

# HEADLINERS & LEGENDS

## LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE USA'S

## HEADLINER... SHANNON McCOWN



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](http://www.ginawallace.com) where she promotes the Home Learn range of courses and the Nail Trainer.



**Gina Wallace**  
T: 01440 820 999  
E: [info@ginawallace.com](mailto:info@ginawallace.com)  
[www.homelearncourses.com](http://www.homelearncourses.com)



**Driving ambition and sheer passion always lead to one route in this industry – a salon of one's own! Meet Shannon, nail art educator and top tech who resides on the picturesque island of Hawaii**

When was the last time you thought to yourself, "I wonder what it's like to live in Hawaii?" Well, you should ask this month's featured nail artist, America's Shannon McCown, she's got a thriving nail career, an adoring family and the tropical lifestyle all wrapped up together and packaged on the stunning Pacific retreat of Hawaii!

### BORN TO BE WILD

Even as a young girl, Shannon McCown's eagerness to get on with life was always hard to suppress. As a teenager, she admits she thought she knew it all but fortunately quickly realised that working at fast food restaurants wasn't going to get her far in life. So in 1985, at age 16, she dropped out of school to enrol in cosmetology school because "book learning" wasn't exciting enough for her. Alas her parents were gutted by this decision but supported it because she possessed outstanding morals and a good work ethic and therefore support was in order. In cosmetology school, she found herself dedicating a large proportion of her time to the nail arena even though the main focus of her course was on hair.

So in 1986, she announced she was switching over to nails because she found that doing any of the three nail enhancement systems seemed to come so easy to her (it felt natural). After her graduation, Shannon was immediately hired in a local nail salon. It was here that she was able to work with a few techs who had been in the business for a long time. She sapped all the information and knowledge she could from them. She mirrored their behaviour, their sales tactics and enthusiasm. However, at that time her income wasn't high enough to allow her to live outside her parent's house, so they pressed her to "get a real job". Reluctantly, she did, but she could not overcome the need to do nails. She seasawed up and down trying to please herself and her parents at the same time. It wasn't until she married and had children that she realised she needed to change her free spirited ways and acknowledges that having children was what finally grounded her and forced her to be more responsible.

### SOUND ADVICE

Shannon stresses that in hindsight, she regrets not finishing high school as many before her. Now, she greatly admires and supports all types of education and advises everyone she knows to, "Never stop learning, never stop trying and never stop loving what you do". She adds, "As a nail tech, you have a unique relationship with your clients. Embrace it!"

### UP, UP AND AWAY

With the support of her husband Jeffrey, and her newfound maturity, Shannon entered the nail industry full throttle and began entering competitions. To date, she's won five titles:

- Strut your Stuff – 2nd, Mixed Media
- Nails magazine mural contest – 1st runner up.
- The Nailympics USA – 3rd Gel tip & overlay
- Strut your Stuff – 1st Sr Enhancement
- Strut your Stuff – 5th Sr Mixed Media.

### RED FACED YET GLOWING

At the 2004 Nailympics in Las Vegas last May, Shannon was working behind the Nubars nail art stand and decided to get comfortable. She took off her jacket and flung her shoes under the table as she stretched and relaxed her feet. Caught completely off guard by the timing of the

Nailympics awards ceremony announcements, all she heard was, "And the winner is... Shannon McCown". She then dashed in full gallop to claim her prize – however it was not without embarrassment as she arrived to an audience of at least a 100 spectators barefoot!

### DO UNTO OTHERS...

Shannon sings praises to the talents of nail icons and gurus Vicki Peters, Jewls Cunningham, Tom Bachik, Tom Holcomb, Lorena Marquez, Doug Schoon and Nancy King but puts Rita Horvath at the top of her list. To Shannon it is Rita who has given her confidence, as well as guidance to understand just what a judge looks for.

### HER RUBBERBAND LIFE

Bouncing back and forth between careers has wasted a lot of precious time for Shannon considering her passion for nail services. However it all petered into insignificance in the year 2000 when she opened her salon, Alter Ego. Today she services a fully-booked loyal clientele while parenting three young children; Raquel, Jennifer and Amanda (who at 14 is heavily competing in beauty pageants). Shannon books clients every hour on the hour, even for manicures. At \$65 per set, her specialty and most popular service is pink and white liquid & powder extensions, even though she also offers gel services. Shannon believes she's the only tech in Kona who offers gels so invites anyone traveling to Kona in the distant future to look her up. They'll be glad they did!

**Shannon McCown**  
Educator – Nubar Nail Art Pens  
Alter Ego Salon  
73-4424 Hawaii Belt Road  
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740 (USA)  
T: 001 808 334 1991  
E: [missnailhi@msn.com](mailto:missnailhi@msn.com)

*Footnote: Thank you, Shannon! Your light-hearted ALTER EGO is as refreshing as your beautiful work. May I someday be fortunate enough to visit Hawaii to witness you in action! – Gina*



### GET FEATURED IN SCRATCH

If you're reading this and have achieved a high standard of quality in nails and/or nail art, please submit your contact details to be featured in a *Headliners and Legends* feature. Email Gina Wallace at: [info@ginawallace.com](mailto:info@ginawallace.com) giving your full name, daytime telephone number and why you think your work should be featured. You will be contacted within 48 hours. Remember – it's fun to get free recognition!