

Stage 2 Food and Hospitality – 2012

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

**SACE Registration
Number:**

2	9	2	7	6	7	E
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Topic: “Reality television cooking competition programs like MasterChef Australia do not truly depict the South Australian Food and Hospitality Industry”.

Word Count: 2000

This **investigation** is assessed using the following specific features:

Investigation and Critical Analysis	Evaluation
ICA1	E4
ICA2	
ICA3	

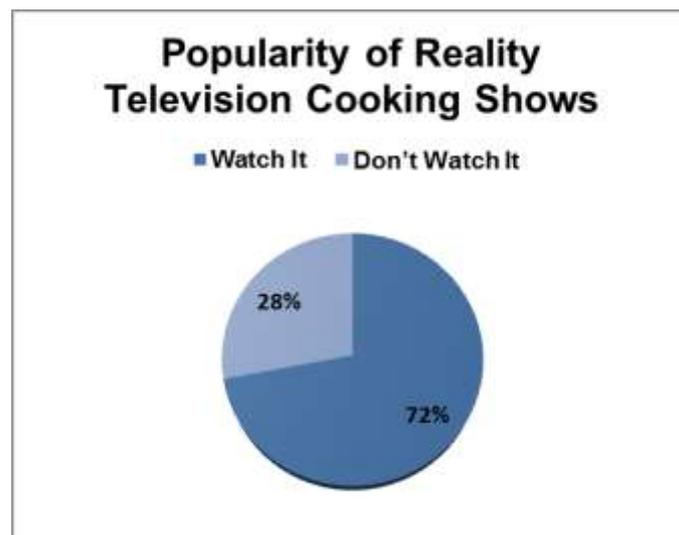
Contents

Introduction.....	3
Scope	4
Methodology	5
Are reality television cooking competition programs targeting the members of the Food and Hospitality Industry or the Gourmet Home Chef?	5
For someone who is interested in becoming a chef are they realistically portraying life as a chef in the Food and Hospitality Industry?	7
Do the Food and Hospitality Industry's menus include dishes that are showcased on these programs?	8
Conclusion.....	10
Reference List.....	11

Introduction

MasterChef has forced its way back the lives of Australians and has just finished its fourth season (Quah, A 2011). Programs like these are ever growing in popularity. The popularity of these programs is shown in Figure 1. MasterChef is providing Australians with a different pathway to the Food and Hospitality Industry. However in today's contemporary society opinions are divided when it comes to the debate of whether it depicts the South Australian Food and Hospitality Industry. MasterChef Judge George Calombaris says "MasterChef Australia is the first reality prime-time cooking program that not only depicts the highs and lows of the hospitality industry, but the passion that each person on the show has for food" (Calombaris G, 2012).

Figure 1: Popularity of Reality Television Cooking Shows, Public Survey, July 2012



Scope

The overall aim of this investigation is to test the following hypothesis:

“Reality television cooking competition programs like MasterChef Australia do not truly depict the South Australian Food and Hospitality Industry”.

Extensive research has been done. Preliminary research has unmasked that there are a range of opinions regarding MasterChef and whether it truly depicts the Food and Hospitality Industry. For the purpose of this investigation I focused mainly on the South Australian Industry. This particular investigation has solely looked at reality television cooking competition programs. This topic is related and focused on these areas of study- contemporary and future issues (contemporary trends in the industry), economic and environmental influences (the importance and role of safe management practices) and political and legal influences (contemporary work place practices, conditions and legislation).

The following focus questions will be used to help guide this investigation:

1. Are reality television cooking competition programs targeting the members of the Food and Hospitality Industry or the Gourmet Home Chef?
2. For someone who is interested in becoming a chef are they realistically portraying life as a chef in the Food and Hospitality Industry?
3. Do the Food and Hospitality Industry's menus include dishes that are showcased on these programs?

Methodology

In order to gain knowledge of the topic and formulate responses to each focus question appropriate primary and secondary sources have been gathered. Several interviews have been conducted with both past and present chefs and personnel in the industry to gain information and opinions on the topic. A survey of the general population or home chefs have been conducted to get the public's opinions and thoughts on MasterChef and whether it is aimed at them or at industry workers. A range of relevant websites have been perused and then analysed and evaluated accordingly. The newspaper was used (electronically) to source relevant information and statistics. There is potential bias represented in interviews, the survey and articles. However these were necessary to formulate responses and were not a limitation of this investigation.

Are reality television cooking competition programs targeting the members of the Food and Hospitality Industry or the Gourmet Home Chef?

