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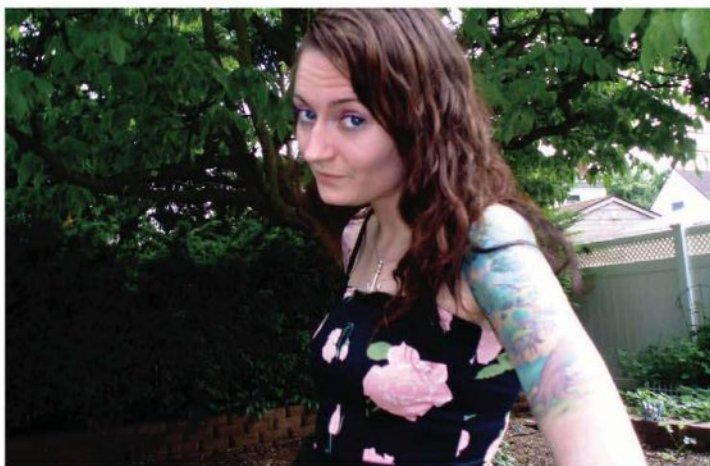
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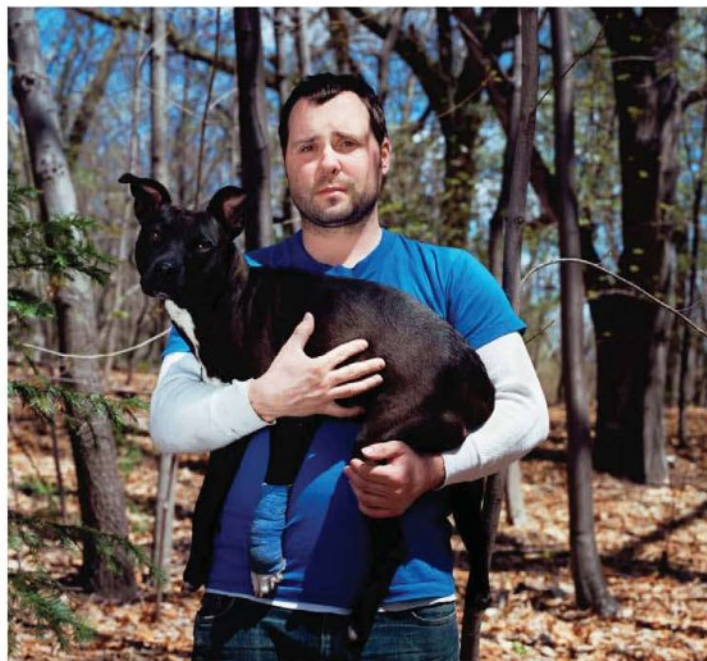


↑ This month we sent Brooklyn, NY, writer **Ellen Thompson** to interview punk icons Strike Anywhere (page 38) for our Inked People section. "The week I was scheduled to interview them had been a super bummed week for me; just listening to Thomas Barnett explain how there's always an opportunity to make a positive contribution to someone else's life snapped me out of that lame mood," she says. Among Thompson's numerous tattoos are two half-sleeves, an African landscape with baby animals on her left arm, and an Arctic landscape with baby animals on her right. "I'm into that animal rights and environmentalism stuff. Plus, what's cuter than baby freakin' animals?"



↶ We'll warn you now that there is a dead bird in this month's fashion spread (page 64). "We shot at my house near the ocean, and in the morning my wife and child were playing outside and they found a dead osprey next to our garage," explains New York-based photographer **Michael Dwornik**. The day also included appearances by a possum, a doe, and a flock of dragonflies. "It felt like the house was on a nature preserve." Dwornik has shot for *Tokion*, *Spread*, *Czech Elle*, *Men's Journal*, Puma, Ecco, Bombay Sapphire, and others. If he weren't a photographer, Dwornik claims he would be "a pain in the ass to someone." We couldn't agree more.

We asked Philadelphia-based illustrator and graphic designer **Michael Miller** to give us his take on the future of technology and tattooing for this month's story "Welcome to the Future" (page 76). Miller's illustrations have appeared in publications such as *Time*, *Outside*, *Bike*, *ESPN*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Rolling Stone*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. Miller hasn't been tattooed yet, despite his artistic background. "No tattoos," he says. "I might be able to make up my mind at some point, but for now, I have none."



↑ Photographer **Jesse Burke** is an instructor at Rhode Island School of Design, where he received his MFA in photography. For this month's issue, he shot hip-hop legends Clipse (page 33). "I've been a big fan of their music from day one, so I was psyched to meet them," he says. "They were super easy to work with. Those dudes rule!" Burke's tattoos include the word "Love" on the back of his neck and his daughter's name on his wrist, both done by Tony Edwards of Old Towne Tattoo Studio, in Tucson, AZ. "He has the best script!" Burke has shot for *W*, *Ocean Drive*, *Mass Appeal*, *Thrasher*, *Slap*, and *Boston Magazine*, as well as Dekline shoes and Ralph Lauren.



BRADLEY

New Limited Edition Prints

letter



The INKED wrestling crew will take on any and all challengers. From left: Josh Von C, Flying Ginger, and the Hebrew Hammer.

Two years ago, I shoved through the door and climbed the stairs toward my first day at INKED. From the start, we wanted the magazine to include the best of tattoo culture. It had to go deeper than any tattoo magazine before it, and it had to look better doing it. So we corralled celebrities and tattoo artists and used some of the world's most talented photographers and writers. Then, from our tiny Chinatown office, the shorthanded INKED crew put in late nights, long hours, and countless weekends toiling to pull it all together. A parade of wild characters came and went, and we threw plenty of booze-fueled rooftop parties that resulted in production-halting hangovers. Maybe you were there. We met a lot of you at parties, conventions, tattoo shops, and other places, and everywhere we went we heard the same thing: Just like us, you had been waiting for a magazine just like this.

These days INKED has a new office but the same small staff and the same mission. For this, our two-year anniversary issue, we rounded up some of our favorite photos from previous issues and continued to bring you the best of tattoo culture. We hung out with one of the staff's favorite bands, AFI, interviewed the Hughes brothers about their new movie, *The Book of Eli*, and took a look at the future of tattooing—from removable ink to electronic flash displays. And be sure to check out our interview with tattoo legend Brad Fink.

Enjoy the issue! And stick around—we have plenty more to come.

Jason Buhrmester

Editor

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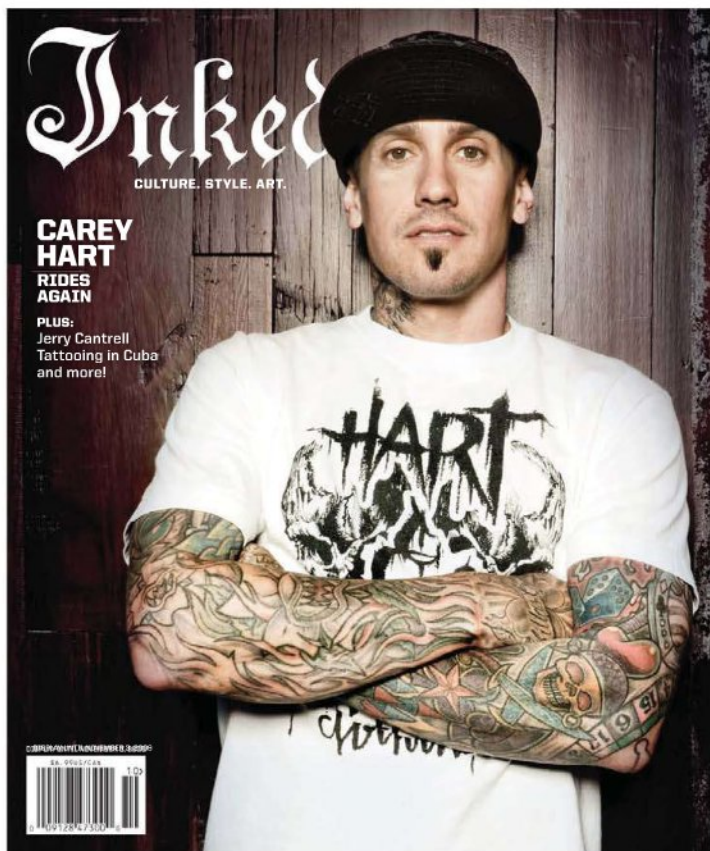
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mail



GOOD SPORTS

Your sports issue [October] might be my favorite all year. It's something that other tattoo magazines have never done. This year's was amazing. Carey Hart, the skateboarders feature, the horse jockey, and the killer story on the tattoo and skateboard scene in Cuba. Wow! You guys rule.

Frank Turner
Baton Rouge, LA

I have a quirky habit of reading magazines from back to front, so it didn't occur to me until I got to the editor's letter that this was the annual

sports issue. I was so involved with the photography and articles (by the way, great pieces on Carey Hart, Ami James, and Jerry Cantrell) that I totally missed the theme. That's why I love your magazine so much! Even if there is a theme to it, the articles stay true to culture, style, and art. No gimmicks telling me I need to pick up this magazine because it's a special issue. Absolutely love it! Keep up the amazing work!
Melody Velasco
Hesperia, CA

WE'RE INTERNATIONAL

Loved your story on Cuba ["Clamp-

down," October]. You guys always seem to include something international from places like Australia and Japan. Thanks for always covering tattoo culture around the world and not just in the States. Tattoo fans are everywhere!

Freddy Garcia
Guadalajara, Mexico

POTTY MOUTH

I am a subscriber and I enjoy receiving your fine magazine every month. You are doing a good job of raising the quality and general acceptance of tattoos as an art form that's accepted by an ever-larger segment of the population.

Then I read the interview with Ami James. His filthy mouth and profanity-spewing comments are setting INKED right back into the gutters, gang clubs, and jails. Why not edit an article like that? It would be absolutely as powerful, if not more powerful, without profanities every five words. Please send him back in the gutters and let him do gang tattoos.

Jason O. Thorso
Los Angeles, CA

What is Ami James's problem? He agreed to do *Miami Ink* and he made a lot of money off it. I liked the show and can't understand what he's so upset about. Is he that pissed that Kat Von D is doing well? Whatever! He's doing better than most of the tattoo artists who are working in tiny shops somewhere. Be grateful for what you have, Ami!

Angie Reid
Santa Monica, CA



SUGGESTION BOX

Your Icon section is my favorite. I love reading about the tattoo artists and their stories of how they got to where they are and the things they went through along the way. What about an interview with Corey Miller? He's easily the most respected artist on *LA Ink* and probably has tons of great stories. Just a suggestion!

Chad Everman
Seattle, WA



WRITE TO US! Got something to say? Send all letters of praise, notes of complaint, story suggestions, and other comments to letters@inkedmag.com. All submissions should include the writer's name and address. Letters may be edited for clarity, length, and content.

INKED LIFE

My First Ink

NAME: Jackie Roscoe

OCCUPATION: Dancer

HOMETOWN: Minneapolis, MN

My first tattoo was "blood then honey" in script across my lower stomach. It was done by J. Lefty at TrustFate Tattoo in St. Paul, MN. My favorite is probably the portrait of Tim Curry as Dr. Frank-N-Furter from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* done by Nikko Hurtado at Ignition Tattoo in Apple Valley, CA.





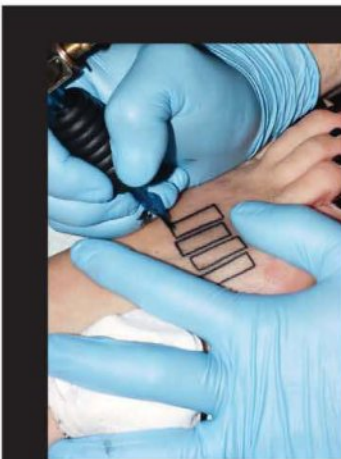
RESPECT ON THE RUNWAY

The fashion crowd recently gave a nod of respect to *ta moko*, the tattoo art of the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand. During the spring 2010 runway presentations, Kate and Laura Mulleavy, the design duo behind Rodarte, sent models down the runways with bold black body art. MAC senior artist Chantel Miller, who created the designs, says they were inspired by the line quality and shapes of Maori facial tattoos. "The designers didn't want to be too literal—they wanted a modern graphic interpretation," Miller explains. To create the sleeves, half-sleeves, and neck "tattoos" that served as a backdrop for the fashion, Miller and a team of 40 artists spent four hours painting on models' skin with MAC cosmetics. "The girls who had real tattoos were excited because we worked their artwork into ours," says Miller, who has six tattoos herself. "It was really nice to pay homage to the people who are out there doing this every day in tattoo shops around the world."



BREAST INTENTIONS

October marked Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and tattoo shops everywhere picked up the cause. For the second year, Neon Crab Tattoos in London, Ontario, offered pink ribbon tattoos for \$40; customers lined up outside the shop as early as 7:30 a.m. Owner Will Graham started the annual Pink Ink Day after four clients came into the shop last year to get pink ribbon tattoos for a friend who was fighting breast cancer. "Emotions were running high, and we all had a great time," Graham explains. "After that experience, we thought that there might be some real interest in doing this for a lot of people." This year's event took on a more personal tone. "In April, my fiancée was diagnosed with breast cancer. It came as quite a shock to all of us, but then it became clear how this really touches everyone. We knew that we had to run the Pink Ink event again, and will continue to do so every year for as long as I am able." This year's event raised nearly \$4,000 for F.A.C.E.I.T., an Ontario-based program that helps patients cope with breast cancer.



BARRED FOR LIFE

Few band logos strike a chord with tattoo fans like the bar emblem of punk icons Black Flag. Now, Philadelphia native Stewart Ebersole plans to track down and photograph as many tattoos of the iconic emblem as possible for a book, *Barred for Life*. "I felt it could be an interesting, albeit academic, way to explain how a tattoo can represent so much to so many," he says. "There are possibly tens of thousands of 'barred' people out there, and they range in age from well under legal to 50, from gutter punk to college professor." Ebersole has already captured nearly 200 Black Flag tattoos and hopes to track down 500, as well as interviews with the band. Having given up his job as a private-school teacher, Ebersole feels the book will teach others what the band taught him, including "the Black Flag paradigm of hard work, never take no for an answer, make your own opportunities, and spread your word no matter how much it goes against the grain. Be the revolution that you want to see in the world."

RODARTE PHOTOS, COURTESY OF MAC

WILD CARD
for
**FIVE and
DIAMOND**
San Francisco



Bartender Brittlynn Stites offers tips on keeping warm. We listen.

SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

The best way to stay warm when it gets cold outside: drink 'til you're numb.

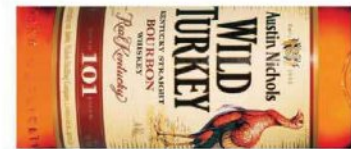
Say it's "something to keep Jack Frost away" or "just a nip to stay warm," but winter is one of the best times of year for drinking. No other season arrives with a built-in excuse to stay in with a bottle. And if you do go outside and brave everything Old Man Winter throws at you, you've earned yourself a trip to the bar as a reward for staying alive in such harsh conditions (in our opinion, "harsh conditions" can be anything from a slight breeze to 60 degrees below).

What separates a winter cocktail from a cocktail you chug in the summertime? First, and obviously, a winter cocktail typically includes some sort of warm liquid, such as water, coffee, or cider along with the booze. (Duh.) Secondly, many also include darker, richer flavors to help accent the brooding of this dark season. Instead of the frothy citrus flavors you'll find in a beachside margarita, winter cocktails focus on the toned-down sweetness of cloves, almonds, and cinnamon to give your booze of choice a little flavor boost. "I think a good winter cocktail is when you can taste the season," says bartender Brittlynn Stites. "When I start to smell cloves and cinnamon around, I know winter is here. A good winter cocktail should be something you look forward to having." So take off the parka, belly up to the bar, and order something a little stronger than hot tea with honey. 'Tis the season ... to drink! —Cory Jones



Dark and Stormy

Pour two parts Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum over six parts ginger beer. Serve with a lime wedge. Some bartenders will tell you that you have to use Gosling's Black Seal Rum, but those bartenders are assholes.



Bourbon Furnace

Pour six ounces of hot apple cider into a glass, toss in three whole cloves, a stick of cinnamon, and—most importantly—an ounce and a half of bourbon. If you want to turn up the heat, go ahead and toss an extra ounce or two of bourbon into the furnace when no one's looking.



Hot Irish Whiskey

If there's one thing the Irish know, it's how to use alcohol to stay warm all winter long (and as a crutch to deal with all of life's problems). In an Irish coffee glass, combine two and a half ounces of whiskey, a slice of lemon, some cloves, a teaspoon of sugar, and hot water. Stir and serve.



Nutty Irishman

Pour an ounce of Baileys, an ounce of Frangelico, and an ounce of cream over ice in a steel cocktail shaker and shake until completely cold. Strain into a chilled rocks glass with ice. Or, if you want to skip this whole process, you could take a few swigs straight out of a Jameson bottle and call it a night.

