



TheBaristas.com

Press Kit

Website: <http://thebaristas.com> ~ Email: info@thebaristas.com



About The Baristas

The Baristas is a coffee shop comedy set in Pittsburgh's Affogato cafe. Ben, Dierdre, Sam, Madison and Gary are the friendly faces who pour your coffee and put up with all your problems. Tip them well; they've earned it.

The Baristas launched on January 31st, 2011. New episodes are posted every Monday at 10 AM (EST). When they're not living on-camera, [the characters are on Twitter](#), where you can eavesdrop on their sarcasm, their sex lives and their perpetually bad ideas.

Before the Baristas...

... there was the long-running web sitcom [Something to Be Desired](#) (2003-2009), which was nominated for a [2008 Yahoo! Video Award for Best Web Series](#). When STBD creator [Justin Kownacki](#) relocated from Pittsburgh to Baltimore in 2009, STBD was put on permanent hiatus. But in autumn of 2010 the comedy-starved fans of STBD donated over \$3000 to a [Kickstarter project](#) intended to help the old show launch a new spinoff -- and thus The Baristas was born!

Photo (L to R): Ben (Will McMahon), Aubrey (Katie Mo Goff), Dierdre (Lacey Fleming), Madison (Jillian Vitko), Gary (Joel Ambrose), Astrid (Laura Lee Brautigam), Sam (Shaun Starke). Photo by [Rob de la Cretaz](#).

Related Links:

[The Baristas website](http://thebaristas.com/): <http://thebaristas.com/>

[The Baristas original Kickstarter project](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/justinkownacki/the-baristas-comedy-with-room-for-cream): <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/justinkownacki/the-baristas-comedy-with-room-for-cream>

[Something to Be Desired](http://somethingtobedesired.com/): <http://somethingtobedesired.com/>

The Baristas: Characters



The Affogato cafe is home to two kinds of people: the baristas who work there, and the regular customers who fill the baristas' lives with meaning... or, on a good day, with tips. *For more information about our entire cast, including all 20+ characters, please visit [The Baristas characters page](http://thebaristas.com/characters/) online: <http://thebaristas.com/characters/>*

Ben (Will McMahon)



Ben

Ben Wright was a man with a plan. But after he proposed to his fiancée [Aubrey](#), he got laid off, and his plan got derailed. So Ben secretly begged his "almost-brother-in-law" [Sam](#) to hire him at Affogato. As a new barista with boundless enthusiasm, he'll use any trick to boost business, increase his hours and help pay for a wedding that seems to be spiraling ever out of control.

After a behind-the-scenes stint in the NFL, **Will McMahon** turned his attention to acting. A graduate of Allegheny College, Will played football and hockey for the Gators. He also occasionally [dresses up like Elvis at Pittsburgh Penguins games](#). Recently, Will played a security guard in a Feb 16, 2011 sketch on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.

Dierdre (Lacey Fleming)



Dierdre

Dierdre is the glue that holds the Affogato café together. Without her, the place would surely collapse under the weight of its own ineptitude. Sure, she's bitter, emotionally distant and occasionally hostile, but that's what happens when you're the only person who ever makes any sense.

Actress **Lacey Fleming** previously played Dierdre on [Something to Be Desired](#) (2003-2009). She studied acting at Point Park University and has appeared in *The Murder Collection* and *Maskhead* for Toetag Productions. Beyond that, she admits nothing.

Gary (Joel Ambrose)



Gary

Gary dropped out of culinary school because they were "too restrictive," so now the Affogato regulars are his kitchen guinea pigs. He's a perpetual ray of sunshine, but the cafe is populated with cynics who don't quite appreciate Gary's upbeat attitude. In fact, the only phrase he hears more often than "Can I get a refill?" is "Shut up, Gary..."

