

The Hot List: Bradley Cooper

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Bradley Cooper is a fantastic asshole. In *Wedding Crasher's*, he did such a good job playing Sack Lodge – the quail-hunting "environmentalist" bully fiancé of Rachel McAdams – that even people in his gym have come up and called him a dick.

But today, sitting in a divey restaurant in Santa Monica, there is no douche-bag behavior. He greets locals warmly, asks permission to drink his latte when it arrives before the meal and even offers a ride to the airport.

He has reason to be happy. Coming off his scene-stealing turn in *Wedding Crashers*, Cooper is at work on a new sitcom, *Kitchen Confidential*. Based on chef Anthony Bourdain's best seller of the same name, *Kitchen Confidential* stands out in a ho-hum fall lineup dominated by enough spinoffs to merit a Dramamine.

Cooper, 30, plays Jack Bourdain, a reformed bad-boy chef hired to helm a swank Manhattan restaurant. The blisters on his hands are real (the set is a functioning kitchen), but the butcher-knife tattoos on his arm are not. "I can relate to Jack," Cooper adds with a wink, and that's all he'll say when asked about his own carousing.

Though Cooper hails from a working-class family in Philadelphia, his mom and dad scraped together enough money to send him to Germantown Academy, a private school outside Philly.

"There were a lot of Sack Lodges at my high school," he admits. Cooper fit in thanks to his preppy looks, but he still felt like an outsider.

"These guys looked so pure, their clothing all pastels and bright colors, but then there was this darkness inside that they hid behind their Saabs, their gates and their fuckin' lacrosse sticks."

He graduated from Georgetown in 1997, heading straight into acting with stints on *Sex and the City*, *Alias* and *Jack and Bobby*.

But he shined in *Wedding Crashers*.

"It was a freaking dream working with Vince Vaughn, Owen Wilson and Christopher Walken and becoming friends with them," says Cooper. "I mean, I go on their Web sites – that makes me a friend, right?"