

inkedⁱⁿ Ames

The low-down to getting your tattoo

Tattoo Parlor Locations

The Asylum
111 Welch Avenue, 268-9000
Jaded Angel 2
2406 Lincoln Way #3, 268-1607
Lasting Impressions Tattoo Studio
114 Welch Avenue, 296-4642

Popular Tattoos

- > armbands
- > suns
- > flowers
- > butterflies
- > tribal symbols
- > Chinese characters
- > roses
- > moons
- > patriotic symbols



Steph Parra paces around the lobby of the Asylum tattoo parlor on Welch. For the past hour, all the artists have been occupied, the low buzz of their tattoo guns drifting out past the black swinging double doors and into the waiting area where Steph is trying to occupy herself. She gazes at the tat pictures on the wall yet again with

indifferent eyes, her hand working its way through her short brown hair in that unmistakable sign of nervousness.

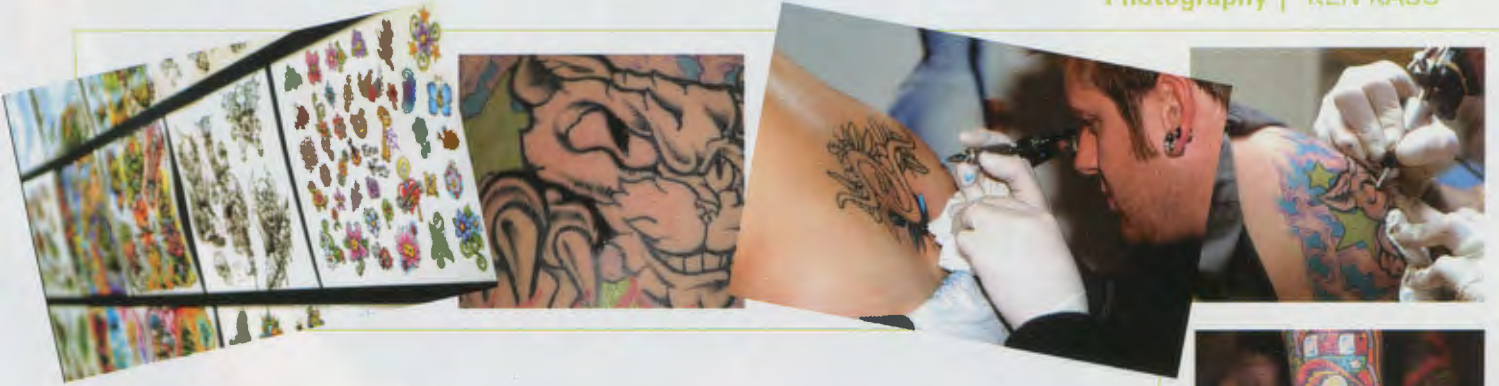
This isn't her first time. Or even her second. The right side of her stomach already carries a large blue "S." A blue rose with tentacles snaking out from behind it sits just to the left of her belly button. Yet, she still feels the butterflies associated with the permanence of a tattoo and the pain of the process. Actually, she's more worried about the pain than the permanence. Two weeks ago, she had a fertility symbol tattooed on her lower back and tonight she is having part of it colored in.

Finally, it's her turn. She's beckoned to the back room by Hot Rod, surprisingly not his real name but the name he uses as an artist because nobody wants to get a tattoo from Chad or Jonathan. He's a scruff man not much

older than she is with a sprawling, dark green tattoo leeching down his neck and diving below his collar. As Steph unbuttons her faded blue jeans so Hot Rod, all dirty brown hair; violent piercings and stubbly facial growth, can get to the small of her back, she glances around her. The room is a storm of contrasting objects, from a black-and-white Johnny Cash print to a monkey head wearing a gas mask.

The snap of the artist's latex gloves brings her attention back to what's about to happen. He doesn't say a word but just turns on the tattoo gun and pushes it against her skin. Steph flinches at that first stab of pain, her knuckles turning white as she squeezes the red leather chair she's straddling. At one point, she lets out a soft yelp as the gun's tip dives again into her tan skin, but there's little dialogue between Steph and the artist. It seems Hot Rod is not much of a conversationalist, though he does spend a couple of minutes talking on his cell phone during the tattooing, his hands meticulously working the whole time.

Steph finally asks how things are going 45 minutes into the coloring. "Almost done." Minutes later, Hot Rod shuts off his gun. "Done for today." Steph rises and glances at the tattoo in a nearby mirror, scrutinizing the color shades and analyzing how much has yet to be done. Because of the tattoo's size, she will have to return at least twice more to



Popular Location

men

arm, shoulder blade,
upper back, calves

woman

lower back, ankle, stomach

Cost

Varies based on the tattoo chosen, colors used and the location on the body. Smaller tattoos with fewer colors can start as low as \$50. Larger tattoos featuring a range of colors often start at \$100.



Tips

finish the coloring. But as the artist places a large gauze bandage across the site, a small smile crept across her face. It hadn't been so bad, and soon she would have another completed tattoo, a lasting work of art inked on her body.



1 The outlines are the most painful part of the tattoo. The coloring of a tattoo is considerably less painful.

2 Keep in mind where you're getting a tattoo: Can it easily be covered if someday you want to get a "real" job? Will it get distorted if you gain a lot of weight or muscle?

3 Wear loose fitting clothing on the day of your tattooing, and clear your schedule after you have it done. It's best just to relax for the rest of the day.

4 Find ways to distract yourself when you're getting your tattoo. Bring a friend along to talk to. Chew a piece of gum.

5 Despite your natural tendency, avoid alcohol prior to getting your tattoo. It can lead to increased bleeding during the process.