

Businesses of All Sizes Can Afford Custom Wall Art

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By Rob Finkel

At LexJet, we work hard to help customers find ways to do more with their wide-format inkjet printers. One of the coolest things that can be done with a wide-format inkjet printer is to make high-quality enlargements of good photographs. Prints can be made at all different sizes and on many different materials, depending on where and how the image will be displayed.

As result, many managers of hotels, restaurants, stores, theatres, and corporate offices now realize they no longer have to use mass-produced posters or paintings to decorate their facilities. Instead, they can afford to custom-decorate their buildings with images that have special meaning to their organizations, their communities, and their customers.



For Norton's Restaurant in Red Wing, MN, John Becker created a five-panel panorama shot of the town. Each 40 x 40 in. panel is printed on LexJet Sunset Photo eSatin and mounted on hardboard with a reverse frame standoff. "The image on the far left was deliberately put on a set back wall to create visual interest," explains Becker.

This growing demand for custom wall art is creating new opportunities for talented photographers, artists, and other creative imaging professionals to replace some of revenues that have been lost to declining demand for other types of imaging services.

In a previous post we showed you the 80 x 120-in. [mural that photographer Norman Gilbert output onto a wallcovering material](#) for the entranceway to the Tower Room Restaurant atop the tallest city in Memphis, TN.

In this post, I'd like to present an example that makes it clear that big-city businesses aren't the only ones interested in buying custom art for their walls.

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The owners of [Red Wing Framing & Fine Art Printing Company](#) recently sent us some images that they had produced for small, local restaurants in the quaint, Mississippi River town of Red Wing, MN. Their story is a perfect example of how entrepreneurial, forward-thinking imaging businesses are adapting to the changing markets for images and framing services.

Red Wing Framing & Fine Art Printing is one of three visually oriented businesses owned by photography-enthusiast John Becker and his wife Valerie, who has achieved Certified Picture Framing status from the Professional Picture Framers Association. Together, they also run [Red Wing Portrait Studio](#) and [Red Wing Digital Studio](#).

While custom framing continues to represent a big share of their business, more and more of their work is now related to what the Beckers describe as "art project management."

"Customers have a certain objective in mind of what they want to accomplish with the images on their wall," says John Becker. "We work with them to figure out what their pain points are and how we can relieve them." Red Wing can help clients select the right images, then suggest different options for printing, mounting, and installing them.

For example, when the owner of the Bev's Café restaurant first consulted Red Wing Framing, she knew the type of artistic look she wanted to create for her establishment. But she also wanted to make sure that the new look didn't alienate her long-time, regular customers. So, Becker found 10 images from the 1930s that had been donated to the local history center, scanned and restored them and printed them out at 24 x36 in. on the [HP Designjet Z6100](#) that Red Wing Framing & Fine Art uses for a wide variety of art reproduction, retail graphics, and professional photo enlargement projects.

The images were printed in black and white on LexJet's 11 mil [Sunset Photo eSatin 300g](#) paper and matted with 8 ply neutral white mats and displayed in simple black frames. The historic photographs have been a big hit, especially with older customers who can remember visiting some of the locales depicted in the image.

Compared to some of the multi-store art-management projects that Red Wing Framing now handles for corporate clients, that restaurant project was small. But John Becker talks about the project with great sense of pride and satisfaction because the client was so pleased with the results. He says, "It accomplished exactly what she wanted to do."

For a different restaurant project at Potter's on Main, Becker produced two series of wall prints. For the first series, he hired a model wearing a vintage dress to pose at various sites around town. For the second series on an adjacent wall (shown below), he shot photos at the annual Flood Run® motorcycle ride/run that raises money for a children's hospital. He printed all of the images at 40 x 40 in. and 26 x 40 in. onto



Becker printed sepia-toned images to complement the brick walls of the restaurant Potter's on Main.

LexJet Sunset Photo eSatin 300g paper and mounted them on hardboard with a reverse frame standoff on the backside.

You can read more about some of the other projects of Red Wing Framing & Fine Art Printing in an upcoming issue of LexJet's In Focus newsletter or visit their website (www.RedWingFraming.com)

