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This forthcoming Center City restaurant is built around home cooks' recipes — and reality TV will decide what's on the menu

Winners will eat free at the restaurant as long as their recipe is on the menu.



Ed Baumstein is betting that Philadelphia's next great restaurant won't come from a professional chef — rather, from the kitchens of everyday Philadelphians.

Baumstein, a longtime business executive, is behind the ambitious Recipe Philly, a 175-seat restaurant, opening next spring at Broad and Arch Streets. In a novel hook, the menu will exclusively feature recipes created by the winners of a competition, and the creative process will be filmed as a docuseries of the same name.





How Recipe Philly will work

The competition will begin Nov. 8 with a casting call and registration at the Convention Center's Broad Street atrium; pre-registration is open at recipephilly.castingcrane.com. With cameras rolling, contestants will fill out recipe cards and share the stories behind their dishes, not the dishes themselves.

Josh Randall, the warmup host for *American Idol*, will emcee that day's filming. Production will continue as producers whittle the entries down to about 100 contestants, and then to about 35 finalists.

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A rendering of the dining room at Recipe Philly, planned for Broad and Arch Streets.

Courtesy of Recipe Philly

Each winner will receive \$1,000, with additional category prizes of \$2,000, and their names and photos will appear on the restaurant's menu next to their dishes. They'll also eat for free at the restaurant as long as their recipe remains featured.

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The docuseries will consist of eight to 10 episodes, beginning with the November casting call and the early stages of restaurant construction. Later episodes will focus on the competition, the judging, and the restaurant's transformation from an empty space to a fully realized dining room designed by Nelson, an international design and architecture firm. (Joe Scarpone,

to food,” he said in an interview last week. “It’s the best-kept secret in the country — 25% cheaper than New York, 25% cheaper than D.C., and just full of family and community.”

Baumstein’s inspiration for Recipe Philly traces back to his days running SolomonEdwards, the Philadelphia-based consulting firm he founded in 1999, expanded internationally, and sold three years ago.



We gave out little prizes, and just getting that three minutes of fame was unbelievable.”

Solomon Edwards compiled the recipes into a cookbook, which Baumstein kept as a reminder of how food brings people together. “What I love more than food is the inspiration that people give you,” he said. “In a world full of negativity, I wanted to create something that highlights the positive.”

The team behind the kitchen

Baumstein’s Homebred Hospitality owns the Recipe Philly brand. His restaurant partner is chef Andy Revella, who has handled menu development and operations for restaurants including Bennigan’s, Steak & Ale, and Rainforest Cafe and is a former director of food and beverage for Harrah’s Casino. Jarrett O’Hara, formerly culinary director of Federal Donuts, is vice president of culinary operations.

Baumstein said the total budget was \$4 million — comparable to similar restaurants.



Filming for Recipe Philly begins Nov. 8 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Registration and details are available at recipephilly.castingcrane.com.

Let's Eat, Philly!

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