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## Enduring Images can put them on anything

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BRIGHT IDEAS

A small company described by its owners as “a well-kept secret in Colorado” is carving out a niche in custom artwork. Its unique technologies permanently imprint art or photos on ceramic or laser-etch on just about anything — from glass, wood and leather to marble and granite.

While the two imaging technologies are distinct from each other, they do have a few common traits, among them that the pictures or designs are as permanent as it gets. Thus, the company’s name: Enduring Images.

“We do everything from monument stones to shower stalls,” said Mary Beth Manwiller, CEO of Enduring Images LLC. “It’s limitless.”

The 3-year-old Lakewood company has the exclusive rights in North America to a patented technology developed in Germany for digital printing on ceramic, according to Manwiller.

Although it’s really more accurate to say printing “in” ceramic because the process’ secret to success lies in the fact that the image becomes embedded in the ceramic during its stint in a kiln at 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. Thus, there is never any fading of color, and the image won’t scratch or wash off.

“It actually absorbs the image into it,” said

Ronald Manwiller, chief operating officer of the company and Mary Beth’s husband.

“This is an emblazoned product ... totally UV-resistant. This is just as resistant as the material it’s on. It’s very durable,” said Robert Rowe, CIO of Enduring Images.

Products range from custom tiles and tile murals — emblazoned with anything from a photo to an artist’s drawing — to customized dinnerware printed with, say, a restaurant’s logo. Mary Beth Manwiller said some customers order dinner plates to match their curtains in the dining room.

Interior designers, she said, are catching onto the endless possibilities — from putting children’s drawings on decorative tiles in the playroom to creating a stunning mural of a mountain scene.



PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN LAVINE BUSINESS JOURNAL

**Mary Beth Manwiller, CEO of Enduring Images, with a custom tile mural and custom laser-etched glass.**

One example of Enduring Images’ work can be found in the showroom of Denver Glass Interiors Inc., 1600 W. Evans Ave., which is adorned by an 8-foot-tall tile mural of a polar bear.

But, Mary Beth Manwiller said, “Most of our business is cameos which are placed on grave markers.” The cameos are small, oval, porcelain discs with a color photo of the deceased. The company’s technology, which produces a 600-dpi resolution, is perfect for such images because it’s permanent and weatherproof.

Rowe explained another plus to the technology: There’s no need to produce a large quantity, because of low setup costs. You don’t have to order five dozen plates; just one is fine.

Plus, it doesn’t have to be fine china. Plates from Wal-Mart work just fine. And the process is FDA-certified as safe for food.

As for pricing, it ranges so much because of the variety of project types that company officials hesitated to give examples. They did say, however, that custom tile runs about \$20-\$25 each.

One notable customer for ceramic printing has been the Indy Racing League, owner of the Indianapolis 500. Its executive chef, Eddie

Wilson, said the league bought about 400 plates for its catering division and about 100 pieces of tableware for the boardroom, all with famous Indy logos. He said he was impressed by the guarantee of a precise copy of the logo, as well as the permanence of the images.

Enduring Images’ other offering — laser etching — evolved after the company bought a laser machine that came with warnings from the manufacturer about its limited use with glass. Enduring Images’ technical staff, though, was undaunted and eventually “found a way around that,” Rowe said.

The etching service since has amassed a growing clientele of custom homebuilders as well as aesthetically minded businesses that want their logo on, for example, the glass wall of their conference room.

The etching is done via a computerized laser-engraving system with a 4-by-5-foot bed capable of producing photo-quality, 300-dpi images on glass — such as windows, glass doors or table tops — wood, aluminum, tiles, granite or marble.

Most glass etchings are done via sandblasting or with acid, which doesn’t produce as great a resolution and takes much longer, according to Mary Beth Manwiller. “We can turn a job around in a few days or a week,” she said.

Ken Hilton, owner of Middle Park Glass in Granby, agreed, saying he has placed orders with companies that use the other processes and “it takes way too long.”

He has ordered etchings for his customers from Enduring Images for interior glass panels, windows and shower doors.

One of the most memorable, he said, was a “very intricate mountain scene” etched into a 9-by-5-foot glass window for a house on Lake Granby. “It was beautiful,” he said. “It gave a great visual effect from inside the pool room.”

As with the ceramic printing, projects are so varied, a general pricing is hard to give, according to Stephen Price, the company’s national account executive. An image etched into a shower door, for example, will cost about 60 cents per square inch, or “\$200 to \$1,000, depending on the complexity of the artwork,” Price said.

While declining to give financials, Ronald Manwiller said the company is poised to double sales next year from this year. He said it also will search for markets for the technology, and strategic partners or investors to take Enduring Images to the next level.