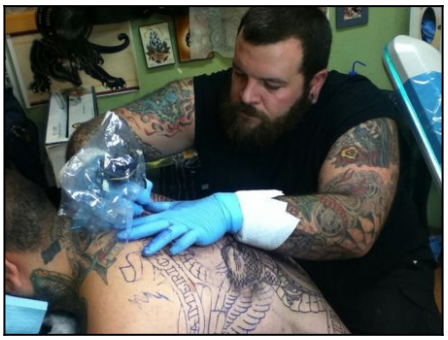
North Atlantic Tattoo – New Bedford's in-demand, premier tattoo shop's expansion includes new talent



North Atlantic Tattoo at 1881 Acushnet Ave now has three talented artists inking locals.

Back in March of last year we told you about North Atlantic Tattoo in a spotlight article. Since then, the response has been overwhelmingly positive and North Atlantic Tattoo has been catapulted into top position when it comes to talent and service. Now booked months out, everyone now knows what we knew: the South Coast has one of the best shops in the country.

Because of the response, current owners Jae and Andrew have expanded their staff to meet the demands of locals. They've brought on board Rhode Island native, Tom Butts – who started his apprenticeship at Providence's Hope Street Tattoo in 2005 under the watchful eyes of Luke Taylor and Matt Brotka.



North Atlantic Tattoo's newest artist Tom Butts hard at work doing what he loves.

After a lengthy 3 year apprenticeship he continued to work his craft there until 2010. Sometime around 2008 he began to add Newport's Anchor Steam Tattoo to his resume, working part-time and eventually switching to a full-time gig. Since then he has traveled as far is Virginia to hone his craft, under some well-known talent including Nate Moretti, TJ Mcinnis, Pete Fortune, Forrest Curl just to name a few.

Tom's love for art goes so far back, that he can't recall a time when he wasn't drawing, painting or creating. In fact, his love for the specific medium of tattooing goes back to his earliest childhood memories when he was surrounded by friends and family who were soldiers and airmen. Growing up, his particular circle of friends – skateboarders and musicians – were bedecked with tattoos, especially those in the Punk Rock scene. This would inspire him to get involved in tattooing as an art-form and had a huge influence on his individual approach to tattooing.

While he is from Rhode Island, Tom has always visited friends

in the greater New Bedford area and has always enjoyed New Bedford's colorful history. He has an affinity for historic New England towns and cities like the Coventry he grew up in, and has always had a fondness for Melville's 'Moby Dick.' So, when he found out there was an opportunity for an artist to develop his craft even further, in one of greater New Bedford's premier shops – it was a no-brainer. To be around experience and talent of Jae and Andrew's caliber was something he wouldn't turn up.



Tom is capable of strong line, shading, and fine detail.

This isn't the first time Tom has heard of Jae and Andrew – Jae and Tom have been friends for approximately 20 years and he was a mentor to Tom in his early years of tattooing. He met Andrew a couple years ago while he and Jae worked together in Swansea. He has been a friend and fan of Andrew and his work ever since.

So, how would Tom define his style of tattooing? I'll let his words speak for themselves: "I am primarily a traditional tattoo artist with a heavy nautical background …but I like to think of myself as a jack-of-all trades – though I am not a portrait tattooer. I can take anything and render it into a solid, clean tattoo. I love to do clean, solid, bright, and bold tattoos that will stand the test of time, large or small."

His tattoos are quintessential American Traditional. Perfect for the blue collar, hard-working person – the one Tom has been around his entire life. His family consists of mostly military, civil servant or tradesman, so working in a geographical region, like New Bedford that is high with these types of professions is important to him.

While Tom sees a lot of people seeking an artist to do their tattoo, he feels the biggest mistake one can do is to look for the cheapest rates around. He feels there should be a balance between art and rate. Since it's going to be on you for life – one should be willing to pay the *right* price. Of course, you don't want to pay a low price and get shoddy workmanship or inversely, pay an exorbitant, over-priced rate, even if it's perfect art.



A little color never hurt anyone!

Tattooing for Tom is serious business, "it's not only my job, but its also my life and hobby. A true artisan tattooer takes his work home with him and everywhere in between. We never shut it off. Always drawing, painting, promoting and planning."

Having said that, he feels having a wide variety of interests and hobbies will indirectly contribute to his artistry by preventing burn-out, and it will also serve to inspire and motivate. Of course, an artist without muses is lost. With

that in mind, Tom is an avid outdoors-man, a collector of odd antiques, and even DJ's regularly. These and other hobbies and interests also help him build rapport with potential and current customers – keeping people comfortable while under the needle, is an important aspect to being a professional, world-class artists. Keeping their mind of the pain and buzzing, helps relax the customer – besides a relationship is just as important as the art.

If you are in the market for some new ink, and love that American Traditional style, you'll want to stop in and see Tom's art and meet the man himself. When you the love he has for tattooing and the pride he has in his art and craft, you'll go nowhere else. But that's what North Atlantic Tattoo does. One visit and you'll have no need to go anywhere else in the city.

North Atlantic Tattoo

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Tom Butt’s Art

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