

IT'S #MKR SEASON



2017 Press Kit

REAL PEOPLE REAL FOOD

Manu Feildel and Pete Evans are back with an eighth season of Australia's number one program, MY KITCHEN RULES.

Acclaimed chefs Colin Fassnidge, Karen Martini, Guy Grossi and Liz Egan also return to Kitchen HQ in 2017 to judge the new batch of aspiring home cooks.

And when the MKR doorbell rings this year, expect new twists and a new face at the dinner table.

The teams for MKR 2017 are:

GROUP 1

Damo & Caz, TAS - Tassie Sweethearts
David & Betty, NSW - #JustFriends
Karen & Ros, VIC - Midwives
Bek & Ash, WA - Flirty Flatmates
Tim & Kyle, SA - Pub Mates
Amy & Tyson, QLD - Serious Siblings

GROUP 2

Albert & Dave, NSW - Brothers
Kelsey & Amanda, NSW - Sisters
Court & Duncan, VIC - Married Hipsters
Josh & Amy, WA - Seafood Lovers
Della & Tully, QLD - Foodie Friends
Allyse & Matt, QLD - Ambitious Newlyweds

GROUP 3

Mark & Chris, VIC - Footy Friends
Caitie & Demi, VIC - Besties
Lama & Sarah, SA - Cousins
Brett & Marie, QLD - First Loves
Valerie & Courtney, QLD - Mother & Daughter
Mell & Cyn, NSW - Business Women

Each team will take turns to transform an ordinary home into an Instant Restaurant for one pressure cooker night. They'll plate up a three-course menu designed to impress the judges and their fellow contestants to avoid elimination. Remaining teams will face amazing location challenges in the hope of staying in the competition for the Ultimate Instant Restaurant round, before our finalists battle it out in Kitchen HQ.

In 2016, an average audience of 2.32 million people tuned in to see Melbourne sisters, Tasia and Gracia, take out the competition and the \$250,000 grand prize.

Another \$250,000 prize is on the line when MKR 2017 premieres Monday after the tennis on Seven.

MKR Series Winners:

2016 - Tasia & Gracia, VIC
2015 - Will & Steve, NSW
2014 - Bree & Jessica, SA
2013 - Dan & Steph, QLD
2012 - Leigh & Jennifer, SA
2011 - Sammy & Bella, NSW
2010 - Shadi & Veronica, QLD

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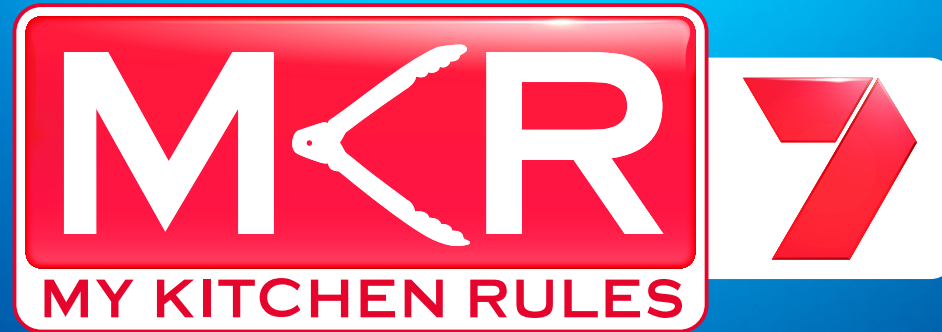
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GROUP 1



DAMO & CAZ

TAS - Group 1



Proudly taking on the mainlanders are Tassie sweethearts Damo, 30, and Caz, 30, who are parents to two energetic young boys.

"Caz is one of the best mums I've ever seen," reveals Damo. "She puts other people before herself."

Damo is a sparky at the local hospital, while Caz is a social worker, working with children and young people.

"Cooking is that one thing that we do together and we enjoy together," says Damo. "It's our couple thing."

"Damo and I balance each other well," reveals Caz. "He is unorganised, forgetful and at times frustrating. I am organised and a bit of a control freak so it just seems to work."

The husband and wife team feel a weight on their shoulders to do Tasmania proud.

"We will really push the local produce," says Caz. "We can't wait to show Australia what Tassie's got."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

K.I.S.S. (keep it simple stupid) and don't overcomplicate things.

STRENGTH

Sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

Damo, while super messy, is good with meat, presentation and the finer details of their dishes. Super clean Caz is amazing at seasoning and sauces. Caz is normally the more assertive one but Damo's not shy to tell her to back off when he feels the need. They tend to bicker a little because they both like to be right and can get a little competitive. But overall, they don't take things too seriously and like to have fun.

HOME COOK HEROES

Damo: Definitely my mum. You can't beat your mum's cooking and mine would always cook amazing homestyle meals.

Caz: My stepdad Michael. He just gets flavours bang on every time.

SIGNATURE DISH

Damo: Poached pears in a spiced red wine sauce with cinnamon ice cream. It's a spin on one of my favourite dishes that mum used to make me when I was little.

