

# TPT's charming new series 'Relish' spotlights local chefs' personal food stories

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Yia and Pang Vang with Pang's Hmong-style steam buns.

Courtesy of Relish

Thanks to the potential simmering within a May episode of

*Minnesota Original*

featuring Sameh Wadi, Ann Kim, and Shige Furukawa, TPT has found itself with a new web series designed just for foodies:

*Relish*

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*Relish*

premiered this week by way of a web episode featuring Yia Vang of Union Hmong Kitchen and his mother, Pang,

cooking Hmong-style steam buns together

(<https://www.tptoriginals.org/relish-pang-vangs-hmong-style-steam-buns/>).

while discussing how she came to know and make them in the first place.

In subsequent episodes,

*Relish*

is lucky to have chef Vang as its buoyant host.

Throughout the season, he visits five fellow local chefs

—Jose Alarcon, Ann Ahmed, Brian Yazzie, Lachelle Cunningham, Jamal Hashi

—going deep into personal and cultural histories of everything from sticky rice to maize and black eyed peas.

Beyond mixing drool-worthy cooking scenes and weightier moments of reflection, the show's goal is to draw together seemingly disparate communities.

As in the premiere, each chef selects an ingredient or dish that is relevant to them on an individual level. This also becomes a jumping-off point for some pretty big social concepts.

Heavy subjects like immigration, colonization, and representation crop up through the show. To its credit,

*Relish*

handles these themes with the powerful, deceptive sweetness of a “food show,” which makes these experiences of families near and far read like just that... rather than political talking points.

Vang eloquently tied together

*Relish*

's themes at the premiere, when he described an upbringing still influencing his perspective on food today. "You actually have a lot more when you say, "This is ours.' That's

the legacy of my mom and dad right there: They always taught us that when you say it's

*mine*

you have less, when it's

*ours*

you have more."

If

*Relish*

feels as intimate as it sounds

kind of like the more tender vignettes in

*Ugly Delicious*

, when Hurricane Chang isn't barging in to deliver Domino's

—

that's no accident. During its launch, co-producers Amy Melin and Brittany Shrimpton explained they sought to capture

*Relish*

in a style reflective of the closeness these chefs feel to the dishes they present, whether that means filming in their home or a different location full of meaning.

*Relish*

engages its audience by watching, reading,

*and*

doing (if they so choose). Accompanying each digital episode is a written piece specific to the chef-food pairing, and a chef-given recipe for the featured dish. Episodes are

released each Wednesday

(<https://www.tptoriginals.org/>).

through December 11. A second season is already in the works.