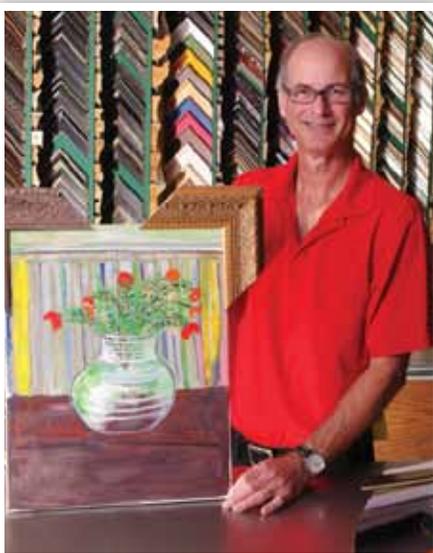


Picture Perfect: Framing for the Holidays

Photos: Evan Kane Photography

If you're looking for a special holiday gift for a friend, family member, or even yourself, consider a framed photograph, a framed artwork, or even a framed pair of jeans!



Charlie Barnes of The Custom Framer

"The newest thing in framing is shadow boxes," said Charlie Barnes, who has owned **The Custom Framer** with his wife Mari, since 1984. Explaining that more than photos or pictures can be framed in a shadow box, he said, "I had one young mother come in and frame her daughter's first pair of blue jeans to hang in her room."

Photographs and artwork, of course, remain the most commonly framed items. However, framing such works can sometimes pose a challenge. Should the frame match the piece or the décor? Should the matting be white or colored, single or layered? Is it better if the glass is regular or filtered?

For artwork, the "key to selecting the most appropriate frame and mat is matching them to the picture first, and the room décor second," said Barnes. "The biggest mistake people make in framing is trying to match a frame to a room. The artwork should be the focal point, and the frame should accent that in a quiet, distinguished way. If you try matching the art to the room, it limits where you can hang the piece in the future."

People in Highland Park tend to be more conservative when it comes to framing artwork, he said. "The timeless look of maple, walnut, and cherry wood frames with a large white mat continues to be popular," he added.

Barnes said that giving a photograph, whether it's a family portrait or a picture of a favorite vacation spot, is big for the holidays. He recommends a thin, simple black frame for any photo. "With photography, you really want a minimalist approach," he said.

"Using conservation materials such as ultra-violet filtering glass and acid-free matting will also help protect the longevity of the work and keep it from fading over time," said co-owner Mari Barnes.

Highland Parkers Set the Style

In Highland Park, framing trends run a little bit different, said Rich Schnadig, who owns **Princeton Frame and Art** with his wife Joan. "Even our reps tell us that. Shabby chic, colored frames, and lacquered frames with interesting textures stand out," he explained. Schnadig, who also teaches art and earned his MFA from The Art Institute of Chicago, began his business in his home studio over 30 years ago.

Highland Parkers are a well-traveled group, he noted. He explained that they see innovative framing in Europe and Asia, and they want to duplicate styles they've seen abroad in their own homes. In addition, some customers own multiple homes, so they feel free to explore more eclectic designs. "We've put a vintage piece into a lacquer-finished frame and it came out just beautiful," he said.

Schnadig sees a trend in the emergence of color matting in dark or muted shades. "For years, all anyone wanted was white. Now our customers want black, grey, and other dark colors for the mats," he said.

Co-owner Joan Schnadig, also an artist, added that the worst mistake a customer can make is choosing a frame that overpowers the art. "You don't want someone to say, 'Wow, what a cool frame,'" she said.

She commented that she has seen more young people coming in with a treasured piece of art from their



Joan & Rich Schnadig from Princeton Frame and Art