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FOOD NETWORK'S *BEST BAKER IN AMERICA* RETURNS TO CHALLENGE ELITE BAKERS FOR ULTIMATE TITLE

Host Scott Conant Joins Judges Jason Smith and Marcela Valladolid, as Nine Bakers Compete for Bragging Rights and Cash Prize

Seven-Episode Season Premieres Monday, May 7th at 9pm ET/PT

NEW YORK – March 28, 2018 – Nine world-class bakers compete for bragging rights and a cash prize in season two of Food Network's primetime competition series *Best Baker in America*, premiering Monday, May 7th at 9pm ET/PT. Food Network's **Scott Conant** hosts the competition as bakers from across the country are put to the test in each episode to create elegant and delicious versions of classic baked goods, including a Skills Challenge that tests their mastery of the essential technical skills of baking, followed by a Master Challenge that tests the baker's prowess working with specific flavors and ingredients. Returning judges **Jason Smith** and **Marcela Valladolid** are joined by rotating guest judges, including baking digital influencers **Yolanda Gampp**, **Joshua John Russell** and **Gemma Stafford**, and prominent cake and pastry experts **Florian Bellanger**, **Shinmin Li**, **Sherry Yard** and **Zac Young**, to determine which bakers possess the artistry and creativity needed to advance through seven episodes, with one baker earning the grand prize of \$25,000 and the title of *Best Baker in America*!

"The art of baking requires incredible skill and the utmost dedication to detail, while also being able to perfectly balance technique and imagination to create the perfect dessert," said Courtney White, Senior Vice President, Programming, Food Network, Travel Channel and Cooking Channel. "Through the competition these nine bakers have their work cut out for them if they are going to impress the judges, and prove to viewers at home that they have what it takes to be the *Best Baker in America*!"

The nine bakers competing for the title of *Best Baker in America* are: **Becca Craig** (Philadelphia, Pa. – Executive Cake Chef); **Kym DeLost** (Chicago, Ill. – Pastry Chef); **Jeremy Fogg** (New Orleans, La. – Pastry Chef); **Frانيا Mendivil** (Los Angeles, Ca. - Executive Pastry Chef); **Leigh Omilinsky** (Chicago, Ill. - Pastry Chef); **Lasheeda Perry** (Atlanta, Ga. – Executive Pastry Chef); **Max Santiago** (Miami, Fla. – Executive Pastry Chef); **Jean-Francois Suteau** (White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. – Executive Pastry Chef); **Adam Young** (Mystic, Conn. – Bakery Owner and Head Pastry Chef).

During the course of the season the nine bakers will have to prove to the judges that they have what it takes to be the best, as they are tasked with culinary challenges designed to test their baking expertise and their inventiveness, including baking perfect Petit Fours to creating a classical French layered meringue cake to constructing the perfect strawberry shortcake and old school classics such as a Charlotte Royale and a Mont Blanc cake, all leading up to the finale on Monday, June 18th when we find out who truly is the *Best Baker in America*.

Meet the newest batch of bakers and view highlights of their creations at [Food Network.com](http://FoodNetwork.com). Plus, get Jason Smith's best baking tips, along with exclusive content from host Scott Conant, Marcela Valladolid and the guest judges. Follow all the baking action and tell us which treats are your favorite using the hashtag #BestBakerinAmerica.

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FOOD NETWORK (www.foodnetwork.com) is a unique lifestyle network, website and magazine that connects viewers to the power and joy of food. The network strives to be viewers' best friend in food and is committed to leading by teaching, inspiring, empowering and entertaining through its talent and expertise. Food Network is distributed to nearly 100 million U.S. households and draws over 46 million unique web users monthly. Since launching in 2009, Food Network Magazine's rate base has grown 13 times and is the No. 2 best-selling



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monthly magazine on the newsstand, with 13.5 million readers. Food Network is owned by Discovery, Inc., a global leader in real life entertainment whose portfolio also includes Discovery Channel, HGTV, TLC, Investigation Discovery, and OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network.