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SOUND ADVICE



AC/DC
Backtracks
[Columbia Records]

The 30-year trail of wreckage behind Aussie rockers AC/DC includes 16 studio albums, one deceased singer, and countless shattered eardrums. This boxed set collects the songs that were left by the side of the road, including 18 studio rarities and 29 live tracks, stretching back to a blazing live version of "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" from '77. Among the best outtakes are the sleazy STD homage "Crabsody in Blue," originally yanked from *Let There Be Rock*, and the original single version of "High Voltage." But the real gold is in the roof-burning live takes of staples such as "Shot Down in Flames" and "Shoot to Thrill." The set also includes a DVD of AC/DC videos and a live DVD from Germany that shows three decades haven't slowed them down—just made them meaner.



AGNOSTIC FRONT
Victim in Pain/United Blood
[Bridge Nine]

Few records captured the violence and rage on the streets of New York City in the early '80s like Agnostic Front's *Victim in Pain*. Released in 1984 and considered one of the first official releases of the hardcore movement, the songs blended the speed and fury of punk with brutal rants about life on the dirty, drug-addled streets of the Lower East Side. In honor of the album's 25th anniversary, this reissue pairs the original 11 songs with Agnostic Front's debut single, *United Blood*. Songs such as "Power" ("Fighting in the streets/Trying to be free") and the anti-NYPD rager "Blind Justice" still evoke the hard-knock sound of early hardcore, while the growl of the title track perfectly captures the moment all of the frustration boiled over. Essential.



THROWDOWN
Deathless
[E1 Music]

When modern hardcore went metal, Hatebreed, Terror, and SoCal's own Throwdown were left as kings of the pit. Throwdown know the formula: Keep the *chugga chugga* guitar riffs churning, leave room for vocalist Dave Peters to fire off Phil Anselmo-inspired vocals, and watch the kids go utterly bonkers in the pit. The slow grind of *Deathless* centers on the band's ability to build intricate, hard-hitting guitar riffs and stab them into the middle of mid-tempo headbanger numbers. "This Continuum" gallops on swirling guitars until Peters blasts, "I can't face this hell alone!" The guitars on "Skeleton Vanguard," filled with chugs and squeals, would make Dimebag Darrell smile.



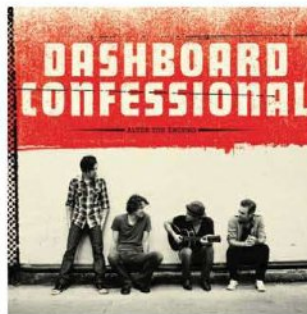
KID SISTER
Ultraviolet
[Downtown Records]

After decades of lagging behind L.A. and NYC, Chicago is now a hotbed of hip-hop. After Common, Kanye West, and Lupe Fiasco comes Kid Sister, the literal sister of Flosstradamus member Josh Young. More mall rat than hood rat, Kid Sister's break came with "Pro Nails," a dance-floor anthem featuring Kanye West that bumps more like Monie Love than any of modern hip-hop's tried (and worn-out) formulas. It's clear that Kid Sister is trying something different, mixing electro pop and synths on the bubblegum "Life on TV" and using "Let Me Bang 2009" to confess, "At least I'm tryin' kinda sorta kinda/Rap more about some girlie shit/Rather than bump and grind." It's fresh and original.



FOO FIGHTERS
Greatest Hits
[RCA Records]

Which is wilder to consider: that it's been 18 years since Nirvana released *Nevermind* or that Dave Grohl's Foo Fighters have released six albums since? While Nirvana was dragged kicking and screaming into playing arenas, Grohl built the Foo and their sound to fill them. Among the 16 tracks assembled on their first greatest hits collection are obvious tracks such as "Monkeywrench," "Best of You," and "My Hero," all well-worn staples of any rock bar. Later, and slightly less obviously, tracks such as "Long Road to Ruin" and "Times Like These" also show up. Of course, no hits collection is complete without a few unreleased tracks designed to draw you in, so Grohl includes the light Tom Petty twang of "Wheels" and the raging, if slightly flat, "Word Forward."



DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL
Alter the Ending
[Interscope]

As Dashboard Confessional's fan base grew, so did their sound. What started as Chris Carrabba wrestling out heartache alone on a stage with an acoustic guitar has grown into a full-size band with a big sound designed to back the singer's growing songwriting skills. The center of that sound will always be Carrabba's voice diving from a high falsetto to a shaky whisper, as it does on "Blame It on the Changes," in which he builds to the climactic confession, "I need you more than you know now." The centerpiece of the album is "Belle of the Boulevard," a Springsteen-style character study that shifts between twangy guitar and a soaring chorus, complete with strings and piano. The sound is expanding, but Carrabba stays true to himself in the center of it all.

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She never knew what to say to him after. He always seemed distant.



IN RECOVERY

Holiday festivities got the best of you? Here's how to look better than you feel.

Even if you're able to haul your ass into work after the company holiday party, chances are you'll look like hell. That's because drinking causes almost as many issues with your face as it does with your liver. Jeanette Betts, manager of the Cowshed Spa at Soho House in New York City, has seen the damage firsthand (the Soho House has five bars to service just 24 hotel rooms). This winter she's got a fix: "We're starting a *maintenance* service on Saturday mornings, where we'll offer a detox facial, hangover massage, shave, and breakfast." Even if you can't get to New York City, there's still plenty you can do to look more presentable the morning after. Most of the issues you'll encounter—bloodshot eyes, dark circles, puffy face, sallowness—are "caused by the dehydrating effects of alcohol," according to Betts. So grab a bottle of Poland Spring and guzzle the minute you wake up, then reach for these other hangover helpers. Then try to figure out where you are. —Jennifer Goldstein



Nickel Morning After Rescue Gel
(\$42, amazon.com)

If you look like you've been in a boxing match (perhaps you were?), apply this face gel as soon as you stumble into the bathroom. It decreases puffiness and refreshes sallowness.



Hangover From Hell Cooling Eye Mask
(\$12, amazon.com)

Shrink bags under your eyes by wearing this chilled eye mask while you take a few minutes to try to remember if you made it home with your credit card, phone, and pride intact.



Visine Totality Eye Drops
(\$7, drugstores)

Betts says that any type of moisturizing eyewash will help clear the telltale bleary-eyed look. Try these drops, which also have tetrahydrozoline HCL, an ingredient that helps reduce redness.



Dynamic Health Acai Gold
(\$35, gnc.com)

Skip the hair of the dog; Betts suggests a shot of antioxidant-packed acai juice instead. "It's energizing and helps improve mental clarity," she says.



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GAME ON



ASSASSIN'S CREED II

Systems: Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, PC

You didn't dream of screwing with the clergy in medieval Italy. But when Ezio Auditore da Firenze's father is wrongly executed, the nobleman turns assassin and takes up the blade to exact revenge on the corrupt politicians, businessmen, and men of the cloth who conspired against his family. With the help of family friend Leonardo da Vinci's brilliant inventions, the assassin brings new flair to the art of killing, infiltrating enemy strongholds with flying machines, wielding two blades for simultaneous instant kills, and bringing gunpowder to knife fights. After the kill, lose pursuers in the streets of Venice, Florence, and Rome by running across rooftops, dodging down alleys, and hiding under objects. Romans got you cornered? Try a smoke bomb and live to slay another day.



THE SABOTEUR

Systems: Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, PC

Part *Sin City*, part *Casablanca*, The Saboteur stands out from the overcrowded collection of WWII games by going black and white. After the Germans invade France, the only color left is the bold red of Nazi banners hanging over Paris. To restore color to the City of Lights, street-smart Irish race car driver turned French Resistance supporter Sean Devlin must drive the occupiers out of the city by sabotaging Nazi bases, derailing trains, blowing up zeppelins, imploding bridges, stealing intelligence, and shooting everyone wearing a swastika. When Devlin successfully liberates a district, color returns to the streets and the cheese-eating surrender monkeys actually start fighting back. If the German heat gets close, dip into a French brothel for hiding. They'll be very thankful for your efforts.



LEFT 4 DEAD 2

Systems: Xbox 360, PC

The best undead shooter on the planet returns with even wilder brain-feeding frenzies. The sequel's five new campaigns span the Deep South as you move through shopping malls, amusement parts, and a murky bayou while facing an array of relentless new zombie types. Zombies in riot gear are almost impossible to kill with gunfire from the front, so players must coordinate attacks and improvise with new melee weapons like chainsaws and *katanas*. As with its critically acclaimed predecessor, the only way to survive Left 4 Dead 2 is to cooperate with three friends—leave someone behind and your chances of survival plummet. Once you're done splattering the streets with zombie blood, get infected yourself and hunt down survivors in the Scavenge multiplayer mode. Tastes like chicken!



BAYONETTA

Systems: Xbox 360, PlayStation 3

"Infinity climax action" sure sounds dirty, and that's just how Platinum Games describes its latest. Taking cues from *Devil May Cry* and an LSD binge, Bayonetta stars a scantily clad witch who wears only her long hair for clothing, shoots guns with her feet, taunts enemies with innuendo, transforms into deadly creatures, and uses her hair for special attacks. If her guns and kicks aren't doing the trick, the titular vamp turns the violence to 11, summoning eye-opening torture attacks involving guillotines, iron maidens, and high-heeled shoes. In traditional Japanese fetish fashion, the more special attacks she summons, the less hair she has to cover her dangerous curves. There's probably a plot in there somewhere, but who cares? It's perverse, weird, and undeniably intriguing. —Matt Bertz

SKIN
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PHOTO ERIC BLACKMON TEE MISTRESS SIZE M



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ROAD DOG

Somewhere between home and the next tattoo convention is an airport where you will eventually be stranded. Possibly overnight. The **Toshiba Satellite U505** (toshiba.com, starting at \$849) will entertain you. The 13.3-inch laptop packs Windows 7, an Intel Core 2 Duo processor, 4GB RAM, and a DVD player into a 4.5-pound package that is perfect for watching movies or searching for nearby hotels. Football fans should subscribe to **Directv's NFL Sunday Ticket Online** (directv.com, \$350), a package that includes online streaming access to every NFL game, real-time scores, and highlights. Now you won't miss the game even though you missed your flight.



Players Only

Nothing can ruin vacation days like boring holiday parties and court dates. Kill time at both with the **Sony PSP Go** (us.playstation.com, \$250), a pocket-sized redesign of the original PSP gaming system. Using built-in Wi-Fi, the system downloads games, movies, and music directly to 16 GB of internal memory, so there's no need to carry UMDs. Flip down the controls and play until the judge calls your case. It might be your last chance for a while.



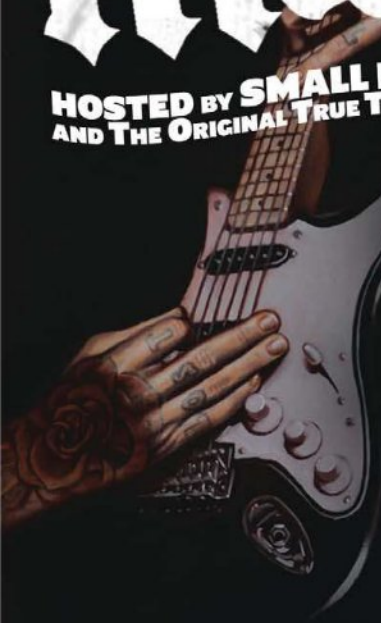
WATCH THIS

Lowbrow art is as dear to our hearts as tattoo art. **Vannen Watches** makes sharp timepieces with designs from some of the best lowbrow artists around. This watch, "Time Waits for No Man" (\$65, vannenwatches.com), was designed by Chicago artist Brian Morris and is produced in a limited edition of 500. Other artists include Dirty Donny, Damon Soule, Buff Monster, and Chris Ryniak.

LAPTOP PHOTO: TIM EASTMAN

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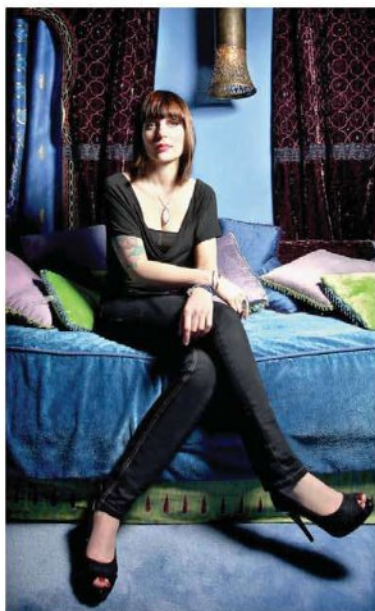


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Clockwise from above: Give Mama a Break; Jinx; artist Mimi S.



MODERN GIRLS

Retro women are reborn through the digital paintings of Berlin artist Mimi S.

Don't get the wrong idea about Mimi S. She may paint ultra-voluptuous, darkly mysterious women, but that shouldn't color your expectations of the artist herself. "Sometimes people are irritated when they meet me because I am down-to-earth and not the strange vixen-painter they expected," says the German-born painter. "It amuses me."

Mimi—who's based in Berlin and represented by the Strychnin Gallery—originally worked as a character designer and illustrator in the animation industry, a job that tested her patience. "You have to transfer their ideas and wishes, no matter if you like the style or not," she says, echoing the frustration of corporate lackeys the world over. So she went solo, creating "digital paintings" that she painstakingly develops layer by layer on her computer. Mimi's husband is also an artist, and the two of them have been embraced by the rockabilly and hot-rod communities, thanks to their posters and CD covers. "I think the fact that my female characters are very curvy fits well into the ideals of today's '50s-retro spirit," says Mimi.

For all of its over-the-top beauty, Mimi's work sometimes borders on horror. In *Metamorphosis*, a sultry, negligee-clad woman's ankles and feet have melted into a large flesh puddle. What's she trying to tell us? Don't bother asking. Mimi is keeping mum, insisting that it's up to the viewer to decide the meaning. "Maybe it's just pure nonsense!" she says self-effacingly.

Mimi herself is a painted woman, having gotten her first tattoo as an 18-year-old working at a pub outside Dublin. It was the early '90s, Celtic tattoos were the rage, and Mimi was experiencing the classic teenage desire to shock the parentals. Her motivation was different when she was in her 20s. She got an Asian fire horse on her back "just because it was beautiful."

Three years ago, she commissioned a piece to cover the Celtic one, but it took on greater significance when her mother passed away. "I wanted to have a garden with flowers, Pacific gods, and exotic paradises that I could dream of because it was a very hard time, and I often wished I was far away," says Mimi. The tattoo, a work in progress that covers her arm and shoulder, is by her friend Niki of Berlin Ink Tattoo & Piercing.

Next up for the artist: two new series of paintings and illustrations, the details of which she is keeping to herself. "But," says Mimi tantalizingly, "I can promise they're going to be very sexy, really strange, and beautifully disturbing."
—Kristina Feliciano



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DESTINATION: PARIS

French tattooer Noon gives us a guided tour of the City of Light.

French artist Noon learned how to tattoo by watching the gypsies and ex-cons who tattooed in the poor part of town, where he grew up. As he explains, "I watched them attach needles to pencils and set the ink bottle on a small plate over a flame—very basic. ... And at 10 years old, I already knew how they did it. There was no color, no fill, only the line."

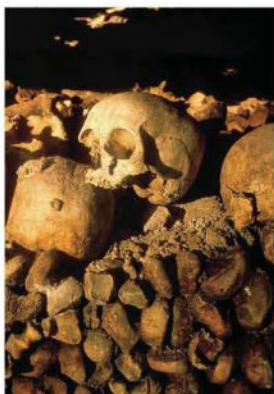
Their simple, line-only tattoos would influence Noon's own singular style that's synonymous with avant-garde or *art brut* tattooing. "It's difficult to explain," Noon says of his style. "I would say it's minimalist, it's singular. I don't know if there's a real name for this. The way I started was with the idea that the tattoo could be finished with only the line."

So who better to give us the best insider info on Paris than a gypsy-educated Frenchman? Here, the master of his own minimalist and modern style schools us on the best wine bars, museums, and cemeteries. —Patrick Sullivan



BEST TATTOO COMEDY SHOW ↻

The best part about Cantada (cantada.net, 13 Rue Moret), a devilishly garish bar, gallery, and theater, isn't that it's situated in the heart of Ménilmontant, nor is it the huge selection of absinthe—though both factors would be reason enough to visit. It's Pascal Tourain, the towering, heavily tattooed "trash comic." Tourain's weekly show, *L'homme Tatoué*, is a must-see, according to Noon. "He presents the tattoo in a way you've never seen before," says Noon. "And Cantada is also an art gallery, so nothing is missing here."



G BEST BELOWGROUND CEMETERY

"This is a visit you need to take," urges Noon. In the 18th century, Paris made use of its abandoned underground quarries to take on the overflow from other cemeteries. Les Catacombes (catacombes-de-paris.fr, 1 Avenue du Colonel Henri Rol-Tanguy) is the result. The tunnel's departed inhabitants have played host to the French Resistance, the German Army, and murder. For nearly half a mile, the bones are stacked to the ceiling and arranged with the kind of morbid precision you might not expect to find in the City of Light.

