



Press Contact: Seth Hyman
Phone: 646-336-3683; Email: shyman@foodnetwork.com

FOOD NETWORK STAR *Season 14 – Finalist Bios*

Harrison Bader, 26 (Los Angeles, CA) – Don't let Harrison's sweet and charming demeanor fool you. Growing up, Harrison's love for cooking came from family dinners around the table, and working in the kitchen of his dad's delis. While in college Harrison knew cooking was his future, moving to Los Angeles and winning a television culinary competition, which allowed him to work with some of top chefs in the food world. Harrison is currently a personal chef, where he continues to highlight fresh and seasonal ingredients for his clients. Harrison is ready to bring his personality and skills to *Food Network Star!*

Katie Dixon, 35 (Hattiesburg, MS) – Katie is constantly impressing people with her bubbly personality and her recipes that are bursting with flavor. Growing up working on her grandparent's farm, Katie cultivated her love for cooking and creating tasty dishes in the kitchen with her family. Currently a private chef and the owner of a café, Katie's Southern style with an international twist is a force to be reckoned with in the kitchen. In between it all, Katie is always hard at work thinking up new meals for friends and family back at home.

Jason Goldstein, 40 (New York, NY) – With his colorful and happy personality, there is nothing that can break Jason's spirit. A chiropractor by day, Jason runs his culinary blog in his spare time, where he gets to share his true love of easy comfort food with short culinary essays and recipes. Jason finished in the top ten of Rachael Ray's cookbook contest, while also teaching cooking classes where he showcases his rich flavors and comfort food tips. Whether it is cheesy meatballs or a bacon-infused burger, you will want to eat Jason's food on the couch on a Sunday afternoon.

Samone Lett, 46 (Sanford, FL) – Samone is the owner of a personal chef and catering business where she creates decadent dishes for her clients, including her purple port wine mac and cheese. Samone became a food specialist upon joining the military at 18, before moving on to culinary school to follow her passion. After graduating, Samone opened her catering company but soon came upon hard times when she became homeless. After much hard work and determination Samone persevered as a chef, and wants to prove to other women in tough situations that they can accomplish anything.

Rebekah Lingenfelter, 34 (Savannah, GA) – With her Southern drawl and infectious laugh, cooking with Rebekah is a little bit party, a little bit Southern, and a whole lot of fun. A native of Georgia, Rebekah is currently a marketing and public relations director, while also writing a food column for the local paper. Rebekah comes from a long line of Southern cooks and wants to bring her love of Southern coastal cuisine to everyone around the world, teaching how to capitalize on local and seasonal ingredients to make your meals shine.

Palak Patel, 38 (New York, NY) – As a child, Palak learned how to make traditional Indian food with her mother, aunts and grandmother, who are the most influential women in her life. After her family moved to the United States when she was 12, Palak embraced the American culture, experimenting with unfamiliar food and flavors with unbound enthusiasm. While working a desk job for many years, Palak decided to follow her dreams, graduating from the French Culinary Institute. Currently a personal chef, Palak wants to share her love of Indian food and how to use spices and condiments to create vibrant flavors.

Christian Petroni, 34 (Port Chester, NY) – Christian grew up in an Italian family in The Bronx, where he spent countless time in the kitchen learning to make Italian feasts. Starting at a young age in the restaurant business, Christian quickly fell in love with the industry, working his way up and is now the owner of restaurants in Brooklyn, Connecticut and Westchester. With his authentic home cooking and larger than life personality, Christian constantly keeps his customers coming back for more.

Jessica Tom, 34 (Princeton, NJ) – As a food novelist, it was destined that Jessica would incorporate food into every facet of her life. An avid foodie and home cook, Jessica started out in the kitchen as a child helping her father perfect their dishes. While attending Yale Jessica wrote restaurant reviews for the college paper, while soon after graduating embarking on her first novel. Jessica is also a marketing consultant where she collaborates with restaurants and food trucks. In her spare time Jessica also runs a culinary blog, where you won't find anything run of the mill to make in the kitchen.

Chris Valdes, 26 (Miami, FL) – Chris has loved to cook ever since he can remember watching Emeril Lagasse on television, inspiring Chris to cook his first meal before he was ten years old. Chris' passion for the culinary arts eventually earned him a scholarship to attend culinary school. After graduation, Chris created his very own catering company where he creates vibrant, Latin-inspired dishes with modern influences. While Chris has quickly become a recognizable face in Miami, his ultimate goal is to teach viewers at home to cook the food they are passionate about, while never giving up and having a fun time in the kitchen.

Manny Washington, 30 (Orlando, FL) – Manny prides himself as being a food-loving firefighter, regularly cooking up meals for his colleagues. Originally from Miami, Manny was exposed at a young age to different cuisines, including Caribbean, Cuban and Haitian, which he incorporates into his recipes. Manny's goal is to make food fun again, while sharing his unique culinary point of view with the world. Manny has the experience, personality and desire to become the next *Food Network Star!*

###