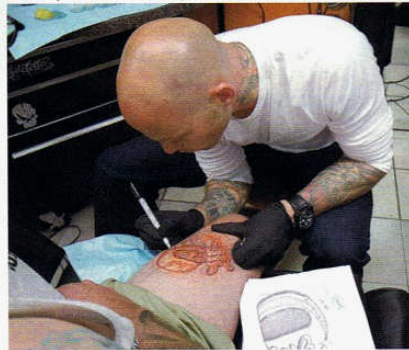


Keeping The Faith Through The Things We Do

HORSE TRADING

A THREE WAY SPLIT TO THE GOOD

Article By: Ken Conte Photos By: Tatsoo Duke Miller



Ami, being a man of his word, decided he wanted to do the tattooing while he was in Daytona, so he called a friend, Gordon Chippewa, and found a great shop that was willing to let him set-up, East Side Tattoo. Owner Chris Mack was totally psyched to help out a fellow artist. Ami wanted to add something of his own to George's design, so he

This Daytona Bike Week saw two segments of biker culture align for the benefit of both. For those who say that the motorcycle industry has lost its way, that everyone involved today is just interested in making a buck, this story shows that there are still old-school values that people live and work by.

It all started at the V-Twin Expo in Cincinnati when Ami James and Marlowe B. of Love Hate Choppers met up with Duane Ballard of Duane Ballard Custom Leather. Ami and Marlowe were working on their debut bike and knew that they would need a custom seat to match the quality of the rest of their bike. They walked the floor of the show and Duane pointed out all the seats he had done for various builders. Blown away by what they saw, Ami and Marlowe were even more impressed when Duane offered to hand tool the seat in exchange for a tattoo by Ami. Duane, a huge Evel Knievel fan, knew he wanted something to commemorate America's first motorcycle daredevil, so he called George Sedlak, Evel Knievel's painter, to see if he could get a sketch of the original "Color Me Lucky" helmet to use as the basis for his artwork. He was psyched about the prospect of getting tattooed by Ami and even more psyched about getting an Evel Knievel original design by George Sedlak tattooed on his leg.

George took some time to work up the design from archival photos, and when they met face-to-face Duane saw the artwork of the helmet and knew it was exactly what he was looking for.

Ami did a Ratfink type guy wearing an Evel Knievel helmet. It was an Ami James original.

While Duane was getting tattooed, Ami and Marlowe B asked George Sedlak to letter Marlowe's bike and pinstripe Ami's bike. George agreed to do it because he loved the bikes and they seemed like good guys. Then the deal got even better when Carrie Repp of R&R Promotions offered up the Dog House Bar and Grill as the place to get it done. When George walked in, he found himself in a great space to ply his trade... in front of a huge audience. With the music blaring and bikers peering over his shoulder, the pressure was on but George lettered the bike flawlessly.

As they sat and Duane got tattooed, it was obvious that everyone involved took away from the exchange something greater than simple profit. It just reinforced that, even today, when several artists get together anything can happen. Duane spotted a rug by tattoo artist Chris Hawkens, something handmade that was very reminiscent of Evel Knievel; on the spot he made a deal to trade another custom seat for the rug. Another barter deal done, and another example of how the motorcycle industry and its true biker values can shine.

