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Quite a handful

ASH KUMAR talks to **RIDDHI DOSHI** about creating henna designs on the palms of celebs and holding on to his Guinness record

he is a lady's man in the true sense of the term. Apart from creating mehndi art on the palms of Hollywood celebs like of Julia Roberts, there's something absolutely remarkable on 27-year old Ash Kumar's CV.

Ash has made it to the Guinness Book of World Records for being the 'fastest henna artist in the world'.

Ash first created the record in 2001, when he made 96 henna armbands of different designs in an hour. Ash again broke his own record in 2003, when he made 167 henna arm bands in an hour. That's only



Julia Roberts is one of Ash Kumar's satisfied 'customers'



I am not just another mehndiwalla... I try to figure out the theme of the wedding and then decide on the mehndi design

Ash Kumar

18 seconds for painting each henna arm band! No doubt nobody has been able to break Ash's record till date.

Thanks to his speed, precision and good designs, Ash has been able to put his art on the skins of Bollywood celebs like Aamir Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Rani Mukherji and

Deepika Padukone. One can also see his skills on Aishwariya Rai's palms in the forthcoming flick *Jodhaa Akbar*.

Ash, however, is reluctant to talk about his stint in this film, "I can't talk about the movie right now but can tell you that I had researched a lot and tried to work out henna tattoo designs that look like they are five hundred years old."

So what is Ash Kumar's real name? He quips, "Well, I never disclose my real name. The name Ash Kumar was coined to create a strong brand." The name, Ash says, is a "true mix

of both Bollywood and Hollywood". According to him, Ash lends a Hollywood flavour to the name while Kumar gives it the Bollywood feel. Ash says that his name, just like his designs, is "very much traditional true mix of of funk to it".

Now if you are thinking of getting your palm done by him for a forthcoming wedding then...yes! Ash does henna designs for shaadis as well and he is quite a veteran at that. Like all celeb artists, Ash has his own way of going about his work.

"I have created designs for weddings of all kinds of cultures like Gujarati, Muslim,

Irish, Spanish etc. I am not just another mehndiwalla. I am a thorough professional. I go to the venue before the marriage and take a look at the outfits, the set etc. I try to figure out what the theme of the wedding will be and then I decide on a mehndi design," says Ash. The 'designer' claims that he has a year-long waiting list for shaadis and there are many celebrities on that waiting list.

Sounds impressive, isn't it? Well, the young man has given a lot of importance to brand building and it seems to have worked for him.

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What are the stars saying?

Aamir Khan

I was supposed to design an arm band for Aamir Khan and a motif on his shoulder when he suddenly said, "Why don't we do something on the face?" I was a surprised as well as happy on how adventurous Aamir is

Hrithik Roshan

Once Hrithik and I were just chatting and I was generally asking him about fame, popularity and the importance of networking. He answered all my questions with one answer: "You will meet the same people on your way up and your way down." These words are still stuck in my mind.

Julia Roberts

I have spent about twenty minutes with Julia while designing an arm band for her. She liked the design so much that she wanted to get a motif done on her shoulder