SEXIEST MUSEUM ↻

In Paris's world-famous Pigalle Place, you'll find the Musée de l'érotisme (musee-erotisme.com, 72 Boulevard de Clichy). Dedicated to eroticism—as most establishments are in this red-light district—the museum is a little more cerebrally stimulating than its triple-X neighbors, though most of the exhibitions are still likely to get you all hot and bothered. From the ancient to the contemporary to the bizarre, this place is bound to have something that tickles your fancy. "And since you are there, make sure to visit the neighborhood of Montmartre," says Noon.



↻ BEST WINE & CHEESE BAR

If you're going to go the wine and cheese route, you might as well find a spot that's teeming with that Parisian *je ne sais quoi*. In this case, it's Art Brut Bar and Gallery (78 Rue Quincampoix), a space dedicated to the outsider art style of the same name. The space was designed by the great French illustrator Lionel Le Néouanic and Les Chats Pelés art collective, explains Noon. "It's a perfect spot to taste a plate of French cheese with a glass of good French wine."



↻ BEST ABOVEGROUND CEMETERY

Père-Lachaise Cemetery (pere-lachaise.com), "must be visited," says Noon. Serene paths and beautiful foliage stretch out over this 100-acre cemetery that serves as the final resting place for a countless number of both French and international artists, composers, writers, and actors. Jim Morrison's grave can be found with a little hunting, and is likely to be adorned with candles and trinkets from the hundreds of thousands of people who visit every year. "Do not forget your camera," says Noon. "It is truly amazing and fantastic here. You'll need at least four hours and a good pair of shoes."



Clockwise from left:
front view of Toyota
4Runner Limited; Jeep
Grand Cherokee;
4Runner interior.

MUD MONSTERS

Two redesigned SUV standbys reaffirm their off-roading roots without sacrificing subdivision-cruising comfort.

2011 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

3.6-liter V6
280 horsepower
\$31,000

2010 TOYOTA 4RUNNER

4.0-liter V6
270 horsepower
\$29,440

In automobile circles, "SUV" was, and still is, a dirty word. Thanks to skyrocketing gas prices, soaring global temperatures, and plunging bank accounts, the three-letter acronym symbolized everything dumb about vehicle design. The knock against many of them was that they were bloated gas guzzlers that couldn't even deliver serious off-road capability. How did they get that reputation? Because that's exactly what some SUVs were. Luckily, carmakers have started to respond—and not just by rebranding their people-movers "CUVs." In fact, two of the best examples of the new generation of leaner, meaner SUVs are also two of the best-selling SUVs of the past couple of decades: the Jeep Grand Cherokee and the Toyota 4Runner. Both can handle rough trails and killer cul-de-sacs.

JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE These days, Chrysler can't afford to alienate any customers. So when they had to decide whether to satisfy weekday commuters or weekend off-roaders with their redesigned 2011 Grand Cherokee, they had only one choice: to satisfy both. And they have. Outside, the Cherokee boasts a new, sculpted profile; the iconic seven-slot grille remains, while a new interior features four extra inches of leg room in back and a smart, plush cabin capable of both impressing the boss and easing explosive road rage. Meanwhile, three different 4x4 systems and five different terrain settings are matched with the new Quadra Lift suspension, which hoists the Cherokee 4.5 inches above its park height and allows for a maximum clearance of 11.1 inches—plenty of room to barrel over logs, woodland

creatures, and the neighbor's lawn decorations.

Fuel economy has never been one of Jeep's strong suits, but an all-new 3.6-liter, 280-horsepower V6 produces 260 lb-ft of torque, boosts horsepower 33 percent, and increases fuel economy more than 10 percent. Need more power for punishing Ma Nature? Upgrade to the 5.7-liter, 360-horsepower V8 Hemi, which pumps out 390 lb-ft of torque, more than enough to topple a log cabin.

TOYOTA 4RUNNER Since it was first introduced in the mid '80s, the 4Runner has consistently earned solid off-road cred. So it's only fitting that its redesign makes it seem capable not only of bombing through bear country, but of chasing down that bear and slowly choking the life out of it. Officially revealed at the Texas State Fair—where else?—the new 4Runner borrows style cues both inside and out from the FJ Cruiser. It rides on a new body-on-frame platform that manages to feel unibody-solid with double-wishbone suspension in front and a solid axle astern—hardware that can be augmented with electronic goodies like Crawl Control and terrain selection. Three trim levels should satisfy just about any driver, but unless your sole intent is to putter in the Fashion Bug for weekly darning lessons, you'll want to make certain you ditch the four-cylinder engine for a new 4.0-liter, 270-horsepower V6 that produces 278 lb-ft of torque. There's no longer an optional V8, but the V6 actually produces more horsepower while getting better fuel economy. Thanks, technology! —*Kyle Henderson*



Clockwise from top left: Burton Buffalo Beanie, burton.com; G-Star fur-lined hat, g-star.com; Oliver Spencer Garrison Field Cap, Oliver Spencer, 212-475-0079; 1717 Olive hat, Atrium, 212-473-3980; Crooks & Castles plaid hat, 310-652-3007.

FUDD FLAPS

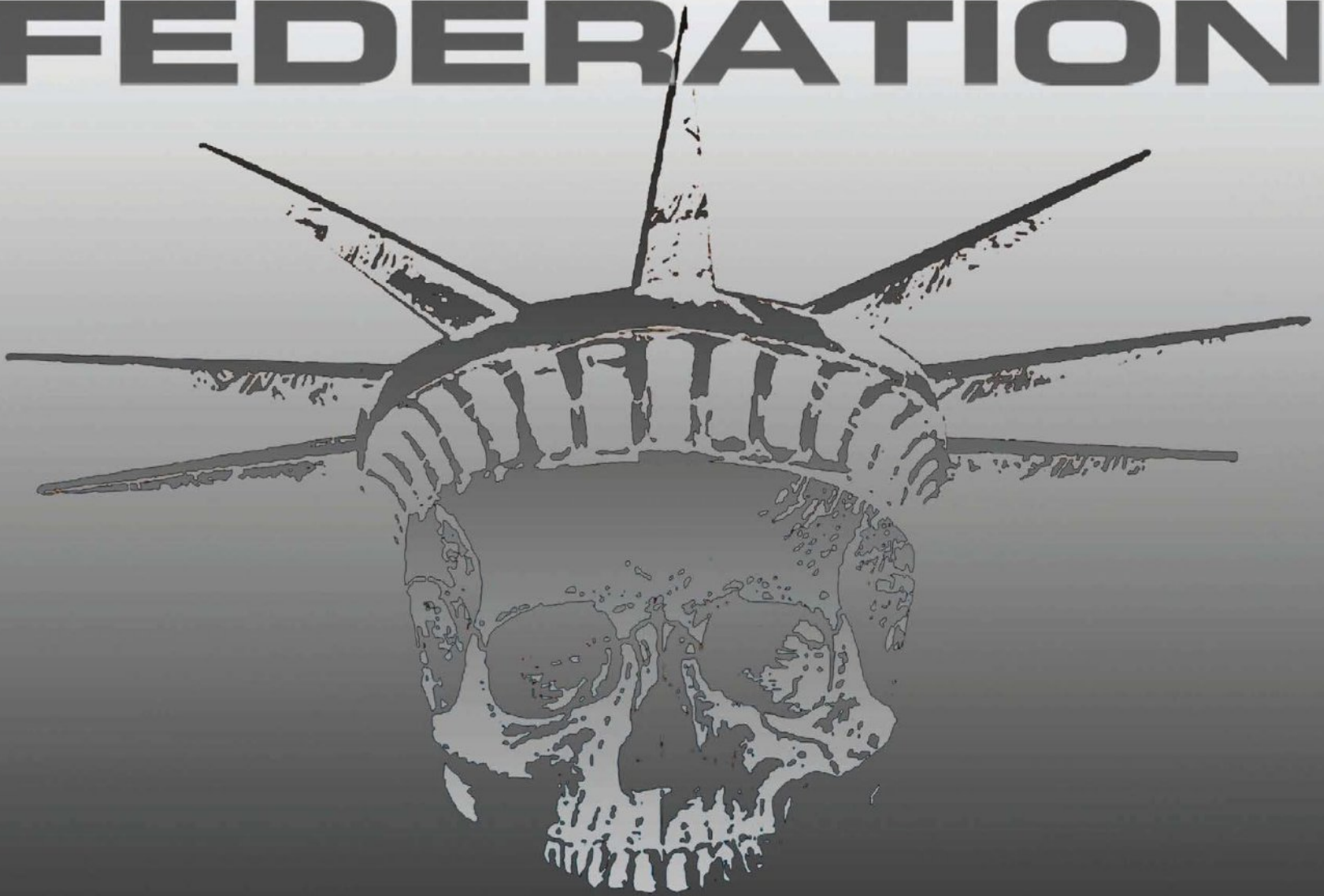
STYLIST, MEGAN TERRY

TRUE GLOVE



Clockwise from top: Dakine Crossfire graffiti glove, dakine.com; DC Ventron Technical Pipe glove, dcshoes.com; Drop Manufacturing Marquis GTX brown glove, dropmfg.com; Rome SDS Coodie glove, romesnowboards.com; Burton Lumberjack Spectre glove, burton.com.

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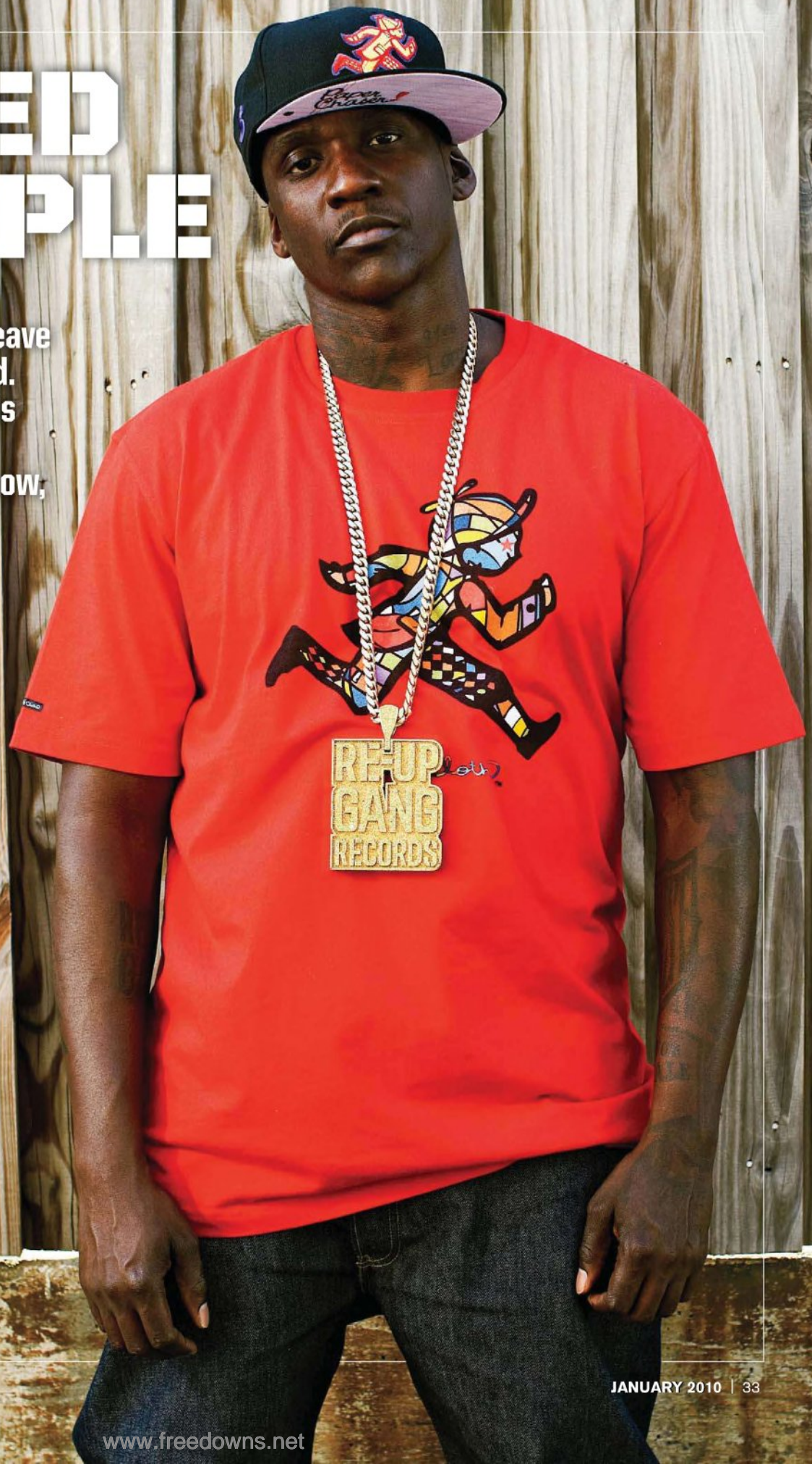
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INKED PEOPLE

"If I could go back,
I probably would leave
my body untouched.
But since I'm in this
deep, what's the
point in stopping now,
right?" -Malice





THE CLIPSE

Strip any given Clipse song of references to drugs, exotic cars, lavish locales, and, of course, money—what's left? Still enough lyric-driven hip-hop for you to wrap your head around for days. Perhaps that's why Virginia-bred brothers Gene and Terrence Thornton (Malice and Pusha-T respectively) have built one of the most diverse and hard-to-classify followings in the game. Walk through the venue doors of a local performance, and you'll find a mixed crowd of straight thugs, hipster-hop kids in red skinnies, and frat boys still poppin' collars. It's an allegiance of creeds and colors that earned Clipse's third full-length album, *Till the Casket Drops*, a spot as one of the most anticipated rap records of 2009. "We like to call it 'hip-hop on steroids,'" exclaims Malice, the older of the brothers. "It's just like everything to the third power with these lyrics and beats."

Casket is a big leap for the duo, as it's their first album not 100 percent produced by the Neptunes. Though the group continues to work with Pharrell, who still brings his talent behind the boards and mic, this time the Clipse also

enlisted help from producers Sean C and LV (credited for the success of Jay Z's *American Gangster*) and DJ Khalil, not to mention an all-star list of guest appearances including the likes of Kanye West, Drake, and Keri Hilson. "Our fans are counting on us," says Malice. "We always stay honest to ourselves and our music, and our stories are real."

The brothers also expect something deeper in tattoos, both theirs and others'. "I hate when a girl gets something like a butterfly, then tells you she did it 'cause it was cute," remarks Pusha. "I'm just like, 'Get the fuck outta here with that shit.'" The simple words "I'm sorry" on his arm, under a baby angel by Mister Cartoon, form his heartfelt apology to the loved ones in his life he's wronged. As for the cherub, he jokes, "It's a baby angel—who can be mad at that?" Malice, a bit more covered in predominantly biblical work, mainly by Dave Lukeson of Fuzion Ink in Norfolk, VA, expresses his own form of honest regret. "If I could go back, I probably would leave my body untouched. But since I'm in this deep, what's the point in stopping now, right?" —Willie G.

ANTONIO BALLATORE

Picture an interior designer and chances are you're not envisioning a bearded, burly, tattooed ex-punk musician from New York City—unless, of course, you tuned in to season four of Home & Garden Television's reality show competition *Design Star*. Devoted watchers are already well familiar with season winner Antonio Ballatore, the man the judges deemed their "bad boy of design."

"I'm *definitely* shocking to the traditional HGTV crowd," says Ballatore. "I build houses and 1920s-themed sets, create live special-effect explosions, design over-the-top kids' rooms, and modify old hot rods. There's no limitation to where I can take my creativity."

It's exactly this brazen enthusiasm that helped Ballatore advance past the 10 other finalists throughout the show's weekly interior design challenges. In one episode, his unorthodox decision to ornament a wall with fluorescent-pink geese was a surprising hit with the judges.

