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Star Bucks

The discreet Jeremy Gurse is Hollywood's mocha mogul. But he's got a lot more brewing.

Harrison Ford drinks double espresso. Juliana Margulies opts for a sugar-free hot mocha with soymilk, hold the jolt. Heather Graham likes double decaf latte, and Tom Cruise's fix is a sugar-free ice-blended mocha.

Jeremy Gurse knows the stars by the coffee they drink. He's Hollywood's self-styled mocha mogul, brewing and blending caffeine to celebrities on movie and television sets throughout Los Angeles.

The former film student, who has adopted the nickname "The Mocha Man," ground his way into the entertainment industry five years ago at age 19, using a special blend of innovative thinking, cunning and timing.

The catering concept dawned on him while he was working at a coffeehouse in Studio City and studying film at Cal State Northridge.

"I noticed the lines for ice-blended mochas and thought, 'Why not create my own version of the drink and bring it to sets,'" he recalls.

He revealed his plan to Bill Dance, a regular patron who runs a casting agency. Dance liked the idea and allowed Gurse to sell drinks at his office, where they were casting extras for the movie "Ed Wood."

Gurse, now 24, saved \$100 from three paychecks to buy a commercial blender and an ice chest.

"I figured if all else fails, at least I'll be able to whip up some damn good margaritas," he says. "At the time, I was charging \$2 by the cup and I remember returning home with a fat stack of ones. My parents were proud."

He began offering customers free drinks in exchange for business referrals to the shows they were casting.

One night, while watching the CBS show "Hearts Afire," Gurse scanned the credits for the line producer. He did the same thing for "Seinfeld."

Then he did what any self-respecting entrepreneur does: He lied. He called up the "Hearts Afire" people and told them he had a referral from "Seinfeld."

"If you're good enough to do

'Seinfeld,' then you're good enough to do our show," Gurse remembers the producer saying. He used the "Hearts Afire" gig to clinch the "Seinfeld" job.

Gurse has worked on the "ER" set for three years. "We love him; he's part of the 'ER' family," says producer Penny Adams.

Gurse figures his company has now prepared more than 75,000 coffee drinks on about 100 films and TV shows. His assets now include thousands of dollars worth of large-scale commercial cappuccino machines, a van

and his own office.

He and four employees shuttle between 12 and 20 productions a week.

To hear Gurse tell it, there are no limits to the wonders of caffeine. During the filming of "Volcano," star Anne Heche was filming a scene in which she pulls a friend from a sewer. After several fumbled takes, the director suggested the actress get some coffee. She did, Gurse says, and the director seemed satisfied with the next take.

All this proximity to glamour does have its pitfalls. Gurse says tabloid publications keep goading him for juicy gossip from the set, but he insists he has too much integrity to serve up any secrets.

But what he'd really like to do is direct. Although his company, Mocha Kiss, has flourished, he has several film ideas percolating. He's formed a production company called Mocha Pictures and plans to open a string of coffeehouses, which may help to finance his movie habit.

—Maryam Henein

PEOPLE



Would-be filmmaker Gurse gets busied by a fan on the Sony lot.