

Seán Creedon revisits the Peugeot 308 and finds out that it's new from the wheels up...

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Fergal Donnellan, Tattoo Zoo



known again a month later. And I also learn that business is good - but not as good as it was five years ago. This isn't because the popularity of tattoos has been waning - quite the opposite in fact - but now there are three times as many tattoo workshops in the city as there were even then. Supply is catching up with demand, even though demand remains enormous.

"Probably a big part of that is fashion," says Ross Daly of Holy Cow Tattoo in Middleton. "I started ten years ago, and (archetypal tattoo reality show) *Miami Ink* started nine years ago - it's been brilliant for us. Trends are changing though. Tattoos are getting much bigger and they're far more widely accepted - there's less stigma attached to them. They're a regular people thing now, not just... you know. Criminals and sailors and bikers and scary people."

Ross got into tattooing because of a lifelong love of art. He studied to be a chef (and was a working chef - he's

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Ross Daly
Tattoo artist

probably the only tattoo artist in the country, if not the world, who's also an award-winning butter sculptor) and was pushed towards the business when his classmates, who saw him sketching constantly, asked him to design tattoos for them.

"The machines have changed completely in ten years," he notes, giving me a quick, enthusiastic run-down on the pros and cons of modern rotary needles versus the louder, heavier electromagnetic equipment of a decade ago. Photoshop, television and social media are now an inextricable part of the constantly evolving tattoo trade.

"I love it," he beams happily. "I love drawing, and I love listening to music." - Tom Waits is growling in the background as we talk - "I love the design process, I love talking, I love the clientele, I love meeting all these cool people, I love making my own hours. Yeah, I love it. Love it!"

You too could be as happy as Ross Daly but, as he says,

"you need to work your ass off. You need to be dedicated. You need to be obsessed. And you also need a third-level education in art; painting, illustration, graphic design, it all pays off massively. A work ethic is also vital. My advice to apprentices is to get a second job you don't like while you're an apprentice, because you'll appreciate this even more."

An increasing number of people are choosing to give over a portion of their own bodies to artistic posterity - "they're doctors, teachers, gardai, mummies...you name it" as Ross says - and after decades in the doldrums new inks, aesthetics and techniques have elevated this art form to new heights, bringing full-fledged legitimacy to tattoos both as self expression and self adornment. The stereotype of the surly tattooist in a smoky, dank room no longer bears any similarity to a profession growing exponentially in popularity and acceptance.

ADVERTISING

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Data protection is big news. Consumers are frequently alerted to their financial details being compromised as a result of security breaches - bad enough if it happens to you; but if you run a business and hold client data; your responsibility is even greater.

"Many people do not think about data protection or backing up files until something has gone wrong," explains William Hogan, Partner at Quintas, "and it is so much easier - and cheaper - to take steps to protect data properly in the first place, than to firefight when there is a problem."

As an accounting practice with over 1000 clients, Quintas have a variety of measures in place to ensure their clients' sensitive data is well guarded; internally and externally; backed up; encrypted and stored at secure locations.

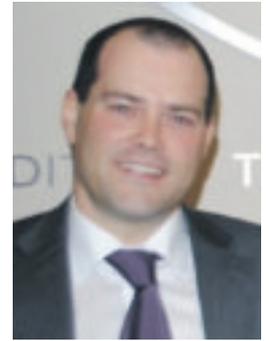
But many of Ireland's small and medium businesses are not as well protected as they should be.

"People forget to update anti-virus software; or are unaware that their systems are allowing malware to harvest their contact information; or have no disaster recovery plan in case an office computer becomes corrupt," says William.

"The Data Protection laws in Ireland are strict; any company storing information has to protect it. By taking a few simple steps, such as ensuring up-to-date anti-virus software; running automated daily and monthly backups and firewall protection, you can make sure you and your clients' information is safe and sound."

There are options to back up your information; including 'in the Cloud'; and you do not have to invest in pricey security systems - most of what you need is available off the shelf on the internet or in computer stores.

Outsourcing your IT needs



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may not cover all your bases, as when something goes wrong services are reactive rather than proactive- the first question you will be asked is have you backed everything up!

Remember that your smart phone is probably synced to your computers, so if you lose it, you should have a plan in place to ensure no one can access sensitive information.

The internet has turned information into a commodity, and there will always be those who benefit from acquiring data that does not belong to them. Ensuring you have appropriate safeguards in place now will save time, money and stress in the event of a problem.

William Hogan performs data needs analysis for Quintas clients and is available for data security evaluations. Call Quintas on 021 464 1400, email at whogan@quintas.ie or see quintas.ie.

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