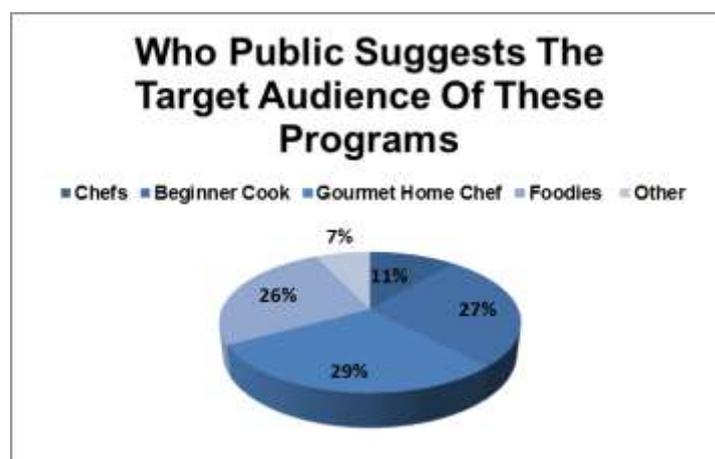
Programs like MasterChef Australia aim to provide their contestants an alternative pathway to enter the Food and Hospitality Industry. The intention is to not only showcase the positive side to being a chef but the less glamorous or negative side also.

Reality television cooking programs are meant to teach their contestants skills needed for working in the industry. However, Margret Fulton said "When I appeared on the MasterChef I found that the contestants were failing at the basics of cooking like pastry making and cooking steak" (Margret Fulton, 2011). In challenges MasterChef Australia focuses on 'restaurant quality food' and it being different to home cooking. The only real thing that sets restaurant food apart from home cooking is the presentation (Alvin Quah, May 2011).

At the beginning of MasterChef Australia season 4 the Sunday Mail TV Guide published an article regarding changes that have been made to the show to make it more viewer friendly, as viewers were complaining they could not trial recipes at home themselves (Sunday Mail – TV Guide, May 2012). This and the fact that MasterChef did a team challenge based on home cooking suggest that the target audience of programs like MasterChef are not professionals but Gourmet Home Cooks or Foodies. During an interview, a participant (full name provided) who is an Apprentice Chef from the Novotel Barossa Valley Resort, stated that she does not know anyone who is a chef and watches reality television cooking programs (Interview 1, July 2012). This might have something to do with the time the program is aired. It has been observed that all winners of MasterChef publish cookbooks aimed at the Gourmet Home Cook not the industry standard chefs.

In a survey of 100 members of the public, one question was raised to ascertain who the public think the target audience of reality television cooking competition programs are. It was proven that Gourmet Home Cooks and Foodies were the target according to the public. As demonstrated in Figure 2. This in turn says that the public do not think these programs are targeting Chefs (Public Survey, July 2012).

Figure 2: Reality Television Cooking Programs



It has been observed through watching MasterChef that there are a variety of things that contestant go on to after the programs. This includes them gaining more experience in a commercial cooking environment and designing their own range of sauces and spices. Some produce their own television programs and many appear as guests in the media.

MasterChef and similar programs are aimed at a broad demographic – from children to adults, males to females and beginners to keen cooks (MasterChef Magazine, 2012) not industry professionals. This probably means these programs are not truly depicting the Food and Hospitality Industry of South Australia.

For someone who is interested in becoming a chef are they realistically portraying life as a chef in the Food and Hospitality Industry?

Much argument revolves around whether or not programs like MasterChef Australia provide an accurate picture for someone who wants to become a chef in the future. Through watching MasterChef it has been observed that their contestants do follow some of the same restrictions and elements as they would in the Food and Hospitality Industry. Contestants are required to do their own Mise en Plas, cook within an allocated time and on occasion they need to work under a budget. However they only experience the positive side of cooking. Whereas in the Industry workers will experience the same but with the addition of stock ordering, cleaning and the less glamorous side of cooking. This would include long hours, working on public holidays, evening work, complaints, stressful working environments and disagreements with colleagues (Interview 3, July 2012)

In an interview with an Apprentice Chef from the Novotel Barossa Valley Resort, it was stated that working within a commercial kitchen is more than just having a passion for food and that there is a whole other level to working in the industry (Interview 1, July 2012). “Before becoming a chef, an apprentice goes through four years of torture and have a demanding lifestyle to lead” (Interview 1, July 2012). In

the reality of cooking one starts with the basic recipes and perfects them before moving on to the harder recipes (Interview 1, July 2012). Alvin Quah in an article for City Search wrote that programs like MasterChef teach the harder recipes and techniques before being able to do the basics perfectly (Alvin Quah, May 2011). This is supported by Margret Fulton's comment that many contestants did not know basic techniques.

