

Cooking Up A Storm With The Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera

Just as its previous hit Gogglebox took us into the nation's living rooms, Studio Lambert's latest documentary series for BBC2, The Kitchen, gives us an insight into how Britain's families come together to eat and discuss their day.

However, this is where the similarities end, both in terms of editorial content and production choices. "We knew that meal times offer a rich opportunity to capture the humour and drama of different households, and gives us a chance to explore the lives of the eight families we follow," explains Mike Cotton, producer, Studio Lambert. "We wanted to emphasize this difference in our shooting style, by selecting cameras that would bring a more cinematic, filmic quality to the content, but at the same time we needed to retain a natural feel, as if we were dropping in on the family."

Studio Lambert worked with director of photography, [Sean Carswell](#) of Base Films, who explains how they devised the series' shooting style. "We wanted to find a different way of getting an 'establishing' shot of the families and the food they had cooked, and we came up with an overhead birds' eye view of the kitchen table and a plate of the meal. In this way, the kitchen table became the leitmotif for each family. Editorially this shot also became a great transitional tool for us to provide a 'pause' for each family and then we could move smoothly into the resulting conversation around the meal, once presented to the table."

In order to achieve this shot, Sean rigged a Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera with a 20mm prime lens over each table and a remote trigger. "The form factor of the camera was important as it had to be able to fit underneath some low ceilings as well as being lightweight enough for the rig. However, we needed the high angle camera to match the cinematic quality of the cameras filming the rest of the action.



"Mike was clear that he didn't want the fish eye effect that is often seen in similar rig shots, but instead the shots of the food had to have a portrait quality, almost as if they were on the pages of a recipe book."

Sean didn't want the kitchens to be over lit, so the dynamic range of the

Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera was critical in order to capture the detail required in natural light and also to match the S-Log footage of the production's other cameras, to ensure an effective post production workflow. "The dimensions of the kitchens were so varied, and with so many people and so much action going on, we needed maximum latitude from all of our cameras to ensure the final shots retained the cinematic quality that was at the heart of Mike's creative vision. He loved the image from the Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera and the signature over the table shot was a real success factor."

The camera was also used in close up and super macro shots of the food preparation, providing a colourful backdrop to the families' conversations. "We could literally put the camera everywhere; in fridges and ovens, or balanced on saucepans to get the shots we needed," explained Mike. "We let the families' story arcs develop naturally, letting the cameras roll as they chatted around their meals, so the Pocket Cinema Camera was really great for achieving some detailed focus shots we could use at any point in the edit, that we knew would complement the conversations circulating around the table, rather than having to rely on having a great shot of the person speaking, which is difficult to achieve in a natural, unscripted shoot."