

TV Review: Gordon Ramsay Returns For More Culinary Abuse in ‘Hell’s Kitchen,’ ‘Masterchef’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 4, 2012 - 10:01am

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CHICAGO – If you’ve ever said to yourself, “You know, one sub-par cooking competition show isn’t enough, I need two back-to-back!,” then FOX is set to make your Summer, pairing Gordon Ramsay’s two culinary programs, “Hell’s Kitchen” and “Masterchef,” back-to-back on Monday nights.



TV Rating: **2.5/5.0**

From the mindset that has had his chefs cook the same thing at Hell’s Kitchen for a decade (when I hear the words “lobster” and “spaghetti,” I picture his snarling face), one should expect that little has changed on either program. Whereas vastly superior shows like “Top Chef” are constantly trying to tweak their formulas with new locations, challenges, rules, Ramsay sends out the same cold entrees year after year. There are are few glimpses of the reality show fun that could provide a bit of escapism on Monday night but the sense that these episodes are so repetitive that they might as well be repeats of last season’s premieres is ridiculous.



Hell's Kitchen

Photo credit: FOX

“Hell’s Kitchen” kicks off the night with the start of its tenth season, one that promises the most high profile winner to date as the champion will be the chef at Ramsay’s steak restaurant at the Paris hotel in Las Vegas. It’s quite a prize and one would then assume that the competition will be stiff, filled with a higher caliber of chef than the program has ever seen before. Ramsay is going to hand over his kitchen to

this winner — he better have a good pool from which to choose.



Masterchef
Photo credit: FOX

Nope. It's more of the same "Hell's Kitchen" formula. Some of them seem relatively talented but others can't figure out how to sear a scallop or to get anchovies from a refrigerator. There's something so bizarre about the formula for "Hell's Kitchen" in that it's CRYSTAL clear that some candidates were chosen not because they were good chefs but because they were good-for-TV chefs. The show seems to blend the "American Idol" auditions round with later ones in that there are people on the show that are meant to be laughed at, mingling among the actual potential winners. Does anyone think that Ramsay is handing over a Vegas restaurant to a 22-year-old? To the guy who's so big that he can barely breathe much less survive on a line? These people are meant to make mistakes.

And that's my problem with "Hell's Kitchen" - the level of competition. Some of these chefs wouldn't survive at a Chili's. I wouldn't allow a few of them to cook me pancakes. And so why should I watch them on a reality show?

"Masterchef" feels a little more honest in its set-up in that none of the contestants are professional chefs. The concept is similar to "Idol" in that there are three professionals passing judgment on home chefs who think they can break through to the next level. The third season of "Masterchef" feels more confident than when the show began. Less high profile names like Joe Bastianich and Graham Elliot (the other two judges next to Ramsay) have developed their own confident roles on the show and feel less nervous than before. Even Ramsay is way more toned down than on "Kitchen."

And yet there's still that "made for TV" feel about the whole thing with contestants who were clearly cast for their entertainment value and not their culinary ones. The producers of "Top Chef" proved that talented chefs could be entertaining and that they didn't need larger-than-life personalities like the woman named Monti Carlo (with a son named Danger) or the seven-foot chef. It's just goofy. It's a modestly entertaining show overall and I did find a few of the contestants interesting but it's not a meal anyone will remember.

"Hell's Kitchen" and "Masterchef" return on Monday, June 4, 2012 on FOX.



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