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### Who's that Guy at Brandy's?

*Food network star Guy Fieri brings his fire-red Camero and his bubbly personality to Flagstaff Tuesday.*

By BETSEY BRUNER  
Sun Staff Reporter  
Wednesday, October 22, 2008

Luncheon diners Tuesday afternoon at Brandy's Restaurant & Bakery got more than ketchup with their french fries; they also got Food Network star Guy Fieri.

Fieri served up lots of laughs with their food during a four-hour shooting segment for the television star's "Diner, Drive-ins and Dives" program. The restaurant on East Cedar Avenue, a popular dining spot for 15 years, has been the scene of a media invasion since owners Ed and Brandy Wojciak were notified recently by the New York network that their eatery had been chosen to be featured in the program.

"I like going to these communities you've heard about all your life," said Fieri, who said he had never visited Flagstaff before. "We roll in and find people who have a real passion for their community."



Food Network TV host Guy Fieri listens to Shonto Begay during taping of a segment for Fieri's show "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" at Brandy's Restaurant Tuesday afternoon. Jake Bacon/Arizona Daily Sun

Known to viewers for his flamboyant style, Fieri sports his signature bleached-blond and spiked hair, a goatee, earrings and wild '50s-style sunglasses.

He starts each show from the network's red Chevrolet SS Camaro convertible, which he drives up to the door of each featured eating spot.

"When the car showed up, we were hyperventilating," said Brandy Wojciak, whose name graces the restaurant. "I'm had tears in my eyes. It's an amazing gift."

#### MEDIA FRENZY

A full production crew arrived to shoot Thursday, and Fieri came Tuesday to do the final taping back in the kitchen with chef Sherman Johnson, who came to work at Brandy's in 2003.

"It's kind of an overwhelming, crazy experience," said Ed Wojciak. "Two days of this, and I don't know how these guys can do this. They are real professionals."

Fieri was also filmed out front in the dining room talking to patrons.

"It was so awesome," said Rebecca Kiritsy, who works across the street and eats often at Brandy's. "We are big fans of 'Diners, Drive-ins and Dives.' It's not pretentious. Everybody likes the neighborhood dive."

Fieri also visited with local artist Shonto Begay, who is currently displaying his 10th painting show at Brandy's.

"I love a place where they throw artwork on the walls," Fieri said.

Begay, who was served tequila lime chicken, one of the four dishes featured in the TV segment, rendered a portrait of Fieri on a little Etch-a-Sketch he brought to Brandy's.

"It went really well," said Begay, about his time on camera. "The questions were answerable."

Ed Wojciak said the production crew filmed Chef Johnson making the lime chicken and three other dishes -- bistro tenderloin stew, chimichurri flat iron steak and ancho honey chicken -- from scratch Thursday, and repeated the preparations, this time with Fieri, during shooting Tuesday.

They taped about eight hours of footage, for an eight-minute final television segment, he added.



Guy Fieri, host of the Food Network TV show, "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" holds up a portrait of himself done on an Etch A Sketch by local artist Shonto Begay. It took Begay just under six minutes to punch out the portrait on the toy. Fieri visited Brandy's Restaurant to film a segment for his show Tuesday and talked with Begay about his artwork which is currently on display in the restaurant.  
Jake Bacon/Arizona Daily Sun

## RISE TO STARDOM

In his rise to stardom, Fieri, 40, beat out seven other contestants from around the country during a reality TV cook-off that ended Sunday, April 23, 2006, with the airing of the final episode of "The Next Food Network Star."

Fieri, who co-owns five California restaurants with his partner Steve Gruber, said he doesn't know exactly why his show, nicknamed "Triple D," has become so popular in the 2 ½ years since it first aired. "I think I'm just highlighting Americana," Fieri said. "We're showcasing places people really love."

Fieri said he likes to film in eateries where people feel like they're at home.

"We say on the show, 'If it's funky, we'll find it,'" he said.

His other shows are "Guy's Big Bite" and "Ultimate Recipe Showdown," which he hosts with Marc Summers.

Fieri said he has a nice relationship with Summers and all the other Food Network stars, including Masaharu Morimoto and Bobby Flay.

"He's a fantastic guy, a good buddy," Fieri said about Flay. "I'm also very appreciative of Giada (De Laurentiis), Rachael (Ray) and Emeril (Lagasse), because if it hadn't been for them, I wouldn't be here."

## KIDS AT HOME

Fieri said the show's three Page Productions crews leapfrog across the country and have probably visited 160 locations so far.

The star said he is on the road about 250 days of the year.

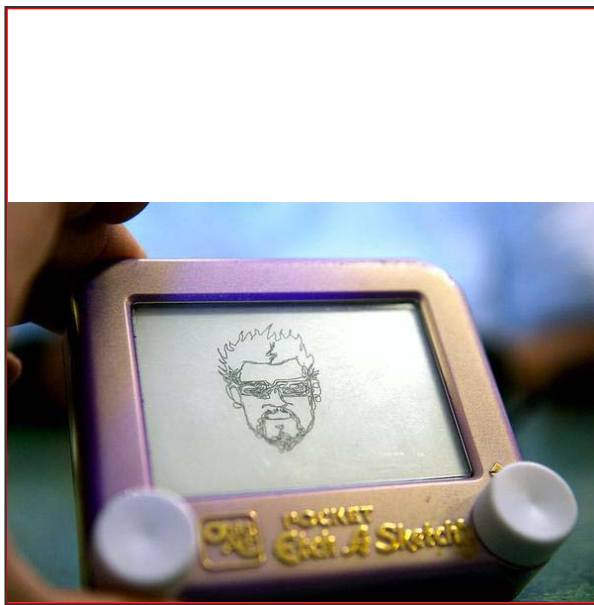
"You have to make hay while the sun shines," he said. "I'm the new guy on the network."

Fieri, 40, lives in Santa Rosa, Calif., with his wife Lori and their two sons, Hunter, 12, and Ryder, 2 ½.

He said one of the drawbacks of his job is being away from his family so often, although he takes road trips with them during holidays and in the summer.

Fieri, whose ancestry is Italian, said he cooks a lot of Italian-based foods at home.

His favorite food is spaghetti and meatballs, because it reminds him of his childhood.



Shonto Begay's portrait of Food Network host Guy Fiere smiles out from an Etch A sketch on a table top in Brandy's restaurant. Jake Bacon/Arizona Daily Sun



Food Network star Guy Fieri watches Chef Sherman Johnson cut some steak Tuesday afternoon during a break in taping for "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" at Brandy's Restaurant. Betsey Bruner/Arizona Daily Sun

"Both my parents are really good cooks," he said.

Fieri said he is teaching his sons to cook, and Hunter has already appeared on some of his shows.

An airdate for the Flagstaff show has not been set yet, said Lisa Krueger, the Food Network PR manager in New York.

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