

Adam Goldgell finishes 2nd in 'Restaurant Express'

Tuesday December 17, 2013 12:13 PM By Tara Conry



(Credit: Handout)

Adam Goldgell was surrounded by friends, family and colleagues when it was revealed Sunday night that he had come in second in Food Network's "Restaurant Express" cooking competition. Although he didn't win the prize of launching his dream restaurant inside the four-star M Resort in Las Vegas with the role of executive chef, Goldgell, 47, of St. James, did land on his feet. After filming for the show wrapped in September, Goldgell resumed his work helping to re-open The Fishery restaurant in East Rockaway, which was battered by superstorm Sandy, and convert it into Reel. He was rewarded for his efforts with an offer to serve as the new eatery's executive chef, which he accepted.

"I wish I would've won, that would have been nice, but I'm happy where I am," he said. "Reel has the potential to be a great restaurant."

Nearly 150 joined Goldgell at Reel on Sunday night for a viewing party to watch the finale and dined on a special menu he created featuring dishes he prepared during his seven-week run on the show. He's planning to add two of them -- a shrimp-salmon burger and a croque monsieur -- to the restaurant's regular menu.

In the final episode, Goldgell and the less experienced Seonkyoung Longest, 29, of Columbus, Miss., found themselves at M Resort, where they had to create a restaurant fit for the hotel -- with a budget of \$5,000 -- that would impress 100 diners plus the show's host, celebrity chef Robert Irvine, and two M Resort executives.

In a way, their journey had come full circle. Seven weeks earlier, they had boarded a luxury bus in Vegas with seven other contestants. As they traveled around the West Coast, they competed in challenges, and each week, the weakest performer was kicked off the bus.

“It was an interesting ride,” said Goldgell, who received praise from Irvine for “keeping a level head” throughout the entire competition.

Although Goldgell wasn’t thrilled with his portrayal on the show, he isn’t ruling out reality TV in the future. After all, this isn’t the first time he almost won a Food Network show. He also finished second in an episode of “Chopped” in 2010.

He added, “I’m a professional runner-up.”