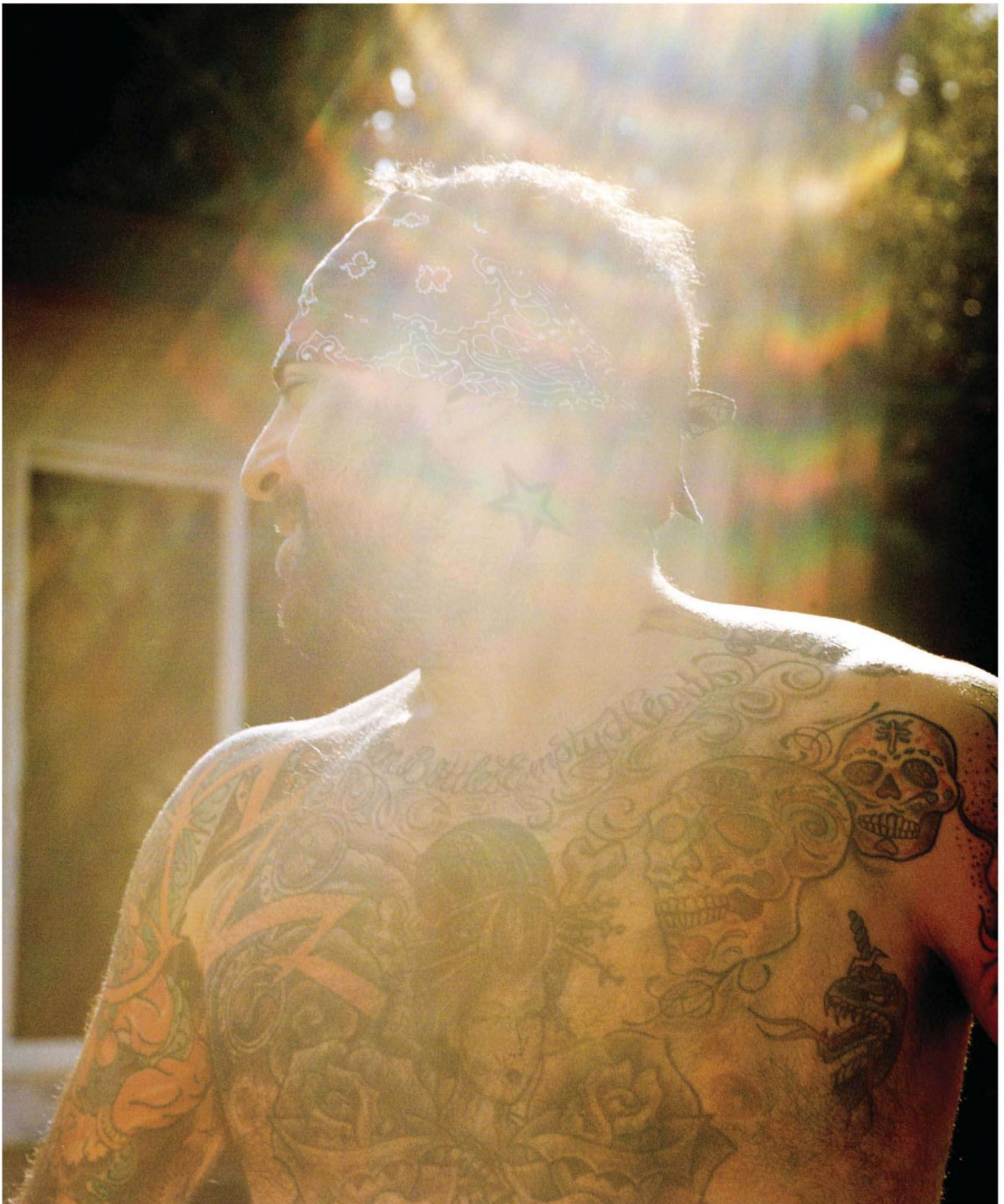
Ballatore's path to design fame hasn't been a predictable one. After spending years playing in New York hardcore bands, including Murphy's Law, and bartending and building sets to pay the bills, Ballatore landed the coveted spot of set builder for famed photographer David LaChapelle. It was during his years with LaChapelle that Ballatore honed his chops, eventually rising to the rank of set designer. "I quickly became known as the guy doing all these over-the-top sets," says Ballatore. "Crazy shit like 20-foot

rocket ships with Pee-wee Herman jumping outta them."

Ballatore's next challenge will be his new show, *The Antonio Project* (the prize he was awarded for his *Design Star* win), which begins airing in January on HGTV. For the special inaugural episode, Ballatore redid his own house in five days and gave viewers a taste of the unconventional collaborations to come. To add a distinct personal flair to the headboard in the bedroom, Ballatore brought in the low-rider airbrush artist Buckwild, who painted a 9-foot metal-flaked sombrero girl.

"That's also a tattoo I've wanted for years," Ballatore says of the lovely señorita. "Buck's switching over to tattooing, so he'll be doing that one on my back." While most of Ballatore's early tattoos—traditional, thick-line Americana—were obtained in New York City during the mid-'90s, the designer says he's become enamored of "all that black and gray gangster stuff" since moving to Los Angeles. It's a style that now decorates his chest, courtesy of Spotlight Tattoo's Baby Ray.

Whether building surreal sets, punishing a bass guitar, chopping hot rods, or wowing design fanatics, Ballatore's nothing-to-prove, punk rock attitude has been at the root of his many undertakings. Fittingly, that sentiment is the source of his next ink: "Next week, my friend Toby [Morse] from [hardcore band] H20 and I are going to get 'NTP'—nothing to prove—tattoos from *LA Ink's* Dan Smith. Dan is amazing, and I'm so stoked." —Brad Angle





From left: Matt Smith, Mark Miller, Eric Kane, Thomas Barnett, Garth Petrie

STRIKE ANYWHERE

Twenty-six hundred miles from his Virginia home and it's all the same deal to Strike Anywhere singer Thomas Barnett. Signs of urban conflict and ghosts of the subverted and forgotten take hold each time Barnett steps out his door and onto the streets of south Los Angeles.

Crashing with friends on Crenshaw Boulevard between Strike Anywhere tours, Barnett is instinctively drawn to the militarized working-class neighborhoods of this megacity, where black helicopters circle overhead and cars burn at the curbside—incidents that, over the past two years, he's woven into the lyrics of Strike Anywhere's latest album, *Iron Front*, a punk blast full of rapid breakdowns and raspy, anthemic choruses.

"It's sort of like me writing letters back home to Richmond, Virginia, about what I'm discovering here," Barnett says, noting the police brutality and historic racism that plagues both cities and inspired lyrics on previous full-lengths *Change Is a Sound* (2001) and *Exit English* (2003).

"Obviously, if you're writing punk songs about the degradation of society and you're trying to find an optimistic thread, like a little bit of hope, you can look to self-organizing traditions of the indigenous communities," he explains. "And I'm finding [hope] in the Latino communities and the African-American working class in south L.A."

It's those glimpses of hope that hold the most weight on *Iron Front*, acting

as answers to songs Barnett wrote more than a decade earlier in Richmond, with his first band, Inquisition.

"They have a lot of depth and a lot of places for people to personalize them," he says. "The songs on the record are just the beginning. They bring to the table what kids in Croatia, Malaysia, or New Zealand need to hopefully become inspired. It's almost like the ownership of the song is a fluid thing."

The band's logo, an adaptation of the antifascist circle—a symbol drawn up in 1931 for the Iron Front, a group organizing against neo-Nazis and fascist terror—has also become fluid since Strike Anywhere started emblazoning it on T-shirts and pins in 1999.

Barnett, who has four tattoos—all done by Ryan Mason at Scapegoat, a vegan tattoo shop in Portland, OR—recently plastered the symbol (a black outline consisting of three arrows pointing southeast, toward the lower right of the circle) on his right elbow. The rest of the guys in Strike Anywhere have that same black outline on other parts of their bodies.

"The fans do different variations on it, though, with bits of lyrics, and that's always intense when you see the words you've written tattooed on someone's body," Barnett says. "That's something you never get over, you never get numb to. It's beautiful—that's when you know it's not really yours anymore." —Ellen Thompson



JULIE



PHOTO BY WARWICK SAINT



PAST PERFECT

We've dressed them up, stripped them down, oiled them up, and washed them off. Now, in honor of our anniversary, we collect some of our favorite tattoo bodies from the past two years of INKED.

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER LOVE

SARAH





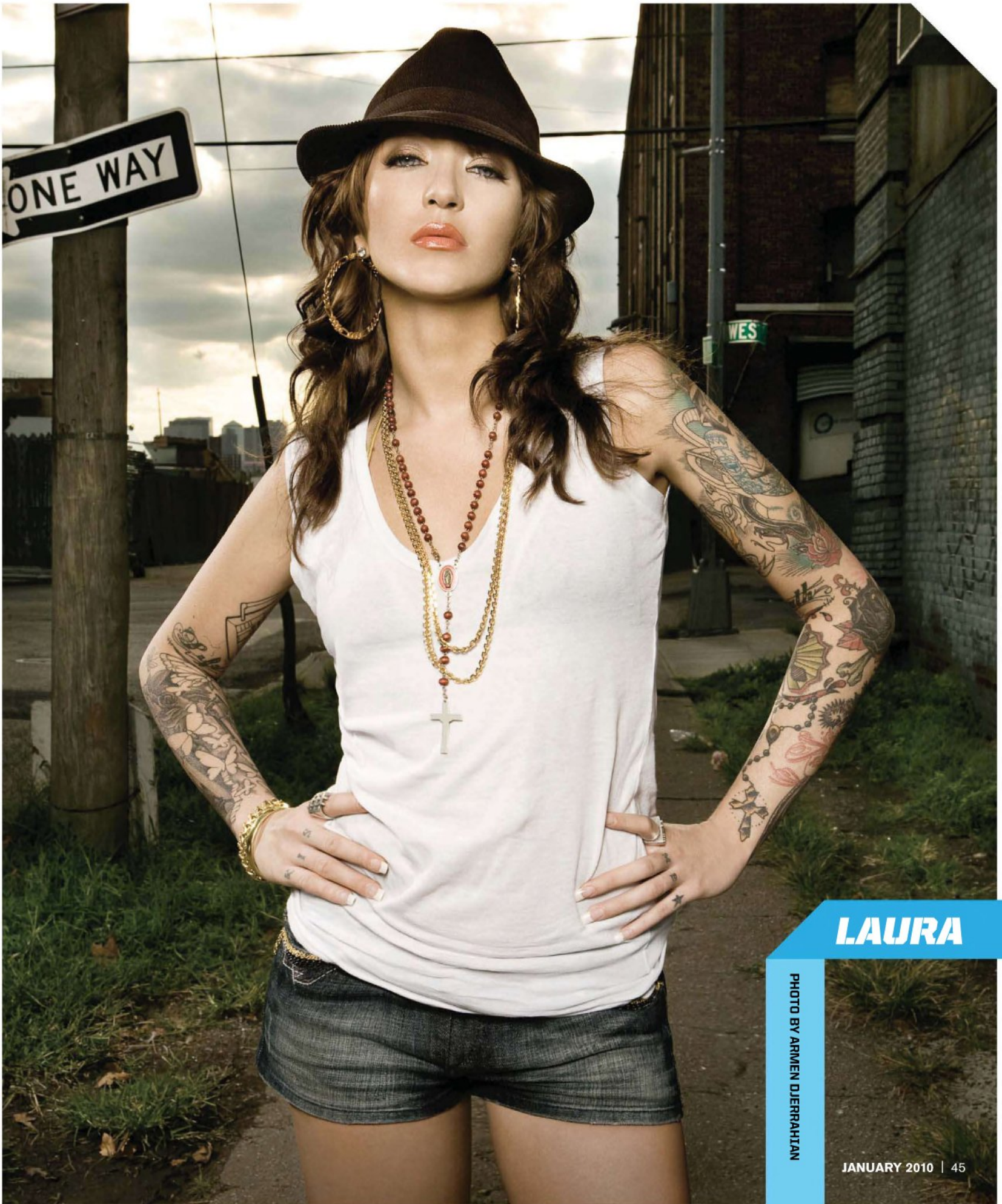
SHARON

PHOTO BY WARWICK SAINT

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RHONDA





LAURA

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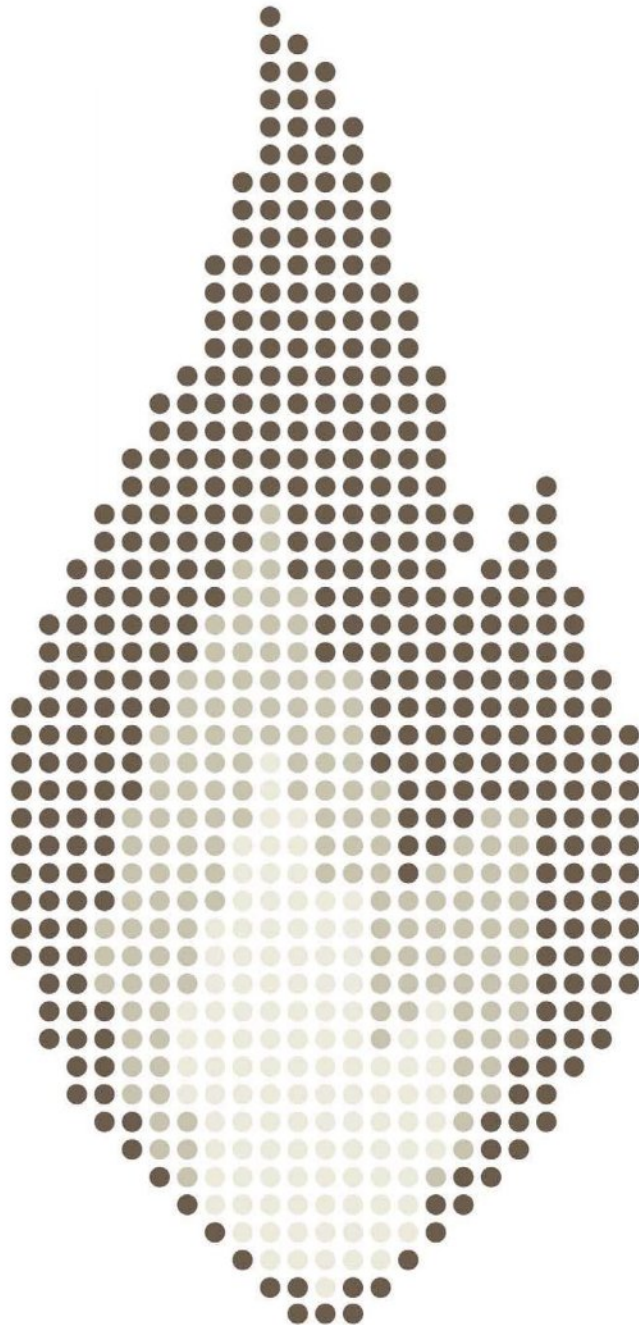
SABINA

PHOTO BY WARWICK SAINT

PHOTO BY WARWICK SAINT

ERIN





FLAME
STILL
BURNS

AFTER 15 YEARS OF KICKING GOTH ASS AND TAKING
NAMES, AFI PUT OUT THEIR BEST ALBUM EVER.

BY STEVE BALTIN





PREVIOUS PAGE, FROM LEFT: ADAM CARSON, HUNTER BURGAN, DAVEY HAVOK, JADE PUGET. PHOTO, JASON O'DELL. THIS PAGE, LIVE AT THE ELECTRIC FACTORY IN PHILADELPHIA, PA. PHOTOS, JUSTIN BORUCKI

"I WAS SURPRISED TO REALIZE THAT IT'S fall. It's fall, right? Mid-September is fall, right?" AFI frontman Davey Havok asks. It's true we're in L.A., where the only way to know summer has ended is by post-awards shows chatter and the number of gifting suites. But even if AFI were being pelted with snowballs thrown by Frosty himself, Havok would have no clue what time of year it was. "You get very involved in writing and recording a record, and it really makes you lose track of everything," he says.

Havok's confusion is understandable. The entire band has been in the midst of a time vacuum for more than a year, writing and recording *Crash Love*, the album faced with the ominous prospect of following their breakthrough effort, *Decemberunderground*. Though the Ukiah, CA, band formed back in 1991, and released their first album in 1995, it wasn't until 2006 that they released the hit single "Miss Murder," which propelled *Decemberunderground* to a number one debut on the *Billboard* Top 200.

So 15 years after forming, AFI finally hit the top of the charts. Now they just have to do it again. No pressure. "We do what we've always done, and we've made music for ourselves first," drummer Adam Carson says as he and Havok sit in the restaurant of a trendy Sunset Strip hotel. "That's really the litmus test. If it does something for us, if it excites us, if it moves us, if it makes us feel something, then we can present it to the world. And hopefully it gets the reaction. And if it doesn't, fuck it—at least we like it."

Crash Love is getting the desired response from critics, earning them some of the best reviews of their career. And it's easy to see why. Whether it's the

had a moment when we were playing 'Cold Hands' last night, where we were both looking at each other and thinking, *Yeah.*"

Glowing reviews are nice, but critics don't buy records. And for AFI, the relationship with those who pay the band's bills is something they take very seriously. "There are a lot of tattoos. I've seen more AFI tattoos than I've seen of any other band tattoo," Havok says. "Certainly that's due in part because I'm the singer of said band," he adds, laughing, "but also because there are so many AFI tattoos. If I was Greg Ginn I might've seen more Black Flag tattoos—'cause I've seen a lot of Black Flag—but people don't come up and show me their Black Flag tattoos, they show me their AFI tattoos."

"I've seen so many good ones," bassist Hunter Burgan adds about AFI-related ink. What are some of his favorites? "I've seen a lot of people with full sleeves with different album art," he says of some of the more creative ones.

