

Craftypreneurs

Online marketplace Etsy gives San Antonio artisans and merchants a new twist on the American dream.



BY JENNY HALPIN

An architect who designs cards so unique that even the White House placed an order.

A former pediatric ICU nurse who now transforms vintage furniture into designer pieces reality stars simply have to have.

These are just a few of the local merchants you'll find on the international e-commerce website known as Etsy.

A veritable treasure chest of vintage and handmade goods that raked in \$895 million in merchandise sales last year, Etsy is the latest version of the American Dream.

In the Alamo City, individuals are transforming their crafts and passions into dollars and cents by using the platform as their storefronts.

In our Personal Finance Special Report, we profile four San Antonians who are supplementing incomes or making a living on Etsy.

Some have left their 9-to-5 jobs to pursue a passion they don't mind getting up for in the morning.

ing machine from the Salvation Army stitched new opportunity for Belinda Gonzalez.

was a young girl when her mother taught her to sn't until Gonzalez needed to supplement her fam- come that she realized the value of the skillset.

for answers, Gonzalez gazed out the windows of d took a good look at the sets of curtains she had n the years.

thought of Etsy and its unique marketplace for oods. And she fired up the sewing machine.

ed some designer fabric online, sewed a couple of osted them on Etsy," says Gonzalez.

as Home Decor's first custom order appeared in onzalez was taken aback.

curtain panels with grommets and linen fabric — ple," says Gonzalez. "I had never sewn anything re. It was beautiful."

designer window treatments on her shop range \$490, depending on the fabric and detail. In No- zalez earned more than \$3,000, she says.

ber of orders pending, the mother of three adult e secondhand sewing machine has paid for itself, e.

ales have allowed her to boost a family income, something she loves — handcrafting designer ements in prints of gingham, vintage airplanes ored alphabets. "I love to shop for fabrics. It's like andy store," she says.

n not really working at all," she says.

N is a San Antonio freelance writer.



Belinda's Tidbits

Finding the Right Fit: At first, Gonzalez created rag quilts to sell on Etsy, but was unsuccessful due to "too much competition." There were fewer curtain-sewing shops. New Etsy sellers should offer something unique to remain competitive, Gonzalez suggests.