Reality competition cooking programs like MasterChef and My Kitchen Rules provide a distorted view of what the Food and Hospitality Industry is like in real life. A person who is aiming to become a chef should not only use these programs to base their decision but should do their own research and work experience to see if the Food and Hospitality Industry is where they belong.

Do the Food and Hospitality Industry's menus include dishes that are showcased on these programs?

Several menus from establishments were selected to ascertain whether the dishes were similar to the ones featuring on MasterChef and like programs. They were the Brasserie, Mawson Lakes Hotel and Function Centre, Chloe's, The Novatel Barossa Valley Resort, Alphutte Restaurant, Café Aqua and Café Primo. For the purpose of this investigation no menus from takeaway restaurants were examined. Through analysis of the establishment's menus and reality television cooking competition programs, it was noticed they both either use regional produce or products that are sourced locally in their menus and dishes (South Australian Menus, July 2012). These establishments and programs were using the same trends in presentation (South Australian Menu). The use of similar trends indicates that MasterChef are using trends created by the industry, particularly their plating techniques are influenced by industry. The plating and presentation ideas which feature on these programs can be useful for the viewers and contestants.

Many participants of the public survey said establishments of a 4-5 star nature serve similar dishes to those served on MasterChef (Public Survey, July 2012). It has been

observed that Celebrity Chefs that appear on the program showcasing dishes have their own establishment. So there are dishes that are exactly the same as those on MasterChef

Due to it only being 3 years since the first season of MasterChef Australia was aired, it has not been long enough for any of the South Australian contestants to have opened a restaurant. It was difficult to conclude if they would have been using dishes from their time in the Master Chef Kitchen.

Taking all this into account the South Australian establishments I researched do not appear to showcase the same dishes as Masterchef and like programs. However there is similarity in presentation and through the ingredients used. In order for this conclusion to be relevant to the Australia wide travel and research would be required.

Conclusion

After conducting this investigation, it is evident that the hypothesis was only partially supported. It was proven that these programs are not targeting chefs. They are targeting the Gourmet Home Chef or Foodies as most contestants have not gone on to open an establishment in South Australia. Also MasterChef has admitted to making it more viewer friendly and also contestants publish cookbooks aimed at the viewer. Most elements and restrictions shown on MasterChef and other programs are the same to the Food and Hospitality Industry however some were different. Thus proving these programs are providing a budding chef with a false and unrealistic impression of the industry. Menus from South Australian establishments when compared to programs like MasterChef only had similarities through presentation style and ingredients. The contestant's meals did not feature in any of the menus examined.

The findings presented in this study maybe limiting. The sample size of people with present and previous experience was rather small and therefore inadequate to represent the opinion of all people who have industry experience in South Australia. If this sample was increased then the findings may have been more definitive. The opinions of the public are unlikely to be representative of the whole population (South Australia), since there were only 100 participants replying. If the number of respondents was increased it maybe more representative.

It is recommended that a potential chef does not base their research on the industry by what they see on these programs, as they provide an unrealistic and distorted view of what the Food and Hospitality industry is like. A potential chef should do their own research and possibly do work experience in various kitchens to see if the industry is right for them. It is expected that MasterChef and like programs in the years to come will probably change their target audience to Industry members and show a more realistic view of the Food and Hospitality Industry. It is recommended that they showcase a realistic and true representation of what the industry is really like, as programs in America like Top Chef do. There is a possibility that viewers will lose interest and these programs may become extinct.

Reference List (ANNOTATED)

Primary Sources

Source	Summary / Opinion
TV Show	
'Team Challenge 7 (Home Style)' 2012, <i>MasterChef Australia</i> , Ten, Adelaide, 27 June 2012, Foxtel Digital Recorder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Showed contestants in a home setting and cooking for the average Australian. ◆ This suggests they maybe be targeting home cooks rather than industry professional.
Survey	
Survey of Public, July 2012, Sample 100 Adelaide citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stated opinions of public. ◆ Suggested that the public thinks it is aimed at the home cook.
Interviews	
Interview 1, <i>Apprentice Chef</i> , Novotel Barossa Valley Resort, Interview, July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Gave valuable statement on whether MasterChef depict the industry. ◆ Suggested that industry professional maybe not watch MasterChef Australia. ◆ Listed jobs done in industry.
Interview 2, <i>Previous Industry Experience</i> , Interview, July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide opinion on the topic. ◆ Gave statement on why they are targeting the gourmet home chef not the industry chef.
Interview 3, <i>Head Chef- Mawson Lakes Hotel and Function Centre</i> , Interview, July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Gave insight in to the jobs performed in his role in the industry.
Menus	
<i>Alphutte Restaurant</i> (MENU), 2012, Alphutte Restaurant, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.alphutte.com.au/menu.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stated the style of food served in South Australian establishments. ◆ Stated the menu style served. Seasonal, A' la carte etc. ◆ Able to view Platting style of each restaurant
<i>Caffe Aqua</i> (MENU), 2012, Caffe Aqua, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.caffeacqua.com.au/site_files/334/menus/CaffeAcquaSeafordMenu.pdf	
<i>The Brasserie</i> (MENU), 2012, The Brasserie, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.thebrasserie.com.au/files/f/162255/Brasserie%20Winter%202012%20Menu.pdf	
<i>Chloe's</i> (MENU), 2012, Chloes, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.chloes.com.au/main%20n	

