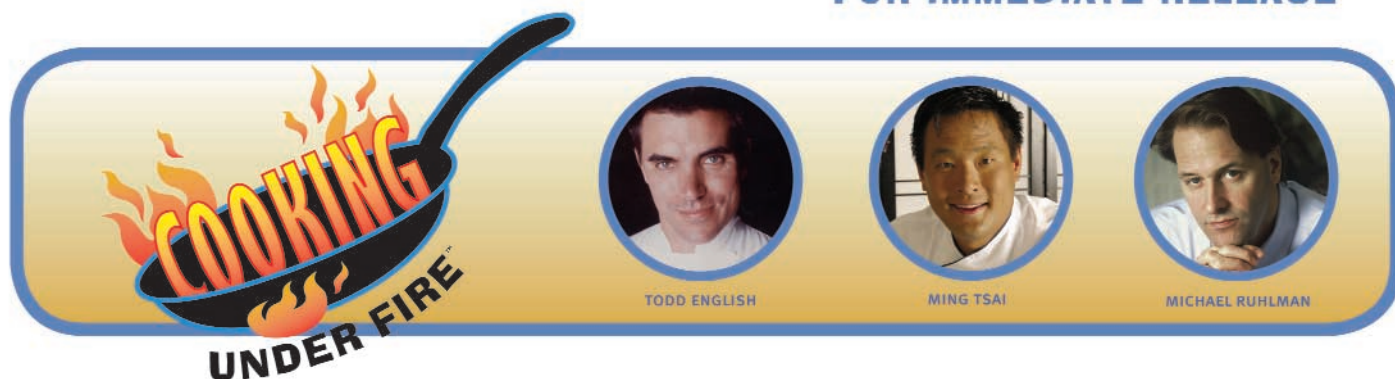


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PBS Serves Up “Reality TV That Feeds Your Brain” As: COOKING UNDER FIRE Heats Up In Prime-Time On PBS

**Ming Tsai, Todd English, And Michael Ruhlman Put Aspiring Chefs To The Test
To Find Out Who Can Handle The Heat**

(Boston, MA, March 21, 2005) Think you know what it takes to make it in today’s culinary arena? The world has watched celebrity chefs reach rock-star status, and the number of aspiring talent is rapidly on the rise ... But the fast-paced, every day pressures of the restaurant industry are anything but glamorous as wannabe chefs struggle to climb the culinary ladder. So who can really handle the pressure of cooking under fire? That’s the question PBS will answer in the brand-new prime-time reality series **COOKING UNDER FIRE**, premiering on Wednesday, April 27 at 8pm (and running at 8:30pm through July—check local listings).

Served up by PBS as “reality TV that feeds your brain,” the documentary-style series will track twelve contestants—ranging in age from 23 to 42, including four women and eight men—as they embark on a coast-to-coast cooking competition in four of the nation’s culinary capitals—Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Miami, and New York. In twelve episodes, the show will give viewers an insider’s look at the mental and physical challenges and intense pressures faced in the today’s highly competitive restaurant industry, and the combination of talent and skills that it takes to succeed as a chef—from creativity and culinary acumen to management abilities and purchasing power. It’s reality TV—the way only PBS can do it.

The focus of the series is to expose the fire that drives successful chefs, according to co-executive producers Lance Reynolds, John Rieber, and Laurie Donnelly. “The audience will see through the contestants’ eyes as they tackle challenges that range from the deceptively simple to the level of a five-star chef, all in the high pressure atmosphere of the kitchen,” explained Rieber. “There are elements of sabotage, anger, camaraderie—and in some cases, things actually go up in flames.”

Each week, the contestants will be judged by famed chefs and restaurateurs Ming Tsai and Todd English, along with author and trained chef Michael Ruhlman (*The Soul of a Chef*, *The Making of a Chef*), as they face intense cooking challenges, difficult deadlines, and the heated pressure of working against the clock. In each of the competition cities, an impressive panel of local guest chef judges including David Myers of Sona (Los Angeles), Michael Mina of Mina’s (Las Vegas and San Francisco), Norman Van Aken of



COOKING UNDER FIRE is a co-production of WGBH Lifestyle Productions, Lance Reynolds, and John Rieber. Corporate funding is provided by Chrysler, Inspiration comes standard; Contessa Premium Foods, Inc; and All-Clad. Additional funding provided by public television viewers.



**New primetime series premiering on PBS
Wednesday, April 27**



Norman's (Miami, Orlando, and Los Angeles), and Marcus Samuelsson of Aquavit (New York), will also weigh in on the deliberation.

“Our judges not only bring to the table the knowledge of talent and skill needed to instruct our contestants and viewers about the culinary arts,” said Laurie Donnelly, co-executive producer of COOKING UNDER FIRE and head of WGBH Lifestyle Productions. “They have lived through the very process of starting out and ultimately thriving in this business, and recognize the skills—but most importantly, the passion—it takes to make it as a chef.”

In order to survive this competition, the aspiring chefs must bring together their experience in the kitchen, unique style, organization skills and creativity under pressure to serve the judges a winning meal and take one step closer to the culinary prize. Failure to execute runs them the risk of being “86’d”—taken off the competition menu and sent home. Success brings them one step closer to winning, and heading down a life-altering path—attaining a chef position in one of restaurateur Todd English’s New York City restaurants.

See who has what it takes to handle the pressure of COOKING UNDER FIRE, when the twelve-part series premieres in prime time, Wednesday, April 27, at 8pm (and runs at 8:30pm through July, only on PBS—check local listings).

Beyond the Series: COOKING UNDER FIRE Web Site and Companion Book

Viewers will be able to continue learning from the series by visiting www.pbs.org/cookingunderfire for exclusive behind-the-scenes footage, contestant journals and recipes. Additionally, a companion book will be published this spring, containing contestant recipes from each episode, and commentary by our celebrity chefs.

About the COOKING UNDER FIRE Production Team

COOKING UNDER FIRE is based on an idea by Lance Reynolds, President of Atlantic Films & Television, Inc., who has represented some of America's leading celebrity chefs including Jamie Oliver (The Naked Chef). The production team also includes John Rieber, founder of A Better Machine, Inc. and former Senior Vice President of Original Programming for E! Entertainment Television, who created programming such as the “Wild On” travel series and “Revealed with Jules Asner”; and Laurie Donnelly, head of WGBH Lifestyle Productions; and represents an award-winning combination of feature film, documentary, how-to, and lifestyle programming experts.



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WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer, the source of fully one-third of PBS's prime-time lineup, along with some of public television's best-known lifestyle shows and children's programs and many public radio favorites. WGBH is the number one producer of Web sites on pbs.org, the most-visited dot-org on the Internet. WGBH is a pioneer in educational multimedia and in technologies and services that make media accessible to the 36 million Americans who rely on captioning or video descriptions. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards...even two Oscars. In 2002, WGBH was honored with a special institutional Peabody Award for 50 years of excellence. For more information visit www.wgbh.org.

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