Burgan can definitely relate to that fan devotion, as his own ink is a walking tour through his musical history. There's his favorite, "a twist on a traditional ship on waves—a sea monster taking down a ship," which honors his childhood band, the Sea Monsters. There are also tattoos for Marvin Gaye, Prince, Minor Threat, and, yes, Black Flag. "It's stuff that influenced me," he says, describing the Prince one as a purple rose with the title of the song "I Would Die 4 U" in its original album font. Likewise, he has the name of Gaye's seminal *What's Going On* in that album's font.

Havok, who got his first tattoo on his 18th birthday in San Francisco, has everything from sleeves with Halloween and *Nightmare Before Christmas*



"THERE ARE A LOT OF [AFI] TATTOOS. I'VE SEEN MORE AFI TATTOOS THAN I'VE SEEN OF ANY OTHER BAND TATTOO." —DAVEY HAVOK



heavy rock of the anthem-like "Beautiful Thieves," the catchy-as-hell infectious pop of "Veronica Sawyer Smokes," the fast-paced no-bullshit rock of the first single, "Medicate," the Adam and the Ants meets garage pop of "Too Shy to Scream," or the tension-filled midtempo ballad "Okay, I Feel Better Now"—a song that explodes into its pulsating chorus—*Crash Love* finds the group showing off its growing versatility and maturity.

After a year-plus of writing and recording, the band entered the studio with a huge catalog of songs to choose from. "As we're working the songs out, some of them we kind of explore and we like where they go, but then eventually they don't really get there and we sort of drop them," Carson says. "But sometimes—and usually they're my favorite songs—they sound great immediately and it's almost as if everybody in the band already knew what they were supposed to do, and the first time through it just gels."

So out of the songs on the album, how many fell into the latter category? "I guess you look at those 50 or something songs that we wrote, or 60—generally those 12. A lot of the songs [on the album] have that reaction. Those are the ones, just because they demand attention."

Havok claims it all began with "Beautiful Thieves." "[It] was the first song we wrote where Jade and I sat down and it was very clear, with that one, it was the best song for us," he says. "We had the same experience with 'Veronica Sawyer Smokes.' When Jade started playing that jangly guitar part, that melody came to me immediately and it was so natural and it was very different for us, which was very exciting for me. Adam and I definitely

themes to black wings on his back and a 9 Lives tribute he got with fellow AFI guitarist Jade Puget and Tiger Army's Nick 13. These days, Havok isn't crazy about discussing his tattoos; site guidelines for Despair Faction, the group's official fan club, forbid inquiring about band members' tattoos, along with discussion of "the group's names, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family information."

It's part of the begrudging relationship the group has with technology. Type "Crash Love" into any search engine and you'll find a thousand sites with complete lyrics to the new album. It's a convenience that Havok doesn't believe in. "It makes you lazier, and I feel that laziness also detracts from the value of what you find. Also, I think the accessibility detracts from the value of what you find," he says. "When you've had to sit down and listen to lyrics and you had to write them down, you're memorizing them as you're writing them down. You're learning those lyrics, you're paying attention to those lyrics."

AFI fans are instead spending time learning the band's songs on Rock Band and Guitar Hero. Havok agrees with Jimmy Page's contention that the games are not actually teaching kids to play instruments, but he does see some good in them. "I understand and I completely appreciate what Jimmy was saying. Yes, it's a shame that kids, rather than picking up a guitar and learning to play guitar for eight hours a day, are playing a video game," he says. "However, if that same kid weren't playing that same game he wouldn't be listening to rock 'n' roll at all. The youth that's playing those games don't listen to rock 'n' roll, and they're not buying the Guitar Hero video game 'cause AC/DC is on it. They heard of

AC/DC because it was on the guitar video game that they were playing."

"It'll be interesting to see if, in the future, kids who grow up playing Rock Band go on to form their own bands and actually play real guitar. All their songs would obviously be the five notes and a lot of whammy bar, 'cause that's how they learned to play guitar—like, no chords or anything, just five individual notes and lots of whammy," Carson says.

For Havok, the switch from music to video games is symptomatic of greater issues. "Unfortunately there are a lot of awful things that are sad right now that are not going to change, and they're not going back to the way things were," he says. "I wish people couldn't contact me 24 hours a day on my cell phone, but that's not gonna change, and I would have to be a recluse and step out of modern life to not take part in it. To simply do something like, 'Guess what, fuck computers, fuck this, fuck my phone, I am not gonna be available via e-mail or cell phone just like I wasn't when I started this band'—everything would stop. Because life has changed, we're faster now. When I started this band I didn't have a cell phone. There weren't cell phones and there wasn't Internet."

"So are you apologizing right now for not having a cell phone for five years after everything started? Because that fucking sucked, man," Carson says as this Oprah moment unfolds.

"I'm not apologizing 'cause I tried—I put up a good fight," Havok replies.

"To me."

"I apologize to you and you only."

The era before mass communication isn't the only time period that Havok seems to long for. His over-glammed presence is an homage to the age of the mega rock star, an era dominated by rock gods, from Robert Plant and David Bowie to Mick Jagger and Steven Tyler. As music has become secondary to video games and the Internet, Havok questions whether the possibility of true rock stardom still exists. "Rock stardom is a thing of the past. It's over, it's sad," he says.

What is a rock star to Havok? "It's someone who plays rock," he says, laughing. "First of all, if you're going to be a rock star, you play rock. You may be a pop star, you may be a country star, but you're not a rock star. And that doesn't mean you don't do something valuable. I think both Gwen Stefani and Pink are great artists, but they're not rock stars. They are pop stars, and there's nothing wrong with that. But there won't be the bigwig worldwide takeover of a rock 'n' roll star like that because there isn't an interest in rock anymore, in that way."

Despite his devotion, Havok has no plans to start a campaign for saving rock 'n' roll. "We've never, ever been interested in convincing people to respond to our music. We've always been interested in making music that is honest, that we're inspired by, that we enjoy, and we hope it touches people. We're very lucky that we've come this far and we've had such a positive reaction of people appreciating what we do throughout all our artistic growth and changes," Havok says. "I feel on some perhaps primal level, at the very least they're responding to the truth in what we do. Whether or not it's a conscious or subconscious thing—whether it's 'I really like that melody,' or 'I really like those words,' or 'Those guys fucking mean it'—somewhere in there, I think there's something that's allowed us to touch people continuously. So to answer your question, we don't try—we just hope." ■



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GREAT ARTISTS,
BUT THEY'RE NOT
ROCK STARS.”
—DAVEY HAVOK





By Patrick Sullivan • Illustrations by Michael Miller

Five Ways Technology is changing the world of tattooing forever.

Tattoos are designed for permanence, and the technology behind them is in no hurry to change either. For more than a century, the basic setup used to put ink in the skin of sailors, soldiers, and other skin art fans has been tweaked and fine-tuned while never deviating too far from the original design. After all, tattoo artists aren't known for chasing the next big thing. But that doesn't mean that inventors, scientists, and entrepreneurs looking for a quick buck aren't trying to come up with one. Here are five ways that technology is attempting to change the way we tattoo and get tattooed.



REMOVABLE INK!

Advances in putting ink into your skin also mean advances in getting it out. The latest: tattoo ink that can be removed with a single laser treatment. Before complaining about the decline of tattoo culture, remember that all inks are technically removable; InfiNitInk (freedom2inc.com) can simply be removed more easily, more thoroughly, and with less injury to the skin. It also doesn't hurt that top scientists from Harvard, Duke, and Brown contributed to the research that led to the development of the ink.

"We are not about temporary tattoos," stresses Martin Schmieg,

president and CEO of Freedom2 Inc. "And we're not about changing the dynamic of the tattoo market." In fact, the company's InfiNitInk is finding increasing, if moderate, success with tattooers—even though, as Schmieg laughs, "Without question, every tattoo artist, upon first hearing about us, hates us."

Schmieg, a self-proclaimed "square businessman," describes tattoos as "things that come to you from within your soul." Yet one study showed that about a quarter of people who get tattooed later regret it, which makes the idea of an easy removal that much more appealing.

Freedom2 isn't stopping with InfiNitInk, either. The company also engineered Virgin Ink, a conventional ink that is free of all toxins; Hawk tattoo equipment, which uses click-in and click-out needles; and a new surface cleaner that eliminates the hepatitis virus.

Just don't doubt the crew's commitment to real-deal quality control. Schmieg's been tattooed eight times with different versions of the ink, and Christine Solari, director of development and manufacturing, has also undergone the needle in what she calls their "applications lab." Ah, job perks.



ELECTRONIC FLASH!

Las Vegas is known for seizure-inducing lights, but Club Tattoo's Sean Dowdell claims that wasn't what inspired him to create the first-ever touch-screen tattoo design displays. It was simply ease of use.

"It's just so much easier than rifling through books or looking through all that flash," he says. "And the image library is endless." Although it took roughly a year and \$80,000 to develop, Dowdell says the payoff was worth it. The slick displays use an effortless interface that combines "the model of iTunes with the searchability of Google." And the result is no less efficient. The database currently includes more than 80,000 images and averages about 2,500 new ones per week. Dowdell predicts his system will change the face of tattoo shops within five years and stands by his statement that it's the best innovation in the tattoo business in the last 20.

Customers can check out designs online at clubtattoo.com and choose a design before getting to the shop. And artists can subscribe to Dowdell's new site, interactivetattoo.com, where they can upload designs and are paid a monthly licensing royalty each time a shop pays to use one. Even better than access to what's bound to be millions of designs is the representation that each artist gets. Dowdell has at least a few touch-screens in each of his five shops in Vegas and Arizona, meaning that each tattooer gets equal billing no matter where the client happens to be. Dowdell has also developed a virtual keyboard that allows the client to choose a font style without having to sift through endless reference books.

One feature the displays don't include is a print button. Dowdell laughs, "We'd probably end up with pages of stuff like 'cock,' 'asshole,' and 'jerk.' So we let the artist print out the designs themselves."

LIFE-SAVING INK!

In the not-so-distant future, diabetics could have a seriously significant excuse to get tattooed. Massachusetts-based Draper Laboratory is developing what they're calling Nano Ink, tattooable ink that changes color based on the body's glucose level, eliminating the need for blood tests. Instead of pricking their fingers to test glucose levels, diabetics would simply hold an infrared light over the ink; its color

would tell the wearer if he or she is in need of a quick shot of insulin.

The idea started as sodium-sensitive ink designed to monitor heart health or to ensure proper hydration of athletes. Now Nano Ink includes three parts: a glucose-detecting molecule, a glucose-mimicking molecule, and a color-changing dye. In an interview with Discovery Channel's Discovery News, Heather Clark, a Draper scientist,

claimed that a healthy glucose level would cause the ink to take on an orange hue. The ink is still in development, but Clark said that tests in lab mice have had spectacular results.

The good news, if you're not tattoo-inclined, is that the spot of ink doesn't need to be much bigger than a dot, and Clark claims the tattoo "would only have to be a few millimeters in size and wouldn't have to go as deep as a normal tattoo."



TATTOO CONCEALER!

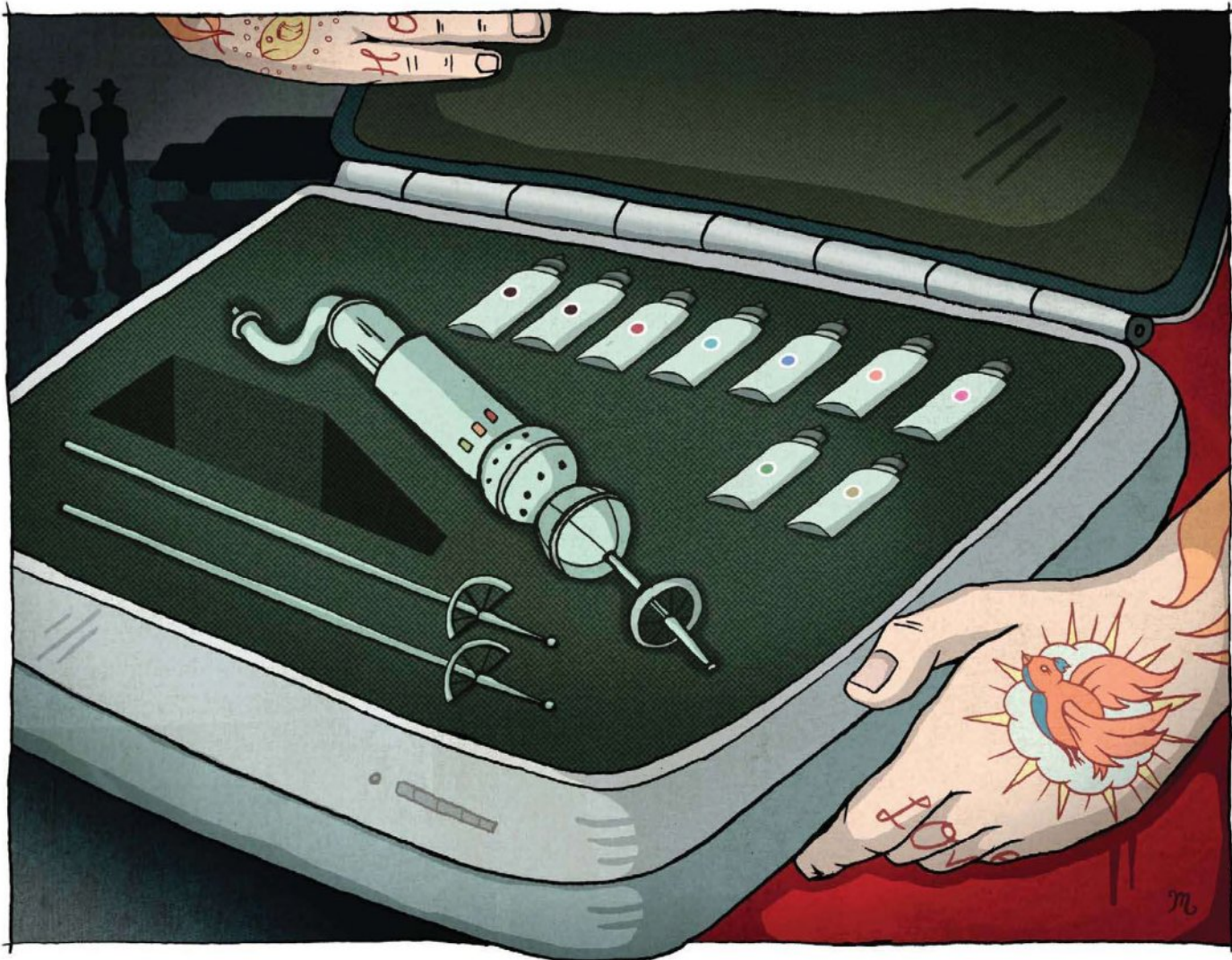


There are plenty of situations that might require concealing a tattoo: a job interview, a weekend with the in-laws, undercover espionage work. Enter Sephora's Kat Von D Tattoo Concealer (sephora.com).

It may seem like an odd marriage, but before Kat Von D ever picked up a tattoo machine, she was sneaking into her mother's room at the age of 7 to experiment with makeup. And if you've ever caught a split second of Kat on TLC's *LA Ink*, you know that it's impossible to miss her balls-out rock 'n' roll style that always includes some striking makeup.

In 2008, Von D teamed with Sephora to create a makeup line, and what started as a few products from the Los Angeles-based tattooer has grown into a full line of signature beauty products, including eight shades of heavy-duty concealer. The water-resistant and smudge-proof cream is applied in four steps (prep, conceal, perfect, and set) and works on bruises, dark circles, and other blemishes.

Von D has never had to cover up her own tattoos, though she admits there were times she probably should have. "Having tattoos made certain things very difficult for me. People treated you differently," she says. "Fortunately, the times are a changin'!"



TATTOO MACHINE 2.0!

Tattoo art has evolved over the decades, but little has changed about the machines buzzing away in shops around the world. Since Thomas Edison patented his Stencil-Pen in 1877 and Charles Wagner patented the first tattoo machine in 1904, the standard tattoo machine has hummed away relatively unchanged—that is until 2000, when California tattooer Carson Hill created the first pneumatic tattoo machine. His Neuma machines (neumatattoo.com) ditch the industry-standard electric coil machine for a design

that runs off of an air compressor. Neumas are smaller and lighter and give the tattooer more control, especially in tighter areas. They have no vibration, diminish stress on the hands, and run smooth at any angle.

For a trade notoriously resistant to change, it's surprising that the older artists have been most likely to pick up a Neuma. "The old-schoolers are more into it because they're the ones that have carpal tunnel or tendonitis," Hill explains. "Those guys come around and they've got real issues, like doctors giving them


a life span on their tattooing." Using the new machine, Hill often tattoos for 10 hours straight and says that his stretching hand gives out long before his tattooing hand does.

The smallest Neuma machine, the N2, weighs in at 1.5 ounces; the largest, the Neuma Hybrid, tops out at 2.5 ounces (with a little more weight behind the needle, it is Hill's preferred machine). There's also an Electric Module that houses a Swiss-made motor that combines pneumatics with electricity. And you thought your Prius was something special.



into the wild

photos by michael dwornik
styled by risa knight

A fashion photograph of a man standing in a vineyard. He is wearing a gray zip-up sweater over a collared shirt and black plaid pants. He is holding a large bird of prey, possibly an eagle or osprey, by its wings. The background consists of a wire fence and grapevines with green and yellowing leaves. The ground is covered in fallen autumn leaves.

