

"Flat Top Tony" brings old style to new business

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Barber Tony Sims wants to bring the traditional art of barbering to the brick streets and old buildings of Alton.

Located on the corner of State St. and W. Fourth in an Alton building, which was once a boot store and a skateboard shop, Sims, who goes by the name "Flat Top Tony," decided

to establish a shop for customers who appreciate the traditional art of barbering. Sims graduated from the Missouri School of Barbering in St. Louis County and apprenticed under "Flat Top" Frank Bort of Wood River for a year.

"I'm trying to go for the retro days," Sims said. "We do more traditional stuff, like flat tops and hot towel straight razor shaves. We try to have an old-time feel here."

That "old-time feel" is abundant in the shop with framed pictures of James Dean and Marilyn Monroe, as well as an old wooden, Zenith-brand jukebox, which Sims said is constantly playing old records.



Sims has leased the building for more than a year, but only recently moved his equipment into it to make it a shop. He recently opened previous to Thanksgiving, and had been working between Alton and Anna, Illinois, which is a small town south of Carbondale where Sims also operates a shop.

When asked why he chose Alton, he said he believed a traditional barber shop would be a nice compliment to Alton's historical feel. In the future, he said he would like to add a small coffee bar, so people could come in, sit down and spend some time.

"I wanted to make a place where people feel like they could come in and relax and spend some time," he said. "I don't want people to feel like they have to come in and leave."

He also expects to be broadcasting Cardinals baseball games when the season returns.

Currently, Sims said he specializes in flat tops and high and tights - the types of cuts popular among police officers and military, Sims, a former Marine himself, said.

Another trait setting Sims's shop aside from others is the fact he is open later on Thursday (until 7 p.m.) to accommodate customers who may not work under normal hours.

Walk-ins are welcome as well.