

HEADLINERS

INTRODUCING US HEADLINER . . .



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.



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Amy Becker. Remember the name. If you haven't already heard of this woman who hails from Mequon, Wisconsin, USA, let me be the first to introduce you to her because she is worth remembering!
Co-owner of Masterworks Salon, educator and America's current #1 competition winner, Amy Becker is setting records in this industry left, right and centre and is constantly striving to achieve what no other has before her. With 50+ competition wins to her credit, she's only just begun to make her mark... so at \$98 for a set of Amy Becker nails, that's a bargain for sure!

GENETIC CLONING

At 16, Amy graduated from high school and thought she would follow in her mother's footsteps as a hairdresser. Her mother, Goeogianne Dickau, was a national award winning hairdresser, so it seemed fitting that Amy should be inspired enough to want to follow this path hoping she too could achieve what her mother had. In 1989, at just 17, she graduated from beauty school and started working full time doing hair. But since she put very little into it, she got very little out and quit within two years to work in a factory. She thought she wanted to go into drywall construction. (Can you imagine? Drywall?) She learned very quickly that she hated factory work and quit that too. She soon found herself working as a receptionist at a nail salon. As she was already licensed, the salon owner asked if she'd consider doing nails. She really didn't want to... but decided to give it a try just to please her boss. She found she loved the challenge!

She constantly worked on her quality, people skills, application time and techniques. During this period she was also trained in massage, facials and waxing and dabbled a little in all three, but nails kept pulling her back because she found she simply loved doing nails more than any other service. She became hooked.

IMPRESSIVE MENTORING

Amy understood the importance of following the direction of those who knew their craft. At the time, Lori Ribar was a leading competitor who seemed to win just about everything she entered, so Amy followed her around like a puppy, lapping up all the knowledge she could. To this day, Amy's not sure if Lori realises just how much of an inspiration she was. "It was Lori who inspired me to open my own business," Amy recalls, "but I'm not sure if she's even aware of it." On the competition circuit Amy came across another skilled tech who was to become her mentor, Sheryl Macauley. They hit it off from day one as if they'd known one another for years. This marked the birth of another great nail friendship.



STRUTTING HER STUFF

A little over a year passed and with a little push from her co-workers and family, Amy entered her first nail competition; the Flat Nail Art competition category at the Midwest Show. Coming in third blew her socks off! She almost fell off the stage, recalling, "The happiest moment for me was when they called time and not only had I finished, I liked what I saw!" Right then and there, she realised, "I am the only competition I need to worry about. Competition is about striving for my personal best."

Her first 'first place' title came from her third competition. When she got to national level, she thought to herself, "Wow! Look what people are doing with nails at this level! I want a piece of this action!" It took several more years before she placed nationally, but her determination never wavered.

FAME AND FAVOUR

She continued to compete and the notoriety got her noticed. So much so that she's done the nails of local TV news casters, a New York publicist and a Wisconsin senator who is assisting Amy in getting a statute changed to stabilise the licensing fees in Wisconsin as they've tripled in the last six years.

Amy and her daughter believe in donations to charity. In 2002 they collectively donated almost 24 inches of their hair to Locks of Love, a charity that makes wigs for children who can't grow hair due to sickness or other reasons. And for the past several years, Amy has been an active participant in raising money for Breast Cancer Research.

FLYING HIGH ON FUMES

On a lighter note, it always amuses me to hear about my honoree's most embarrassing moments. Amy didn't let me down with this true story: "I brought down a non-stop commercial airliner with acrylic liquid!", she exclaims. "It spilled out inside my carry-on, creating fumes that the flight attendants didn't recognise and couldn't find. I was sitting on the opposite side from my carry-on so I didn't know what was going on until it was too late. Luckily I got up and told them at the beginning of our descent, or the runway would have been lined with emergency vehicles! It was embarrassing as everyone was so angry with me!"

