Pele has an insider’s perspective on why fighters get inked. Pele’s own tattoos aren’t meant for intimidation, but to reflect his pure Samoan heritage, his personal history and his self-esteem. “Every time I get a new tattoo, it makes me feel confident and good about myself,” he says.

The 340-pound gentle giant plies his trade in Las Vegas as co-owner of Bad Apple Tattoo Company. Pele, who was featured on the reality TV show “Inked,” has applied his artistic touch on such fighters as Joe Stevenson, Tim Sylvia, Kendall Groves, Phil Baroni, and even referee John McCarthy. Pele recognizes the warrior mentality as a common motivation for many of his peers.

“I used to tattoo Phil Baroni before his fights. He would come up to me before every fight and ask me to hit him up,” says Pele. “He’d be like, ‘Yeah. I’m going to war. I’m going into battle.’ His vision and my vision of getting inked are different. But it’s cool. Everybody has a different perspective on tattooing. A lot of these guys look at their tattoo


