



Louis Apodaca (right) places an order at the trailer window from Donny Teel at Buffalo's BBQ.



Donny Teel is one of the world's greatest barbecuers.

No brag — just fact

By NATALIE MIKLES
World Scene Writer

Inside a trailer hooked up to a doughnut shop in Sperry is some of the world's best barbecue.

That's not our opinion. It's a fact, proven by the dozens of awards, including world championships that barbecue cook Donny Teel has racked up over the years.

It's rare for a competition barbecue cook to have a day job cooking barbecue. But Teel, an electrician by trade, was having so much fun cooking barbecue on the weekends that he decided to go for it on the weekdays, too.

The best part is it gives all of us the chance to taste food that's usually reserved for certified barbecue judges.

Teel wakes up early and is down at the trailer, just off of Oklahoma 11 where the blacktop turns into a grassy drive, by 7 a.m. to start smoking.

He could make it easy on himself and buy one of those fancy gas or electric cookers he's seen others use. But he knows it wouldn't be the same.

So Teel chops the seasoned wood that goes into his big smoke r, connected to the trailer.

Customers show up early to Buffalo's BBQ, especially when the weather's nice. You see, rolled-down car windows are more effective than any money Teel could spend on advertising.

When we stopped by about 11 a.m. last week, two customers were already at the trailer window. They were regulars, and Teel knew what they wanted before they even got out of their pickup truck.

If the customers are from Sperry, they likely know Teel or one of the many Teels in town. The Teels set up residence with their old home place in 1946, and Teel says there have been Teels in the Sperry school system ever since.



MICHAEL WYKE / Tulsa World

Donny Teel travels to barbecue championships all over the country on the weekends. On weekdays, he sells his barbecue out of a trailer in Sperry.

A teenager on his lunch hour stopped by about 11:30 and left his order up to Donny.

Their conversation went like this: "How are you?" Donny said. "Hungry," said the boy. "Whatcha want?" "Whatcha got?"

SEE TEEL H-4

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Note: If you missed the May 4 story about Donny Teel and the other great competition barbecue cooks of Oklahoma, you can find it online. Go to www.tulsaworld.com/oklahomabbq.

Where:
201 N. Oklahoma 11 in Sperry

Hours:
11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday

'Iron Man's' man

Former Tulsan finds a niche in motion picture arm of Marvel

By JAMES VANCE
World Staff Writer

"It's a strange dream job," says Jeremy Latcham, "and it was a crazy journey to get here, but it's been exciting. I just feel so lucky to be here."

"Here" is Los Angeles' Marvel Studios, the fledgling motion picture arm of comic book heavy-weight Marvel Comics — and the studio that kicked off its production slate last week with the red-hot blockbuster "Iron Man."

And Latcham is a 28-year-old Tulsa native who's played an important role in the process of transforming the armored superhero from a relatively unknown quantity to his current status as box office champion.

Latcham is the studio's vice president of development and production, a job that requires involvement in virtually every aspect of getting Marvel's bizarre characters and complicated stories into the camera.

"I'm kind of a failsafe," he said in a recent telephone interview. "I juggle lots of different elements. Before we go into production, I work with the writers, I talk to the agents to find the right people to tell our stories. When there's a question about how we're going to present some element of the story, I present the research to Kevin (Feige, Marvel's president

Latcham: "I got to take part in writing the book on how to make a Marvel production."



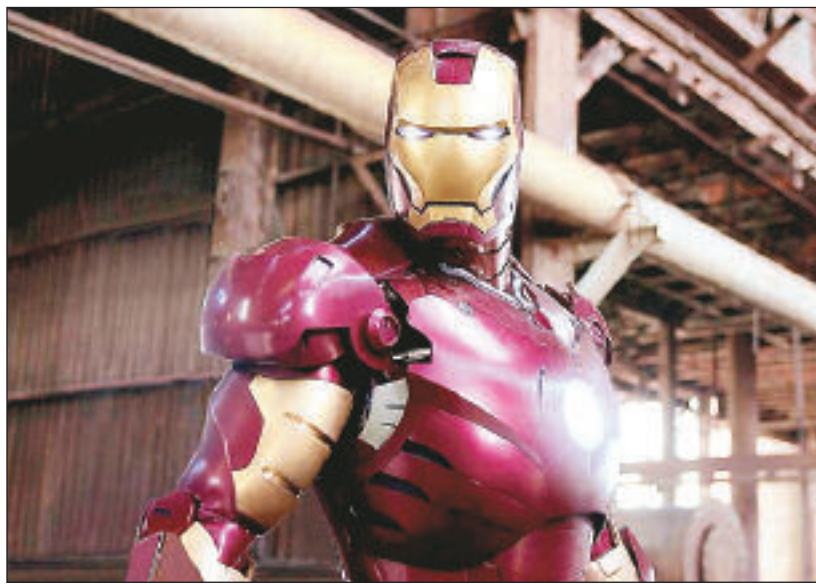
of production) and to the director and say, 'What do you think of this?'"

"And when we're in production, I'm always hanging out with the cast on set or sitting in on the meetings with all the departments, taking a lot of notes and boiling down everyone's opinions on what needs to be done so a decision can be made. It's really cool and rewarding, because I also get to sit back and watch and learn how you make a movie this size."

Latcham's journey from Union High School graduate in 1999 to working alongside Robert Downey Jr. and the "Iron Man" company has been remarkably brief and enviably free of obstacles.

A Dean's List student with a lifelong love for the movies, Latcham spent a year at the University of Richmond, where he served as editor and program director for the campus TV station. Seeking more film training, he transferred to Northwestern University in Chicago before taking the plunge and heading for California.

After landing intern positions at a couple of studios, Latcham took a



Courtesy

Robert Downey Jr. stars as "Iron Man."

job in 2006 with Endeavor, the talent agency that served as a model for character Ari Gold's operation in the HBO series "Entourage."

"After a year, I was thinking about finding something else to do next," Latcham recalls, "and I was talking to a guy there who was about to leave Endeavor to go run a new studio. That (guy) was David Maisel, who's now the chairman of Marvel Studios. He brought me along as his assistant, and I've been here ever since."

Latcham's transformation into a studio player wasn't as painful as being bitten by a radioactive spider or getting blown up by Afghani terrorists, but it was just as abrupt — what the young producer terms "an amazing combination of hard work and good luck" that landed him on the ground floor of the new studio just as "Iron Man" began its two-year flight to the big screen.

"It was so exciting to be involved in the studio's first film from begin-

ning to end. There's a real quality-control attitude here, making sure that every decision is what Marvel wants, learning what makes these characters tick and what matters to people about them, and how to get that onto the screen.

"I got to take part in writing the book on how to make a Marvel production."

Before leaving Tulsa, Latcham got his feet wet on various local shoots, including one busy period in which he spent his days bouncing from an intern spot at television station KJRH to assisting on Johnny Graham's Cloud Nine commercial work and functioning as segment producer on the ESPN soccer program "MLS Extra Time."

"My first job in the business was the day after I graduated high school," he says. "I got a job working for Johnny Graham as a production assistant on a Mazzio's Pizza commercial. It was 'The Double Dippin' Dudes' for Mazzio's dipping sticks," he laughs.

"My first day on the set I was standing there grating cheese, and I looked around at all the lights and the equipment, and I knew right then that this was it, this was what I wanted to do."

And — one leap of superheroic proportions later — that's exactly what Latcham is doing.

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