

Chef Adam Ryan to compete in Chopped Canada TV series

By Tabitha Wells

In January, Food Network Canada will be premiering Chopped Canada, a fast-paced cooking show pitting chefs against one another for the chance to win \$10,000.

The show is the first Canadian edition of the immensely popular series in the U.S., and focuses on shining the spotlight on Canadian culinary talent from across the country.

“Over the last few years, Canadians have devoured the nail-biting competition in Chopped and it's a thrill to introduce our own adrenaline-pumping edition,” said Shaw Media's Senior Vice President of Content Barbara Williams. “With the highly entertaining Dean McDermott at the helm and some of the country's most respected chefs presiding over the judges' table, the all-Canadian cast of contenders are in for the competition of their lives.”

Orangeville's Adam Ryan, executive chef at 199 Restaurant on Broadway, was selected as one of the cut-throat series competitors, to cook off in head-to-head challenges in front of a panel of expert judges for a chance at the grand prize.

“I thought it would be fun to compete. I've done competitions like this in the past, and it was a fun and different experience, and I would get a chance to win some money doing the job,” Ryan commented. “There was a casting call online application that I filled out. I heard back from them and I went to meet the producers, and I had an interview with them, and then I heard back from them again saying I was on the show.”

In each episode, the chefs are asked to turn a basket of mystery ingredients into a three-course meal in just 20 minutes. Course by course, the judges select which chef will be “chopped” from the show, until only one chef remains as the champion.

“The demands and the stress were definitely up there as the worst parts of the competition,” Ryan said. “Twenty minutes to cook a dish is not a lot of time, and as soon as you open the basket of ingredients, your mind is just going a hundred miles an hour. It's quite overwhelming to open up a basket of ingredients and then try to put a dish together in a limited amount of time.”

According to Ryan, the cooking part of the competition definitely met his expectations. The experience was a different one, but was fun and challenging, and pushed him to cook in ways he wouldn't normally cook in order to perform at the highest level he could.

“I think my favourite part was just getting to do what I wanted to do, and going in there and getting some new ingredients and getting to cook with them in the way that I cook,” he said. “The neat thing about the show is that there are no limits in what they want you to cook. You can cook whatever you want. There are no twists, no change-ups. You get your ingredients, they set the time limit and you just cook.”

The show will air on Food Network Canada, starting tonight (Jan. 2) at 10 p.m. Behind-the-scenes footage, as well as full episodes after the air dates will be available on the show's website at choppedcanada.ca

“Being on Chopped and the exposure to all of the restaurants will be good for everyone,” Ryan observed. “I think people will watch the show, and if they've never heard of the restaurant they'll want to go there and if they have been there before they'll want to go back.”