

It's hats off to the country's budding chefs on Junior MasterChef



THE bloke who coined the phrase "never work with kids" had obviously never seen Junior MasterChef. The children's version of Ten's hit reality series has generated a huge buzz over the past month.

"This is Australia's next generation of top chefs and cooks. They will change how a nation eats," judge Gary Mehigan says at the start of the first episode. Mehigan isn't kidding.

The 50 children featured on the program knock out a range of mouth-watering dishes. This isn't chocolate crackle territory. We're talking goat cheese wontons with balsamic glaze, ricotta gnocchi with egg-

plant salsa, chicken with walnut and pomegranate broth.

The first thing that strikes you about Junior MasterChef is how much fun it is compared with the adult version.

The judges - Mehigan, Matt Preston, George Calombaris and newcomer Anna Gare - are clearly having the time of their lives. There is a wonderful spirit between the kids - something that was sadly missing from the recent adult version of the show.

Over the next few weeks, five heats of 10 competitors will take place with the best four from each heat making it through to the top-20 qualifying round.

Sunday night's first task was an "international challenge" and highlighted the multicultural make-up of the competitors. Children of British, Greek, Italian, Indian and Iranian heritage went head to head.

The second task is a dessert challenge that has Calombaris saying he has "the best job in the world" after tasting a knockout orange and almond cake. The uncomfortable part of Junior MasterChef was always going to be seeing children eliminated.

The show looks like it will acknowledge, but not dwell on, the disappointed children who miss the cut.

"Don't feel down that you didn't get through. You're great cooks and you'll go a long way," Mehigan says.

article from Herald Sun

Young MasterChef hopefuls dish up goods

According to the judges, 11-year-old Sam stands like a chef. But, much more than that, he cooks like one.

In the premiere of Junior MasterChef last night, Sam made the French dessert, quatre-quarts, with tempered white chocolate, strawberries, raspberries and cream.

"He's tempering white chocolate? That is ludicrous!" exclaimed one of the judges. "If he pulls that off, cracker dish." And he did - with a few tears as he made it through to the next level. Sam was one of the top 50 eight- to 12-year-olds taking part in the MasterChef spin-off, picked from 5500 children who auditioned for the show. Judges George Calombaris and Gary Mehigan, were joined by a new addition, Anna Gare, who told the children that, like them, she had started cooking when she could first see over the kitchen bench. The judges balanced stirring the children's excitement with encouragement, helping a boy pick out ingredients when he had a mental blank, rescuing a burned meringue from the oven, and suggesting icing sugar should help mask melted plastic ramekins. But among the few hiccups shone brilliance: Tayla, 12, made goat cheese wontons with balsamic glaze and fennel salad. Sofia, 12, cooked falsomagro with crumbed eggplant, while her twin, Isabella, cooked ricotta gnocchi. All three qualified for the top 20. Nick made baklava, inspired by his Greek heritage, and knew what the judges were after.

"There's a big risk cooking Greek for [judge] George [Calombaris] because he always compares it to his mum's, or his, so it's high pressure," Nick said. These four were the qualifiers from the first heat. There will be five heats of 10 contestants from which four will be selected to form a top 20.



Junior MasterChef. Photo: Channel Ten

Article from SMH

Marina says she's 'more Greek than Welsh'

SHE'S known as one of our top pop exports, but Marina Diamandis has delivered Wales a crushing blow - by declaring that she's more Greek than Welsh! But fear not, the singer - who has shot to global fame with her act Marina and the Diamonds - insists she's also very proud of the land of her birth. The Brynmawr singer said: "I'm quite patriotic." Both Wales and Greece are good countries to come from.

"I probably feel more patriotic about the Greek side." The sultry brunette went to live in Greece when her parents separated during her teens. It was at this point that she learned to appreciate her Hellenic ancestry, she said.

"My dad hammered it into us growing up that Greece was the best," the 24-year-old said.

"It's a place that's really magical because it's so rich in history."

But she said her huge success has yet to register in the country.

"They know that some Greek girl in the UK is a singer," she said.

"That's about it. I'm probably way bigger in America."

Article from WalesOnline

A few words about Marina

Marina Lambrini Diamandis born 10 October 1985), better known by her stage name Marina and the Diamonds (sometimes stylised as Marina & the diamonds), is a Welsh singer-songwriter of Greek descent. She rose to fame after reaching number two on the BBC Sound of 2010 poll list, coming second to Ellie Goulding. After releasing one private EP, Diamandis released her second extended play, The Crown Jewels EP, with help from Neon Gold Records, in 2009. Now signed to 679 Recordings, she released her debut full-length studio album, The Family Jewels, followed by her third extended play, The American Jewels EP, in 2010.

