

Look who's **crashing**
the party!



Mon-Thurs 7.30 on



REAL FOOD REAL PEOPLE

This year, the My Kitchen Rules dinner tables are set for a few extra guests – as three new teams crash the party.

In the third round of instant restaurants, three original teams will do battle with three new gatecrasher teams.

Like the previous rounds, each team will transform an ordinary home into an instant restaurant. They'll serve up a three-course menu designed to impress their fellow contestants and our esteemed judges, Pete Evans and Manu Feildel.

And our gatecrashers don't hold back as they try to stamp their mark on the competition. It's mitts off in an effort not to be the next team eliminated?

There will be exciting new dishes, new alliances formed and a whole new level of drama in the kitchen and at the table.

Our gatecrashers are:

Victoria – Angela and Melina (Real Housewives)

New South Wales – Ashlee and Sophia (BFFs)

Western Australia – Kieran and Nastassia (Food Nerds)



ASHLEE & SOPHIA

Best friends

Growing up with few luxuries, good food was at the heart of happy family life for these two from Cabramatta in Sydney's west.

"We didn't have much, not a lot of money, but my parents always made sure we had good, wholesome food," says Sophia. "We really couldn't have much else but there was always a fresh cooked meal every day. It was the one way they could nourish and show us love."

Food, says Sophia, also has the ability to transport you back in time. "You can remember what the weather was, what you wore when you ate something. I remember these polka dot MC Hammer pants I was wearing, it was raining and my mum made this particular dish," she says.

Sophia's family is from Cambodia and Ashlee's from Vietnam. They grew up in Sydney's hub of South East Asian life, Cabramatta. The girls have been best friends since they sat next to each other on their first day of kindergarten.

Sophia, 29, is now doing a communications degree at Griffith University, while Ashlee, 28, is involved in blogging and photography.

Ashlee has been married for five years to American born Matthew, while Sophia is "single and ready to mingle". But she admits she and her "crazy hilarious" friend have a bond that's hard to come between.

"With any great partnership it's the yin and the yang. Like I always say to Ashlee, I swear we're like the Olsen twins. We just know what the other is gonna do or think. We definitely have this connection that is cosmic.

"Ash and I are true to ourselves," she adds. "We get an idea in our mind and we follow it through and if it pans out great; if it doesn't, well, that's life. We're fearless."

Adds Ashlee: "My friends would say I'm very straightforward and honest. I don't sugarcoat things. I don't see the point in making people feel better and not having them get the message."

The girls love to throw dinner parties together and say their style of cooking is distinctly Australian. "We're Australian girls at the end of the day and when you think about Australian cuisine, it encompasses everything from Asian to French," says Sophia.

Plus Ashlee loves to cook American for her husband. "I love to make corn bread. A bit of Spanish and Mediterranean. I like to cook everything. I try to mix it up."

And they say the beauty of living in Cabramatta is the availability of great produce. "Cabramatta has cleaned up so well, it's a tourist destination," says Ashlee. "There are food tours. But the myth has stuck to the name and it annoys me. The drug problems were in the '90s. The people of Cabramatta have come so far. We'd like people to see us and understand that."



GROUP 1

KIERAN & NASTASSIA

Food nerds

Swan Valley, WA mates Nastassia and Kieran lead double lives.

By day, Nastassia, 29, is a super-organised property manager, overseeing a department of six at a real estate agency.

By night, she's unleashing her nerdy obsession: her addiction to 1980s cartoons.

To the outside world Kieran, 31, in sales at JB Hifi, is metal guy: the long haired aficionado of all things Metallica and heavy metal music.

But in his other life he's passionately committed to table top gaming – Kieran has been playing War Hammer since he was 12.

"Yes, I'm a nerd," says Kieran, who plays with Nastassia's husband.

Kieran's best friend is Aaron, Nastassia's husband of two years and partner of 11. And now Kieran and Nastassia cook together every other Sunday.

Nastassia only learned to cook when she and Aaron moved in together.

"Cooking was forced on me because my husband couldn't fend for himself," she says. "When I first moved out I was quite happy to live on Vegemite sandwiches. Then he moved in with me and I suddenly had to feed him. I admit I was really bad at cooking at first. I was 19. I just got better and started to buy more cookbooks and enjoy it. I started doing my mum's recipes and got excited about it."

Kieran's cooking also came out of necessity.

"I was really fussy as a kid – a terrible eater," he says. "Mum forced it on me she said, 'I'm not cooking for you. I'm sick of cooking different meals for everyone.' I cooked steak and mushrooms for myself when I was seven. But it took me a while to get into it. I hated the smell of garlic and got to 19 and the switch went on. I'd help Mum and it went from there."

As hard working as Nastassia is, she says her mum passing away last year from diabetes-related heart disease caused her to reassess.

"When I lost Mum I realised I needed to change my world. I was working 14-hour days. My husband would ring and say 'Where are you?' I've just recently changed my outlook on things, have become more mellow and not as rigid."

"She's changed – a bit," smiles Kieran. "But she's still bossy."



GROUP 1

ANGELA & MELINA

Real Housewives

Beyond the big hair and perfect makeup, these two Italian beauties are dynamos running their own beauty businesses while maintaining happy home lives.

Angela, 37, runs an eyelash extension salon employing two technicians in her Hughsdale home, while Melina, 31, is the daughter of Melbourne menswear designer Dom Bagnato, and is a personal stylist.

Angela and Melina are very close. “We just bounce off each other with everything,” says Angela.

Adds Melina, “I’m very spontaneous and I need those type of personalities around me. Ange is like that too.”