Caz: Roast chicken and vegetables. This dish is special to me because I grew up eating a roast with my family every Sunday and now I cook one for my family every Sunday. I also make a yummy relish from tomatoes grown in our vegetable garden.

DAVID & BETTY

NSW - Group 1



Hailing from Sydney's western suburbs, SMB category manager David, 32, and social media influencer Betty, 27, might be #justfriends but they're hoping to go all the way in the competition.

"As a team, we love that we are straight forward with one another," says Betty.

"We're like brother and sister and we're going to stand up for each other no matter what happens," adds David.

The main thing that brought them together after meeting in a body piercing parlour was their backgrounds - David's family came to Australia on a boat from Vietnam, while Betty's family are from Laos.

"We are so proud of our culture," Betty says. "Both our mums are amazing cooks."

And these self-confessed hustlers will do whatever it takes to get to the end.

"I think we're doing things a little different," David says. "We're cooking food our mama's have taught us, that we've grown up with, that we love to eat, so hopefully we're serving up something they're not expecting or haven't tried before."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Sticking to our roots and cooking authentic Southeast Asian flavours that our mothers have taught us.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Betty is fast with a knife while David brings the creativity. Both are natural leaders but open to opinions and will take charge in their area of strength... although David tends to take the lead.

HOME COOK HEROES

David: My Mother.

Betty: My Mumma.

SIGNATURE DISH

David: My carbonara with no cream. Simple ingredients but it's the most delicious dish and comforting every time.

Betty: Lao pawpaw salad. We have a mortar and pestle that has been in our family since I was born. I remember how proud my family was when I picked it up for the first time.

KAREN & ROS

VIC - Group 1



Karen, 50, and Ros, 55, have been best friends and midwives for more than 20 years.

"I love being part of the most beautiful experience of people having a baby," says Karen.

"It's the most beautiful job in the world," admits Ros.

With three and four adult children respectively, these Melbourne mums enjoy a shared passion for their families, their work, keeping fit, the footy, cooking... and champagne.

"Because we cook so much for our big families we're really bloody good at it," says Ros.

"And being midwives, we're used to being organised which gives us a huge advantage," adds Karen. "And hopefully we'll produce a beautiful result on the table like we do in the birth suite."

"The competition better watch out cause the midwives are here to deliver," sums up Ros.

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

To cook fresh, nutritious and flavoursome dishes, that we plate up and serve with love, which make our families and friends feel nourished and nurtured.

STRENGTH

Sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

More experienced cook Ros is head chef, while Karen is the sous chef. Ros is a bit more experimental and knowledgeable about food and flavours, while the more basic home cook Karen is good with plating and other suggestions. They are both instinctive, opinionated and very vocal while they are cooking.

HOME COOK HEROES

Karen: Ros.

Ros: My eldest sister. She can whip up a delicious meal at a moment's notice.

SIGNATURE DISH

Karen: Tiramisu! I make a chocolate tiramisu, a berry tiramisu, and I also invented a lamington tiramisu for my Australia Day BBQ last year.

Ros: Roast pork, it's a family favourite. And my summer pudding at Christmas.

BEK & ASH

WA - Group 1



Bek, 27, and Ash, 30, are best friends from Perth who confess their favourite two T's are tea and Tinder.

"We live in hope that we will find our dream men," says self-proclaimed flirt Bek. "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach, so it's a good thing that we can cook."

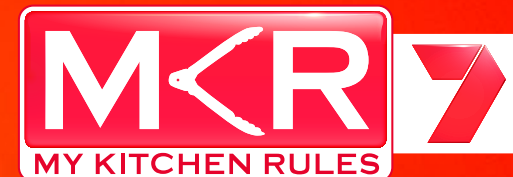
But these flirtatious flatmates warn they're not to be underestimated.

"We will be bringing our A game," says dental nurse Ash.

"We're very intelligent and driven women," adds Bek, a vet surgeon. "We've swiped left, we've swiped right and now we've got our game faces on."

The two besties, who met playing soccer, think of themselves more like sisters than friends and share a lot of the same interests.

"We are very similar and are used to each other's idiosyncrasies," says Bek. "We do a lot together - walk the dogs, go to the shops, eat out... is Ryan Gosling an interest?"



FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Simple and tasty food, cooked well. Get the taste right, get the textures right and voilà, you have a good dish.

STRENGTH

Ash's strength lies in savoury dishes while Bek's is with sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

Although they both admit they're pretty hopeless at taking the lead, Bek is more assertive and tends to step up while Ash follows. They sometimes clash on ideas, techniques and taste preferences but reach a compromise fairly easily as they both hate confrontation. They work together well when things are going well!

HOME COOK HEROES

Bek: My dad.

Ash: My sister, her cooking is amazing! She knows a lot about food and is always there for any questions and advice.

SIGNATURE DISH

Bek: Custard tart because I experimented a lot with this to make it my own and it's delish.

Ash: My roasts, particularly pork with crackling. Nothing beats having your friends around on a Sunday night for a good roast dinner, especially in winter.

TIM & KYLE

SA - Group 1



Adelaide best mates Tim, 30, and Kyle, 27, bonded over their love of beer, beards and food.