<u>avigation/menu.pdf</u>	
NBV- Harry Restaurant and Bar(MENU), 2012, Novotel Barossa Valley Resort, accessed 29 July 2012, <u>http://www.novotelbarossa.com/pdf/nbv-harrysdinner.pdf</u>	
Mawson Lakes Hotel Dining (MENU) 2012, Gunn Group of Companies, accessed 29 July 2012, <u>http://www.mawsonlakeshotel.com.au/pdf/Menu_2012.pdf</u>	
Primo Hunger (MENU) 2012, Caffè Primo, accessed 29 July 2012, <u>http://www.caffeprimo.com.au/primo-hunger.htm</u>	
Newspapers	
Karvess, D, 2009, 'George Calombaris a hit on MasterChef', Neo Skomos, 11 May, accessed 29 July 2012, <u>http://www.neoskosmos.com/news/en/node/1076</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Insight into what one of the judges thought the aim of the programs was. ◆ George Calombaris shared what he can give to the contest of the show.
Quah, A, 2011, <i>Reality Cooking TV Shows – Underdone or Overcooked?</i> , City Search Australia, accessed 29 July 2012, <u>http://www.citysearch.com.au/events/reality%20cooking%20tv%20shows%20%E2%80%93%20underdone%20or%20overcooked%3F</u> -QUOTE MARGRET FULTON, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ States opinions and gives reflection from professionals and industry representatives regarding MasterChef Australia. ◆ Provided thought unto what people should take away/ learn from the show.
Schipper, D, 2012, 'Food Nerds Are Back', TV Guide (Sunday Mail), 6-12 May 2012, p.8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Looks into the current season of Master Chef. ◆ Proved very helpful to look at what they intend to modify this year to make it better.
Wasley, A, 2012, 'Life after MasterChef for Julie Goodwin, Adam Liaw, and Kate Bracks', Sydney Telegraph, 2 October 2012, accessed 29 July 2012, <u>http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/life-style/sunday-magazine/heads-of-the-master-class/story-e6frf039-1226154225748</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provided insight into each season's winner's life after MasterChef.

Secondary Sources

Source	Summary / Opinion
Websites	
<p><i>The Big Boss: A Day In The Life of the Executive Chef</i> 2012, CulinarySchool.com, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.culinaryschools.com/the-big-boss-a-day-in-the-life-of-the-executive-chef</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Look a day in the life of an executive chef. Providing a valuable means of comparison with the television shows.
<p>MASTERCHEF MAGAZINE 2012, News Limited, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.newsspace.com.au/masterchef</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Suggest who the target audience of MasterChef Australia branded programs and products.
<p><i>MasterChef Website</i> 2012, Shine, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.masterchef.com.au/home.htm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provided insight into the winners. ◆ Looked at dishes served on programs, presentation style. And challenges presented to the contestants on shows.
<p><i>My Kitchen Rule Website</i> 2012, Yahoo 7, accessed 29 July 2012, http://au.tv.yahoo.com/my-kitchen-rules/</p>	
<p><i>Top 10: 5 Star Adelaide Restaurants</i> 2012, Nile Project, accessed 29 July 2012, http://www.nileguide.com/destination/adelaide/best/five-star-restaurants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provided a list of 5 star restaurants in Adelaide. ◆ Easy to find each restaurant and navigate to their website.
<p>Piper, S 15 September 2011, <i>Reality TV Cooking Shows vs. The Reality of Cooking</i>, Sally Piper, accessed 29 July 2012, http://suite101.com/article/reality-tv-cooking-shows-vs-the-reality-of-cooking-a389024#ixzz21zK4TJRY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Compare / contrasted the reality of cooking with what is shown on reality television cooking programs.