Nicholas K oxford shirt;
Steven Alan gray sweater;
Levi's black plaid jeans;
Converse sneakers.



Belstaff gray leather jacket; Buckler knit top and wool pants; Bailey messenger cap; DKNY boots.



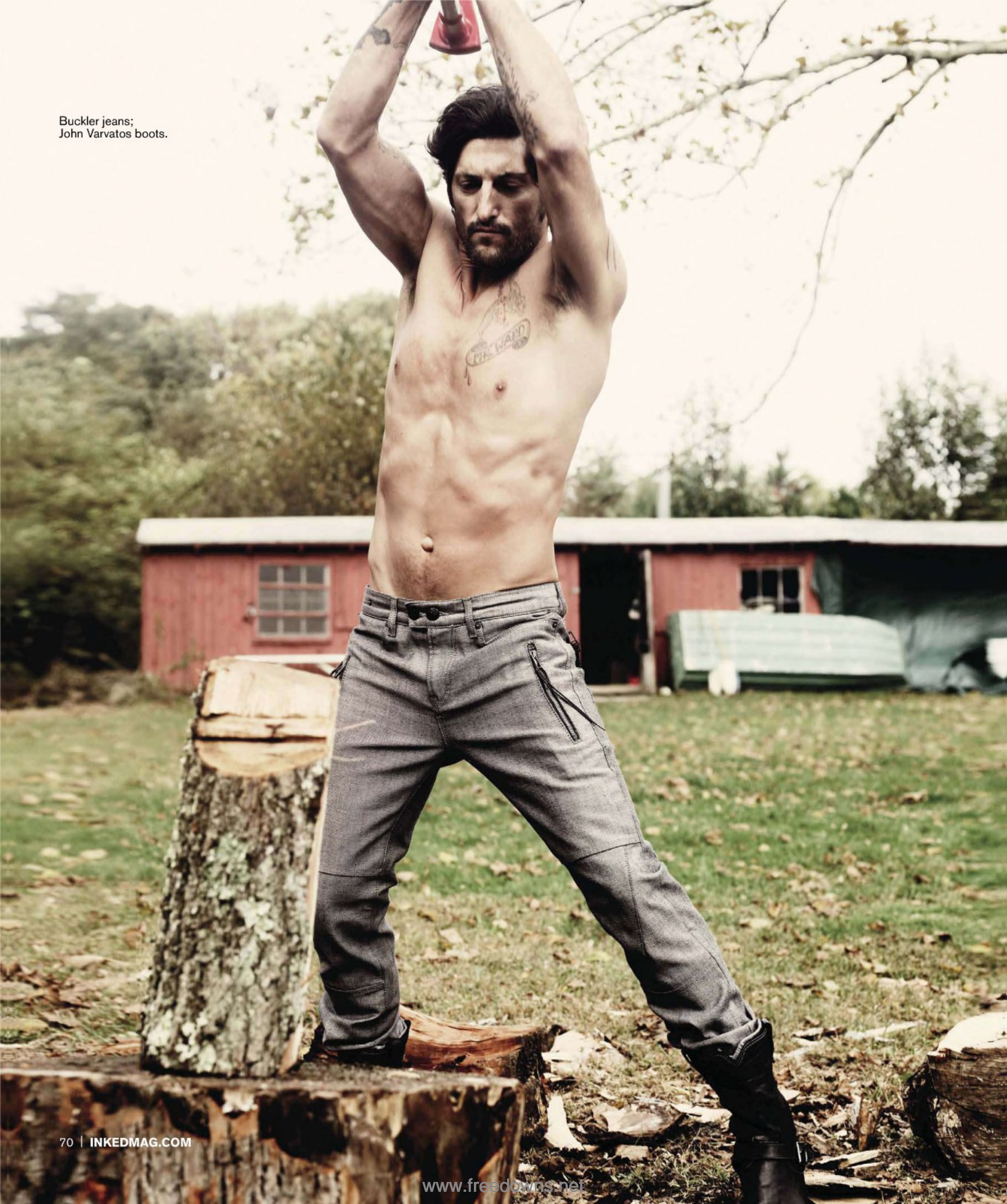
Ben Sherman gray sweater; Steven Alan flannel shirt; Fossil gray striped scarf; Levi's burgundy jeans.

Billionaire Boys
Club green
plaid suit and
multicolored
flannel shirt; Ben
Sherman boots.

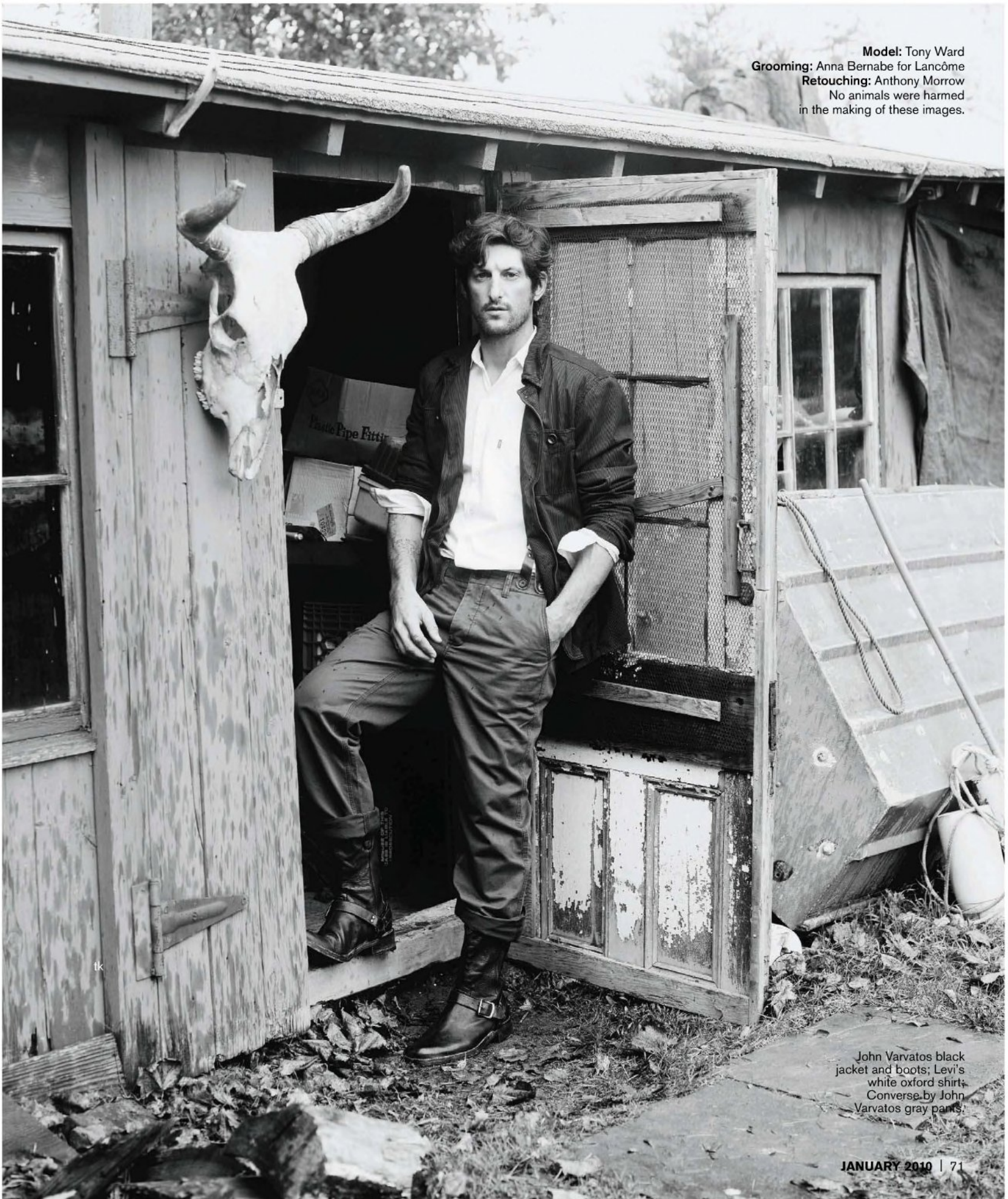




Buckler jeans;
John Varvatos boots.



Model: Tony Ward
Grooming: Anna Bernabe for Lancôme
Retouching: Anthony Morrow
No animals were harmed
in the making of these images.



John Varvatos black
jacket and boots; Levi's
white oxford shirt;
Converse by John
Varvatos gray pants.





Allen and Albert Hughes

After lying low, the directing duo are back with the postapocalyptic action flick *The Book of Eli*—and are looking to earn themselves more tattoos.

BY ERIC ALT PHOTOS BY JAMES MINCHIN III

The last time the words “a new film by the Hughes brothers” graced movie theaters, the country was on high terror alert, huddled in basements, and armed with radiation suits and shotguns. You see, this was way back in October 2001, a month after the single most catastrophic event to hit American soil had—surprise—made people a little leery of heading out to the multiplex, much less to see a dark, twisted Jack the Ripper yarn called *From Hell*. But Allen and Albert Hughes have never done anything the easy way.

After getting stomped by gangbangers during preproduction on their debut film, *Menace II Society*, walking a fine legal line while filming pimps for *American Pimp*, and turning a nearly decadelong layoff into one of the most anticipated movies of 2010, the Hughes brothers are forgiven for feeling a lot like Denzel Washington’s character in their comeback film *The Book of Eli*: wounded, isolated, but itching to kick a little ass once again.

INKED: How many tattoos do you guys have?

ALLEN: I have one on my right forearm that is six words, so I don’t know how many tattoos that counts as. They’re the 12 virtues of the Lakota Native Americans. I got the first six, which are humility, perseverance, respect, honor, love, and sacrifice. I’m suppose to get the next six on my left arm—truth, compassion, bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom—but I don’t feel I’ve earned my way there yet.

ALBERT: I have one, on my right wrist. It’s very modest. It looks almost like a bracelet. It’s binary code for my daughter’s name. At first I thought I wanted the Armenian calendar, because we’re half Armenian, and I wanted to get each month tattooed in a bracelet form depending on how healthy I lived,

if I deserved that month or not. But it turns out there are two or three different types of the Armenian language so I thought it was just too complicated. So for my first tattoo, I kind of tiptoed my way in.

It’s funny that you both feel you need to earn your tattoos. Allen, are you going to reward yourself with the other six words any time soon?

ALLEN: First off, I don’t like tattoos. I hate them. And there are certain ones that do look good on certain people, but that’s probably, like, one percent of the population. I never in my life was going to get one, but about a year and a half ago, it was, like, four in the morning, and I popped up in bed and something told me to put those virtues on my right forearm. So then I thought, Why don’t you sit on this for three months? And I did, and those words and that way of life, the indigenous cultures of America, are ways that I hold near and dear to my heart. So I was in Miami, and I’m sort of a wuss about this stuff, so I thought, Why not go to Miami Ink? Because at least they’re on TV and I can sue the shit out of them if something goes wrong. *[Laughs.]* I just wanted something simple, but leave it to artists to talk you into stylish fonts and shit. Before I knew it, I looked like a Latin gang member. *[Laughs.]*

ALBERT: I actually want more. I want sleeves. But there’s no way I can come up with that many ideas for tattoos. But Allen hasn’t earned the ones he has on him! *[Laughs.]* My daughter jokes to him all the time, “Have you mastered those virtues yet? How’s it coming?” It’s like an inside joke with us.

Was it as painful as you anticipated?

ALLEN: You know what was the funny? I got in the

chair, and I sat down like that statue *The Thinker*, you know? And halfway through the artist was like, “Are you okay?” And I’m like, “I’m cool, man.” Because to me—as corny as this might sound—I felt like I needed to feel every word. So it didn’t feel painful. It was like a rite of passage.

ALBERT: It was right where I thought it would be. Not bad. It feels like a thousand cats licking you at once.

Your new movie, *The Book of Eli*, is set in a postapocalyptic world destroyed by nuclear war. How do you see us going out?

ALLEN: I think we’ll go out by our own hand. They talk about a super-volcano or a meteor or global warming ... I don’t know, man. I look at shit and I’m like, We’re going to go out by our own hand somehow.

ALBERT: George Carlin once joked about all these people who are into “don’t pollute” and “world peace” and “no nuclear weapons” and “save the planet”—don’t they realize the planet doesn’t even think about us? We’re just a small little blip on the radar. The planet is just going to shake us off one day, no matter what we do. The planet is then going to rebuild itself and not even blink an eye. I don’t know how we’re going out, but we’re going out.

You started making movies when you were 12. What inspired you?

ALLEN: Cocaine. *[Laughs.]* No, no ... although, after we saw *Scarface*, we did make movies about Cuban drug dealers and blowing shit up—it was all, like, *Miami Vice*, *Scarface*-based stuff. We’d get flour in the kitchen and act like we were snorting blow. Coke deals and gunfights going down. ... That’s how our movie career started: with cocaine.

ALBERT: Our mother rented us a camera at first,

and we started doing it as a hobby. The discovery of the tripod was big for us. We'd imitate shots from Bruce Lee movies, like *Enter the Dragon*. Then we saw Robert Townsend's *Hollywood Shuffle* and we heard the whole story of him using credit cards to finance the movie. It was the first time we thought, Oh shit, we can do this.

If you'd known then what you know now, how would you approach your first movie, *Menace II Society*, differently?

ALLEN: It's funny because we never really liked that movie. When we were done with it we were like, We have a piece of shit on our hands. People reacted to the movie the way we wanted them to react to the movie we had in our heads. I never understood until years later. I popped it in and was like, Oh shit, we were 20 when we made that, the characters are roughly 20, and we were living on weed and Taco Bell. We were living that lifestyle, minus the drug dealing and gangbang. We were in that element. And there's an urgency to the movie that I don't think we could bring now. The lunatics were running the asylum.

ALBERT: Most directors, when they look back at their first movie, probably see it like a high school photo of themselves with pimples. It wasn't the movie we had hoped to make. I think if we had to do it again we could do it more efficiently. And I think we'd deal with some of the violence a little differently. But that naive kind of got us through that movie. We didn't know what we couldn't do.

Is it true that you guys once got into an actual fight with Tupac Shakur on the set of *Menace*?

ALLEN: We were good friends with Tupac at the time. We started doing music videos with him when we were all around 19. And he went out of his way for us to do his first three music videos. When I met him he was one of the funniest, sweetest, most sensitive people I ever met—he was a good guy. This was before *Juice*, when he wasn't famous. He was just a budding rap artist. But from the moment he saw *Juice*, he changed. It was like a chemical imbalance. He just seemed ready to go to war about everything. Before you knew it, he had all these tattoos with "50 Niggas Deep" and "Thug Life" and a machine gun on his solar plexus. He just changed. He had this bravado problem—especially if people were around, he'd just be an ass.

So I tried to confront him and talk to him because we had decided to relieve him of his duties on *Menace*. And there are a lot of versions of what happened, but I had Tupac up in the air, and I was throwing him against a truck, and before I knew it, nine or 10 gangbangers had thrown me off him, and that's when the ass-kicking really commenced. It was never Tupac and me. It was me getting my ass stomped out by them.

ALBERT: I went off to get the set police to help us. I got away from being jumped, but I did get chased all around downtown L.A. with three cars full of guys. I was smoking weed too. [Laughs.] Before, when we

smoked, we never went out in public—we were too paranoid. And this was the first day I said, "You know what? I'm going to let my guard down and smoke weed and go out." And I did and here this shit happens. I ran into a fire station and I was so freaked out that they were looking at me like I was crazy. And then the police showed up and had their guns drawn on me and everything. And I was *high*. I probably would have chosen the beat-down over that experience.

ALLEN: The good news was, I never knew that your adrenaline kicks in and you don't feel any of that shit. I just felt my body moving in different positions and blood squirting out of my nose, and I was like, Yo, this is insane, because I don't feel none of this shit.

Is it true you guys turned down doing an antimarijuana ad because you felt it was hypocritical?

ALLEN: No! Actually, we wanted to do it! [Laughs.] I'll tell you why we turned it down, ultimately. We were asked to do a military commercial for the Navy and a Rock the Vote ad and then the marijuana thing. The first one was while Bush was in office, so I was like, "I'm not doing that shit." And Rock the Vote—we wanted to do it, but at the time we weren't registered voters and they were like, "You niggas ain't doing this shit." [Laughs.]

Then we were approached about these marijuana ones and the problem I had was that it had parents coming to talk to their kid and it was like, "You shouldn't smoke because this, that, or the other, and marijuana leads to this, and marijuana can make you do this, that, or the other." I was like, "Yo, this is bullshit." The script was basically "Drugs are for losers and people who have problems and can't deal with their lives." Tell your kids the truth: People do drugs because it's fun. [Laughs.] I wanted to tell them: You're at an age when it's not optimal to be smoking weed—your brain isn't fully developed yet. Wait until you get to college. [Laughs.] Be real with kids. If it's cocaine or PCP you can say, "This shit is bad." But with weed it's more nuanced.