Bartender Kyle works to live, not lives to work, while Tim works in advertising sales but has quit his job to pursue his real passion – food. They describe their cooking style as Modern Australian hunter gatherers.

“When I was a teenager my mum worked a lot of nights so I tried to learn some new moves in the kitchen,” says Kyle.

“Good food, good mood... I’ve always said that.”

“I first learned to cook with my dad who’s a chef,” says Tim. “I’m keen to get into the kitchen and show the teams what we can do. I quit my job for this competition so it’s really important we do well.”

“We came here to win!” adds Kyle.

The single, self-described social butterflies enjoy beer, live music, beer, socialising, beer, the footy and their mates!

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

If we love the food, everyone else will too!

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

As a general rule, if it’s meats and sauces Kyle will take charge while Tim is more of a sides and desserts dude and in charge of plating up. They have their tiffs, but move on fast. Together they make a “pretty rad team”.

HOME COOK HEROES

Tim: The old man and nonna.

Kyle: I don’t have one.

SIGNATURE DISH

Tim: Nonna’s lasagne. She taught me this in her backyard kitchen and it tastes bloody amazing.

Kyle: Spiced kangaroo.

AMY & TYSON

QLD - Group 1



Brisbane siblings Amy, 29, and Tyson, 26, are out to prove they're anything but average cooks.

"Our food is pretty different to the normal style of food on My Kitchen Rules," says Tyson, an Uber driver. "We like to challenge ourselves. And we're here to win."

"We didn't grow up cooking," adds Amy, who works in human resources. "Since moving out of home and having to cook for ourselves, I think a lot of what we've learnt is by experimentation and trying to replicate what we've eaten out."

Tyson admits he's confident, verging on arrogant, with his palate and critiquing of food.

"We call Tyson the angry, angry man because he can get quite hot headed very quickly," says Amy.

"Physically I swell up in the neck and some veins might pop in my forehead and I go red and really tense," he reveals.

"We don't suffer fools," Amy confesses. "People say I'm really tough."

Or as Tyson puts it bluntly, "You're a bitch."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Cook and eat food that has interesting ingredients, flavour and texture combinations. It doesn't have to be crazy or fancy. It just has to be fun and delicious.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Amy is big picture; Tyson is more details-oriented. Amy is generally quite bossy and a natural leader while Tyson is good at taking direction (and blocking her out when needed). But they can interchange roles to get the job done.

HOME COOK HEROES

Amy: No one really.

Tyson: Anthony Bourdain. I like his story of progress through cooking industry and now into television. And I really enjoy his ideas on food.

SIGNATURE DISH

Amy: I don't really have a signature dish - but I have cooked crumbed lamb brains a lot in the last year!

Tyson: I don't really cook the same dish enough to become a signature. But a crowd pleaser I've done a couple of times is ribs.



GROUP 2



ALBERT & DAVE

NSW - Group 2



Brothers Albert, 35, and Dave, 28, from Sydney's northwest are hoping to show everybody that Cantonese cuisine is the best.

"We're originally from Hong Kong but moved to Australia when I was three and Albert was 11," says Dave. "Our hope is to deliver authentic Cantonese cuisine."

"Otherwise, mum will not be happy," warns Albert.

The boys were taught to cook by their mother, Cecilia, who is herself a popular cook and broadcaster in the Chinese community, and believe that will give them a "humongous" advantage in the competition.

"We really want to do our mum proud because she's supported us her whole life," says single Dave, who is CEO of a successful online retail business.

"He's much cooler than me, a real lady charmer," reveals Albert, who is married and has recently welcomed his first child, a boy.

Dave fondly describes his Audit Manager brother as: "very nerdy, a typical Asian, the accountant, went to uni and did really well."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Never be afraid to be adventurous, try out different recipes and learn from different people. Food should be exciting to eat and bring out smiles in everyone tasting it.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Dave is stronger in desserts, knife skills and prepping, while Albert takes the lead with entrees and mains and is good with a stir fry, marinating and making sauces. They work well together. Dave is naturally more assertive though.

HOME COOK HEROES

Albert: My mum.

Dave: My mum of course. Best home cook and hands down would win MKR.

SIGNATURE DISH

Albert: Ginger and shallots mud crab. It reminds me how much I love to cook as it's a lot of hard work but it always pays off because it's everyone's favourite dish and tastes delicious.

Dave: Glutinous rice with Chinese sausages with steamed egg as a side dish. All my staff love it and when I ask them what they want for dinner and if they want me to make something else, they pretty much just request that same dish again and again.

KELSEY & AMANDA

NSW - Group 2



From a family of five sisters come southwest Sydney siblings Kelsey, 22, and Amanda, 36, who want to liven up the competition with their unique approach to life.

"Everyone's going to see how fun, colourful and loud we are," says Amanda. "But we're also going to show the other teams that we're not bimbos and they shouldn't judge a book by its cover."

Married mum-of-three Amanda sells makeup while Kelsey and her partner recently welcomed their first child, a girl, and she is currently on maternity leave from her career as a banker. However she readily admits she cannot do maths and definitely uses a calculator!

