

HEADLINERS & LEGENDS

MEET JAPANESE HEADLINER

KAZUKO TOMIYAMA



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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I've seen some outstanding nail art in my 16-year career, but very few have compared to the nail art created by KAZUKO TOMIYAMA from Tokyo, Japan. You have to see it to believe it!



NATURAL TALENT

With only seven years of nail experience under her belt, Kazuko Tomiyama has made the most of her artistic talent. Her spirit is focused on creating a flawless 'storyboard' across her subject's nails. Murals are her favourite expressionism. And what is most amazing about her work is that, similar to only a couple of other well-known artists in the world, she can take just about any portrait or picture of a person, animal or subject and turn the image into a tiny exact replica on a nail. If only we all possessed this kind of talent!



CHRISTINE TURNER ON A NAIL

There is now a nail art machine available for about £5000 (page 25), that can transfer computerised images onto a nail, but all Kazuko needs is a bit of acrylic paint, a few detailer brushes and a picture. With her incredibly steady hand and keen eye for placement, she begins to tackle the job by taking one area at a time, building with each stroke of the brush until what appears is truly a work of 'art'.

PICTURES TO PORTRAITS

Kazuko gains inspiration for her designs from visiting art galleries and travelling extensively in the USA and Canada. Recently, she trained with former *Headliners and Legends* feature artist, Christine Turner in Canada (September 2004 *Scratch*), to reinforce her knowledge of nail technology, client services and salon business practices. Kazuko is quick to credit Christine with having given her the best technical training she's received thus far. In tribute, she created a portrait of Christine on a keepsake nail as a symbol of her appreciation.

Not surprisingly in 2003 Kazuko claimed the 1st prize in *Nails* magazine's self-portrait contest. She went on to also win 2nd place in its first mural contest in the same year. As a result, she has since been featured many times in various nail and fashion magazines in both the USA and Japan.

Citing driving forces for her inspiration, Kazuko names Kie Kuriyama, the director of Kie International Nail School, as the person who has given her the motivation to excel past normal expectations. Among many other more complicated words of wisdom, without Ms. Kuriyama's simple insistence to 'Practice, practice, then practice some more!', Kazuko believes she wouldn't be where she is today.

BITING THE BULLET

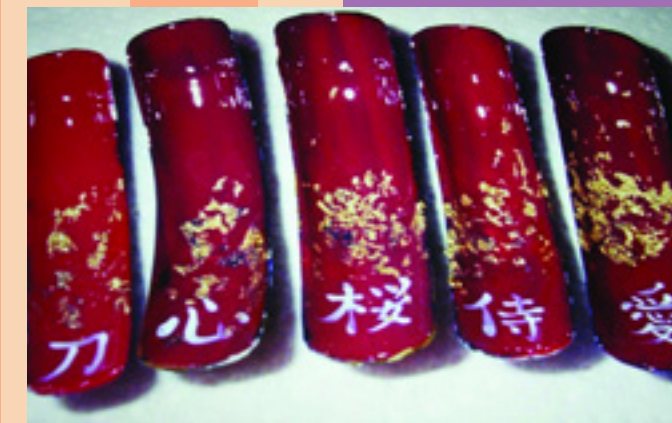
Having worked in a high street nail salon for a while, Kazuko opened her own nail salon in Japan in 1998. She named it Miwa Salon. Today she works 50 hours per week to keep up with the demand. Her fee for a set of acrylic nail enhancements, a popular choice with her clientele, is about £50 in British sterling and she also performs luxurious manicures and pedicures on a regular basis. Walking in someone else's shoes Kazuko's most memorable salon moment was when she performed a pedicure on a client who had forgotten to wear open-toed shoes. Being the caring and concerned guardian of her recently applied polish job, Kazuko graciously lent her client her own shoes to wear home that day. The irony was that it was bitterly cold outside and not an open-toed occasion at all – still the polish application always reigns!

DESIRES OF THE HEART

When asked for her future goals in the nail industry, Kazuko very humbly replies, "To improve my skills as much as I can and serve my skills for many people in the world in order to make people happy." Likewise, in her twilight years, Kazuko hopes to be able to reflect back at 2004 with this thought: "I would like to feel the happiness of my experience as a nail technician."

Kazuko Tomiyama

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Footnote – Thank you, Kazuko! Literally, your micro-art is among the best I've ever seen! It's been a pleasure to honour such a remarkable person who possesses such a remarkable talent! – Gina

If you or someone you know should be honoured in a *Headliners and Legends* feature, please email Gina Wallace at infogwc@ginawallace.com. State the following contact details of your nominee: full name, daytime telephone number, and why you think they should be featured. It's fun to get FREE recognition!