

HEADLINERS & LEGENDS

INTRODUCING VICKI PETERS...



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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Legend Vicki Peters is the USA's leading non-product related educator and competition director, author of four nail-related books, and host of Nailpro's 'Nail Those Profits' ocean cruises. She is currently *Nailpro* magazine's educational director.

After a series of jobs as a waitress and in retail management at the tender age of 32 years, Vicki Peters entered the nail industry in 1985. The nail industry enticed and appealed to her after she had her first nail service, and from that moment on she knew nails were going to be a new direction and calling for her.

In the beginning and still today, her greatest inspiration has come from Paula Gilmore, fellow nail tech and educator who she worked for, Norm Freed, Geno Stampora and Steven Brooks, who she reveals have all contributed to her success.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

After many years on the competition circuit Vicki Peters eventually obtained a first place trophy by beating Tom Holcomb the last year she competed in 19. Before that time, she had always managed to come in second. But this didn't persuade Vicki to quit, she was determined to succeed! She pushed herself and obtained guidance from Lynn Grubs, Lee Nguyen, Dao Doybins, Tom Holcomb, Tammy Taylor and Kym Lee until she was sitting front and centre with a first place trophy. The smell of that success was enough to motivate her to wanting more. And several years later, she had won 35 top trophies and began the trend of traveling nationally to all nail competitions.



VICKI PETERS IN THE HOT SEAT

HOW MANY NAILPRO ARTICLES AND COVERS HAVE YOU DONE TO DATE?

I'd estimate around 125 covers over the last 13 years. I've done at least 50 per cent of the *Nailpro* covers, and lots of others besides. My biggest cover accomplishment, however, was doing Farah Faucett's nails for the cover of *TV Guide*!

TELL ME ABOUT THE MOST COMICAL EXPERIENCE YOU'VE HAD DURING A PHOTO SHOOT.

Oh, probably Sheryl Macauley (the cover tech shown here) assisting the October 2002 cover model in the bathroom. She was wearing long dramatic nails and couldn't do a thing all day! Just imagine!

WHEN WAS THE FIRST NAIL THOSE PROFITS AT SEA CRUISE?

October about 13 years ago... I called it the Poseidon Adventure! We had 16 foot swells and I didn't get seasick! The cruises are so much fun! (Networking, cocktails, classes, more cocktails, and shopping.)

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST ATTENDANCE YOU'VE HAD TO DATE?

130 - I had so many pictures taken of me on that cruise I now know what it feels like to be a celebrity. I wasn't prepared for that!

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR BOOK WRITING EXPERIENCES.

My first book was the *Nails Q&A Book* by Milady Publishing in 1992. Being published is a big kudos for any writer so I am glad for the opportunity although I don't think it's my best work. It gave me the direction to write more, and for that I am appreciative to Milady and Kathy Frangie who made it happen. The book's available from: www.milady.com, www.vickipeters.com, and www.beautytech.com. In addition, I've completed a *Competition Class CD*, written *The Competitive Edge Competition E-book* which is online, *Drilltalk*, and an information book for Lamisil. I am currently in the process of finishing my first video and have another book in the pipeline.



WHEN COMPETING, WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART TO ACHIEVING THE FIRST PLACE TROPHY?

The struggle to get there! They say the trip to winning is a journey and my journey was exceptionally hard because that first place eluded me for so long and I was always so consistently close. When I finally did win first and beat Tom Holcomb, it made the win even sweeter.

BESIDES SKILLS, WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED TO ATTAIN FIRST PLACE?

Gain confidence and become consistent in competition.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST START DIRECTING COMPETITIONS?

I firmly believe if you dominate a competition you should step down and judge, taking your career to another level and opening the door for someone else. I did that on many occasions and decided I liked being on the other side better. Accessing the competitor's nails gave me an even better perspective of my own work. It not only made me better technically, it made me realise my career in the nail competition circuit was evolving. It also put me in a whole new arena with the show managers.

