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Venus & Mars

Every week Cosmopolitan's very own Venus & Mars give their take on the most talked about love, sex and relationships stories. See where the his 'n' hers views clash, collide and occasionally complement each other.



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Are tattoos on girls sexy?

Peaches Geldof has just got her 20th. Other girls have even more. But are tattoos are turn on or off?

Mars: OFF

You can bank on Peaches Geldof to make pretty much anything look foolish. Standing on a beach in South America showing off her 'body art' she looks like she's been ambushed by a bunch of over excited kindergarten kids with a colouring set.

But what's she saying? That's the question.

Once upon a time you'd judge prospective partners by their movies or music collection, now all you need to do is get them to strip off and have a quick read.

Perhaps there are some tattoos which are just default Venus. Dolphins, love hearts, crescent moons - none of these are any more revealing than the fact that she watches America's Next Top Model or is off to see Confessions of a Shopaholic with her mates. Yes, she's a girl.

To dig a little bit deeper you need to keep reading. Names aren't good - especially a long list of guys' names (Peaches has a musician under her left arm, an 'ex-Valentine' on the top side and a 'Max' on her wrist). It's like carrying around a photo album of former loves. It says Can't Let Go.

And who in their right mind wants to be greeted by a constant reminder of her past conquests every time she gets her kit off? Talk about a passion killer.

A well chosen lyric might at least reassure you that she's on the same wavelength as you. In Peaches' case there are four lines from a Nick Cave song and you can't say fairer than that. But even then there's a bit of a worry. Is this person trying too hard? Are tattooed lyrics above the arse crack the black ink equivalent of leaving out a cool book you haven't actually read just to impress him?

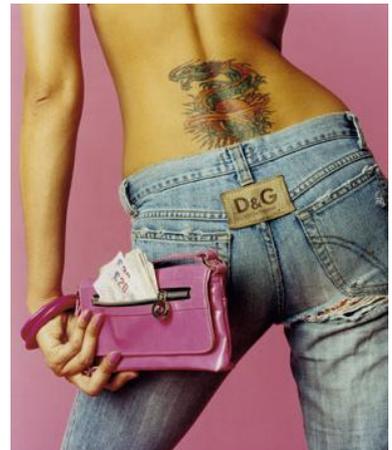
Of course there's no reason why Venus' tattoos should be for anybody but Venus. 'It's my body and I'll do what I like with it' is a laudable sentiment. I have a friend, Alice, who has an amazing tattoo of a human skull all the way across her back which has transformed her into a walking piece of art.

But still the urge to judge a book by its cover is hard to shake. If I see a Venus with barbed wire, daggers or nooses she may just be a bit of a Goth but I think 'Fatal Attraction' and immediately check the stove for bubbling rabbit. Venus' tattoos may just be another form of self-expression but don't blame Mars for misreading the signs.

Venus: ON

My first thought when I saw those bikini shots was that a small child must have graffiti'd all over poor Peach's body with a biro while she was asleep on her sun lounger. When you see them all at once like that she looks kind of messy, like she needs a good shower.

But though I'm generally loathed to fight the corner of a pointless celebrity SAD (celebrity sons and daughters), on this occasion I'm making an exception - partly because I'm in the pro-tattoo camp and have the stamp to prove it (a star on my left shoulder blade). And partly because the staunch disapproval of the Daily Mail is a sure sign that something



must be cool and sexy.

Not content with one feature dedicated entirely to the SAD's body scribblings (Topless Peaches Geldof Reveals The 20 Bizarre Tattoos That List Her Friends, Lovers and Even Song Lyrics) the tabloid then followed up the next day with another report boasting an equally catchy headline (You May Think Tattoos Look Cool Now, Peaches, But They'll Be Hell to Get Rid Of (And It'll Cost You Thousands) to express their concern for the poor girl's potential laser-surgery bill in fifty years time.

If Peaches is indeed still around when her skin has gone from peachy to puckered, I would imagine she would be only too happy to hold onto the living proof she was, for about five minutes, once famous and quite 'rock n roll'. And even if she did want to have the whole lot erased and her bikini line lasered to boot, I doubt Geldof Junior would have any trouble footing the bill.

The Mail's reaction illustrates why, ever since I was a teenager, tattoos have always held some kind of sexy allure for me: because grown-ups don't approve. There's something deliciously wrong and naughty about them. When strategically placed they draw attention to body, skin and curves making them tantalisingly sensual. Plus, the night I had mine done I pulled, quite frankly, the fittest bloke you have ever seen. I'm never going to laser my lucky star. Not even when I'm 80.
