



Want to give your iPhone a new look? Wrap it.

photo by Chris Frichie

It's All About U

By Krista Franks

IT WASN'T LONG AGO that grocery stores and drug stores supplied most of our necessities for daily living. We needed a gallon of milk, a loaf of bread and a head of lettuce. But that was then. This is now, and some of the goods and services available today are vivid reminders of just how far we've come. Joining the old standbys are retailers that combine technology and imagination to create their own little niche...enter "It's All About U."

Walking into It's All About U is a visually stimulating experience. Every inch of wall and floor space is filled with captivating glossy images. To the left a cobblestone path dissolves into a sandy beach that borders an "ocean" of blue-green water. The water leads to a tropical paradise, foliage climbing the wall. Overhead, a dark, three-dimensional spaceship protrudes from the ceiling, hovering over a golden cityscape at sunset. Underneath the city

skyline, molten lava flows to a sea of dark, sparkling emeralds. These images are not just decorations, they are examples of the products available at It's All About U, where customers can personalize nearly anything – from cell phones to cars, even the walls of their home. The store specializes in custom wallpaper, vinyl wraps, digital t-shirt printing, "Fatheads" as well as laser engraving. Storeowner Todd Cunningham utilizes many of the products himself. His home is wallpapered with images of his 2007 honeymoon in Hawaii; his personal cell phone is wrapped in a rust-colored snakeskin print.

Cell phone wraps are one of Mr. Cunningham's most popular products. Frisco Mayor Maher Maso had his cell phone wrapped with a City of Frisco motif at the store's grand opening last October. Since then, Mr. Cunningham's staff has designed several City of Frisco motifs for cell phone

wraps. The process is quick and relatively inexpensive; cell phone wraps start at \$12 and can be done while you wait. Plenty of ready-made images are available, designed by the store's full-time designers Kris Jones and Alex Marks. Customers are also free to bring in images of their own to make the finished product even more unique and personal.

Cell phones are not the only items that can be wrapped. The store also boasts what Mr. Cunningham refers to as the "wrap wall." Floating in the "sky" above the wallpaper city are images of items that can be vinyl-wrapped for customers. Mr. Cunningham points out a hair dryer he wrapped in a pink and black geometric pattern for his hairdresser. A car in bright purple has been wrapped with a dragon skin design. Laptops, remote controls, even your computer's mouse can be wrapped. In fact, anything that has a hard



Todd Cunningham (right) demonstrates the wrapping process.

photo by Chris Fritchie

surface can be wrapped, according to Mr. Cunningham.

One of the most unusual requests Mr. Cunningham has had was to wrap a soccer ball. A soccer mom came in with the ball and asked to have an image of her child's soccer team applied to it as a gift for the child's soccer coach. Among the most interesting items Mr. Marks and Mr. Jones recall wrapping are hockey sticks and a beer tap.

Car wraps have become increasingly popular over the past few years. Business owners hoping to promote their business as well as consumers hoping to express their individuality are turning to car wraps to spread whatever their particular message might be. Car wraps are achieved when a large vinyl sheet is smoothed over the surface of the car with a squeegee.

Mr. Cunningham's Tahoe is wrapped in advertising for his other business, Signarama. One major advantage of car wraps is they are far more cost-effective and less time-consuming than re-painting the vehicle. A car wrap can be completed in days and costs a few thousand dollars.

In addition to full car wraps, It's All About U also offers smaller, removable graphic stickers for cars.

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In addition to personalizing mass-produced items like cell phones and cars, It's All About U also takes customization into the home on a grand scale. Customers can bring in an image of their favorite location or just a personal motif to use as wallpaper for the rooms in their home. Those who love the ocean can

have a wall transformed into a beach scene. Mr. Cunningham also points out a small image hanging on the wall of the store depicting a simple modern room with a sleek, black grand piano. A giant red rose occupies nearly an entire wall of the room. Not only are the wallpaper image options infinite, there are also several textures available including glossy, parchment, and mosaic tile, all of which are demonstrated throughout the store. An added benefit of the custom wallpaper is its early warning effect. In keeping with the multi-tasking days in which we live, the wallpaper sets off the fire alarm at 300 degrees.

An alternative to covering an entire wall with a particular scene or image is to purchase adhesive vinyl images for a wall. It's All About U is an authorized reseller of Fatheads. Fatheads are vinyl decals that adhere to the wall and can be removed or repositioned at any time without tearing or losing adhesion. Sports enthusiasts can have a life-size image of their favorite sports star plastered on their wall, and children can have a full-sized Batman flying

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Next Month in Frisco STYLE

COMING UP next month, we will reveal Frisco STYLE's Person of the Year. Plus, do you love your job so much that you would do it for free if you could? Meet some people who would do just that in "Take This Job and Love It." Those stories and more in the June issue of Frisco STYLE.

Previous "Person of the Year" recipients, Bob Warren, Mack Borchardt and Jill Cummock (above)

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across the wall of their room. However, like everything else at the store, customers can create their own custom Fatheads-like vinyl decals. One of the most popular custom requests comes from parents ordering images of children in their sports uniforms. In fact, one grandfather decided to devote a wall of his home to custom vinyl images of his grandson, one for each year as he grows up. Mr. Cunningham himself created custom vinyl images for his five-year-old son's bedroom. Entering the room is like walking into the city of Bikini Bottom, home of Sponge Bob Square Pants. The bright green walls are full of large Sponge Bob characters.

Custom t-shirt designs are another common request. Mr. Marks even recalls a time he created a custom t-shirt from a coloring book page. In addition to printing digital images on t-shirts, Mr. Cunningham and his staff can print photographic images on fleece blankets. Laser engraving is also available for fleece. Part of the fleece is burned with an image so that the image appears to be impressed into the textured fleece fabric. It's All About U also performs laser engraving on wood, glass,

marble, granite and plastic for trophies, plaques and desk wedges. They can even engrave designs onto champagne glasses to commemorate special occasions.

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It's All About U, located outside JC Penny in Stonebriar Centre has been thriving ever since it opened, drawing curious customers with an eclectic variety of requests.

Designer Kris Jones has worked at It's All About U since it opened. He studied graphic design at the Art Institute of Dallas before joining Mr. Cunningham. Mr.

Jones enjoys the opportunities he has to expand his customers' creative ideas and help them come up with truly unique products. "We get to make the ordinary extraordinary," says Mr. Jones.

Alex Marks has also been with It's All About U from the beginning. He enjoys the opportunity to be creative at work, and learning how to use the many different innovative technologies he has access to through his job. In addition, Mr. Marks appreciates the freedom Mr. Cunningham gives his employees, trusting them to make the right decisions and utilize the technologies available to best suit each customer's needs. "It's the coolest job I've ever had," he says.

Mr. Marks believes that if it's a success in Frisco, It's All About U could grow to be a nationwide company with stores across the country. Currently, the small store seems to draw the curiosity of Stonebriar shoppers, and its unique concept keeps them intrigued. "Everybody who comes in is just blown away," says Mr. Marks.

Krista Franks is a writer who lives in University Park.

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