

# wp Closer Inspection



How **appliques** are secured depends on the material and other factors. On these heels, Wells used Quick Grip adhesive. But if she wants appliques to be removable, she'll use hot glue instead.



A customer asked Wells for **"butterfly shoes"** such as these — similar to a pair she made for rapper LoLa Monroe two years ago. But Wells eschews crafting replicas, saying her aesthetic is about being an individual.



Wells uses a **mini iron** to carefully press delicate materials such as fabric and feathers. "A normal iron would just burn them," she says.

Before she begins stitching, Wells warms a sewing needle with a Bunsen burner or **lighter** so the needle "goes through clean," she says. Otherwise, it can damage the inner lining or cause the shoe to buckle inward.



Wells asks customers to provide **undecorated shoes**, so they're guaranteed to fit. "It's easier for me, and it's better for them, because they know that's the shoe they want and style they're going for," she says.



Wells prefers shoes made of **synthetic materials** instead of real leather, which can be difficult to work with, she says. Leather is thicker, "so it's harder for me to manipulate if I need to sew through it."

Though she buys **feathers** online, Wells also has a friend whose brother studies birds, she says. He collects feathers and sends them to her. She estimates these shoes used 40 feathers each, which she sewed to fabric before stitching onto the shoe.



## Fancy feet

She aims to add flair to what you wear

**BY KRIS CORONADO**  
**When Dominique Wells** was a model a few years ago, she covered her turquoise patent leather pumps with flowers and feather-shaped blue and black appliques for a fashion shoot. When the photos came out, no one was looking at her, she says. "It was, 'Where'd you get these shoes from?'" That eventually led the Prince George's County resident to launch *Jezebelle's* ([www.facebook.com/jezebelle's](http://www.facebook.com/jezebelle's)), in February 2010, decorating one-of-a-kind kicks for fashion-forward women. Her shoes,

usually heels, start at \$150, and clients have included R&B singer Mya. Wells estimates that she has accessorized 60 pairs of heels in the past year with such materials as chains, feathers, studs and spikes.

Today, Wells, 23, squeezes in business between taking online classes at Penn State (she's pursuing a bachelor's degree in energy and sustainability policy) and working as an analyst at the Department of Energy.

Here, she demonstrates how she adds panache to shoes.

Wells designed these **platforms** for a photo shoot this past spring, securing each spike (about 30 per shoe) individually with an X-ACTO knife and drill. She estimates that this pair took four to five hours to decorate and cost \$250.



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