

FLAVOR

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Bye-Bye, Betty Crocker Hello, Average Betty

A former Tampa resident joins a growing throng online who seek fame as Internet video cooks.



Photos from Sara O'Donnell

By JEFF HOUCK
The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — The paradigm is shifting. Maybe everyone won't get 15 minutes of fame, but it looks as though they will get their own food show.

Makes sense. After all, if someone such as Rachael Ray can convert rudimentary food skills on television into a multimedia empire, surely the field is wide open for business. Technology for shooting and editing video is more affordable and easier to use. And with all the venues available online at YouTube, Yahoo! Video, Metacafe, Crackle and similar sites, anyone can cast himself or herself as the star.

Enter Sara O'Donnell. The 33-year-old Los Angeles visual artist took a video camera she got for Christmas in 2005, combined it with her love of cooking and, assuming the offbeat persona of Average Betty, became one of the hottest food personalities on the Web at her site, AverageBetty.com.

A graduate of Gaither High School in Tampa, O'Donnell performs all of the roles in her spots, edits the video herself and does all the animation. Somewhere in each three-minute bit, she fits in a little bit of cooking amid the campy costume changes, physical humor and over-the-top sound effects.

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She loved to cook as a child.



As a result of word of mouth, the online video of Christopher Walken roasting chicken and pears drew more than 158,000 views in just a few days.



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