



SEA-side salon speak

ANNA LEE discusses the evolution and regeneration of the South East Asian nail community

For a very long time, the rest of the nail industry has had a misconception that SEA nail techs are uneducated, do not speak English, have not had any proper training or certificates, damage the client's nails and basically do not care, as long as they earn the money.

Being in the nail industry for eight years, I can almost understand where this image stems from. However, since starting my CND SEA education programme just over one year ago, I've come in first contact with many SEA techs and discovered that, although in some cases it's true, there are however, just as many SEA techs in the UK who want to learn, improve, do it correctly and move forward.

So while we have a sector of the SEA community that is doing it 'wrong', we are also beginning to see a huge rise in the community that wants to do it 'right'. This sector is usually the younger, emerging generation of the SEA community, which has so much motivation and dedication to the industry journey that to be a part of its education expedition makes me feel proud and honoured.

Jason Tran represents the new, younger generation of the SEA nail community. Jason is Vietnamese and runs a very busy salon, St Alban's Nails in Hertfordshire. Jason and I connected straight away when we met, as he understands my vision and the importance of education.

"I've been working in the nail industry for eight years now, having initially started out as a junior at my sister's salon in St Albans," Jason reveals. "I'm now the manager at my family-run salon, which is also managed by my sister, Anna Tran. We are the two senior nail techs and as such, are pretty much fully booked every day.

"Eight years ago I signed up to learn how to do nails with a local college where I was taught the basics: manicure, pedicure, file and polish. After completing the course, I

recognised my talent and creative skills in the nail arena and booked onto learning nails at a higher level. Eight years on, I'm more captivated and in love with my job than I've ever been before.

"I always look forward to arriving at work everyday and getting to know all about my clients, old and new. What drives my passion for nails is what I can do; the transformation and the end result. My inspiration mainly comes from the latest fashion and trends. My current favourite nail muse is Rihanna; the sharper the nails the better!



Jason Tran



Nail designs by Jason Tran



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"My take on what makes a good nail tech is the ability to listen and understand the client's needs. I often do more than that, I find out what they're looking to achieve and advise them on whether their demands are tangible. I always advise on what is best for their nails and lifestyle; therefore the outcome is more satisfied clients than unsatisfied, simply because I communicate and advise them along the process. This is a problem I find with many SEA nail techs. They lack communication with their clients, therefore, failing to achieve what their clients request or desire. This absence of communication has resulted in the client majority being disappointed with the services they paid for and thus branding most SEA techs as rude and unprofessional.

"Over the years the nail industry has grown and improved significantly on techniques and ways

of improving nail enhancements and treatments. As I researched into these new techniques I stumbled across CND Shellac and coincidentally was introduced to Anna Lee, CND education ambassador.

"I booked and attended one of her SEA classes with an open mind and I'm so glad I went. I now understand more about how Shellac works and I have a much more in-depth knowledge about the product. I feel confident with the Shellac treatment I now offer and I'm very satisfied with the results. I now have clients who praise Shellac Power Polish as it delivers what it says on the bottle; it does last up to two weeks (if not more!). My perception on further nail education has changed completely as I feel that we, SEA techs, will benefit more from learning and finally become recognised for what we do best!

"I have high hopes for my family's salon in the future. I hope we can expand and branch out into other areas of beauty as so far we have invested wisely in popular treatments such as massage and facials and we're looking at teeth whitening treatments as our next move. Knowing that we can offer more services to our clients means I can see my family's ever-growing business expand and grow with prosperity over the coming years." **S**

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