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BY BAZ MCALISTER

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The Leaf Blower: a Symbol of All That's Wrong With Humanity

You'll never see a woman using a leaf blower. Women have more sense than to lay their hands on the most obnoxious invention mankind ever dreamt up. No, hang on, the leaf blower was clearly invented not by man, but by Satan. In the evening. On the same day he invented meth in the morning and was tripping balls by lunch.

It's a microcosm of the world's ills. If you regard dust and debris on your property as a problem too vexatious to bear, then all this hellspawned thing does is relocate that problem. Shunt it sideways, not solve it. It's an undeniably masculine modus operandi.

It even looks male, the leaf blower - a big, swinging, droopy dick and pendulous ball-sack; a symbolic penis spewing fumes and jizzing hot stinking dusty air all over SomeoneElse'sProblemtown, population: you.

I watched a prick slinging one yesterday: wide-brimmed hat, mask and sunnies to keep out the dust, ear defenders on to block out the dozen-bikers-with-buzzsaws noise he was inflicting on the otherwise still neighbourhood. He strolled at the centre of a billowing tornado of douchebaggery as he blew leaves off his property into his neighbour's drive. Seconds later, the breeze blew them back. If this chubby Sisyphus was aware of the futility of his actions, he hid it well, this preening cock trumpeting all that's wrong with humanity.

Dude, grow up. Get a rake. Make a compost heap. At least then you'll be contributing something to society - even if it's just a pile of rotting vegetation.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Pub Toilet Graffiti and the Art of Avoiding Sectarian Violence

Graffiti's not new. When they weren't out subjugating barbarians, the Romans festooned their walls with phalluses. The Vikings only started invading other countries because they'd run out of space in their own toilet cubicles. And one-third of all Neanderthal cave paintings can be translated loosely as 'I've had Ug's mum'.

I find it useful as a barometer for gauging the mood of a new pub. I spent my twenties in Glasgow, where announcing the wrong religious/football affiliation in the wrong alehouse could arouse the ire of chaps who made Begbie from *Trainspotting* look like a Wiggle. A peek at the toilet wall before ordering was a lifesaver. A phrase like "Knox, Calvin and Luther are all the devil's beasts" was a clue not to slag off the Pope in the taproom.

Now I use this as my bellwether. If the cubicle walls drop enough f-bombs to annihilate a town, or have 15 phone numbers with boring old "For a good time, call..." daubed before them, the intellectual level is low. Brace for a dull, potentially violent night.

But clever graffiti is a gift. Brisbane's videogamer haunt the Mana Bar had the legend "For a good time, press up, up, down, down, right" in its bogs. I laughed so hard a little bit of wee came out – which was fine, given the situation.

The best one in a while was in a quite nice city sports bar, where the air of jovial banter was summed up by some angry cretin writing "Australia sux", under which some absolute genius had penned "New Zealand nil".

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

About Author

Baz McAlister

Journalist and editor specialising in features, film, the arts and travel. Sometime stand-up comedian. Aspirant screenwriter. Irishman-about-town. Big fan of potatoes and whiskey.

Why is the website called bytestories.com?

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