



Rebecca Loveless (middle) with Doug Watson (shop manager, left) and Sam Benvenuto (tattoo artist, right)

BREAKING TRADITION

Delray Beach's first tattoo shop celebrates a one-year anniversary

BY ALYSSA FISHER

Rebecca Loveless isn't sure how many tattoos she has, but she guesses about 60. She calls the areas of her skin without them "spots."

"I'm filling the spots," she says. "It's not so much as, 'I want a tattoo on my chest.' It's, 'I need a tattoo on my chest because there's a giant spot there.'"

She gets tattooed regularly at Tradition Tattoo, her Delray Beach parlor—the first in the city—that turns 1 this month. Before it moved into its new home (165 Avenue L), it was based in Boca Raton—making the business 5 years old.

"Hey, Sam ... do you think we'll still get '5' tattoos?" Loveless asks one of her artists as he walks by on a recent afternoon.

"Yeah," he says with a shrug, not missing a beat.

Getting new ink is a casual affair at Tradition, but opening the shop was anything but. When she heard there were no tattoo shops in Delray Beach, where she's been living for six years, it became her mission to add one.

"I thought, well, I can be first," says Loveless, who specializes in custom, American-traditional designs. "I've always enjoyed the idea of making history and putting my stamp on something."

She applied two years ago but was rejected. The University of Florida visual arts alumna prodded—where was proof that she couldn't open a tattoo shop?

"I'm the type of person who loves a 'no,'" the 34-year-old says, laughing. "Like, tell me 'no.' Go ahead. I love the challenge of it."

Nowhere in the city regulations did it say she couldn't—but it didn't say she

TALK OF THE TOWN

Keeping readers in the know about community news.

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The **SUSHI & STROLL SUMMER WALK SERIES** returns to Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens. On June 9, take a nighttime walk through the 16-acre gardens before settling into the new picnicking area, which features local food trucks and Japanese snacks.

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SUBCULTURE COFFEE ROASTERS once again is serving morning joe in downtown Delray Beach, this time at its new location at 20 W. Atlantic Ave. The popular gathering spot had to close its doors after losing a legal battle involving its former space.

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Stay well in the **SALT SUITE**, which recently opened in Boca Raton (6063 SW 18th St., Suite 112). In addition to its therapeutic benefits, the anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties of salt are said to improve lung function and nasal passages.

could, either. She took advantage of that limbo and, per the city's suggestion, hired a lawyer. With his help, she argued that permanent makeup, a cosmetic technique that uses tattoos, had been going on in Delray Beach for years.

It worked. Last June, Tradition changed its ZIP code. Business grew about 30 percent, Loveless says, and she hired another artist to join the small, close-knit staff. After the battle with the city, it began acknowledging her as an artist, even enlisting her to paint the Delray Affairs and Garlic Fest posters.

"When I'm an old lady, I can still be the first tattoo artist in this town," she says. "Makes you proud."