

tastytv

BY GEORGE DICKIE

Bakers turn detective to recreate delicious desserts on Fox's 'Crime Scene Kitchen'

Fans of baking and forensic investigation will likely find a unique new competition series upcoming on Fox suits their tastes.

In each episode of "Crime Scene Kitchen," premiering Wednesday, May 26, contestants are tasked with entering a kitchen and then using a scant few clues left behind – crumbs, trails of flour, contents of a trash can, etc. – determine the delicious dessert that had just been consumed. They then must set about recreating the confection. The baker who not only gets the dish right but also most impresses the judges – chef Curtis Stone and cake artist Yolanda Gampp – wins a \$100,000 grand prize.

So not only is there baking know-how and technical expertise at play here but also deductive reasoning, a mix Joel McHale – the show's host and a non-baker – found fascinating.

"When you go in the kitchen, you have to check everything," he explains, "including like the bulletin board, you can check the garbage, you have to check the dishwasher. And the (contestants) are like, 'Well, I used milk.' And (the judges are) like, 'You shouldn't have. Why? Because the milk was not opened. Just because it's there doesn't mean it was used.' So there are a couple of misdirects which drive people out of their minds. It's great, and the clues only get harder

and harder as the thing goes on. So sometimes you wind up with close to everybody baking the same thing and then other times just everything is different."

And it is in those other times when things get interesting as contestants will create an absolutely over-the-top spectacular dessert worthy of winning any baking contest – but it's only problem is it's wrong. The judges then must decide whether that baker continues or goes home.

The contestants are a mix of professional and home bakers, some of whom thrive under the bright lights of televised competition while others grapple with their nerves. It is the job of McHale, a stand-up comic by trade, to keep things light and enable the competitors to focus.

"I am a Golden Retriever dropping the tennis ball in front of you so you'll throw it," he says. "So I enjoy all that and I literally get my energy from it. ... I enjoy getting to know the bakers; they all have very interesting backgrounds. ... So I think Fox wanted a non-baker or non-chef as their host just to keep everything kind of – you know, the judges are the experts and the host is the person making loud noises into a microphone and the bakers are baking."



Joel McHale

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