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TOOLS *for* SUCCESS

We all have a favourite piece of equipment that helps us to do our job or adds to the pleasure of our work. If a worker is only as good as their tools, these Melbourne specialists must be outstanding

CATHERINE LAMBERT

PETE SCISSORHANDS

IF another hairdresser has used Pete Leighton's scissors, he knows immediately.

"My scissors are like my arm and they're like my territory so I can feel if someone has used them because the tension changes," the hairdresser of 29 years says.

The popular senior cutter at Shibui does at least 10 haircuts a day, five days a week with his \$1600 Japanese mountain blade scissors.

Leighton's scissors need replacing every few years because each time the blades are sharpened, their size reduces. They are made of five different metals and are top of the range, so they are difficult to part with.

"You just know your tools so well and because I'm a freehand cutter, and don't use a comb, I'm even more attached to my scissors," he says. "When I get a new pair the blades are longer and it takes some time to adjust.

"They know me quite well at The Alfred hospital because I've cut my hands so often but luckily, there has never been any damage to a client — only to me."

Leighton has lost the feeling in two of his

fingers and once presented his scissors to the receptionist with two knuckles placed on the blades. She had to leave the building.

"My hands look more like a butcher's.

"But I love cutting hair so much and freehand cutting lets me read the hair more and I can feel its texture."

IF THE SHOE FITS

A DANCER'S shoes are more than a useful tool or piece of equipment, they are integral to their art.

There is little time to become attached to the pointe shoes though, with many dancers using three different pairs of shoes in one performance alone.

Former Australian Ballet School student Tene Ward, 18, only received her first pairs of customised ballet shoes last September and she is doing her best to make them last for her performance in the company's touring production of *Storytime Ballet: The Nutcracker*.

"I received 24 pairs in September and seven pairs by October," Ward says.

"When we are doing a lot of pointe work, the shoes quickly disintegrate."

The block in the toe of ballet shoes is made from papier mache so the moisture from



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dancers' feet makes it crumble, especially if they are jumping frequently or dancing *en pointe*.

Since dancing in customised shoes, Ward feels much more comfortable and confident while dancing. The back of the heel has been raised on her shoes and they have been made with less weight so they make a softer sound when landing on stage.

As much as she loves her shoes, she admits to being quite brutal with any new pair.

“We all torture our shoes,” she says.

“I stand on them, I jump on them and when I get a new pair I put them in between the door and the door frame and shut the door on them.

“You can hear the shoes crack. We all own Stanley knives to score the soles and sometimes shave them as well if needed. If you don't have a good shoe, it's a nightmare so it's very important to us to get them just right.”

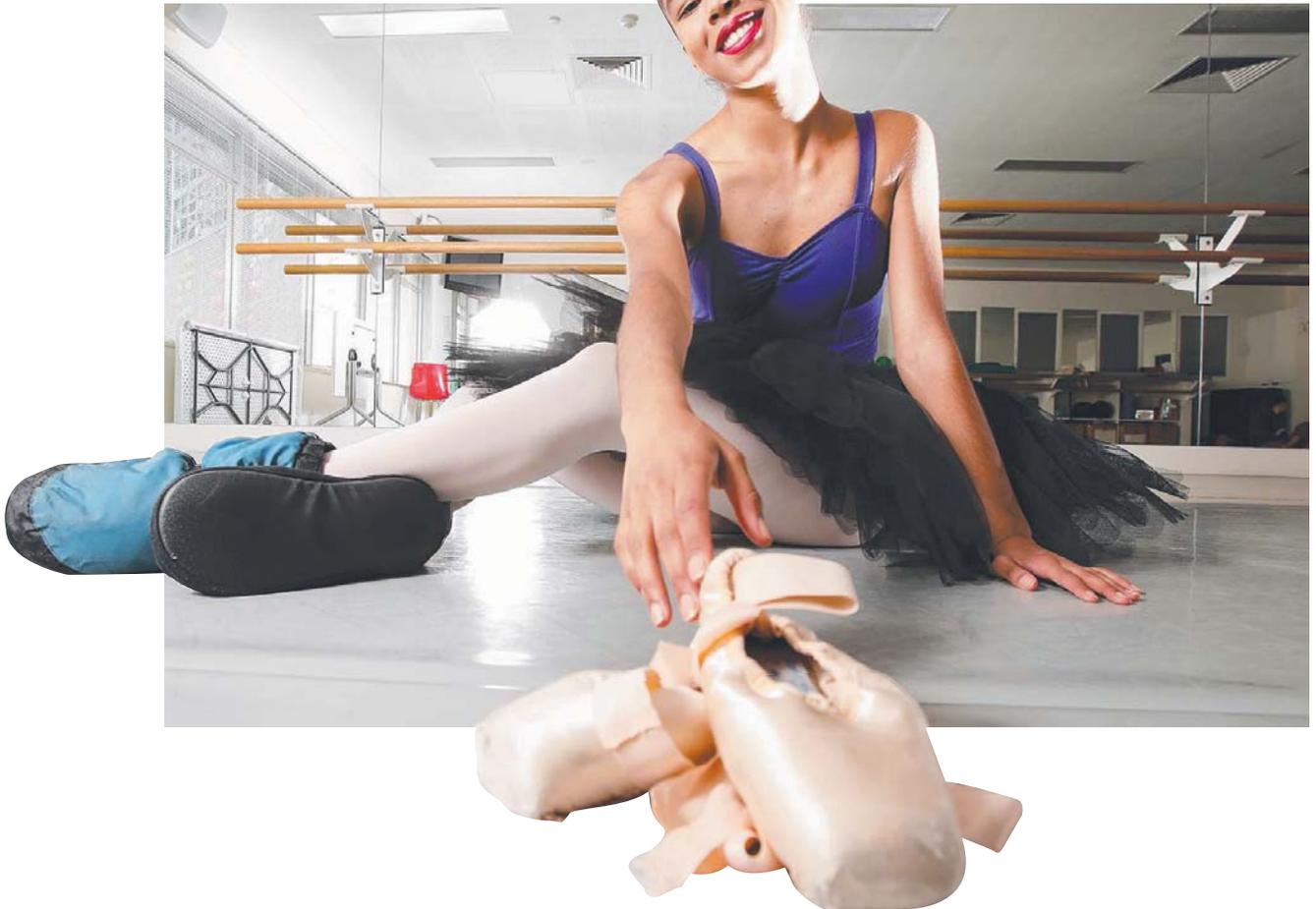
It takes only seconds for Ward to get her shoes on because taking too long could mean she misses a cue on stage. Even though the shoes may look complicated to tie, she has been doing it for most of her life, more so since joining the Australian Ballet School five years ago.