"One of the advantages we have is that we're busy mums and are used to multi-tasking," says Amanda. "That's a massive thing that we do all day, every day."

"I would rate us as chef material," offers Kelsey.

"Food to us means laughter, family... and loudness," adds Amanda.

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Make it taste good!

STRENGTH

Amanda's strength lies in savoury dishes while Kelsey's is with sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

They work really well together and can pre-empt what the other is thinking. Kelsey is the bossy one but Amanda is happy to let that bossiness glide by to get the job done.

HOME COOK HEROES

Kelsey: Everyone in my family teaches me new things.

Amanda: My nan, especially for her baked dinners and famous cheesecake.

SIGNATURE DISH

Kelsey: Chocolate fondant. I am always cooking it for my family and they love it!

Amanda: Duck with cherry sauce and snapper (our dad loves snapper).

COURT & DUNCAN

VIC - Group 2



Happily married Melbourne couple Court, 29, and Duncan, 34, love cooking together and their fur baby Ted, an English staffy.

"I'm the king of protein," says Duncan, a project manager.

"And I'm the salad ninja," says Court, a designer.

Court was a vegetarian and a vegan for a lot of her life. Now she eats meat, but tries to do so responsibly. Meanwhile, meat lover Duncan's pride and joy is his offset smoker which he's fondly named, Willie Nelson.

The creative couple, who are well known for their public displays of affection, say their friends might describe them as a little bit hipster.

"I grew a beard and wore a nine dollar flannel before it was cool, before it was hipster," reveals Duncan.

"We were friends for a year, we hated each other for a year," says Court.

"She hated me," adds Duncan.
"Then I put a ring on it."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Ethical, sustainable, generous, delicious.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Duncan is the leader, a big picture person, while Court does the surrounding bits and bobs like prep, purees and salads. They communicate well, support each other and back each other up. And Duncan is really good at keeping Court's spirits up.

HOME COOK HEROES

Court: Maggie Beer.

Duncan: I don't really have one.

SIGNATURE DISH

Court: I love to be the one who brings the huge bowl of delicious salad to the party. Think lots of colour, toasted nuts, grilled asparagus, pomegranate etc.

Duncan: Smoked beef cheeks, cornbread and potato salad. I'd say the time and attention involved in building and maintaining a fire and the communal vibe that goes with it are pretty special. It's not worth firing up Willie Nelson unless there's crew coming to eat all of it.

JOSH & AMY

WA - Group 2



Married seafood lovers from Broome, Josh, 25, and Amy, 26, plan to put their money where their mouth is, promising the best seafood the competition has ever seen.

"I was going to keep quiet about knowing seafood so well but I'm a big personality and I couldn't keep it quiet," says Josh, a deckhand.

"Josh is a seafood master," adds Amy, a casual relief teacher. "He knows what he's talking about."

"Most of my skills in the kitchen are self-taught," says Josh. "When it comes to the preparation and cooking of seafood, I would beat a five star chef. Our seafood that we put on for people is better than restaurant quality."

Josh and Amy and their beloved Australian Shepherd, Dustin, live with housemates in the coastal paradise and are connected by a love of travel, the ocean and the great state of WA, which they are very proud to call home.

"The lifestyle we have here in Broome is absolutely perfect," says Amy. "We love being on Broome time and just getting to kick back and relax."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Fresh is best! Western Australia has the best seafood and we want to share it with the world.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Josh is more assertive and likes to be the dominant one. They clash a fair bit as it's hard for Amy to follow orders sometimes, especially when she thinks he's wrong! Josh's cooking style is "go with the flow", creative and spontaneous while Amy is organised, plans ahead and sticks to the recipe. Amy does dessert and Josh does everything else.

HOME COOK HEROES

Josh: Malcolm Douglas because he can use limited ingredients and equipment to create amazing bush tucker.

Amy: Mumsy.

SIGNATURE DISH

Josh: Chilli mussels, so tasty!

Amy: Chilli mud crab because to me it's a celebration dish. We go out and catch the mud crabs ourselves, cook them ourselves, then enjoy a hard day's work by devouring them with friends!

DELLA & TULLY

QLD - Group 2



Brisbane foodie friends Della, 30, and Tully, 30, can't wait to show everybody what they can do.

"People say we're a bit of an odd combo, but that's ok... we are," admits Tully.

"We're very organised, we have fun and we can play on each other's strengths and hopefully that shines through in the kitchen," says Della.

"Some say we're extroverts and the life of the party and while we both enjoy a good laugh we do take our jobs very seriously," reveals Tully, who has a rewarding career in indigenous health.

"Nobody can believe that I'm a construction lawyer, but I am," laughs perfectionist Della.

"Being Maltese, I learnt to cook as I was learning to eat and I've had lots of key influences on my cooking," she adds.

"I really see MKR as a journey for helping me hone in on my skills in the hope of having a career in food one day."

