

Folsom teen makes 'Idol' cut

Atlantic County resident Louis Gazzara, 17, went from being one of 234 hopefuls Wednesday to being one of 32 winners who will compete for stardom on the "American Idol" TV show.

The show's judges — Paula Abdul, Randy Jackson and Simon Cowell — decided that Gazzara's performance in the Hollywood, Calif., semifinal auditions was good enough to make the final cut.

When Gazzara appears on the program again in February, the national TV audience will decide whether he makes the competition between the Top 10 performers.

Gazzara's success comes as no surprise to his voice coach for the last three years, Sal Dupree of Linwood.

"The country will hear one of the finest voices possessed by a 17-year-old," Dupree said. "He has remarkable control for his age and beautiful tone. They are in for a treat. ... The country will love the way this boy can sing."



Staff photo by Michael Ein

Louis Gazzara, 17, of Folsom is among the 32 singers who will compete for stardom on Fox's 'American Idol.'

Gazzara, who lives in Folsom and is a senior at St. Joseph's High School in Hammonton, could be seen on last night's show wearing a white shirt and singing a snippet from the Michael Bolton song 'Go the Distance.'

He had already beaten out 50,000 people who auditioned in seven cities for a spot on the second edition of "American Idol." The show's first season was last summer's unexpected hit. The winner, Texas waitress Kelly Clarkson, became a household name and her first single stormed to the top of the charts.

— By Vincent Jackson