

Every Leader Has It. Passion.

This is not an advertisement. It is a public interest article.



By Tom Lincir, President and Founder, Ivanko Barbell Company

Something that is the best in its class has a certain aura. You know it when you see it, touch it, taste it. People who create the best don't stop at good enough like everyone else. They keep going. They're never satisfied, never finished. What drives certain people to press on long after others have rested? Passion. The pure joy of doing what they do. Find people who approach their work with passion. That's where you'll find perfection in the making.

The Urethane Plates you see on the cover of this magazine and elsewhere on these pages are emblazoned with the logos of entities that, in my opinion, are the best in their class. The national collegiate champion football team two years back-to-back. The world's best business hotel. The best bank in the Western Hemisphere. The ultimate strength training gym. The finest Vodka in all of Ukraine. They set an example for all of us, and remind us that however good we may think we are, we've still got a long way to go.

Bill Pearl's Gym
Nobody doubts that Bill Pearl, five-time Mr. Universe winner, has passion for strength training. At the age of 75, he still trains every day as hard



Bill Pearl and Tom Lincir circa early 1980s.

as he always did. I was fortunate in my mid-20's to train at Bill Pearl's gym on Manchester Avenue in Los Angeles. Bill's gym was different from everywhere else. It wasn't a place where you

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sit in front of a mirror and do concentration curls with 20 pound dumbbells. The guys there were using dumbbells that were 200 pounds and up. It was the place where the biggest and strongest men in the world trained. That was the whole thing. Not just big. Big and strong. Men like Pat Casey, who was the first person to bench press over 600 pounds without the use of inflatable super suits, wraps, or steroids; Chuck Ahrens, who was so broad that he looked like two guys in one shirt doing laterals with 100 lb. dumbbells; Dallas Long, the 1964 shot put Olympic champion who could bench 500 lbs. from a dead stop; Big Steve Marjanian who could do incline presses with well over 400 lbs.; the best athletes from USC; and last but not least, Bill's big brother Harold Pearl who I remember had fingers the size of the big end of a pool cue.

Training at Bill Pearl's gym forced you to be the best you could be. You pushed harder than you normally would, and that's why you got results. Interestingly enough, Bill's equipment was mostly custom or homemade. His gym is the original source of some of the greatest ideas that are out there now. What some designers are taking credit for today are ideas that evolved from Bill's gym 40 years ago. Why was Bill Pearl's gym the best place on earth to train? Passion.

Presidensky Standart Vodka

This is the finest vodka in The Ukraine, arguably the finest in the world. It is the favorite of Viktor Yushchenko the newly elected pro-Western President of The Ukraine. It also keeps coming out on top in the hundreds of taste tests I have conducted with friends and customers at The Red Square restaurant in Las Vegas. I have a private locker there with over 100 rare vodkas from all over the world. The locker is in a tasting room that is kept at 10° F below zero. At



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this temperature, the vodka develops a slight syrupy texture, which is an important part of the traditional tasting experience. The faint of heart put on thick Russian fur coats and hats before entering the room. I find, however, that after 28 cc (one ounce) of vodka, a Hawaiian shirt is sufficient attire.

The Ukrainians say the true test of superb vodka is if a woman will drink it straight. They also say that it is permissible and healthy to drink up to 50 cc of vodka a day, a prescription that I do not find difficult to administer. These traditions and lore are all part of The Ukrainians' centuries old passion for vodka. While many companies manufacture vodka to make money, something different inspires Presidensky Standart to craft the very finest. Passion.

The USC Football Team

The University of Southern California (USC) football team has won the national championship two years running, and they seem poised for an unprecedented third in a row, which no college team has ever done before. It looks like there is no



way of stopping them. A lot of this revolves around the passion of the coach, Pete Carroll, who is probably the best coach that ever was. He has more enthusiasm than anyone on the team. He begs players to play catch with him after every practice until the sun goes down. He doesn't want the practice to end. He's having too much fun. This enthusiasm is very infectious. It is why the recruiting has been so tremendous in recent years. Recruits want to be around someone who so thoroughly enjoys the game. It's like he's reliving his college football days. He just can't get enough of it.

We often hear coaches tell the media about the pressure cooker that a college football coach lives in. Pete Carroll tells his players that this is the most fun they'll ever have in their lives. Why is the USC football team as good as it is? Passion.