"Dinner parties with Della are like no other," says Tully. "The more the merrier is definitely the motto."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

We want to show people that food is fun. Take something simple, be a little inventive and make it great. Respect the produce, cook fresh and from scratch.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Della is the driving force, while Tully steadies the ship. Della is the creator of all things delish and will cook most of the dishes while Tully is the cleaner, chopper, grinder, preparer and gofer. They work well together but like most relationships, enjoy robust discussions.

HOME COOK HEROES

Della: Jamie Oliver is just the shiz. His lisp, his passion for food, the flavour combos. Just unreal.

Tully: Bill Granger.

SIGNATURE DISH

Della: I don't have a signature dish per se, but I have signature Asian fusion combinations. I love cooking good cuts of beef and teaming them with Asian accompaniments or twists - like tempura vegetables or soy dipping sauces or marinating the beef in miso.

Tully: Slow roasted meats and big sharing platters, especially my 12 hour mutton and lemon potatoes with a fancy salad of whatever I have in my fridge. I grew up eating cheaper cuts of meat with my large family so I love being able to make them really delish.

 @dellatully.mkr

ALYSE & MATT

QLD - Group 2



Ambitious newlyweds Alyse, 30, and Matt, 37, are betting on backing a winner – themselves! The married couple from Brisbane, who live with their dog, three cats and four chooks, have been competing in fashions on the field for the last eight years.

“We’re used to copping judgement on fashions on the field,” says Alyse. “So we’re going to handle critique the best out of any of the teams. We’re comfortable wearing that winner’s sash and being on the winner’s podium.”

Physiotherapist Matt describes his wife as very cutthroat and “a little bit bitchy”.

“I will definitely make my opinion clear on how I feel about someone’s outfit,” says Alyse, an electrical tender coordinator who describes Matt as a perfectionist, gorgeous and “he has glorious muscles!”

“In our relationship we’re very competitive and our competitive side carries over into the kitchen,” admits Alyse. “We want to show we’re a triple threat; we can get the flavour, the technique and the presentation.”

“With our strengths we will win MKR,” adds Matt. “We are winners.”

“The word loser does not come into our vocabulary,” says Alyse. “We always aim to win and if you’re not there to win, I don’t know why you’re there in the first place.”

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Interpreting classic dishes in a modern way, whether that’s in flavour or presentation. Fresh, healthy and great tasting... and maybe a little bit naughty when it comes to desserts.

STRENGTH

Sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

Alyse is head chef and Matt, who is great with a knife, is her sous chef. Alyse plans out their time in the kitchen and Matt is good at tasting and tweaking as they go. Matt likes a really strong, knock-your-socks-off flavour, whereas Alyse likes something a little bit more subtle. Matt is a procrastinator while Alyse is go-go-go. Alyse stresses out whereas Matt remains calm.

HOME COOK HEROES

Alyse: Rachel Khoo – I find it so amazing that she ran a little restaurant out of her tiny apartment in Paris. I also love the way her food is so authentic but with her own little spin.

Matt: Gordon Ramsay.

SIGNATURE DISH

Alyse: My pavlova. The first time I tried making it was an absolute disaster! It wasn’t until I met Matt that he encouraged me to give it another go. Now I can’t attend a get-together without someone requesting one of my many takes on the classic pav.

Matt: Anything with scallops or pork belly/loin/leg roast. I’m told I get them done perfectly and with the right oven, the crackle is awesome.

Instagram icon @alysematt.mkr



GROUP 3



MARK & CHRIS

VIC - Group 3



Footy loving best mates from Melbourne, Mark, 32, and Chris, 33, met in high school and admit they don't take themselves too seriously.

"I've got two of the best kids in the world," says single father Mark. "I'm teaching them to be Hawthorn supporters".

"More like brainwashing them!" teases newly married Chris. "I met my wife Bianca 11 years ago. She's probably the best thing that's happened to me... besides Mark."

Mark and Chris liken the stress of cooking on MKR to playing footy, which they've done together for a number of years.

"You're in the same zone because you're physically and mentally stressed, but there are no other teammates to rely on except the two of us," says Mark.

"We both have an Italian background so cooking's literally in our blood," he adds. "My nonna will be spitting chips if I stuff up pasta."

"Cooking for Colin is going to be the biggest match of our lives," admits Chris.

"I want to prove that the footy guys aren't just going to hand down the traditional meat pie kind of dish," says Mark. "We want to surprise our guests and show them what we're capable of."

"We're going to be hard to beat," promises Chris.

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Simple yet creative dishes, full of flavour.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Mark is the workhorse while visionary Chris enjoys plating and being creative. Being teammates, they know how to work well together and push each other to be their best. They hand the lead role around depending on what they are doing. Chris is a better cook in Mark's eyes so he has more input but Mark helps him to implement his vision. They rarely clash in the kitchen unless they make silly errors. But even then, they work them out well together.

HOME COOK HEROES

Mark: My now deceased grandfather, Frank.

Chris: It's a toss-up between my mum and mother-in-law.

SIGNATURE DISH

Mark: Peking duck wraps. It was the first dish I got very comfortable with. I've entertained a lot of guests with it and always received great reviews.

