not easy to cook conch over an open flame on a beach without getting any sand in the dishes.

The challenges aren’t always that drastic. Some involve cooking with just one hand or one pot. This past season, one challenge had the chefs cooking without any tools: no spatulas, can openers, etc. In the heat of the moment Fabio grated cheese through a shelf.

Season eight just ended, with the reunion airing last Wednesday. “Top Chef: All-Stars” was all about chefs from previous seasons returning for redemption. Eighteen finalists from the past seven seasons returned to the “Top Chef” kitchen to fight for the crown they had missed out on.

Richard Blais of Atlanta, born on Long Island, took home the crown. In season four, Richard was the runner up. He was the favorite to win his season, but he choked in the finale.

During the “Top Chef: All-Stars” reunion show, he said that he doesn’t regret having lost back



photo provided by eater.com

The talented culinary cast of Top Chef All-Stars give their “super-fly” poses for the show’s promotion

in season four; it gave him a reason to look over his technique and win the toughest season of “Top Chef” yet.

Blais stands out in the pack of “chef-testants” for his use of “molecular-gastronomy,” the study of the physical and chemical process that happens while

cooking. He has made bacon ice cream and foie gras ice cream. Richard is currently hosting his own show, “Blais Off” on the science channel about his scientific cooking methods.

Blais said that he would compete again. Maybe in the future there will be a season of “Top

Chef” for the past winners.

With the end of “Top Chef: All-Stars,” “Top Chef Masters” has begun. In “Masters” renowned chefs take on the quick-fires and elimination challenges.

“Top Chef Masters” airs on Bravo, Wednesdays at 10.