ALBERT: I wanted to do it, because I'm into propaganda. But we were always clear: We'll do these, but we smoke weed and we don't vote. [Laughs.] I'd do an ad for the Republican Party just for the challenge. I don't agree with them at all, but I'd do it. But I won't do a summer blockbuster. I do have some morals. [Laughs.]

Do you guys argue on set?

ALLEN: We used to argue more on set. On *Book of Eli* we got into two—I wouldn't call them arguments—they were spats. "Put that there." "Fuck you!" Very quick like that. But when we were closer—we used to live and work together, but that stopped after *From Hell*, we went our separate ways—there was more of that.

ALBERT: When people see it, they think it's pretty vicious, but it's not as bad as it looks. On *Eli*, he said something that pissed me off, I said something that pissed him off, and he walked off to a

tent and just went into a tirade with one of the producers about me. And I'm in the next tent. I can hear the whole thing.

Do you have a weird twin connection?

ALLEN: Always. I was talking to our agent the other day and he said, "Does your brother know this information?" And I said, "I didn't tell him, but he knows." With twins it's always in the silence, what you don't say. It was funny—we did a lot of writing with Denzel [Washington], and he has twins. And he'd watch us bicker and shit and he would just laugh. He knew how to deal with it. His twins go at it pretty hard too.

ALBERT: It's been there since day one. We had the same dream once, when we were still in the crib.

Did you guys witness anything during the making of the documentary *American Pimp* that you couldn't show on film?

ALLEN: Ironically? The pimping—when it came to actually going down and getting the money from the girls and checking their "traps," taking the money out of their hand, and discussing the business of pimping. I don't know if people realize this, but in that documentary there is only one shot of a pimp taking money out of a ho's hand. Legally, it's a big-time felony, so we couldn't show them pimping. So there was some sleight of hand in the filmmaking.

ALBERT: It was more like funny shit [that didn't make it in]. One day we were playing PlayStation with a bunch of the guys, and there were maybe two girls hanging around, and one of the pimps was eating a bag of Cheetos and they kept falling on the carpet. Eventually I just said, "Are you going to clean that up?" And he said, "Aw, man, I'm going to leave that for the bitches to clean up." It was just shit like that.

Have you seen anyone with a tattoo based on one of your movies?

ALLEN: No. I've seen people dressed as *Dead Presidents* on Halloween—and that surprises me, because that movie didn't make \$100 million.

ALBERT: I've never seen anyone with a tattoo, and I'm glad I haven't. There was a really famous rapper—I won't say his name—that I really respected back in the '90s. Then he was in some magazine saying that his favorite movie of all time was *Dead Presidents*, and I instantly lost respect for him. [Laughs.] So if someone's rolling around with a tattoo of that movie? We've got problems.

You guys haven't shown much of an interest in doing big franchise movies, but just for the hell of it, what would a Hughes brothers' Harry Potter movie be like?

ALLEN: Shitty. [Laughs.] Real real real shitty. Fairies and whatever the fuck they are. I can't do that.

ALBERT: That shit wouldn't even be released. Although I think sometimes what I would do with that, because it's so corporate and it's so big. The ironic thing is that I was a big Pippi Longstocking fan when I was a kid. And I can see myself doing a Pippi Longstocking movie. It's laughable, but I could do it. [Laughs.]



I INKED GIRL

KATHRYN BUTLER

It all started with a lipstick Kathryn Butler stole from her mom as a wide-eyed preschooler. "I just always had a thing for makeup," Butler, 22, recalls. "I'm sure I walked out of the house a few times as a little girl with it smeared all over my face," she giggles.

Now, Butler, an Atlantic City gal, glides similar shades of red across the lips of others as a makeup artist with MAC Cosmetics. "It's kind of like tattooing, but clearly it's a lot different because it's not permanent," explains Butler, giggling again. "It comes from the same concept, you're painting a body. That's how I look at makeup, definitely like tattoos. Your body is like a canvas and whatever you put on it brings out your personality."

A majority of Butler's 19 tattoos—many which have been inked by Josh "Baker" Williams of Hot Rod Tattoo in Atlantic City—bring out her dark side, she says. "I love being open to artists' interpretations, because as an artist, sometimes you see things a little differently," Butler says. —*Ellen Thompson*

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER LOVE
STYLED BY HAROLD JAY MELVIN





American Apparel
white mesh bodysuit
and black bodysuit.

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“Your body is like a canvas and whatever you put on it brings out your personality.”



Dolce & Gabbana
bra; Donna Karan
tights; Bruno
Magli shoes.



Dolce & Gabbana
bra; Donna Karan
tights; Azzedine
Alaia boots.

American Apparel
tank top; If Six Was
Nine skirt; Bruno
Frisoni shoes.



Dolce & Gabbana bra;
Donna Karan tights;
Bruno Magli shoes.

Makeup: Joel Marriott for
MAC Cosmetics

Hair: Jessica Bond
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INKED SCENE



“I don’t get satisfaction out of making something look similar to something that someone else has done. I do get satisfaction from doing something unique and dynamic.” –Brad Fink



BRAD FINK

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INKED: This interview is for our Icon section—**BRAD FINK:** What's up with this "INKED Icon"?

That's what we call the renowned artists we profile who have contributed to tattooing over the years and continue to advance the art. Wow. I'm flattered, but you're making me feel self-conscious. [Laughs.] Icons are people who are dead or at least old. I only just turned 39.

You're nevertheless internationally known and respected in tattooing. Enjoy it. I have a hard time with it when, at tattoo conventions, people come up and *ooh* and *aah* over me, because I feel like I just started—like I was just one of those kids who went to their first convention and saw Jack Rudy or one of those dudes and was blown away.

You've been tattooing more than twenty years. What do you mean when you say you still feel like you "just started"? A lot of times I find myself saying how amazed I am at how fast time goes. A couple of weeks ago, a guy who I used to tattoo in my kitchen in high school came into the shop to get

another tattoo. Or my grade school art teacher just interviewed me for a local magazine in St. Louis. I ended up tattooing her and she was so happy.

Of course, I'm definitely happy where I'm at and cherishing that I have three successful shops [Iron Age in St. Louis and Daredevil and Fun City in New York City] with great partners—Michelle Myles and Mark Andrews—and, most recently, partners in a clothing line called Me Against the World. When I started I wasn't thinking about where I'd end up. I just did what I did and never gave it much thought. All of a sudden here I am, an INKED Icon.

Remember, in 1987, people didn't put these fuckers on a pedestal like they do now. None of this reality TV shit. We were just skin mechanics, laborers, blue-collar dudes. I'm from the old mind-set. Tattooing is something I cherish and am protective of. Although I will say that with all the TV shows and media, there is more positive than negative coming from it. People are more educated when they come into the shop.

What do you mean by more educated? People are putting more thought into their tattoos, getting bigger work. For example, when getting a Japanese work, they're not just saying that they want a koi fish or a dragon, but many come in after doing their research and say, "I want this story."

How do you feel about a client coming and saying, "Here is my back, do what you will?" I like that. It shows the client respects me and my artwork and they're open. All I ask in these situations is to give me a starting point because if you leave it completely up to me, you're gonna get something demented.

How did you get your start in tattooing? Well, my mother took me to get a tattoo when I was 15. You had to be 18 years old to get tattooed unless you had a parent there, so she came with me. The man who put that tattoo on me, Mitch, ultimately taught me to tattoo.

What did you tell your mother to convince her that you should get tattooed at 15? My mother has always been open-minded and supportive. As a child, I never fit in. I was always an outsider. In eighth grade, I lost my hair and was diagnosed with alopecia; that intensified being ostracized by the kids. It was a traumatic thing for me. I believe everything happens for a reason, and it brought me to this point in life and this business. Back then I was pissed at the world. I get to high school the next year and discover punk rock—and punk rock went hand in hand with tattoos. My mother was willing to do anything to make me feel more comfortable with myself.

In high school, I had a lawn service. I was mowing Mitch's lawn and getting tattooed by him. I decided that I wanted to start tattooing and told Mitch; he then offered to help me out so I'd make fewer mistakes. From there, I practiced a couple months in my kitchen and then started working at his shop. By no



“Remember, in 1987, people didn't put these fuckers on a pedestal like they do now. None of this reality TV shit. We were just skin mechanics, laborers, blue-collar dudes.”



means was I at a point that I should have been working at a shop; I was just thrown in there. I didn't have a formal apprenticeship like I am giving my apprentice. Mitch taught me a lot but there was no structure.

Did you have to clean toilets and all the nasty stuff? I did it, but it wasn't Mitch telling me to do all the disgusting things. It was me knowing it needed to be done and doing it myself. This leads to my disdain for the younger generation coming into tattooing today. Back then there were no references or the information on the Internet that is readily available. Back then I had to search and search for it. I had to go to the library, seek out *Easyriders* tattoo magazines and Ed Hardy's *Tattoo Time* series. Today there are instructional DVDs and all this crap on how to tattoo. They even have pre-made needles now. When I started, I had to get to the shop two hours early to make my needles for the day or next two days. Today people get very good in a short time, and there's this sense of entitlement young people have in the business that everything should be handed to them.

We didn't have a shop person back then to wipe people's asses. Today these kids want to come in, do their tattoos, and leave. Back then I had to make needles, clean the shop, stock my station, and answer the phones. It was a one-man show. Mitch worked 12 to 5 and I worked 5 to 10.

Did you also walk miles in the snow to the shop barefoot back in your day? [Laughs.] Yes, I did! I wrecked enough cars by 17 years old and my insurance was canceled, so as a matter of fact, I had to ride a bicycle or walk to the shop. Yes ... I did have to walk to work in the snow. [Laughs.]

Now you have a young apprentice. What lessons are you passing down? I teach him life lessons—that there's more to tattooing than actual tattooing. I teach him how to adapt to every quirky personality that walks through that door, because without those people you would have nothing. I'm teaching loyalty and respect. I want him to know the history and how tattooing got to this level.

What was the most important lesson that Mitch taught you? Let your work speak for itself. I never chased media and sort of let people come to me.

You're most known for your Japanese and traditional work. Is that what you tend to do most of the time? Yes, but I will pretty much do anything unless it's racist or gang-related. I'm fortunate because, at this point, the people who come to me trust me and so it's easy to tell them this and that won't work. But I won't be the dude to say, “Oh no, I won't do that!” I do work on an



"It's important for people to know that there's so much study and preparation that goes into tattooing. When I first started, I would get so frustrated because I was under the impression that the tattooists I admired, like Ed Hardy, would just sit down and it would flow—not thinking that they were actually doing homework and preparing."



appointment basis, so it may be harder to get into my schedule. We have so many good artists at my shops, though, that I can recommend someone else to get the client in sooner. But I'm not above anything.

Why do you think these people all come to you for that specific "Brad Fink tattoo"?

Nothing I do is really intentional, but throughout the years of drawing I've tried not to be completely influenced by others, and it's just an evolution and many years of doing this that you can't put your finger on. I don't get satisfaction out of making something look similar to something that someone else has done. I do get satisfaction from doing something unique and dynamic. If you saw my house, you'd see thousands upon thousands of books. So much goes into influences of mine, and all these influences acquired over the years have gone into the way I draw.

So your style is more organic through your experience and studies?

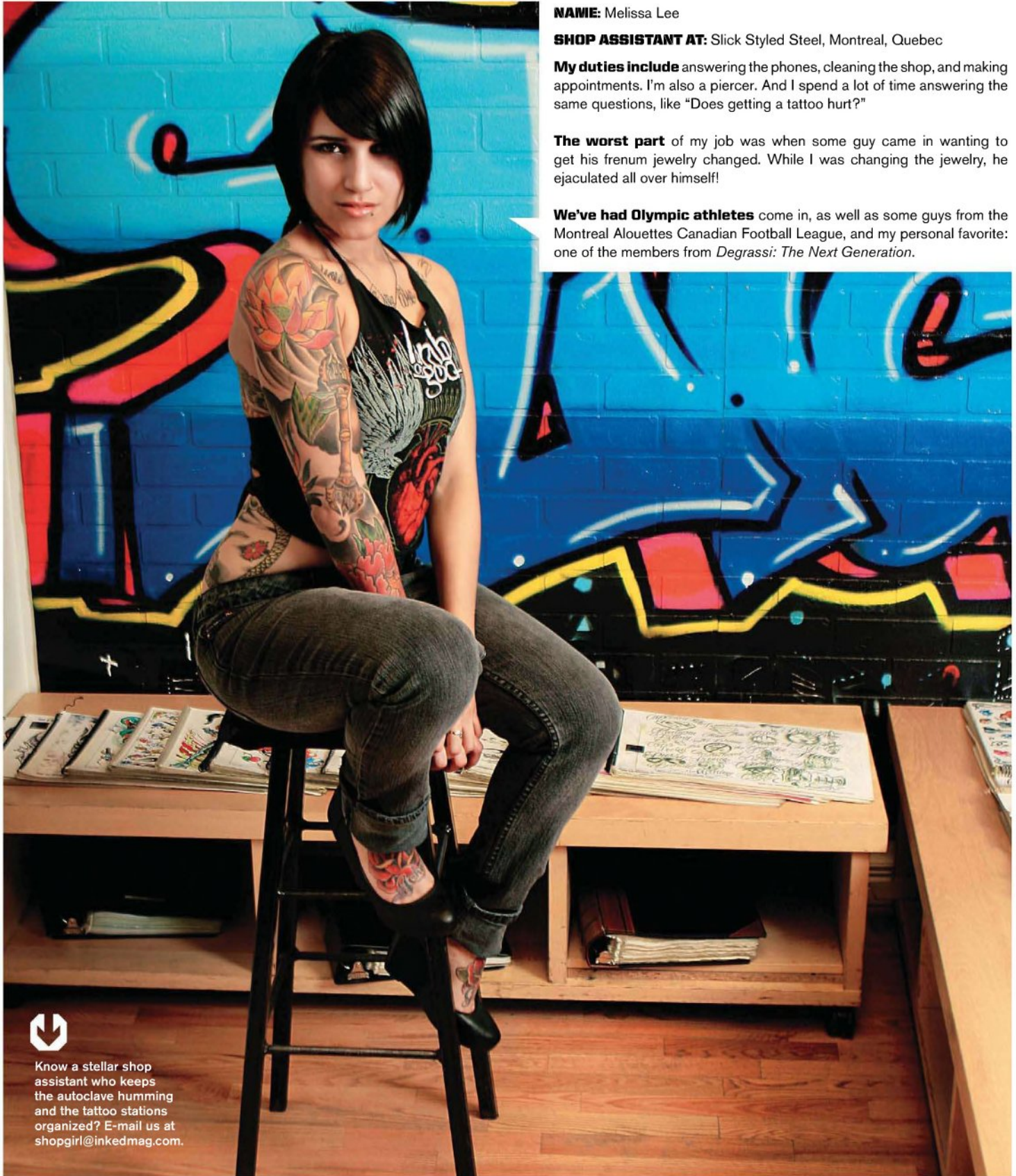
Yes. It's important for people to know that there's so much study and preparation that goes into tattooing. When I first started, I would get so frustrated because I was under the impression that the tattooists I admired, like Ed Hardy, would just sit down and it would flow—not thinking that they were actually doing homework and preparing. Some people say, "Oh, it's great that you make so much an hour." And I think, Really, dude, I make half of that because the amount of time that goes into it beyond actual tattoo time is probably double.

People will go out and pay \$150 for a pair of shoes, wear them for a few months, and that's that—but they still have a problem with paying

however much an hour for a tattoo. For example, Michelle and I were working the Rome Tattoo Convention and it felt like we were tattooing at a flea market because people kept going from booth to booth—not knowing or caring about the tattoo artist they were asking. They just wanted the cheapest price. Meanwhile, they're standing there in Gucci shoes and Dolce & Gabbana shirts. But it's a universal thing; you see it everywhere.

I guess you're not a billionaire yet, hanging with stars and tattooing them on their private jets?

Yeah, I'm definitely hobnobbing with some really big people. You know Sal? I just bought my breakfast from him this morning. And if you don't know him, you're nobody. —Marisa Kakoulas



NAME: Melissa Lee

SHOP ASSISTANT AT: Slick Styled Steel, Montreal, Quebec

My duties include answering the phones, cleaning the shop, and making appointments. I'm also a piercer. And I spend a lot of time answering the same questions, like "Does getting a tattoo hurt?"

The worst part of my job was when some guy came in wanting to get his frenum jewelry changed. While I was changing the jewelry, he ejaculated all over himself!

We've had Olympic athletes come in, as well as some guys from the Montreal Alouettes Canadian Football League, and my personal favorite: one of the members from *Degrassi: The Next Generation*.



Know a stellar shop assistant who keeps the autoclave humming and the tattoo stations organized? E-mail us at shopgirl@inkedmag.com.