They describe themselves as people who are “high energy and fun” and who call a spade a spade. “Some would say we’re brutally honest,” laughs Angela.

Angela has been married for four years and has a 2 ½-year-old boy called Patrick. Melina has been married 3 ½ years and has a 16-month-old boy Jordan. “We’ve been friends for 13 years and now our sons are friends. Oh, and we’ve got exactly the same wedding anniversary.

“It was a coincidence because Ange was married in Ireland and I couldn’t make it so didn’t have the date of it in my head and then it was the only date we could get at the venue we wanted for ours.”

Among other things they share is a passion for cooking.

“We send photos to each other on our phones of our food,” says Angela.

“It will be like, ‘I want to eat that next time I come over,’” continues Angela, “Or I will keep leftovers for her, ring her up and say, ‘Are you in the area? Come over and taste this.’”

“Food for us as Italians means family and it’s so joyful and passionate,” says Melina. “There’s no way I’d let my husband pick up takeaway. I get such pleasure out of seeing him eat.”

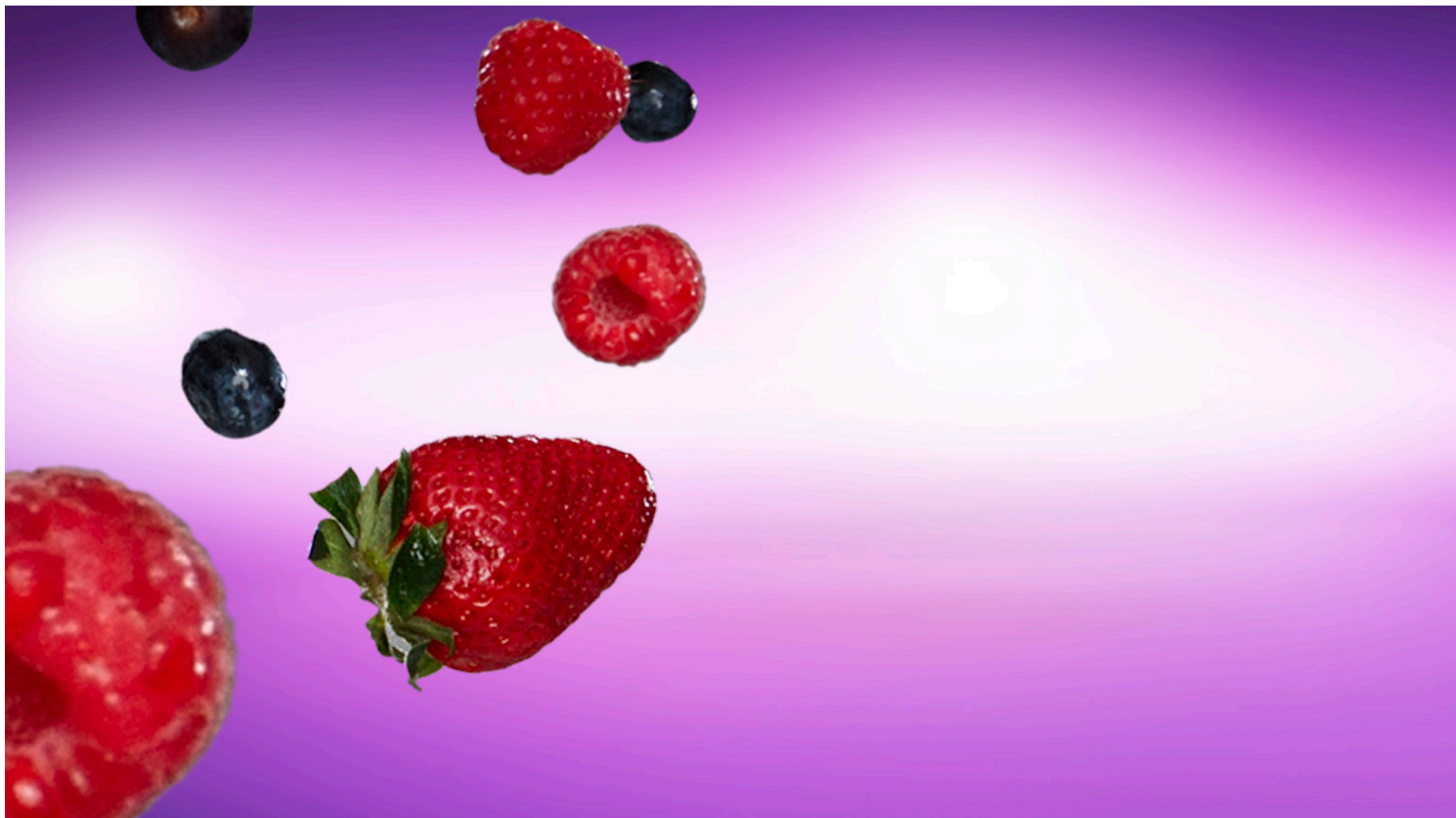
Angela agrees: “My husband says he can start eating, count to three in his head and as sure as anything I’ll say, ‘What’s it like?’

Do you like it?’ And I’m totally unaware I do it most of the time. It drives him absolutely insane.”

Their other shared commitment is to good grooming and – big hair. “We love hairspray!” says Melina. “We love ourselves. We look after ourselves,” she explains. “We’re confident in our marriages and we work hard as mums and we work hard at our relationships. We’ve got a lot to be proud of so I believe when you leave the house, the way you look represents how you feel. So if you look like crap, then you’re not happy in your life.”

But, adds Angela, “We’re genuine. I just happen to be a real person who likes to dress up.”





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