Chris: Mushroom risotto - it may seem simple but is actually hard to get right. I learnt a traditional way of making it from Italian Food Safari and love adding lots of butter, extra virgin olive oil and parmesan cheese.

Instagram icon @markchris.mkr

CAITIE & DEMI

VIC - Group 3



Melbourne besties Caitie, 22, and Demi, 22, are the youngest team in the competition.

"We think that might be a bit of an advantage for us because we bring something a little bit different that maybe the others haven't seen yet," says Demi, who along with Caitie, is studying marketing at university.

The girls met in Year 7 during Food Tech and quickly became friends after realising they shared a similar sense of humour and a passion for fashion.

"Our mantra is food, fun and fashion," says Caitie.

"We like to do a lot of fusion food," reveals Demi. "Caitie loves Italian food, I love Japanese and we love bringing those ingredients together to serve fashion food."

"Fashion food is food that looks pretty and delicate and could be put on the cover of a magazine," explains Caitie.

"I reckon the other teams underestimate us," admits Demi.

"They perceive us as fun and that maybe we don't take things too seriously," says Caitie. "But we're here to prove them wrong!"

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Fashion, food and fun. Cook the food you want to eat and make it look like it should be on a front cover.

STRENGTH

Caitie is great at sweets and Demi excels in savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Demi is the leader in the kitchen and is the fast and efficient one, whereas Caitie is better at presentation and preparation. Demi does the cooking and Caitie is the brains and vision behind their menus and how they will be presented. Demi is great at thinking on her feet while Caitie is more precise and pedantic. They rarely disagree or get annoyed at one another.

HOME COOK HEROES

Caitie: My grandma is a 5ft pocket rocket and cooks everything for our whole family on her own. She insists that for family occasions we should go out to a restaurant, but she always ends up cooking enough food for an army at her house.

Demi: My mum and dad.

SIGNATURE DISH

Caitie: Any pasta that I make I am very proud of. It's my thing. I love making a dough and then turning it into pasta. It really excites me.

Demi: Matchamisu - my matcha tiramisu. It was something I thought up and tried out and it ended up being amazing and is now one of our favourite desserts to serve.

LAMA & SARAH

SA - Group 3



MKR's first Lebanese team, Adelaide cousins, Lama, 34, and Sarah, 33, are set to bring Middle Eastern fire to the table.

"We're cousins, we love each other dearly, but we fight a lot as well," admits Sarah, a hair and make-up artist.

"But no matter how much we bicker, we know we can put it aside," adds finance broker Lama. "The love is there."

The passionate duo have done almost everything together and enjoy the exciting things in life like skydiving and motorbike riding.

"We've cooked together, screamed at each other, laughed together, we cry together, everything!" exclaims Lama.

"We are here to prove to Australia that Lebanese food is more than just your 2am kebab," says Sarah. "We're going to give our guests the best Lebanese food they've ever had."

"Everything in the Lebanese culture is based around food," says Lama. "Hommus is where the heart is!"

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Real wholesome home cooking made with love and whole ingredients.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

Lama is a methodical, traditional thinker, while Sarah works on emotion and is very artistic. They are both stubborn and headstrong and want to be the boss. Who drives the ship on the day depends on what they are cooking. Sometimes it's harmonious and sometimes it's fireworks. At the end of the day, they always hug it out and move on with the task at hand.

HOME COOK HEROES

Lama: My mumma... hands down!

Sarah: My aunty Aida and my mum.

SIGNATURE DISH

Lama: I have three - kousa mahshi, spenikh w ris and sheikh el mahshi. They're my favourite home cooked Lebanese dishes. They remind me of my childhood and my mother and grandparents.

Sarah: My sticky chicken which is chicken fillets marinated in peanut butter, chilli sauce and soy. Or spenikh which is a Lebanese spinach and rice dish with beef.

BRETT & MARIE

QLD - Group 3



Brett, 35, and Marie, 38, are a loving husband and wife team from Brisbane.

"Marie was my first love," says Brett. "The first time I laid eyes on her I was just in awe but then she took off overseas. Years later we hooked up again and it was like we'd never left each other."

"We both have a child from previous relationships and then we decided to add one more," says Marie of their modern family of five.

"Cooking to me is an expression of love," she adds.

"It's definitely something that we want to pass onto our kids," reveals Brett.

"Our food dream is to open a small tapas restaurant and bar where the atmosphere is warm and welcoming and gives the feeling of family and togetherness," says Marie.

And don't underestimate these first loves.

"We're really competitive," admits Marie, a student.

"Definitely!" adds Brett, who helps find jobs for people with disabilities. "There's no prizes for coming second in life."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Good food that tastes great.

STRENGTH

Savoury.

IN THE KITCHEN

They are both assertive. Brett is more of the leader, but Marie doesn't just follow. They know what needs to be done and are both willing to allow the other person to run with an idea. They are pretty easy going people in general and this is also the case in the kitchen - they work well together and just get on with the job.

HOME COOK HEROES

Brett: Anthony Bourdain, René Redzepi, Magnus Nilsson, Andrew Zimmern, Luke Nguyen.

Marie: Maggie Beer.

