

HEADLINERS

MEET THE UK LEGEND

BY GINA WALLACE

Some people rise to stardom slowly then enjoy the fruits of their labours while it lasts. Others seem to shoot to the top and stay there for long periods of time. This month's pictorial is dedicated to such a person.

Legend Ketan Patel is one of those names that no one can easily forget. And once you've met this warm, down-to-earth, intense man, you'll quickly bookmark a place in your memory bank for him. He's tenacious in his determination to succeed and his ever-present enthusiastic energy transcends his audiences. The reason is simple. He knows his stuff, for Ketan has achieved what no other person has been able to achieve! He has placed three times as the UK's top-spot 'Winner of Winners' Nail Technician of the Year! And currently is director of technical excellence for Team Creative (CND).

HE'S GOT VA VA VOOM

As a child Ketan Patel enjoyed life as many other kids do, but Ketan had a special, natural-born flair about him...yet this flair sat untapped until he was 22.

At university he enjoyed chemistry, physics and english. He even holds an HND in catering, yet none of these fields thrilled him enough to pursue a life-long career utilising them. When asked, 'What did you envision as a career when you were a child?' His quipish reply is, "A man!" This is typical of Ketan, ask a serious question and get a quirkish answer. He's one of those rare, light-hearted men who are always in a good mood and ready to tackle things that most people shy away from.

His introduction into the world of nails was in 1987 when he was asked by a salon-owner friend to help her out during the hectic Christmas season. Within days, he knew he'd found his calling...he was hooked! Like a sponge he began gobbling up everything he could get his hands on about nails. The theory, the practical and the salon management aspect...it all excited him.

A MEETING OF MINDS

Soon after that, he struck a gold mine when he was introduced to Gigi Rouse. Gigi, a long-time veteran of the UK nail industry, distributor of Creative Nail Design products and former owner of Designer Nails in Leeds, agreed to take him on as a trainee. Soon, Ketan was creating nails that far surpassed the typical salon standard. It was right then that she knew she had an exceptionally gifted, future champion on her hands! With her strong personality, knowledge base and some gentle guidance, she carefully steered him into the competition arena. It wasn't long before the name Ketan Patel became a name that was announced regularly. The competition bug had bitten him and bitten hard! To date, he's stood on the winner's podium 13 times. He concedes that the trophies and prize money aren't what drove him...it was the credibility and recognition gained from them. What's more, he was determined to possess a place at the top and stay there for an unprecedented term!

Being in a career field where the derivative 'female domination' is an understatement, Ketan enjoys being singled out as 'a man who can do it and do it better'. Yet he insists he's not out to prove it to anyone else but himself.

FEEL GOOD FACTOR

Ketan and I were once 'regulars' in the competition arena in the mid to late 90s. I recall one of my first thoughts of him was, "He's like glue!" (An American expression for someone who is extremely attractive because they 'make ya feel good all over'.) And I'm sure I'm not the only one he affects this way. His charismatic style and personality are infectious. At exhibitions he's always willing to sit down and show off his abilities, then direct onlookers to methods for their own self-improvement.

AUDIENCE APPRECIATION

I recall joining him on one of his seminars many years ago at an exhibition (long before I began representing Essential Nails). There were about 30 of us in the room and every audience member had this look of unbridled anticipation on their faces. The seminar was poised to start at 3pm. At 3:05, he still wasn't there and no one could find him! The anticipation grew even greater after 15 minutes. It was obvious to me that the majority of his fans were thinking, "Is he coming? Is he even here?" Then... without warning, he came busting into the room with a long,



BY GINA WALLACE

Gina Wallace is the principle international educator for Essential Nails. She is a ground-breaking tutor who passionately believes in high standards in nail education. She presents and teaches on the Home Learn videos, is a three-time UK nail art champion, a former salon owner and is webmaster of www.ginawallace.com where she promotes the Home Learn range of courses and the Nail Trainer.



T: 01440 820 999