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BY GEORGE DICKIE

Meet the next generation of chefs on 'Battle of the Brothers'

Once up-and-coming chefs themselves, Bryan and Michael Voltaggio know what it's like to make their way in the culinary world. So they'd like to make that journey easier for the generation behind them, as they demonstrate in a competition series coming to discovery+.

In "Battle of the Brothers," which begins streaming Thursday, June 17, the Los Angeles-area siblings and restaurateurs serve as mentors for eight of the country's most promising chefs in a culinary competition designed to test their skills and techniques through three rounds of challenges. The winner at the end of the six episodes – as determined by a panel of rotating judges including Jordan Andino, Alex Guarnaschelli, Christian Petroni, Cliff Crooks and Jeremiah Lawrence Stone – gets a guest-chef takeover at one of the Voltaggios' restaurants to present their own vision and get their name out into the foodie world.

It's a concept both brothers have been longing to undertake for quite some time.

"In our kitchens, this is what we're trying to do every day, is foster new talent," Bryan Voltaggio explains. "And so (the show) presented the opportunity to do this – and especially during the year that we all just had, to give people an opportunity to emerge and become a chef in their own right. ..."

"So Michael and I have been in this industry for a combined 50 years," he adds with a laugh. "We've both been cooking for a very long time. So it's time for us to transition into this role, so there wasn't a better time than now."

The contestants here were all hand-picked by the Voltaggios for their potential to break out and take the next step, be they private chefs, line cooks or sous chefs. And their skills and fundamentals, naturally, are all first-rate. But of course, under the pressure of competition and time constraints and with the presence of TV cameras and lights, they can lose their focus, which is where a mentor's counsel proves critical.



Bryan Voltaggio

"A lot of times it's just, 'Hey, tell me why. Tell me why you're doing that,'" Bryan Voltaggio says. "Because a lot of times, even just asking that simple question makes them rethink the whole reason why they might be approaching an ingredient a certain way, like, 'Why are you braising this now? Tell me what you're going for here.' And just having that out-loud

conversation sometimes either makes a chef think twice about what they're doing or helps them complete their thought.

"And I think that not always are we questioning them thinking it's a bad idea," he continues, "but sometimes it's just maybe steering them in another direction. ... Just making sure that they're going to get their food to the plate."

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