

06/06/2002

# East Bay Newspapers<sup>®</sup>

Online Edition

## **Entrepreneur keeps invention under wraps** **By Tim Dumont [tdumont@eastbaynewspapers.com](mailto:tdumont@eastbaynewspapers.com)**

BARRINGTON - Refrain from doing a double-take if you happen to see Bill Donohue outside grilling this winter. He knows what he's doing.

"I like to grill year-round," he said. "In December and January it gets a little cold, so you have to bundle up to go outside. But a steak always tastes better when it's on the grill."

His own gas grill is in pristine condition. There's absolutely no rust, nicks or chips. He said that's a direct result from the canvas grill cover — or Grill Wrap as he calls it — that protects it; an invention of his own design.

The idea for the Grill Wraps came to him after he was cursing he had to - replace his own grill cover — again.

"It was one of those right-time, right-place moments and a light bulb went off and said 'Everything else is black, ugly and rips,'" the 47-year-old said. "Why can't there be a grill cover that can last as long as my patio furniture?"

He answered his own question.



Mr. Donohue, who has over 10 years of product development experience working with fabrics for such companies as Eddie Bauer, Lands End and Talbots, went ahead on a prototype. He garnered up some marine fabric and assembled a test cover. After receiving feedback from family and friends, Mr. Donohue tweaked his design a bit and now his company, Cove Point Canvas, manufactures personalized Grill Wraps.

"The Grill Wrap is only a couple of months old but people seem to like them," said Mr. Donohue, who moved to Barrington from North Carolina three years ago to be closer to his wife's family in Longmeadow, Mass.

"I've already had a dozen orders."

Mr. Donohue's Grill Wraps are made from marine grade outdoor fabrics, the same materials that are used on yachts.

"Other covers can rip, crack or fade," Mr. Donohue said. "These marine fabrics last. Each of the Grill Wraps comes with a five-year warranty."

Mr. Donohue's Grill Wraps have triggered more marine canvas ideas; patio furniture covers and "Air Wraps," covers for outside free-standing air conditioners.

"If people like this idea (for the Grill Wraps), they can match everything else," he said.

The idea for the Air Wrap came from his mother-in-law, so to speak.

"Every time we went up to visit her in Longmeadow, I had to cover her air conditioner," he said. "That cover was made out of plastic and tape. I think there was also some string involved, too."

Mr. Donohue knows it's merely a pipe dream to see his Grill Wraps at Home Depot, mainly because of the price. The wraps start at \$140. Still, he believes the idea has potential.

"It's like with any other business that's just getting started for the first time," he said. "Word of mouth is so important. But I think I have a real buyable idea."

"It basically comes down to everything else in the market is either plastic, it rips or it cracks. The other negative is that everything out there is black. This way you can add color."

Mr. Donohue's Grill Wraps are available at Barrington Radio & Electric and at New England Hearth and Patio. He has started a website, [www.grillwraps.com](http://www.grillwraps.com).