



Photo by Kaeden Dupre

Drag racer Don Pocock sits in front of his 2011 Corvette Callaway streetcar in Port Hope. The drag-racing enthusiast continues to get behind the wheel.

Drag racing a life-long passion

By Kaeden Dupre

On the tarmac strip, engines roar and the crowds cheer brightly. Smoke from the exhaust and burnt rubber roll through the hot summer air as Don Pocock keeps his eyes on the lights and his hand on the trans-brake release. Sweat beads on his forehead, but he has no fear, only the intense urge to win.

Pocock of Port Hope is a drag-racing enthusiast and has been for over 60 years. His first experience putting his foot on the gas was at 13 years old, when his dad needed help working his construction business. He drove an old pickup truck around and really got a

taste for going fast. By 16, he wrote and took his driving test on the same day and was driving himself around legally that night. By the age of 20, he married his wife, Jan, and bought his first fast car, which his parents were not keen on.

"They didn't care for it; they thought it was a big waste of money and very dangerous. They never came to watch me race," said Pocock.

Owning a total of over 40 cars and travelling to many states and provinces, Pocock could be considered a professional drag racer, though he prefers to call himself a hobby enthusiast. Jan has been by her husband's side, supporting him and his

passion. However, five years after they were married, they had their first child. Don put racing aside and concentrated on growing his construction business to support his family.

"A year after she was born, I wanted to build a house. I sold my race car, and I got out of it for 10 years," said Pocock.

For that decade, Pocock went without racing. It had been his passion for years before, but he stopped because his family came first in his life. During that time, he had been tempted to race again by friends who still did it, but he remained focused on what was most important, his family. The construction business flourished, and he became

successful. After 10 years, he went to a race after he was invited by a friend. Watching the cars fly by and listening to the engines scream, Pocock developed 'the itch'. He bought another race car soon after and put his foot to the gas.

Jan and the family still supported him, though his two daughters were not very interested in cars. Travelling in a large motorhome with an enclosed trailer behind, they travelled and raced in many places in Canada and the United States. Pocock even went on to break a Canadian speed record for the quarter mile, a title which he held for two years until it was broken again.

Don and Jan are now living in Port

Hope. He still races, not as intensely as he used to, but still very regularly. He drives a modified 2015 Corvette, fitted with wide rear grip tires for the strip. A rare Corvette Callaway that was used in the 2023 Super Bowl as a show car is also in his collection.

Pocock's upcoming races are this weekend. He has a race in Cayuga, near London, on Sept. 21, and a race in Shannonville on Sept. 22. Pocock's continued passion for racing has allowed him to find a drive for his heart. As long as he is healthy, he hopes to continue racing for many years to come and spend lots of quality time with his friends and family.

Flash tattoo events growing in popularity

By Via Abbott

Feminink, a local tattoo shop in Belleville, was abuzz on Friday, Sept. 13 as they hosted a flash tattoo day, offering visitors a unique opportunity to choose from a wide variety of pre-designed tattoo pieces.

Tattoos are applied to clients in the order of first come, first served. Flash tattoo days, in which customers select from pre-made designs for a quick and affordable tattoo experience, have seen a growth in popularity. But what exactly are flash tattoos, and why are they so popular in the tattoo world?

Typically, flash tattoos are pre-designed, smaller, and often less expensive than custom work. These designs tend to include popular, classic imagery. According to a 2023 article by *Different Ink*, "The Artistry and History of Flash Tattoos," the rising interest in flash tattoos can be attributed to the increasing demand for traditional-style tattoos, a style known for having a bold design and vibrant colours. The article highlighted that many people seek flash tattoos for their first tattoo experience because they're drawn to classic, nostalgic designs.

However, the trend isn't just about convenience. *The Honorable Society*, a well-known tattoo studio in Los Angeles, notes that flash tattoos provide newer tattoo artists with an opportunity to practise their skills. Meanwhile, *Tattooing 101*, an online tattooing school, described that while flash tattoo days can bring in significant revenue quickly, the true value lies in attracting new clients, in hopes many of whom will return for more personalized work at a higher price point.

Asked about flash tattoo days, Zoe Vance, an artist at Feminink, explained that flash tattoo days often coincide with holidays like Mother's Day, Christmas, Halloween, and other celebrations.

"It's kind of a fun, spur-of-the-moment thing," she said. "You don't have to sit there and decide what you want or take time. It's just a quick in and out. You can go with your friends and stuff, which is



Photo by Via Abbott

Feminink tattoo artist Zoe Vance tattoos flash client Hailey MacDonald during a Friday the 13th flash tattoo event.

super fun."

Flash tattoo events can bring large numbers of people into the shop. Feminink's flash tattoo events have drawn in large crowds, with Vance recalling a particularly successful Halloween event last year when approximately 70 clients came in for tattoos. She explained that

on a typical flash day, each artist can accommodate between 10 and 30 clients, depending on the size and complexity of the designs.

As for the creative process behind flash tattoos, Vance revealed how each artist at the shop creates one to three "flash sheets"—collections of designs—from

their imagination and what they believe clients will find appealing.

"You just sit down and think, 'What would be cool?'" She added that designs range from cute, motivational quotes to light-hearted, even silly images. One popular design at Feminink's recent event was a small ghost doing a dab—a fun, quirky

piece that caught the attention of several people.

With their affordability, convenience, and the growing appeal of traditional tattoo styles, flash tattoo days seem to be here to stay, presenting an opportunity for clients and tattoo artists to celebrate a shared appreciation of tattoos.