

TV GUIDE

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Eddie Falco
and James
Gandolfini of
The Sopranos

What are YOU lookin' at?

Yeah, you.
Season 3 of
The Sopranos.
Everything you
need to know.
Nuff said.

By Frank DeCaro

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SUDDENLY SOPRANO

It's a common reaction to being summoned by a famous mobster. "I screamed so loud that my father came running out of the bathroom, thinking I was being murdered," remembers Denise Borino of the day she got a call from an associate of Tony Soprano. "The girl introduced herself, and I couldn't believe it," says Borino, 37, a legal assistant from Roseland, New Jersey. "I just kept asking her, 'Who is this?'"



Looking the part: Borino and Vincent Curatola, who plays Johnny Sack

One of seven people selected from an open casting call held last July at a New Jersey high school, Borino almost didn't try out. "But my boss said, 'You're perfect for it.' I had copies made of pictures from my brother Vincent's wedding." After waiting for hours (20,000 hopefuls showed up), Borino left and mailed her photos, as instructed, to HBO's casting department.

In August she received a call to read for the part of Ginny Sack. A few weeks later, she was filming her first scene with James Gandolfini, whom she describes as a "very, very sexy man." Borino won't say much about Ginny except that she appears in three episodes and that she has "big hair. But they're my own nails, which are long, because I do nails part-time."

"It really hasn't hit me yet," she explains of her potential celebrity. "But my brother Christopher says, 'Just because you're a star doesn't mean you can get out of making coffee for Sunday dinner.'" —Jim Colucci

Although Falco, Gandolfini and Chase have won Emmys for their work, *The Sopranos* has never won, losing to *The Practice* in 1999 and *The West Wing* in 2000. It is a fact not lost on the cast and crew. "The first year we were the upstarts, and the second year we were the forgotten," says Imperoli. "It was almost as if we had one year where we were recognized, but it never happened. Considering what [the show has] contributed to television, I think the academy has overlooked us."

Chase, who previously worked on *The Rockford Files*, *Northern Exposure* and *I'll Fly Away*, is philosophical. "It's Hollywood, and the good guys have won for a hundred years—and they're going to continue to win. That's what Hollywood is about," says Chase, who

laughs and adds, "I think the [television] academy breathed a sigh of relief when something nice like *The West Wing* came along to relieve them from voting for this nasty thing."

Of course, the show's nastiness is part of its appeal.

"David called me the other day and said, 'You speak Neapolitan, [and] I need a really bad, bad curse word,'" recalls Annabella Sciorra ("The Hand That Rocks the Cradle"), who joins the show as Mercedes-Benz dealer Gloria Trillo in episode 8. "I was glad, because the word that the character was going to say no one would ever really say. So I called my friends and got some really horrible curse words."

Before she went on the show, Sciorra had heard that some Italian-American