



PHOTO BY KIKI VASSILAKIS

The Dead Presidents Lounge // 5 South Allen St, Albany **Dustin Horan, artist and owner**

"I've been doing this for 18 years and I own the tattoo shop. We hit all the angles and everyone here has been doing this for a long time. There's a bunch of great artists and we try to do our best to please everybody."

Best/most interesting tattoo you've given: The best, I always like to think, is the last one I did. The most interesting...I did a dragon sleeve yesterday. I guess I like the big tattoos, the really large scale ones that go from the back to the backs of the knees, or sleeves, a lot of body suit stuff are the most interesting because you grow with those people. Some people will come in and be like, "Oh, we're just gonna do this one," and then it turns into limbs, like "I'm gonna do my leg now." I like that.

How many people come in with a plan to do large scale pieces vs people who

come in and do it one piece at a time?

Here, now, it's generally that they want to do a large piece. It wasn't always like that, when we started it was a lot of smaller tattoos.

Worst/most difficult tattoo you've given: I'm no good at writing [laughs] I won't even do it anymore because there's so many people who are better at it. We have a guy Pete [Clarke] here who is probably the best script artist I've ever seen in my life, so why would I bother?

Most elaborate tattoo: It's those big ones.

How long should someone consider a tattoo before getting it?

I'd say at least a month, but it's different for everyone. There're some people who wait a year, usually people who just spon-

aneously do it end up regretting it. I have a six-month waiting list, so you have to wait at least six months to make sure you still like it, but I don't recommend that necessarily. I think you know when it's right.

Biggest challenge as upstate tattoo artist: I have no challenges. I love tattooing and I think that there's a lot of awesome clientele and there's a lot of awesome artists here--and not just in this shop. There's some people that I grew up learning tattooing with and it's really good to see them--like there's the Saratoga Tattoo Convention where you see all these people that you only see once a year but that you've been seeing for so long who also tattoo and do the same. I have no complaints about upstate.

Most expensive tattoo ever given: Well we charge hourly here so it would have to be the longest, like those bodysuit people that just keep going and going.

How long do those usually take? Years. I've been tattooing one guy--I just went to his wedding--that I've been tattooing for like 10 years.

Your favorite tattoo on your body: I'm really excited about my back piece now that one of the guys here is doing. We've been working on it for a little bit but it hurts, so I keep slacking. But, I'll look in the mirror in the mornings like, "Oh man, that's so cool." It's a samurai warrior named Benkei and he was a warrior monk who got kicked out of his temple or something, it's an old Japanese legend.

Why did you become a tattoo artist? Because I don't think I would have as much fun as a comic book artist. That's what I re-

ally wanted to do and this just, it didn't fall into my lap so much but it kind of seemed like a good idea. My mom really pushed me to do this and my buddy recommended so it all kind of just fell together.

First tattoo? [inner right bicep] It was like an Alien Workshop symbol, a skateboard symbol. I used to skateboard a real, real lot and I was like, "I'll always love skateboarding," so I got that. I don't skateboard anymore though. It was in college, before I even know I was going to tattoo.

Tattooing on yourself: When I started I would do some doodles, but I'm not that big a fan of inflicting pain on myself.

Best client: I have to go back to those ones who just keep returning. I have guys, a little more than a handful, who will like, when I open my book, they make appointments with me almost every other week or once a month. It's almost like church for them. They're coming in around the same time every month, they take off the summers because they're like, "I wanna go swimming, I don't want to heal." So they end right before summer starts and they come back in September. It's kind of like school, we're like, "How was your summer?" It's great. They come in, they sit down they get tattooed. Those people that know it's gonna take a while and they're dedicated to it.

Worst client: People who change their minds right before their appointments where you have the drawing and they're like "Ah, I change my mind," and they didn't tell you. I don't really deal with a lot of bad clients I have a lot of great people. There's just all different people. ■

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