

Camo is always in style

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By Eric Barker of the Tribune
Outdoor show in progress at fairgrounds

Tony Humphreys owner of the Big Dipper shows some of the many things that he can re-coat with many ...

Tony Humphreys of Lewiston figures he can put camo on just about anything.

That includes gun stocks, motorcycles, computers, bows, animal skulls and toilet seats. At least those are some of the things he's decorated with a variety of camouflage patterns.

Humphreys and his wife, Trina, own a business called The Big Dipper, Creative Camo Decorations, that specializes in putting a layer of camo or other printed films on anything with a hard surface. Known as transfer printing or film dipping, the process is becoming popular with hunters and outdoor enthusiasts looking to camouflage their equipment or just add a level of style to any item.

The Humphreys are one of the dozens of vendors at the Inland Northwest Outdoor Show at the Nez Perce County Fairgrounds. The show opened Friday afternoon and the Big Dipper booth was attracting attention.

"It's pretty cool. I've never seen anything like it," said Randy Parsons of Clarkston.

Parsons said he has a friend who just purchased an all-terrain vehicle and he thinks she will be interested in the process.

Norm Riddle of Lewiston was also impressed.

"It's unbelievable. It conforms to anything."

Humphreys said comments like that are not uncommon.

"We've just had an amazing amount of positive responses from people who have seen it," he said. "It's a neat process. It's something that really, really interests me, being in the painting industry."

Humphreys is a painter and power-coater by trade and does the film dipping on the side. He'd be happy if the side job turned into a full-time gig.

"I hope people force my hand and make me go full time."

He said gun stocks, which cost about \$85 to be coated with a pattern, bring him the most business. But mounts of deer and elk that have been prepared in the European style where the hide and tissue are removed from the skull are becoming more popular. Traditionally the skull is bleached white. But Humphreys applies a pattern to the skull to give the mounts a new look.

"I think a lot of the women have said 'now it can come in the house.' "

Other vendors at the outdoor show include ammunition makers, several boat and ATV makers, retailers of fishing, hunting, camping and horse packing gear.

The show runs from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

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