Actor **Joel Ambrose** is originally from Johnstown, PA. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2008 with a BA in Theatre Arts and Communications, and has worked in various capacities for City Theatre, the Pittsburgh New Works Festival, Phrase Three Productions, PittRep, Prime Stage Theatre, and the Pittsburgh CLO. Some of Joel's favorite non-theatre things include: Harry Potter, stage combat, and annoying his twin brother.

Madison (Jillian Vitko)



Madison

Madison is a barista at Affogato... and a business major at Pitt... and a sales associate at Victoria's Secret... and is perpetually overworked and under-appreciated. It's a good thing she doesn't have time for a boyfriend, because her luck with men has never been particularly good. (One guy broke up with her on her birthday. At her party. By writing it in the card.)

Actress **Jillian Vitko** graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2007 with a degree in Theatre Arts. She's performed with various film & theatre groups including: Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Comtra Theatre, Pittsburgh New Works, Pittsburgh Pride Festival, Pittsburgh Scarehouse, Coldfront Productions, Dreamworks and Lionsgate. She hopes to someday own a hairless dog, so she can hug it without sneezing.

Sam (Shaun Starke)



Sam

Sam is a lot like Peter Pan, only not quite as nimble. But he's lived with his girlfriend [Astrid](#) for seven years, which is like living with Tinkerbell, since she's tiny and she can sew. And ever since Astrid's sister [Aubrey](#) announced that she and her boyfriend [Ben](#) were getting married, Astrid's death stare has made Sam wish he lived in Neverland.

Actor **Shaun Starke** previously played Sam on [Something to Be Desired](#). Given his extensive Shakespearean stage credits, how he ended up doing anything outside of classical stage acting both confuses and pleases him. A native of Butler, PA, Shaun studied drama at Slippery Rock University. He's currently a board member and director for Poor Yorick's Players, an outdoor Shakespearean company based in Monroeville, PA.

The Baristas: Where to Find Us?



As a web-based sitcom, The Baristas is all over the Internet. Friend, follow & watch us here:

Videos, Videos, and More Videos!

- [The Baristas on Blip TV](http://thebaristas.blip.tv/) -- <http://thebaristas.blip.tv/>
- [The Baristas on YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/thebaristastv) -- <http://www.youtube.com/thebaristastv>
- [The Baristas on iTunes](http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-baristas/id417162734) -- <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-baristas/id417162734>

Facebook

- [The Baristas Facebook Fan Page](http://www.facebook.com/pages/TheBaristasTV/157065444326693) -- <http://www.facebook.com/pages/TheBaristasTV/157065444326693>

Twitter

- [The Baristas Twitter profile](http://twitter.com/TheBaristasTV) -- <http://twitter.com/TheBaristasTV>
- [A real-time list of The Baristas characters' ongoing tweets](https://twitter.com/TheBaristasTV/the-baristas-characters) -- <https://twitter.com/TheBaristasTV/the-baristas-characters>

Photo by [Mike Sorg](#).

The Baristas: Press Coverage

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (9/19/10) -- "Cybertainment: 'Baristas' creator seeks to kick-start his 2nd Web-only series": <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10262/1088396-370.stm#ixzz1CpfqVfXI>

"The Baristas" review on Tubefilter: <http://news.tubefilter.tv/2011/02/07/lon-reviews-the-baristas/>

Contact & Press Inquiries

Who Makes This?

The Baristas is created and produced by [Justin Kownacki](#). (He's usually on [Twitter](#).)

Where Is It Made?

The Baristas is filmed in Pittsburgh, PA, at [the Affogato café](#). (Yes, the café is real.)

Who Does Your Theme Song?

Our theme song is "Never Listen to Me" by Portland's post-punk power trio [The Thermals](#).

How Can I... ?

For inquiries about interviews, merchandising, product placement, music licensing or sponsorship, please email us at info@thebaristas.com.

Related Links:

Justin Kownacki's website: <http://justinkownacki.com/>

Justin Kownacki on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/justinkownacki>

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