

Headstone City's Shocking Shirts

Written by Freddie Young
Sunday, 02 May 2010 08:31



Tired of wearing those T-shirts with boring movie-poster prints that every other horror fan owns? Are you feeling a bit undead and need some new, original horror clothing to make you feel more alive? Then look no further than Headstone City.

Creator Damon Cassaro was having trouble finding unique horror tees, and decided that the best way to fix that problem was by making his own shirts with designs no one else was doing. Damon's unique shop (on-line [here](#)) is inspired by films, pop culture, fads and novelties as well as books—both horror- and rock-'n'-roll-related. Cassaro also runs a [blog](#) that focuses on genre news, reviews and artwork that he and his friends have created. Those who sign up for updates even have a chance to win free T-shirts. Fango spoke to Cassaro about Headstone City's origins, the brand's future goals, and his love for the undead.



FANGORIA: What's the Headstone City brand all about?

CASSARO: Headstone City stands for the unique—inspired by all things horror, the avant-garde and the things that go bump in the night. Tired of the unoriginal horror clothing that was out there, I wanted unique and original T-shirts. I couldn't find any, so I established Headstone City and began designing and silk-screening my own shirts. In a world flooded with typical, run-of-the-mill horror clothing, Headstone City creates one-of-a-kind designs. Everywhere you go, it's the same kind of stuff: a bit-mapped poster thrown onto a shirt. Sure, those can be cool, but not if you want something different. Headstone City designs are clean, simple and distinct. I've also created original stories for each shirt. These little anecdotes provide origins for each design that other clothing companies don't have.

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FANG: You seem to have a love for zombies and skulls in particular. Why do they inspire you in your designs?

CASSARO: I have always found the undead irresistible. I can remember walking down the video-store horror aisle when I was little and being surrounded by Romero and other zombie box art. Those films struck a chord with me, and I've loved them ever since. As for skulls and skeletons, I feel these images are signs of our own mortality, and are also distinctly human. I also find it interesting that we each have a skull that we walk around our entire lives with, yet we will never see it with our own eyes.

FANG: What are your favorite zombie films, and genre films in general?



CASSARO: I've been a horror fan since I can remember. THE THING, FRIGHT NIGHT and AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON top the list. As far as zombie flicks go, I'm a big fan of THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, Lucio Fulci's ZOMBIE and the underrated LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE.

FANG: How long, on average, does it take to design your products?

CASSARO: It probably takes about a month or so to create a design. I start with a concept, and once the sketch is completed, I'll scan it or design the remainder on the computer. After that, I'll get the image ready to be printed on the silk screen. Once the actual screen is finished, I'll begin printing the T-shirts.

FANG: You have embraced social networking, such as MySpace and blogging. How have these helped with the continued success of your brand?

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CASSARO: The blog is a great tool for spreading the Headstone City brand. I keep people updated with the status of new shirt designs, and also post dates for conventions that Headstone City will be appearing at. It's also a fun way to talk about anything related to horror. Facebook and MySpace are excellent resources as well. They're good ways to interact with Headstone City's fans.



FANG: Do you plan on expanding Headstone City into something more than a T-shirt store? Are you interested in making other clothing or jewelry to complement your designs?

CASSARO: At the moment, I have only put my designs on T-shirts. Although I have screened some images onto heavy card stock and sold those, I currently don't have plans to make other items. But someone did ask me to print one of my designs on their wetsuit. It would be a little more difficult than printing on a cotton T-shirt, but the wetsuit would be one-of-a-kind, that's for sure.

FANG: What's the most challenging aspect of marketing Headstone City? In what creative ways have you gotten your brand's name out to the public?

CASSARO: There is a lot of competition out there. It can be challenging, because there are so many options for consumers to choose from. In many ways, you have to be creative in making the company known. Some ways I've gotten the Headstone City name out there are by having bands wear the shirts; I've given them to celebrities to wear and contributed shirts as wardrobe for independent films.

FANG: What are your future plans for Headstone City? Do you plan on expanding your brand to other parts of the world with a more physical presence?

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CASSARO: Currently, the shirts are only sold at HeadstoneCity.com. In the future, I would like to expand into stores in both the U.S. and the rest of the world. Some people prefer to see the shirts in real life and try them on before they purchase them.



FANG: What has been the formula behind your success?

CASSARO: Dedication, passion and hard work. If you're going to try something, then you've got to go all out. Going to conventions and shows is also very important. It can be exhausting, but it's a necessity. It's a fantastic way to get your name out there and also to meet different people. Being at the conventions gives my customers a face to attach to the Headstone City brand. To be successful, you need to do or offer something different—that people can't get anywhere else. Headstone City designs are unique in that aspect.

FANG: Finally, do you have any advice for aspiring designers?

CASSARO: If you want to start a business, it's very simple: Just do it. Take a chance. It's better to take a chance and fail than to never try anything because you're scared of failure. Use the Internet and all your resources. There's so much information on everything and anything you want to do. If you try something and it doesn't work out, then try something else. Take what you've learned and apply it to something new. Above all else, have fun. Make sure it's something you truly enjoy doing.

You can visit Headstone City on Facebook [here](#) and on MySpace [here](#).

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