From left: Kohei Toyama, Andy Tran, Jess Yen, Kristina Hagerty, Man Yao, Milton Nunez, Lucy Hu.

MY TATTOO

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For a tattoo traditionalist so spiritually grounded, Jess Yen is tough to get on the ground. In the few days we planned to rap about his southern California shop, My Tattoo, Yen and the Horiyen (or My Tattoo) family were on the convention circuit, grabbing flights from SoCal to Vegas and back for The Biggest Tattoo Show on Earth, then to Miami for Visionary Expo a day later. Next, the My Tattoo crew will cross the ocean for the Berlin Show, and they'll close the year at Rock the Ink in Atlanta.

A self-proclaimed eco-friendly tattooer—Grist, a nonprofit dedicated to environmental issues, put him as number three on a list of Most Badass Greens—Yen specializes in the fine art of Tebori hand style, an art he began studying as a 13-year-old in Taiwan when he tattooed a classmate with a needle attached to a bamboo stick. Through a 17-year career of the traditional Tebori style, Yen has gathered the New

School Oriental style tag, a two-year client wait, and a busy schedule of convention appearances.

Yen credits his success to the crew and customers around him. "The people who have helped me grow and have grown with me—without them, I would not be who I am today." Yen purchased and renamed My Tattoo in late 2000, and through trial and error in hiring artists, now exhibits a family-style training for staff. Says Yen of the staff philosophy: "The mentality of appreciation comes before any skills." After weeding through 40 apprentices, five artists remain at My Tattoo, including Andy Tran, Kohei Toyama, Milton Nunez, Man Yao, and Lucy Hu. The shop also includes body piercer Kristina Hagerty.

"All but one family member did not have any past experience in tattooing," Yen says. "Most of them learned from scratch under my teaching. Although this takes more time and effort, I prefer to train them



Clockwise from left: tattoo by Jess Yen; interior of My Tattoo; tattoo by Lucy Hu; tattoo by Yen; tattoo by Milton Nunez.



from the beginning. I want my students to learn the right way the first time so that there is less regret and faulty work out there."

The multicultural group includes artists from four different countries who speak a total of seven different languages. "The city of Alhambra [the shop's location] is only about 10 minutes east of downtown L.A., which is very convenient for people who travel from LAX, Los Angeles County, and Orange County," he says. "My Tattoo is a multicultural shop for that reason, and our location—our shop—attracts people with many different kinds of backgrounds."

In 2007, My Tattoo expanded to a second shop next to the original. The first shop is run by four artists, accepts walk-ins, and has an Asian fusion

feel, while the new shop, with a large Buddha fountain, is reserved for VIPs. This is Yen's work space, which he runs with his student Lucy Hu. The area is appointment-only and also provides a proper work environment for the many well-respected guest artists that visit. "We had Jack Mosher, a.k.a. Hori-mouja, Yang Zhuo, and Aric Taylor," Yen says. "I believe this will give an opportunity for the clients to meet artists from different parts of the world. At the same time, my students and I will be able to exchange experience with them."

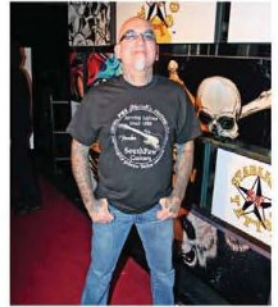
Next, Yen plans to open an art gallery that will

exhibit the history of Tebori and work from the shop's artists. Two other items on the wish list: a new apprentice and more bodies (Yen is looking to work on more full bodysuits). "I am always looking for a clean canvas, which allows me to create a full body painting and design. This is not an easy task, because not everyone is willing to do their entire body," Yen admits. "I want to create a totally new style of tattooing which has not [been] done by anyone before." What will that style be? "I will keep it a secret for now. Stay tuned. I hope my new work will bring a different level of artistry." —David Diehl



THE BIGGEST TATTOO SHOW ON EARTH

Las Vegas played host to Mario Barth's "Biggest Tattoo Show on Earth." Over 40,000 attendees filled the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, including Slash, Jack Osbourne, Duff McKagan, Sylvester Stallone, and others. For more photos, go to inkedmag.com.





TATTOOS & TABOOS WITH AMI JAMES

The Sixth & I historic synagogue in Washington, D.C., hosted Tattoos & Taboos, a discussion of Judaism and tattoos featuring *Miami Ink*'s Ami James and INKED's own creative director, Todd Weinberger. The pair talked about the attitudes and assumptions toward tattoos in Jewish culture.

For more photos, go to inkedmag.com.



BLACK TATTOO ART

NYC tattoo fans flocked to Tattoo Culture in Brooklyn to celebrate the release of INKED contributor Marisa Kakoulas's book, *Black Tattoo Art*. Afterward, many wobbled home with the hefty (536 pages!) tome under their arm.

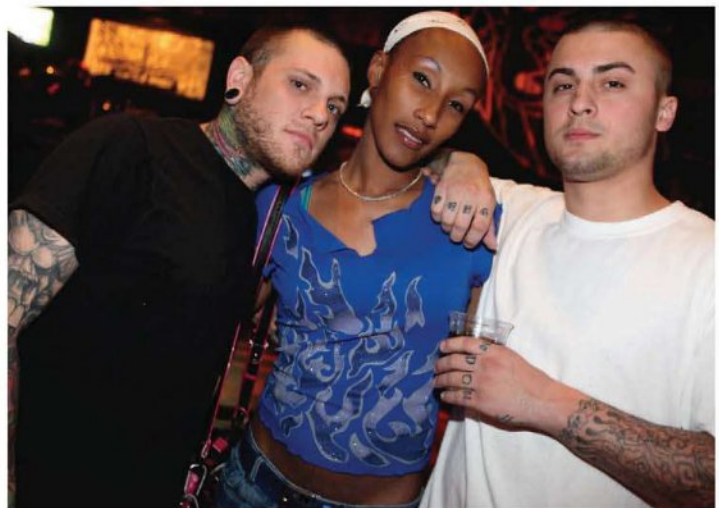
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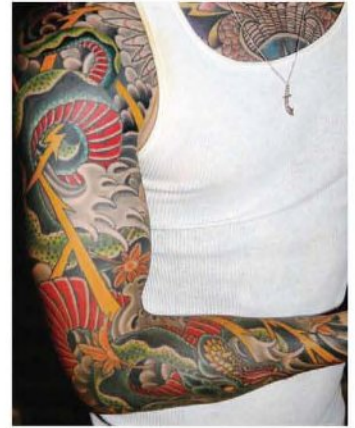




TRUE COLORS

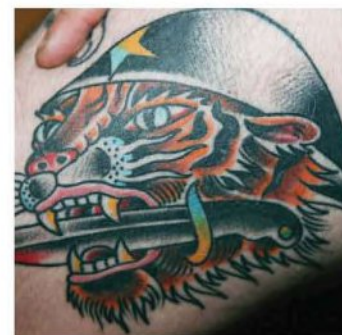
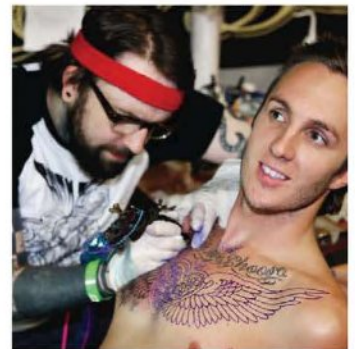
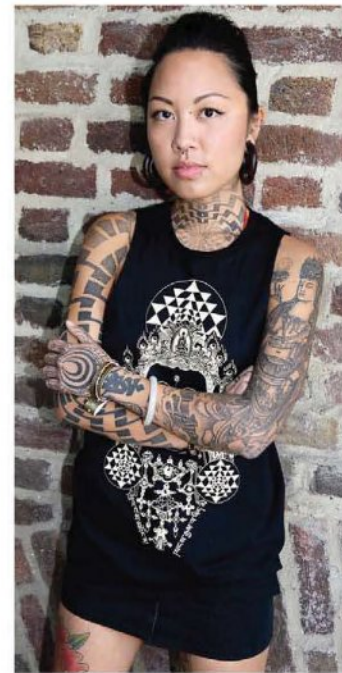
During Mario Barth's Biggest Tattoo Show on Earth, INKED hosted our first-ever True Colors Awards at Wasted Space in the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. For more photos, go to inkedmag.com.





LONDON CONVENTION

The fifth annual International London Tattoo Convention was held September 25–27 at the historic Tobacco Dock. The event attracted artists from around the world, including some from Germany, Italy, Brazil, New Zealand, and Japan. For more photos, go to inkedmag.com.



DRAWING BLOOD II

We've always ranked Richmond, VA, as one of the most underrated tattoo scenes around. The city is home to some serious tattoo talent and recently local spot Ghostprint Gallery played host to "Drawing Blood II," an impressive show of paintings by tattooers Phil Holt, Timothy Hoyer, Daniel Albrigo, and Jeff Srsic. We're ready to relocate.

For more photos, go to inkedmag.com.



PAUL ROMANO WORKHARDENED

We aren't sure what we love more: Paul Romano's art or the albums adorned with it. As the artist behind covers for bands such as Mastodon, Death By Stereo, Godlesh, and others, Romano celebrated his first solo show at the Toothless Cat Gallery in Philadelphia, PA.

For more photos, go to inkedmag.com.



Inked GUIDE

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PHOTO: DOMINIC EPISCOPO



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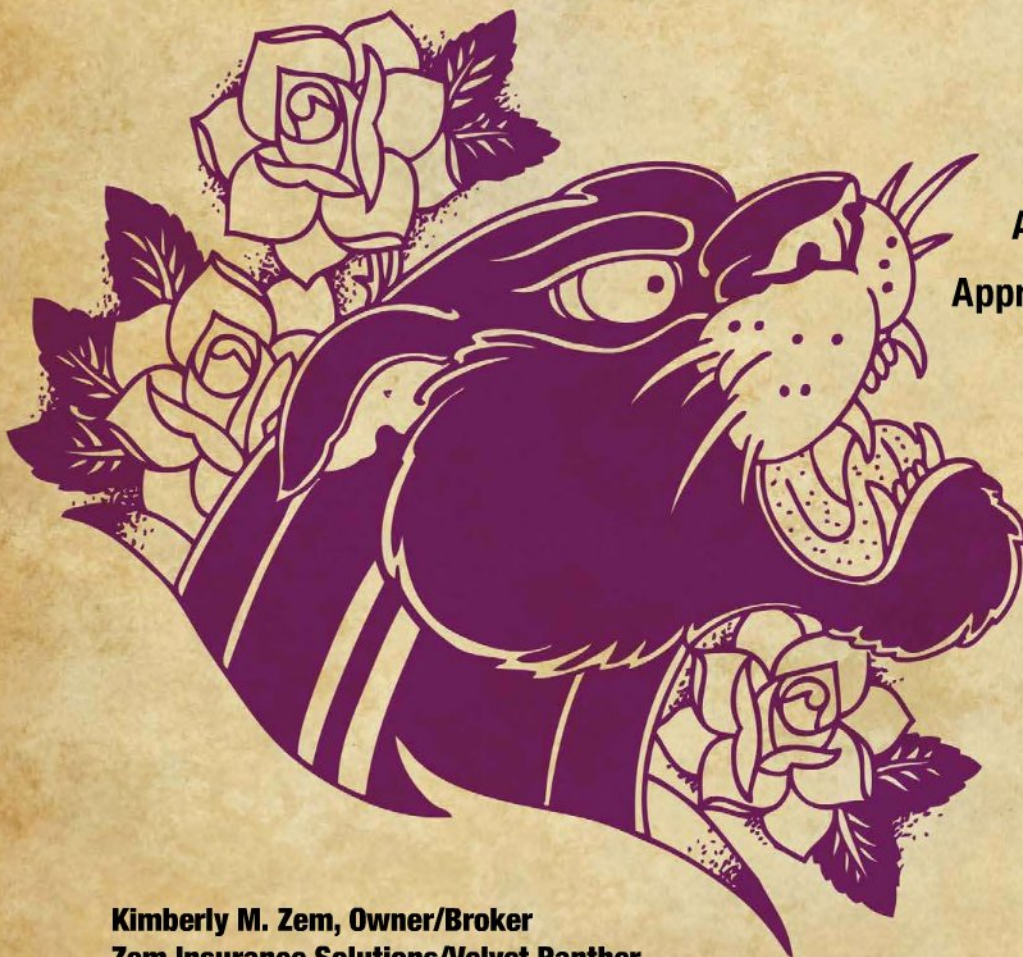
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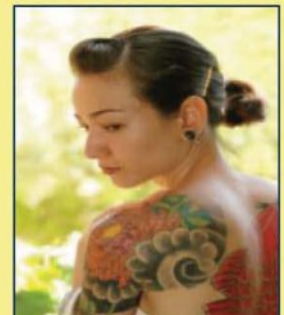


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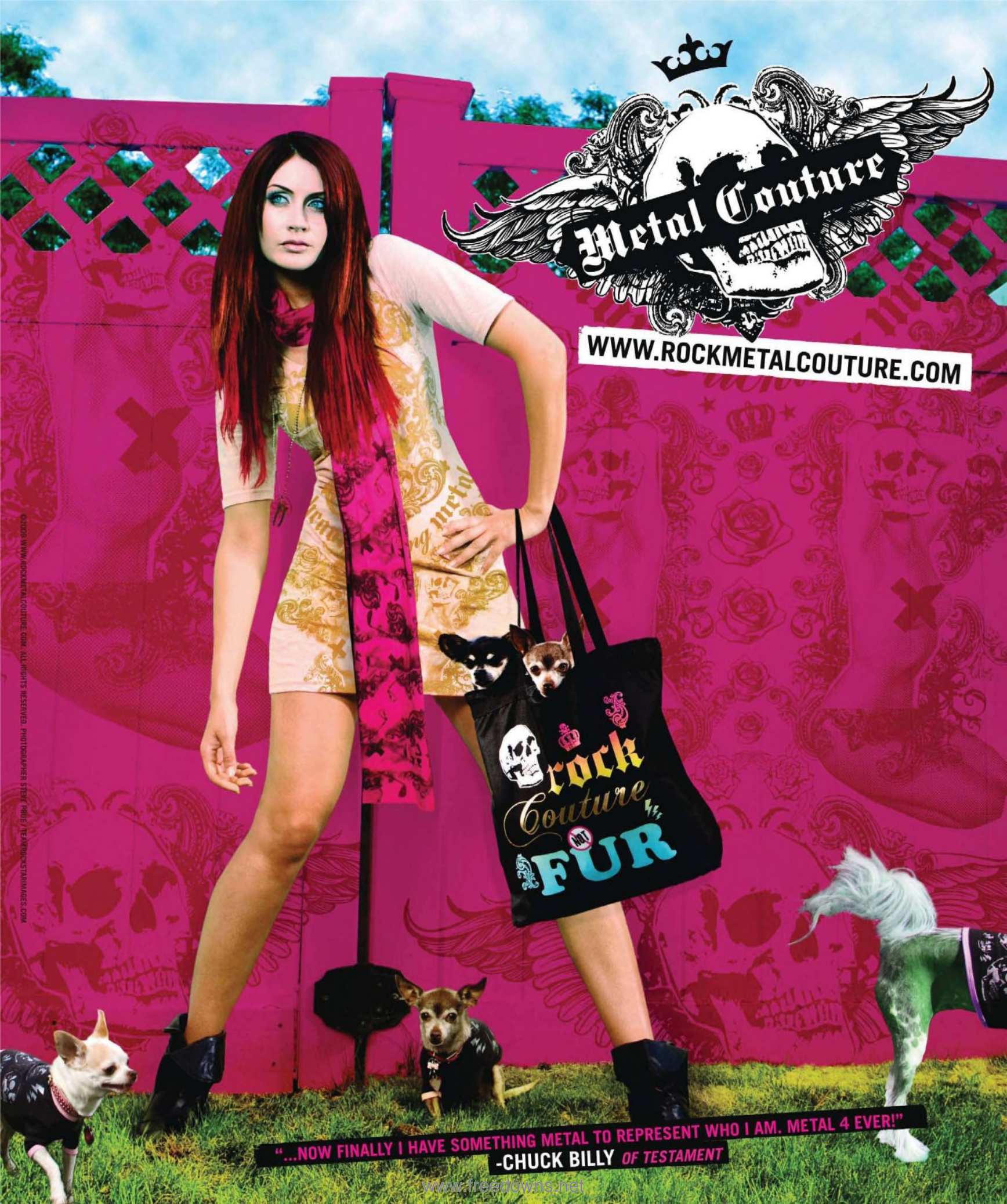
Milwaukee transplant Mario Desa works at Chicago Tattoo Company, the Windy City's oldest shop. "I deal with icons rooted in classic Americana, filtered through my modern eye," he says of his style. "I had a pretty informal learning experience with a lot of trial and error, but I read all I could and paid attention when I got tattooed." He counts Dan Trocchio, Jeremy Tupta, and Julio Avila among his early teachers and is still glad that he doesn't have a formal art education: "Thankfully, only folk traditions."





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