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1	Frost Bank 100 W. Houston St., 78205 210-220-4011, frostbank.com	\$7,079,316	\$12,041,906	8.59	27 98	State	SM	TX	Marvin R info@fro
2	Wells Fargo 40 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 201, 78216 210-856-5004, wells Fargo.com	3,650,371	920,511,629	4.43	52 6241	Federal	N	SD	Steve steven.arnold@
3	Bank of America NA 300 Convent St., 5th Floor, 78205 210-270-5043, bankofamerica.com	3,621,769	1,015,462,231	4.40	39 5360	Federal	N	NC	Kennet kenneth.wils
4	Broadway Bank 1177 N.E. Loop 410, 78209 210-283-6500, broadwaybank.com	2,159,777	279,489	2.62	31 10	Federal	N	TX	Pamela pparish@bro
5	JPMorgan Chase 1020 N.E. Loop 410, 78209 210-829-6152, chase.com	1,688,754	914,854,246	2.05	52 5,642	Federal	N	OH	Jay C
6	BBVA Compass 200 Concord Plaza Suite 200, 78216 210-370-6103, bbvacompass.com	1,225,448	51,073,046	1.49	26 667	State	SM	AL	Andre Andrea.Smith@
7	Jefferson Bank 1777 N.E. Loop 410, 78217 210-734-4311, jeffersonbank.com	987,304	0	1.20	13 0	State	NM	TX	Paul E. M pmcsween@je
8	International Bank of Commerce 130 E. Travis St., 78205 210-518-2500, ibc.com	775,120	5,973,694	0.94	33 163	State	NM	TX	Mike
9	Farm Bureau Bank FSB 17300 Henderson Pass, #100, 78232 210-637-4800, farmbureaubank.com	525,750	N/A	0.64	1 1	Federal	SB	NV	Will H C
10	Texas Capital Bank NA 745 E. Mulberry Ave., Suite 150, 78212 210-390-3800, texascapitalbank.com	450,638	7,270,312	0.55	2 11	Federal	N	TX	David David.Pope@
11	The Bank of San Antonio 8000 IH-10 W., Suite 1100, 78230 210-807-5501, thebankofsa.com1	322,805	0	0.39	4 0	State	NM	TX	Brent brent.given@
12	American Bank of Texas NA 19501 FM 3009, #1, 78266 210-651-5030, abtexas.com	301,952	1,421,808	0.37	6 28	State	NM	TX	Bernie bernie.mueller
13	Amegy Bank of Texas 10001 Reunion Place, 78216 210-343-4500, amegybank.com	270,791	10,087,455	0.33	5 82	Federal	N	TX	David david.mcgee@
14	Capital One NA 103 W. Quincy St., 78212 210-222-1513, capitalone.com	241,590	187,802,892	0.29	7 916	Federal	N	VA	Mark mark.koshnick@
15	Comerica Bank 13750 San Pedro Ave., Suite 900, 78232 210-491-3600, comerica.com	205,889	50,161,142	0.25	9 477	State	SM	TX	Rhond
16	First Victoria 401 Main Plaza, New Braunfels, 78130 830-608-5501, firstvictoria.com	179,129	1,972,920	0.22	5 32	Federal	N	TX	Barry
17	Schertz Bank & Trust 519 Main St., Schertz, 78154 210-945-7400, schertzbank.com	179,075	0	0.22	5 0	State	NM	TX	Melvi mgolla@sch
18	TexStar National Bank 600 Pat Booker Road, Universal City, 78148 210-659-4000, texstar-bank.com	167,516	0	0.20	6 0	Federal	N	TX	Man mruiz@tex
19	Community National Bank 1503 Avenue M, P.O. Box 130, Hondo, 78861 830-426-3066, cnbanktx.com	154,876	0	0.19	4 0	Federal	N	TX	Mark S msunderman
20	Security State Bank 1000 North Oak St, Pearsall, 78061 830-334-3606, securitybk.com	142,661	227,226	0.17	3 2	State	NM	TX	Mike mwilson@se
21	First Commercial Bank NA 1336 E. Court St., P.O. Box 1960, Seguin, 78155 830-379-8390, 1cb.com	120,709	0	0.15	3 0	Federal	N	TX	Mark markl@
22	Prosperity Bank 14402 U.S. Highway 281 N., 78232 210-826-2161, prosperitybanktx.com	113,909	12,400,457	0.14	4 237	State	NM	TX	Frank frank.casab@p
23	Castroville State Bank 502 Paris St., Castroville, 78009 830-538-2201, castrovillestatebank.com	113,273	0	0.14	2 0	State	NM	TX	James V castrovilleban
24	CitiBank NA 2338 N. Loop 1604 W., Suite 200, 78248 210-408-5010, citibank.com	112,518	446,109,482	0.14	8 1,023	Federal	N	SD	Jerom jbyers@
25	Lone Star Capital Bank NA 150 N. Loop 1604 E., 78232 210-496-6116, lscb.com	111,103	84,988	0.13	4 4	Federal	N	TX	Dann dbuck@

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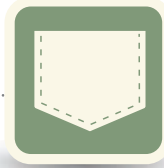
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How to do business on Etsy*:

Fee: 20 cents to list an item for 4 months, or until it sells
Fee: 3.5 percent of the sale price of each item is paid to Etsy
Membership fees:
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payments to store owners.
Example: If you list and sell 10 items for \$10, you will owe Etsy
listing fees, plus \$3.50 in sales fees. In total, you pay Etsy
(about 5 percent) of your \$100 in revenues made from
items you sold for \$10.
Provide a valid credit card to register with Etsy (In some
countries, registration through PayPal is allowed.)
Store owners are not billed any fees until the storefront is open
and items are listed for sale. *Source: Etsy.com

Items you can sell on Etsy:



1. Handmade goods



2. Vintage items
(20 yrs. or older)



3. Craft supplies

Formula to price your wares:

Materials + Labor + Expenses + Profit
Wholesale x 2 = Retail

*Read more about this formula in two blogposts:

etsy.com/blog/en/2012/a-simple-formula-for-pricing-your-work

designinganmba.com/2010/04/21/pricing-your-products-for-growth



Worth Knowing.

