

# DON'T GET INKED DRUNK

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The art of tattooing has since long progressed. Within the last few decades it has experienced a cultural embrace. Tattoos are no longer for those in the seedy underbelly of society; their artistic qualities are now accepted by people from all walks of life.

What compels a person to get a tattoo? For most, a tattoo represents a significant person or time period. For others, it signifies a mantra or lifestyle.

"I got mine because I am a dancer and I sing," said ASG Grant Department Officer Jessica Henrikson of her tattoo. "It's a heart as a music note."

### Choosing the right artist

When considering getting a tattoo, the first step is to choose a shop and an artist.

Ask around. Most shops' reputations rely on word of mouth from satisfied customers ... or disgruntled ones.

Shops should follow the standards of cleanliness.

According to Rose Guilfoyle, an artist at Pussycat Tattoo on McLoughlin Boulevard, the customer has every right to ask the artist to provide evidence of a clean workspace.

"You can ask your artist to set up in front of you so that you can see packages being opened," Guilfoyle said. "It is more than OK to ask to see the sterilization area. It should look clean and tidy and organized. You can

check with the State Board of Health to see if the shop has had any issues in the past."

All of these things are good indicators that a shop is running a sanitary operation.

When selecting an artist, look at the styles of art at which he or she excel. Someone who is a phenomenal portrait artist would probably not be the best at doing a Japanese-style tattoo.

"Be aware of the type of work coming out of the shop you pick," Guilfoyle said.

Willow, owner of Two Chicks Tattooing on 7th Street, in Oregon City, said, "Choosing your artist is important. You need to make a personal connection and feel comfortable with the artist you choose."

Art Instructor Dave Andersen said about selecting his artist, "I went to about 10 tattoo shops, and I talked to them about tattooing. I saw their facilities. I talked to them about their background and saw the tattoos they had done."

"I just kind of fell in love with Tim Jordan. That's how I met him. I just went into his shop (Star Tattoo), and I connected with him."

### Finding the right design

A good shop is willing to work with a customer on the design of his or her tattoo until he or she is satisfied, but the customer must be willing to give the artist some freedom as well.

"I said, 'This is kind of your piece. It's on me, and I'm paying for it, and I have a say, but it's kind of a collaborative here,'" Andersen said. "So, I let him have freedom on it, and I'm glad

I did. People go in and say, 'It has to be exactly *this* and exactly *that*,' but what you do is, when you meet a tattoo artist, you trust them."

"You learn who they are. You see what they do. Then, you trust them. Then, you give yourself to them and say, 'OK, I'm your canvas, but this is what I want. Go for it; I trust you.' That's what very important, in my opinion, about choosing an artist."

Know that if the design is intricate,

it will need to be large. "The most common thing I hear from people about their tattoos ... is that they did it too [it doesn't] age very well," said.

Trust the artist on the best tattoo. They will know how to work up on the chosen area of the

### Preparing for the big

Artists have a few suggestions regarding how customers should prepare to have a tattoo placed on their skin.

"You need to understand allergic reactions can happen," said, "and if you have allergies this may not be for you."

Guilfoyle said, "It's a good idea to get a good night's sleep. Eat a meal before you come in. Be well-rested and not because we'll walk you through the whole thing."

One common misconception is that an individual should get a tattoo beforehand.

Andersen said, "Most people in the old days would have too much alcohol and stumble into the first tattoo parlor that came upon and say, 'Yeah, I'm a dancer on me!' But the next day you're strict in Oregon. I mean, you have any drugs in your system you cannot have any alcohol in your system. There are reasons for this."

Getting a tattoo is not a decision to take lightly. But with many shops that boast great artists, it is a matter of choosing the one that is right for you.



Photo by Andrea Simpson Clackamas Print  
Clackamas student Emma Reynders shows off her tattoos, one of which was done at Two Chicks Tattoo, located in Oregon City.

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