SIGNATURE DISH

Brett: If you were to ask my kids this question, I'm sure they would say lamb shanks. They're so full of flavour and the sauce is amazing, I wouldn't say that it is special to me but I love making it because I know how much the kids love it.

Marie: My pasta sauce with grilled polenta or gnocchi. It's my nonna and father's sauce and I've been perfecting it since I was 18. I make mine slightly differently and I think it's better than my father's and brother's... shhhh don't tell them!

VALERIE & COURTNEY

QLD - Group 3



Brisbane mother and daughter team, Valerie, 61, and Courtney, 29, are set to spice things up.

"My mum loves her spices," says Courtney. "She carries raw chillies in her handbag."

"If the food's a bit bland, the chillies come out," admits Valerie, a real estate agent who has been married to husband Errol for 40 years.

Courtney, who works in media sales, is the eldest of their three children.

"Courtney makes me feel young at heart and I love spending time with her," says Valerie.

"I'm so grateful to be in this competition with mum," offers Courtney. "I couldn't think of anyone else I'd want to share this experience with."

Valerie and Courtney study their past for success in the future, drawing on their Anglo Indian roots.

"Our recipes have been passed down through generations," says Courtney.

"I have a book of my father's recipes that's been with me for about 44 years," reveals Valerie. "I think it's going to be our secret weapon."

"I always remember mum in the kitchen cooking and in earlier times my Poppy," says Courtney. "I liked to help out where I could and learned a lot from watching on."

"You've never seen food like ours," promises Valerie.

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Food from the heart and keep the traditions alive.

STRENGTH

Savoury and sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

Valerie is the boss and Courtney is the sous chef. Valerie is a home cook and likes an abundance of everything. Courtney feels she wants to do too much so reigns her in and keeps everything organised. Valerie is very traditional while Courtney gives it a modern flair when she can. There are plenty of fireworks but Courtney has a deep respect for her mother.

HOME COOK HEROES

Valerie: My dad Joe.

Courtney: My mum. She has lived and breathed food, especially Indian cuisine. She was born in New Delhi, and was educated on food, traditions, culture, flavours and taste by my poppy (her dad). I have learnt a lot from mum and still have a lot to learn. As she loves to remind me, I'm lucky to have such an accessible food mentor and role model.

SIGNATURE DISH

Valerie: I don't have just one. My lamb curry, glace/glaze, kitchari and jalfrezi are typical Anglo Indian dishes which I learnt from my father and now my family always asks me to cook.

Courtney: Lamb curry (with plenty of accompaniments). It is special to mum and I because it's a family favourite and we have enjoyed it at home a lot. I first ate a lamb curry when I was just three-years-old.

Instagram icon @valeriecourtney.mkr

MELL & CYN

NSW - Group 3



Wollongong business women Mell, 40, and Cyn, 42, are planning on success.

"We're definitely here to win," says Cyn, who acknowledges that people can be intimidated by how confident and successful she and good friend Mell are.

"When people first meet us they tend to judge us as pretentious, stuck up cows," says Cyn. "That's their problem, not ours. I don't really care what people think about me."

"I tell it how it is," adds Mell, a licensed conveyancer who works in the law firm Cyn owns with her husband.

"So technically I'm her boss," says Cyn. "But (in the kitchen) we don't think either of us is boss. We've both got our strengths in different departments and because we can both cook well, we don't need a boss."

Mell describes their entertaining style as "high class".

"We love entertaining, we love the wow factor," says Cyn. "The other teams are going to be intimidated the moment they drive up to our house."

But don't judge a book by its cover warns Cyn.

"I think people's perceptions of us will be 'we have it all'," says Cyn. "But we didn't get that by luck, we didn't get it given to us. It was bloody hard work and a lot of sacrifice and that's exactly the attitude we're going to take into this competition."

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Fresh, full flavoured food with a creative flair.

STRENGTH

Savoury and sweet.

IN THE KITCHEN

There is no leader or follower; they are both bosses and work very well together. Each of them plays a strong role in the kitchen as they are good at different things. Cyn is a more relaxed cook so helps to calm Mell down. Mell pushes Cyn to do better. When it comes to recipes, they nut things out together to achieve an end result they are both satisfied with. They both understand what hard work is and never ever give up.

HOME COOK HEROES

Mell: Cyn.

Cyn: My nonna.

SIGNATURE DISH

Mell: Satay chicken, profiteroles and chocolate eclairs. I really love to cook all types of Asian food and also many different types of desserts.

Cyn: I don't really have just one. But my meatballs are special to me because it took a lot of meatballs for my husband to give it the tick of approval.

 @mellcyn.mkr



JUDGES

MANU FEILDEL

Series Judge



What we can look forward to in MKR 2017?

More, More, More! More drama, more food, more competition.

What were you looking/hoping for in this year's hopefuls?

Great food, a love of great food and an ability to cook great food.

Has anything surprised you about this year's teams?

Everyone has been wanting better food for each other.

What keeps you coming back to MKR year after year?

Travelling the country to discover new home cooks and the competition this encourages.