WHAT WAS THE STRANGEST INCIDENT YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED IN A COMPETITION?

I was judging a competition in Japan about four years ago. There were almost 75 contestants and we had one hour to judge. The Japanese culture is very strict about sticking to the rules and schedule and they were serious about getting it done in one hour, no exceptions. When they called time I was exhausted. Not the way I would have done it but we did, and the right person won!

HOW MANY HOURS ARE SPENT ORGANISING A COMPETITION?

Many over the last 18 years, which has led to a system I now have in place that makes it much easier.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN ORCHESTRATING A COMPETITION?

It starts with writing the rules and regulations, working with the trade shows to do the marketing and mailings, receive competitions calls, take registrations, acquire judges, send judges packs, orchestrate judges meetings and check contestants in. Then there's floor help, judges, head judges, competition assistance and hosting the awards ceremony and press releasing the media.

It also depends on the show. For a one-day *Nailpro* show I need three judges, one head judge, floor help and me. At *Premiere* I have as many as 10 judges, five people on the floor and me.

WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND COMPETITORS DO IF THEY DON'T RECEIVE A TROPHY?

I firmly believe that competitors should take advantage of every aspect of the competition to get the most from their experience. They should start by attending a competition class. At the event they must network with other competitors, see all the nails, especially the winning set, so they can compare. The contestant should get their score sheet and take their model to all the judges for a face to face critique. Another important aspect of the competition is to have their placement on the score sheet so they know where they are placed. Leaving a competition without this knowledge or a score sheet leaves the experience unfinished. You need to know where you did well and what you need to work on.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST NO-NO IN THE COMPETITION ARENA?

From a director's perspective, arriving with a huge ego and attitude is very unattractive and a sure bet for failure. From a competitor's perspective arriving unprepared will get you every time.

DESCRIBE SOME OF YOUR PROUDEST MOMENTS.

I think my proudest moment has been competition training, especially Michiko Matsushita from Japan. She went on to win IBS Long Beach, ICE in LA, Midwest and IBS NY all in one year. When I have trained a competitor and they win it's hard for me to control my emotions. I feel like a proud mum. I have a 99 per cent success rate on competition training.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE A LEGEND IN THE NAIL INDUSTRY?

I have a good perspective on my mentoring influence in the industry, but it's taken me a while to realise it because my biggest fear is allowing my ego to get out of control... I am just a nail tech like everyone else. I know I have an incredible platform and I will always respect that.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT TO DATE?

I don't think I've done it yet, however, I do have some wonderful highlights! I got quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* this year - that was pretty cool. Also, when *Nailpro* had my cartoon character done for an article I wrote. They didn't tell me so when I arrived at the office I was thumbing through the latest magazine as everyone watched to see my reaction. It was quite a surprise. I thought, how cool is that? That I am well known enough to have a character that everyone would recognise drawn of me. Plus they made me skinny!

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS?

I am big on setting goals for others. However I don't have them. I have 'to do' lists instead. On personal goals, I am approaching a milestone in my life and slowing down. I feel I have almost done it all and because I am extremely happy working for *Nailpro* I plan to continue with that avenue for a long time to come. I have achieved a lot, more than many even know. Now it's time to put some effort into the rest of my life.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE THOSE WHO WANT TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?

That's a tough one. I am not a gambler but I am a risk taker - there is a difference. One of my greatest strengths is my networking ability and I firmly believe that this skill has put me in touch with the right people and my career opportunities have come from this. I feel that I was in the right place at the right time and seized the opportunity, taking career risks along the way.

So my advice to others is to have a plan, be prepared, take risks and do what I did. There is so much opportunity out there if you just go get it and I can't do it all. It's all about what you put into your career you get back. You don't learn until you teach another what you know. Giving back to our industry is what makes us grow. So many of us are still excited about doing nails because we continue our education, attend trade shows and compete. It keeps us fresh, motivated and on top of the new trends and techniques.

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