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What's Cooking With Curtis Stone

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Curtis Stone

Curtis Stone seems to be turning up everywhere — barbecuing on a deserted island for Oprah, schooling *The Biggest Loser* contestants on nutrition and sharing recipe secrets as a regular contributor on *The Today Show*. Beginning March 16, the Aussie chef can be seen in a dual role as one of four judges and an investor on the new NBC series, *America's Next Great Restaurant*. *TV Guide Magazine* caught up with Stone while he was cooking for Saturday's 2011 G'Day USA Black Tie Gala. What we learned — whether he's delivering or tackling one, Stone is always ready for a challenge.

TV Guide Magazine: Viewers see more of the exercise aspect of *The Biggest Loser* than the food. Is there more going on behind-the-scenes culinary wise?

Stone: I work on-camera and off-camera with the contestants giving them recipes and support the whole way through. That was the motivation for going on *The Biggest Loser*. To some people, food is their biggest enemy. To be able to try and

influence people to change that relationship with food is really special.

TV Guide Magazine: Do you have more challenges in store for this season's contestants?

Stone: I just shot one two days ago with my good friend [Lorena Garcia](#). Lorena and I have just come off of *America's Next Great Restaurant* where we had everybody's concepts restaurants and signature dishes thrown at us for weeks. We took a bit of that creativity to the *Biggest Loser* ranch and said, "How would you create a beautiful, healthy dish that all Americans would love to eat on a daily basis?"

TV Guide Magazine: What can audiences expect from *America's Next Great Restaurant*?

Stone: We opened *America's Next Great Restaurant* up to everyone — contestants didn't have to be a chef or have any experience, they just had to have a love of food. We started off with thousands of contestants, then narrowed them down to 21. After the first episode, we end up with 10. They're given challenges like those they'll be faced with when they enter the restaurant business. Then we figure out who we think has the best concept and who's the best operator.

TV Guide Magazine: Did you learn anything throughout the process?

Stone: We really did. Myself, [Steve Ells](#), [Bobby Flay](#) and Lorena Garcia, the four of us would sit there and someone would pitch us an idea and we'd look at each other and go, "Damn, that's good. Why haven't we done it?" Don't get me wrong; there were some wacky ones. One guy wanted to open a gun store and a restaurant all in the same building, another guy wanted to have a redneck, bare-knuckle fight after the meals were eaten. All sorts of wacky and weird ideas, but some of them

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TV Guide Magazine: What's the winner's prize?

Stone: We're opening up three restaurants across the country for the person we think has the most solid concept. You've never seen four people who host a show be more nervous, because we're investing in this new chain of restaurant that, if it works, we end up with 500 of them, if it doesn't, we might go broke.

TV Guide Magazine: What's been most gratifying about the experience?

Stone: Food has made all my dreams come true. I've gotten to travel, met interesting people and gotten to do what I love everyday. The ability to be able to give something back and make someone else's dreams come true is pretty exciting.

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— *Bekah Wright*

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