MKR 2017 will be remembered as the year of the...?

Pickles! And average/below average/above average - you'll soon discover what this means!

Who is your home-cook hero and why?

My Mum Evelyne. She taught me so much about family cooking and good simple food. I miss my mum's cooking!

Who are your dream dinner party guests?

The cast of Seinfeld. I would love to cook for Jerry when he comes to Australia!

What words of advice would you give to viewers at home who are thinking about applying for MKR?

If you think you can cook, just give it a go!

PETE EVANS

Series Judge



What we can look forward to in MKR 2017?

Flavour, flavour and more flavour! We have delicious food, exciting destinations and challenges and colourful and passionate cooking teams.

What were you looking/hoping for in this year's hopefuls?

Teams that tell me a story as to why they have a passion for food. I love when that translates onto the plate and palate.

Has anything surprised you about this year's teams?

They are a lot more confident than previous years... it has stepped up a notch!

What keeps you coming back to MKR year after year?

The food keeps evolving and the teams keep getting stronger plus I have a lot of fun working with my mates Manu and Colin.

MKR 2017 will be remembered as the year of the...?

Confident home cook!

Who is your home-cook hero and why?

Any parent that chooses to cook delicious and nourishing food for their family day after day as there is no greater gift than that of good, healthy food cooked with love and intent.

Who are your dream dinner party guests?

My children and my wife.

What words of advice would you give to viewers at home who are thinking about applying for MKR?

"Come on down" as Larry Emdur would say... we'd love to see what you have!

COLIN FASSNIDGE

Judge



What we can look forward to in MKR 2017?

Great personalities, some good cooking and a lot of surprises.

What were you looking/hoping for in this year's hopefuls?

Passion and cooking from the heart. My group has always had a couple of teams in the finals and I want to keep it going.

Has anything surprised you about this year's teams?

The overall standard and skill level is high.

What keeps you coming back to MKR year after year?

The pay cheque!

MKR 2017 will be remembered as the year of the...?

Some of the best challenges ever seen in the competition!

Who is your home-cook hero and why?

My mum Collette. She taught me everything I know.

Who are your dream dinner party guests?

Al Pacino, Chewbacca and my brother Andrew – cause he's a bit of both of the other guys.

What words of advice would you give to viewers at home who are thinking about applying for MKR?

Give it a go because someone just like you said that and now they are \$250,000 richer!

KAREN MARTINI

Guest Judge



What we can look forward to in MKR 2017?

Lots of thrills and quite a few spills, as teams ultimately deliver delicious, passionate food on a plate.

What were you looking/hoping for in this year's hopefuls?

Confidence, integrity and flair with a smile.

Has anything surprised you about this year's teams?

The level of bonding between the teams is rather strong – sometimes I think they forget it's a competition!

What keeps you coming back to MKR year after year?

Year after year, I am constantly surprised at the dedication and determination of the contestants, especially towards the end from the final four teams. There's always some great, ambitious food to be judged.

MKR 2017 will be remembered as the year of the...?

The rise of the pickle condiment and some exquisite sauces.

Who is your home-cook hero and why?

My grandmother, Meme, as she always taught me that the most precious ingredient in the food you cook is love. Never cook whilst angry.

Who are your dream dinner party guests?

Guy, Liz, Colin, Manu and Pete because we always enjoy ourselves around the table, and they would never dare judge!!

What words of advice would you give to viewers at home who are thinking about applying for MKR?

To be a good cook, you also have to enjoy eating – tasting is terribly important, even when you're under time pressure. And you need to be able to work as a team – there is no 'I' in team!

GUY GROSSI

Guest Judge



What we can look forward to in MKR 2017?

Good food, blood, sweat, and lots of tears!

What were you looking/hoping for in this year's hopefuls?

Honest and soulful food.

Has anything surprised you about this year's teams?

Their determination.

What keeps you coming back to MKR year after year?

The sheer excitement!

MKR 2017 will be remembered as the year of the...?

Kitchen wars!

Who is your home-cook hero and why?

My Mamma, need I say why!

Who are your dream dinner party guests?

People with an insatiable appetite.

What words of advice would you give to viewers at home who are thinking about applying for MKR?

If you think you've got what it takes, dive in and get ready to hold on to your hat!

LIZ EGAN

Guest Judge



What we can look forward to in MKR 2017?

More great personalities and some talented cooks!

What were you looking/hoping for in this year's hopefuls?

For their heritage and family traditions to shine through.

Has anything surprised you about this year's teams?

I'm always surprised by the talent and passion home cooks have.

What keeps you coming back to MKR year after year?

Seeing the teams' skills and confidence grow as the competition goes on.

MKR 2017 will be remembered as the year of the...?

I'll remember it as the year I finally saw fish cooked with confidence and matching skills.

Who is your home-cook hero and why?

My mother, she taught me so much.

Who are your dream dinner party guests?

My grandparents, on both sides, because I never met them and I have so much I'd like to talk to them about.

What words of advice would you give to viewers at home who are thinking about applying for MKR?

Run an instant restaurant at home, complete with timer, and see how you feel after that!

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