

AUSTRALIA/NZ
Inked
CULTURE. STYLE. ART.

132
PAGES OF
TATTOOS!

Carey Hart

More than just Mr. Pink!

Guitar Gods

Ozzy Osbourne
The Dear & Departed
Deftones

Harry Kewell

Our country's finest
football export

**Australian
tattooists**

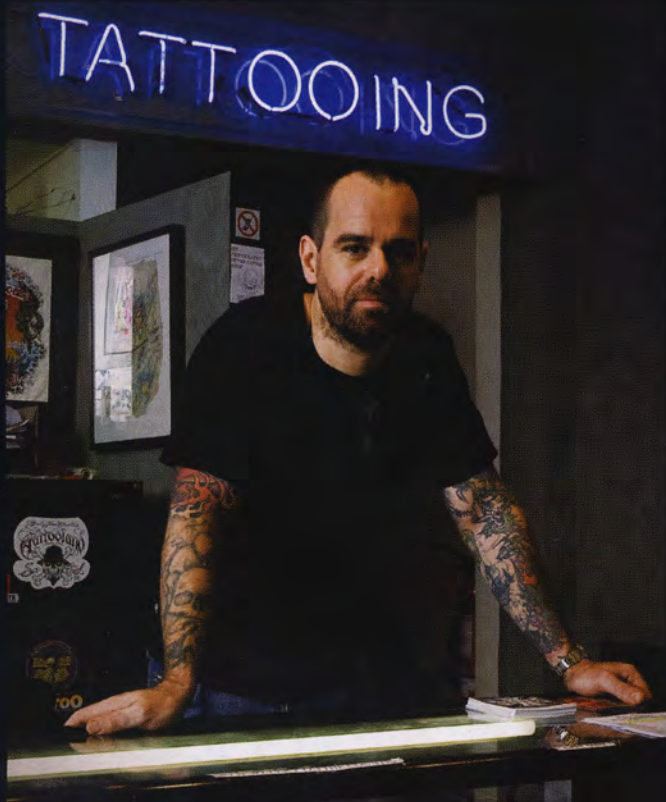
Speak out about
backyard tattooing!

**SPORTING
INK**

A look at the tattoos of all your favourite sports stars: Tim Cahill, Daniel Conn, Aaron Edwards, Benji Marshall, Erik Ellington, Lizard King and many more...



ISSUE 2 JULY / AUGUST 2010
AUS \$12.95 NZ \$14.95 INC GST
ISSN 1837-9087
9 771837 908005
custommade
mediaaustralia



AUTHENT/INK

FROM WHAT I CAN TELL more and more tattoo shops are opening daily around Australia and the world. I am not sure where all these tattoo people are coming from but there seems to be a steady rise in working tattooists available for potential clients to choose from. Diversity in most things is great. It can breed cultural growth, originality, competition and fend off stagnation with an injection of new ideas and perspectives and motivations. Tattooing is no different. There definitely needs to be some growth, some cultural diversity and hopefully some people willing to take some chances and try new things. Perhaps not so much in pioneering new tattoo styles, as that's been done already with varied successes, but in their approach to the art and the actual promotion of 'art'. Apart from a few good shops here and there that are busting out fresh, strong work there are a lot of shops just playing catch up and repeating everyone else's style.

To the clients of these shops I say, "ask for more"! Push your artists to be original, don't settle for copies of copies of someone else's tattoo, and move on if you feel your artists are lazy or couldn't be bothered. You want nice tattoos, right? Everyone wants a great tattoo, but it doesn't come easy to any of us. As an artist you must strive everyday to improve yourself, even after 17 years of tattooing I am forever kicking my own arse and am never satisfied at the end of the day. I am always trying to improve and that is the way it must be. As a client you must look for ways to help your artist improve, bring him interesting projects and reference, give her some rein to experiment, providing he/she is up to the task! Let's make tattooing ours again and not just a TAFE course trade where folks are replicating things out of magazines 9-5 in a dingy office.

It used to be that interesting and rebellious people got tattooed, the outcasts and outlaws, the people that took chances and threw caution to the wind and couldn't give a fuck what anybody thought about them, now it's a bloody popularity contest amongst artists and clients alike. Let's get back to being those outsiders again, but with an eye for great art and a renewed spirit for adventure. Micro lettering and your favourite celebrities' anklet tattoo do not count.

Collecting, viewing and studying art is great way to get a feel for interesting talents and the appreciation of created images and whatnot. You don't need to spend a fortune on original paintings or prints, just head into your local cool bookstore and browse the art section and check all style of paintings and drawings from the old Dutch Masters to illustrated

Inked Australia's resident tattoo advisor Kian Forreal on the rise of tattoos in Australia



KIAN'S PHOTO BY MATTHEW LOWDEN

medical books of the 1800's, plenty to see there to whet your appetite and make you think in different ways. Alternatively head into your nearby counter-culture artsy shop that does sell prints and see what's on display, ask questions, and learn what you can about a particular style if it grabs your attention. The more you know about an artist's history or saga, and the tradition of a style the more you come to feel a connection with it. You can reference and admire all sorts of different styles and take on things that will train your eye to differentiate between 'ok' Art and 'great' Art. And, all this will help you love and appreciate tattooing, and its myriad of styles, even more.

I was asking around the shop today for some ideas and themes that the other artists I work with thought should be addressed, the main one that we kept talking about was the whole 'tattoos need to mean something' bit that clients get obsessive about. I know for a lot of people that this is a crucial factor in their tattoo decision process and that's cool, several of my tattoos have overt and covert meanings, nothing wrong with that. And some are just cool looking works of art from artists whose work I admire and I let them have freedom to make some cool shit on me. Just good-looking pictures that mean absolutely nothing, except what they are portraying. The medium is the message.

Beautiful art is great to look at, whether it's a sexy pin-up, a tall ship sailing the stormy seas, a freshly severed samurai head, doesn't matter, if its done well and everyone is happy... Mission accomplished! The personal meaning that can be attached to it is the experience of the who, what, where, when of getting the tattoo done. Not many other things can give you the same experience, as well as lasting a lifetime AND never be taken away from you.

Now this might sound strange coming from a tattoo artist whose work is surrounded by and defined by its meanings and mysteries, I am speaking of course of Traditional Japanese tattooing. The main difference is that the images and designs in my art, for instance, like a peony flower or a tiger, has a simple meaning such as 'beauty', 'elegance' or 'strength', but the meaning is not one attached to the wearer but to the image itself. It's just a representation of the idea that lends itself to the image. There is no personal meaning except what you give to it, and there is none necessary if you choose there not to be. You can have a big mean tiger on your chest that is just a big mean tiger, no further explanation needed. Easy. I have to stifle a laugh sometimes when I hear folks explaining their

Miami Ink stories in the shop to the poor counter staff who become proxy therapists, it doesn't have to be that complicated. Lets all just learn about, make and love great art, great tattoos and try to make the right decisions in decorating our bodies. And let's remember that our skin is a non-renewable resource that must be respected and cherished!

Kian Forreal is a professional tattoo artist with 16 years international experience and specialising in traditional Japanese tattoo work. He has worked all over the world and has studied under some of the leading tattoo artists of today. He is based in Sydney at Inner Vision Tattoo, Surry Hills. For more, visit www.kianforreal.com or, for information on Laser Tattoo Fading and Removal, please visit www.fadeyourtattoo.com