The Royal Canadian Bank

The Royal Canadian Bank is the largest bank in Canada, and the fifth largest bank in the Western Hemisphere. For the third year in a row, it was named Canada's most respected corporation. They have also won awards for corporate governance, human resource management, financial performance, corporate social responsibility, and long-term investment value. Last year they gave \$ 59 million to community causes worldwide.



The bank caters to more than just Canadians. While they don't actively seek American customers, I am sure they would be happy to have your account. They provide personal service the way American banks no longer do. You can have a U.S. dollar account in a branch in your time zone, so they're really like any other bank you might choose. Expenses are in Canadian \$'s so they're currently about 20% less than with American banks. The Royal Canadian Bank has been Ivanko's bank for years, and it's obvious when you talk to the people there that they have a special air about them that is missing in most American banks. Passion.

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The Mandarin Hotel

When we closed down our original factory in Taiwan, we looked for a factory in China that could continue the legendary quality and on-time delivery that was Ivanko's hallmark. We found it more difficult to get this kind of performance in China. After a few false starts, I made the decision to go to the factory and





Tom Lincir working in Ivanko's factory in Shenzhen, China.

take personal charge of the situation. Our factory was just across the border with Hong Kong in the city of Shenzhen, China. Hong Kong was still controlled by the British in

those days. I decided to make the Mandarin Hotel my home base. This turned out to be a good choice. Like thousands of repeat guests before me, the Mandarin became my home away from home. Their reputation as the best business hotel in Asia is well deserved.

To get to the factory every Monday morning, I would walk to the Macau Terminal, which is only a short distance from the Man Wah (local pronunciation for Mandarin). From there I would board a speedboat to Shekou, where a car was waiting to take me to the factory. My work at the factory from Monday

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through Thursday was tiring and dirty, but the reward was coming back home to the Mandarin on Thursday evening. What makes the Mandarin Hotel so special is service. The experience starts when you first arrive, and they greet you by your name. In fact, you're greeted by name every time you leave or return, a nice touch. You can pick-up the phone in the morning and say, “coffee fast,” and in less than 5 minutes, you will have a perfect cup of fresh brewed coffee. Try that “at home” and see what it gets you.

But, the real heart and soul of the Hotel is the concierge team who work 24 hours to meet your every need. I never gave them a request that couldn't fulfill, and believe me, I gave them some unusual ones. The concierge team at the Mandarin is the best in Hong Kong, arguably the world, and they are quite pleased to prove it to you. I used to try to stump the team by coming up with almost impossible requests. I finally gave up because they always came through. The Mandarin makes detailed notes about your wants and needs, likes and dislikes, so, on your next visit, things just seem to magically happen. They take pride in making magically happen what other hotels would consider impossible. You can tell they love every minute of what they do, and the reason is obvious. Passion.

What This All Means

You can always tell when someone is in business just to make money. They frown a lot. They get paranoid about what their competitors are doing. They cut corners when they can get away with it. They struggle. When you pursue your work with passion, the rewards come in much greater measure than if were only chasing money. You do a lot of things that the customer can't see or verify, but you do them anyway, because it's right. You have to saw one of our urethane dumbbells in half to see that there's 1/2" of urethane to cushion the impact on equipment and furnishings. We could have used half as much like everyone else, but 1/2" is the right amount. So when I talk to a customer about an Ivanko product, I have nothing to hide because I know we've done everything in our power to make it the best it can be. Why? Passion.



Tom Lincir with Giovanni Valenti and Sammy Lui, concierge team members at the Mandarin Hotel, Hong Kong



For a long time, I have considered Roy Simonson at Freemotion to be the best equipment designer in our time. He approaches his work with passion. As a result, this is a company where you find perfection in the making. We are proud to display their logo next to ours.

Ivanko Barbell Company was founded by Tom Lincir in 1967, and it is the leading provider of professional and commercial grade barbell and dumbbell products worldwide. Your comments or questions are welcome. Write Tom Lincir at Ivanko Barbell Company, P.O. Box 1470, San Pedro, CA U.S.A. 90733, e-mail tom@ivankobarbell.com, or call 310.514.1155, ext. 205.