“The shoes are what makes ballet because you don't find any other dance form where these shoes are worn,” she says. “These shoes let me do what I love to do.”





of detail when you look through it," he says. "It saves a lot of unnecessary removal of moles."



LIFESAVING EYE

PROFESSOR John Kelly has dedicated his life to treating and preventing skin cancer.

He has one of the most well-trained eyes in dermatology but even he admits he would be lost without his dermatoscope.

"I can't diagnose skin cancers with the naked eye because I feel like I'm blindfolded," Kelly says. "A diagnosis with the dermatoscope is 20-30 per cent more accurate than the naked eye."

The dermatoscope was first invented in 1989 but has been improved upon every two years subsequently. His present model is only 10 months old.

"It enables me to visualise the skin better because it eliminates surface reflection and also enables me to visualise structures under the skin so I can see the distribution of pigment," he says. "That means I can distinguish a mole from a melanoma and even distinguish different types of tumours."

"It also helps me determine how much of the surrounding tissue needs to be cut out with the mole because you can see the edges of the cancer."

Kelly diagnoses at least five patients with melanoma a week as head of the Victorian Melanoma Service at The Alfred hospital. He says for every 30 moles he sees one will be diagnosed as a melanoma.

"It's an acquired skill to use the

dermatoscope and you can see a lot of detail when you look through it," he says. "It saves a lot of unnecessary removal of moles."

SPARKS FLYING

TIMOTHEA Jewell is not happy unless she sees sparks flying.

The sculptor often spends eight hours a day sculpting intricate shapes into metal with her plasma cutter.

"I love being in the studio with my tools getting my hands dirty so that at the end of the day I have an



enormous sense of accomplishment,” Jewell says.

“I can look back at something I’ve made and feel proud.”

The plasma cutter is her favourite tool because it lets her do the finely detailed work that goes into making both small and very large

sculptures. It is an electrically charged, handheld blow torch that works by sending compressed air through a small channel. Once the nozzle of the plasma cutter touches the metal at 16,000 degrees, it creates a spark and melts the steel.

“It’s exciting when the sparks fly and I get a real creative buzz, but it’s also dangerous,” she says. “I’ve been in a situation where I didn’t have my helmet on and the sparks hit my face shield, which started to melt, and also set some of my hair on fire.”

Jewell has worked with her present plasma cutter for about 13 years and has been sculpting for 14 years. It is mostly used for special commissions where there is a specific design.

She first became captivated with welding when she spent time with her father, a mechanic, in his garage while he was welding.

“I still remember that smell of burning — it never leaves you — and there’s something comforting about it,” she says. “There are a lot of similarities between us but I’ve gone down the path of sculpture because there are so many different skills involved and lots of different pieces of machinery to use.”

CUTTING EDGE

GUY Grossi may be one of Australia’s best chefs but he modestly confesses he couldn’t do it without his knife.

The German-made Wusthof knife has been part of some of the delicious dishes he creates daily at Grossi Florentino, in Bourke St in the city.

“It’s the knife I use for many preparations, from basic things like minestrone soup through to refined sauces, and it’s great for cutting vegetables and also the more refined meats such as salmon and tuna,” Grossi says.

“It’s such a beautiful knife that it doesn’t take much looking after. I use a steel sharpener to keep it sharp and also a stone occasionally.”

The knife was given to Grossi by Matteo Tine, the chef in the grill at Grossi Florentino. It was not a special occasion, making it more

meaningful: “He gave it to me just because I’m a really good boss and I look after him.

“But he’s been working with me for a very long time so it has a sentimental attachment.”





Tools of the trade: (Clockwise from left) John Kelly uses a dermatoscope to detect skin cancers; chef Guy Grossi, who couldn't work without his knife; sculptor Timothea Jewell works with her prized plasma cutter; dancer Tene Ward and her custom shoes; and hairdresser Pete Leighton wields his favourite scissors.

PICTURES
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