ADAM CARR / Senior Vice President, Commercial and Industrial Lending

Grew up in San Antonio / Degree in Finance from University of the Incarnate Word and Active in Alumni Association / Volunteer at San Antonio Christian Schools / Coaches Football and T-Ball

Where do you think banking is going?

There is no doubt that consolidation will continue and there will be more rules and regulations. What won't change, however, is the importance of the relationship between the banker and the customer. A banker is really doing his or her job when that personal bond is strong.

Is there a product or service that you feel your customers should know about?

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What is something people might not know about you?

I've been "carded" by my friends who don't believe my initials are "ABC"...but it's true. (And the B stands for Bryan.)

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- Robert Ober
CEO, Robert Ober & Associates, LLC

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Founded: 2009

Number of

Etsy sales: 355

Etsy Admirers: 4,191



It all started with a picture on Facebook.

Retired pediatric ICU nurse Tracey Bellion had refinished her childhood bedroom set for her 6-year-old granddaughter. Her daughter-in-law posted a photo of it on her Facebook page.

Bellion wasn't prepared for what would happen next.

"All of a sudden people started asking where they could find the furniture," remembers Bellion. "We had orders for weeks."

Her pastime quickly became a full-time job.

With a little nudge from her family, Bellion set up a store in 2009 for her custom-painted vintage furniture on Etsy.

Called Tracey's Fancy, the shop — bearing the tagline "Fabulous fancied-up and funky-fied furniture!" — has closed about 400 sales.

Black headboards with electric lime green and calypso blue patterns, Moulin Rouge-inspired bedroom sets and fancy chandeliers made from reclaimed 55-gallon steel drums are just a few of the store's highlights.

Last year, Bellion earned about \$50,000

in profits; this year she's averaged \$7,000 to \$15,000 per month.

Using her pickup truck, Bellion does yard sales and thrift shops and also employs a few freelance writers.

Thanks to the popular e-commerce site, Bellion has sold pieces all over the world. She customizes for one of the stars on the TV show *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*. She shipped a large French provincial dresser with a monogram on the side for two different occasions.

"Sometimes people pay more for the furniture," says Bellion.

With a customer base made up mostly of women between the ages of 30 and 50, Tracey's Fancy's hottest pieces include bedroom dressers and vintage-style chairs. Items on her Etsy shop range from \$800 to \$4,500.

Reviews on her Etsy shop speak for themselves. One customer was so amazed at the pieces that she bought a set for her daughter's Alice-themed nursery. She's an avid reader.

JENNY HALPIN is a San Antonio freelance writer.



on Etsy are looking for that
you don't find in big box

Comment: Tracey prefers
payments over other methods
easy.



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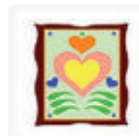
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More local shops and fun tidbits

About Etsy*

- Etsy was founded in 2005, profitable since 2009
- \$895 million - the amount of total merchandise sales on Etsy in 2012
- 30 million - total number of Etsy members (including buyers and shop owners)
- 1 million - the number of active shops on Etsy
- More than 20 million - the number of items listed on Etsy
- More than 60 million - the number of monthly unique visitors to Etsy's site
- 200 countries with annual transactions
- 450 - the number of Etsy employees

*Source: etsy.com/press



A Work Heart Shop

etsy.com/shop/HeartSA
HeartSA
Opened: Oct 2009
Sales: 528
Admirers: 1,500

Handcrafted wreaths, garlands, and decor for the holidays and other special occasions.



Suburban Leatherworks

etsy.com/shop/SuburbanLeatherworks
Leatherworks
Opened: Mar 2009
Sales: 290
Admirers: 210

Custom, handcrafted leather goods such as belts, flasks, Bibles, and koozies.



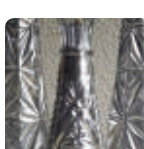
Royal Kane

etsy.com/shop/RoyalKane
Opened: May 2009
Sales: 5,446
Admirers: 3,485

Now featuring an orange "What does the fox say?" t-shirt, local Etsy story Royal Kane sells funny, hip and retro t-shirts, as well as vintage maritime silkscreened pillowcases.

