

# Actress shows raw talent for real-life role as sushi chef

BEVERLY HILLS — The road to success for actress **Tracy Griffith** has been a little fishy.

She's one of the few female sushi chefs in town — at trendy Beverly Hills eatery *Tsunami's*. (She has a Web site for recipes, *Sushiwoman.com*.)

The 34-year old actress, who is **Melanie Griffith's** half-sister, has always loved cooking. "I was looking for something else to do (in between acting jobs); I was getting a little squirrely."

She went to the California Sushi Academy in Venice, Calif., last year. Her schedule: half-day classes three times a week for eight weeks. At first her teacher said he didn't want to teach women. "I don't want to say anything bad about him, but he is no longer there!" She continued with advanced classes.

"It was very grounding. After I graduated from the Sushi Academy, I started interviewing. I went to seven or eight different restaurants that I had eaten at a lot! They were not interested in hiring women and told me. A lot of them were offended and thought it was funny. 'Ha, ha, ha,' she mimics. "We don't have sushi women."

Finally, Mark Fleishman hired her at *Tsunami's*, telling her she'd be a great draw.

The raven-haired chef says it wasn't easy. *Tsunami's* master sushi chef "was very tough." But, she adds, "we worked it out." And now she says she gets a lot of repeat customers. "You're with your people when they eat. Like Zen. It's very reverent; everything matters."

While she loves the chef's life, she also likes to act.

She and Melanie have the same father, **Peter Griffith**. And, says Tracy, Melanie's mom, **Tippi Hedren**, "is like my second mom." While talking, Griffith got a call saying she had landed an acting part. She'll co-star with Mickey



By Robert Hanashiro, USA TODAY

**A rare sushi woman:** Actress Tracy Griffith works at *Tsunami's* in Beverly Hills.



Dave Hogan, ImageDirect

**Melanie Griffith:** Supportive big sis.

**Rourke** and **Jeff Conaway** in a sci-fi flick, *American Chili*. She worked with *The West Wing's* **Rob Lowe** in *The Finest Hour*. And she played **Laura Dern's** sister in *Ruby Ridge: An American Tragedy*.

She also worked with her half-sis and brother-in-law **Antonio Banderas** in *Crazy in Alabama*.

"Antonio was great; he had such a good time. He was like a little kid at the zoo." Melanie and Tracy rarely talk shop. "She's in another league. She was involved in the Hollywood world since she was born. I'm not as tough as she is."

But Melanie did have a strong effect on her sister. She turned Tracy on to sushi. "We went to *Something Fishy* in Malibu. I couldn't believe it; I was possessed!"

By Sue Facter

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