

September 18, 2015 – Maggie McGrath

10 Of America's Most Promising Culinary Talents To Square Off In Under 30 Food Festival

These ten culinary stars have all appeared on the [FORBES 30 Under 30 list](#), but who will reign supreme when they go head-to-head?

For the second year in a row, the [FORBES Under 30 Summit](#) will feature a cook-off between the country's most promising chefs. Last year's winner, Recette's Jesse Schenker, is coming back to defend his title, but he faces some stiff competition. Take, for instance, La Marina's Kelvin Fernandez (30 Under 30 [Class of 2015](#)): he just beat Bobby Flay on 'Beat Bobby Flay.' Or Chef Joseph 'JJ' Johnson (30 Under 30 [Class of 2014](#)), who was a 2015 James Beard Award semi-finalist in the "Rising Star of the Year" category.

Here's a look at the full line-up of chefs squaring off in the Under 30 Food Festival:

Christopher Coombs: A member of the 30 Under 30 [Class of 2012](#), Coombs is the owner of three restaurants in Boston: Deuxave, Boston Chops and dbar. Coombs has been lauded for his "daring small plates," and Boston Chops was named the best steakhouse in Best of Boston 2015.

Kelvin Fernandez: Fernandez is the head chef at New York City's La Marina. He made headlines earlier this year by beating Bobby Flay on the Food Network show "Beat Bobby Flay," becoming just one of five chefs over the course of five seasons to do so.

Nelly Garcia: A member of the 30 Under 30 [Class of 2015](#), Nelly Garcia started baking gourmet wedding cakes on nights and weekends in college. This side gig turned into Rocheli Patisserie, the specialty bake shop Garcia runs in Austin, TX.

John Lasater: Named to the Under 30 list [in 2015](#) and the executive chef at Hattie B's Hot Chicken, Lasater has been setting a new standard for southern fried chicken. His chicken is in such demand that Hattie B's is now expanding beyond its home in Nashville, with a new restaurant expected to arrive in 2016.

Jeff Mahin: Mahin has been credited with driving a pizza revival in Los Angeles. He's the culinary force behind Stella Barra Pizzeria, Summer House Santa Monica, Do-Rite Donuts, and M Street Kitchen. He was named to the 30 Under 30 list [in 2012](#).

Aditi Malhotra: The rare CEO and chocolatier, Malhotra ([Under 30 Class of 2014](#)) is a trained graduate of Switzerland's Glion Institute. She opened her boutique chocolate shop, Tache Artisan Chocolate, in 2012 and has been receiving rave reviews ever since.

Jason Pfeifer: After training at Per Se and Gramercy Tavern, Pfeifer made his way to Danny Meyer's Maialino, where he serves as the chef de cuisine. Pfeifer is a member of the Under 30 [Class of 2014](#).

Giorgio Rapicavoli: A frequent guest on "Chopped," Rapicavoli is the founder of Eating House in Miami. He was a 2013 semi-finalist for the James Beard "Rising Star Chef" award and a 2012 inductee to the [Forbes Under 30 list](#).

Jesse Schenker: Last but certainly not least is the reigning Under 30 Food Festival champion, [2012 Under 30 inductee](#) Jesse Schenker. As the owner and executive chef of New York City's Recette and The Gander, Schenker is the recipient of numerous culinary accolades and is a two-time James Beard Award semi-finalist.

The Under 30 Food Festival will take place on Sunday, October 4, at 6pm in Philadelphia's [Piazza at Schmidt's](#).

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/maggiemcgrath/2015/09/17/10-of-countrys-most-promising-culinary-talents-to-square-off-in-under-30-food-festival/>