

Q&A with MonMell Designs

Written by Sona Patel

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Pillows. We prop them on our beds, fluff them, occasionally fight with them and most importantly, we sleep on them, with them and couldn't live without them. This Valley, power duo took their passion for pillows to a new level and dreamt up a biz dedicated to...pillows! So, MonMell Designs was born and we caught up with the entrepreneurs behind the idea.



Photo courtesy of Oh Snap Photography

What is so unique about MonMell Designs pillows?

MonMell Designs are best described as art meets home décor and unique because we are not only printing on burlap, but we're then taking it to another level adding in embellishments like you might find in other art forms. We look at simple things, like a clothesline and see ropes to embellish a nautical-inspired design. They are conversation pieces and keepsakes and they are made with envelope enclosure backs so you don't have bulky pillow forms to store between holidays or styles.

What is your inspiration behind designing these pillows?

The inspiration comes from almost anything. We love decorating seasonally, so that is how we started by creating a collection of Thanksgiving and Christmas decorative pillows. But, since then the ideas haven't stopped. We've gone onto every holiday, children's lines, sports theme, faith-based and even designed custom pillows for weddings and the Queen Creek Olive Mill.

What motivated you to start this business?

We love to create, but shy away from the word craft. Our creative addiction was costing us a LOT of money. So, we started thinking we might be able to support our supply costs and maybe take home a little more money for Christmas shopping by making some pillows. We thought it would be a 1 weekend boutique in Chandler, but 1800 facebook fans and 5-6 months later we're still growing, creating and selling!



Photo courtesy of Oh Snap Photography

Is there a unique story behind the business, or the business name?

The story behind the business name is it's the first few letters of our last names. We call ourselves 'birds of a feather', so we added a tag line of home décor to feather your nest, because we considered our homes were our nests.

How are the designs created? How do they come to life?

We come up with an idea, create or have a graphic created and then look at how we can embellish it. We have had to learn that not everyone likes pillows with as much detail and embellishment as we do. So, we've been working to create lines that are more basic in embellishments and more pronounced in the graphical design. Some of our designs are a result of gifts we need to give, things we want in our own homes or a crazy idea we come up with over a glass of vino or a cell phone conversation on the road. And to be honest...we've had a lot that just don't work!

What style do your pillows capture? ex. contemporary, traditional, country.

What we're finding is burlap is such a hot home décor element because it works in all decorating styles. We've even sold to people who have contemporary homes. But, we find that the majority of our customers love rustic, traditional, shabby chic, eclectic or Tuscan.

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Where did your passion for burlap sprout?

We started seeing it pop up in a lot of the styling of the major home décor retailers...but we always looked at it and said, "that would be cute if we added ___" After enough times of saying that, we decided to just create our own!

Have you always had an entrepreneurial itch?

For sure. The idea of being a woman with a successful business is something we felt like we were on the other side of the fence longing for with so many other businesses. We would research and talk with any of them we could meet (and still do!) to find out how to do it right. What we've learned is that for better or worse, women, particularly mothers "do" business differently than men. There are certainly inherent challenges that come with being so-called Mom-preners, but we don't shy away from that calling, because we are madly deeply in love with our children and "burlap babies" too!

What are your hopes and dreams for MonMell Designs?

We'd love to see our ideas come to life on the pages of Pottery Barn, Ballard Designs, or Nieman Marcus. But, at this point we just aspire to take MonMell Designs to boutiques and customers all across the US. If somewhere in that we have enough time and money to pay for two family vacations to the beach somewhere, we wouldn't complain.



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Where can our readers buy MonMell pillows?

We are at [Etsy](#) and [Mon Mell Designs](#).

Your pillows are currently available online but, can we purchase them locally?

We are also sold at Poppy's Home Décor, In The Pink, and One Wing Boutique. We are also final stages of a handful of other boutiques who will carry our product by early Summer 2012.

Animals (particularly rabbits) have a huge influence on the pillow designs, why is that?

(This was just for Easter.)

What types of personalized options do shoppers have? (Monogram, Photos, size, etc.)

We do customized work on a variety of levels. Primarily we do weddings with Monograms, and Initials and are a custom design which uses your wedding invitation to create a keepsake pillow is in production.

We have also partnered with a party printable company Anders Ruff (www.AndersRuff.com) , who has recently just created items for Universal Pictures and Venus Williams. In collaboration with AndersRuff we have taken party printables, which are the hot trend in celebration entertaining and extended the graphical options to home décor pillows. We have also created custom designs for children's birthday parties and new baby arrivals.

[To purchase or to learn more about Mon Mell Designs. please click here.](#)