

# THE VARSITY

## Pressing questions for Glenn Jones



### Threadless champ tells us about winning T-shirt designs

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Racking your brain to buy a gift for the cool lady who has everything? Need to impress your new arty boyfriend so he'll never know that you still aren't sure exactly who Toulouse-Lautrec is? Fret not, students. Threadless.com is here to get you through those holiday gift buying hurdles.

Started in 2000 by Chicago design whiz-kids Jake Nickell and Jacob DeHart, Threadless is the latest in design's fusion with the Internet community. Anyone can submit a T-shirt design, and many do: the site now gets an average of 125 submissions per day. The public then votes, on a scale of one to five, which designs are worthy of becoming a reality. Each week a winner is chosen, and the designer gets \$2,000 as well as store credit, and the best prize of all: seeing their vision printed on 100 per cent cotton distributed around the world. The shirt is then available for a limited time for \$17 to the public.

Designer Glenn Jones has won the Threadless contest a whopping eighteen times, and has become a celebrity around the site. Known for his clever and artistic shirts—such as "Calling Home" (featuring E.T., naturally) and "What Would MacGyver Do?"—he ranks as a favourite among the site's submitters. Yet Jones says he was not initially attracted to the fashion element of the project. "I didn't really think about the clothing side of it," he admits about his first few submissions. "It was more the illustration."

Like many of the site's other winners, Jones' T-shirts often contain quirky references to the media. "I think the people who like my work enjoy it because it has a link to stuff they grew up with," he said. In terms of advising other applicants, Jones agrees that having a pop culture muse usually foreshadows success. "A lot of my work is inspired by pop culture and a lot of people go in that direction when designing on Threadless, mainly because it usually creates a connection with the voters," he said.

Threadless, which now rakes in millions each year, has come a long way since Jones first began designing for them. "In those days, it was \$150 for the win," he recalls. But he remains grounded about his considerable fan base. "My reaction to my first win was the same as it is when I win today: excited!"

When he's not thinking up nifty tees, Jones toils as a creative director for the firm Dashwood Designs in Auckland, New Zealand. Jones' success hasn't gone to his head. He proudly wears other Threadless designers' tees around and is quick to credit their talent. For the budding illustrator or designer, Jones suggests checking out notcot.org, where he often gets inspired. "I constantly have new ideas," he says. "It's just a matter of sitting down to draw them."

As far as shopping goes, Threadless makes it seem almost painless. The site, which has a massive sale on until December 16, allows you to pick the category of designs your gift-receiver might want ("ironic," "monsters," etc.) and a variety of colours and sizes for your sweetheart. If you're feeling like a big spender, you can throw down \$200 for a 12 club membership, where you get a shirt per month. Seal the deal with a radical card from Glen Jones' website: [glennz.co.nz](http://glennz.co.nz). Sure beats a tie clip and some black socks.