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OCTOBER 1, 2007

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MIKE RUBENDALL

KING'S AVENUE TATTOO

844 Broadway, nr. N. Nassau Ave., N. Massapequa, N.Y.

516-799-5464

Specialty: Japanese, horror, neo-traditional.

It's worth the schlep to Nassau County to get inked by Rubendall, who used to work at Adorned but now has his own shop (which will be featured in the season premiere of *Tattoo Wars*, a reality show on the Learning Channel this fall). Some of his best pieces combine traditional Japanese motifs—koi fish, cherry blossoms—with the kinds of ghouls, demons, and gore you'll find in Booth's portfolio. But Rubendall favors the Eastern aesthetic, he says, because "it's open and bold and colorful, and you can see it from across the street. It'll look good forever." He researches the images and aesthetic principles intensely. "If you're doing a sleeve, you wouldn't mix cherry blossoms and chrysanthemums. If you're going to do it, you should do it correctly, and with respect for the culture."

Wait list: One year.

Price range: \$125 to \$200 per hour. Expect a full back to take at least 30 hours.