Factoids:

- *Etsy users are called Etsyians
- *Most Etsy entrepreneurs are women



Liz's Shop

etsy.com/shop/Lizsshop
Opened: August 2012
Sales: 35
Admirers: 180

Owner hand paints and distresses home decor items to create that mercury glass look. Items include vases, candle holders, bowls, etc.



Hats by Green Beans

etsy.com/shop/GreenBeans
Opened: June 2009
Sales: 245
Admirers: 240

Crocheted hats, headbands, and kerchiefs for which a portion of sales are used are labeled, such as 100 percent vegan-friendly nylon. Green Beans and Vegan Beans are partly or entirely made of recycled/upcycled materials or sustainable fibers. Hats by Green Beans donates 5 percent of the

How to file taxes if you're an Etsy seller:

etsy.com/blog/en/2013/taxes-101

Fuller was laid off from his job this past year. A graphic designer and father of three turned to other comic heroes for help.

Some of those characters were what Fuller was hand-making: wooden knobs and selling through online Etsy shop, The Character Chest — which he had founded about a year ago.

“My wife-law got me started doing designs for her Etsy shop,” Fuller says, “and that eventually led me to start my own.” Fuller has a degree in computer animation and graphic design and enjoyed creating the knobs with animated characters, such as Spiderman, Dora the Explorer, and more than 100 other choices.

“I realized that since there wasn't really a market out there for character knobs, I should be the one to start it.”

When he lost his primary salary, Fuller put heart and soul into the Etsy shop, tripling the number of designs.

“I'm adding new designs all the time to help increase the exposure of my shop,” he says.

By expanding the variety of designs on the knobs, his income. His goal is to add another 100 designs this spring.

Fuller recently began graphic design work for a company, says the more than 560 sales he's made have helped supplement his income. He estimates between \$15,000 and \$20,000 over the last year, and is growing. He's even received a few special requests that are hard to believe.

“My wife asked me to make knobs with her parents' faces on them for their 50th anniversary.” One of the things Fuller gets from satisfied customers is what makes them happy.

“I'm happy to know that I can put smiles on their faces, even if it's just a dresser knob,” he says.

Fuller is a San Antonio freelance writer.

Products include skateboards, t-shirts, etc.

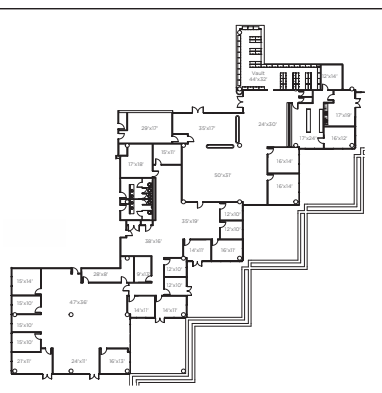


Super Powers

Fuller advises new Etsy sellers how to use strategic words to describe their product, which generates more traffic to their sites.



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st children her age were
a Legos and Barbie dolls,
Bishop daydreamed about

nd in the paper aisle of a store,”
and just dream of the things
x sheets could become.”

ation for design led Bishop
degree in architecture from
itute in New York City. After
he worked for various firms
ct.

nd’s birthday, she designed
illustrated the architectural
f how to construct and demol-

the card to my project man-
ishop. “She laughed so hard
d ‘You should sell these!’”
ishop’s “aha” moment.

he opened Architette Studios
l within the first week she
a part-time job would pay.

ally left her job at the archi-
and put pencil to cardstock

paper, full-time. With more than 3,500
sales, Bishop is well known for her notecards
that depict detailed city skylines.

She was commissioned to create 5,000
Washington D.C.-city skyline notecards
for the White House.

“I research the locale, discover important
landmarks, icons, geography, and then I lo-
cate all of these things on a map,” she says.

Bishop’s designs range from \$16 to \$175.
Her popularity on the site led her to be an
Etsy featured spotlight seller in 2011.

“I got 450 orders in one night when that
article went live on Etsy,” says Bishop, who
estimates she makes about \$43,650 a year.

Her repertoire has grown to include cus-
tom-made invitations, prints, even elegant
wedding stationery. All have that special
touch Bishop has become known for — ar-
chitectural flair.

Her biggest regret? Not pursuing it
sooner.

JENNY HALPIN is a San Antonio freelance
writer.



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