

Local color



TIPS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD: Feb. 28-March 6

■ Shape house plants for spring growth to produce a more balanced plant.

■ Prune shrubs and trees, including fruit trees. Cuts heal faster if done before trees leaf out. Consult your garden professional about spring-flowering trees and shrubs. Many should wait until after bloom.

■ Pull out the fridge and vacuum the coils.

HANDYMAN

GARY SANDERSON

We're considering building a deck to the side of our house. It would be maybe 12 feet by 12 feet, only 20 or so inches tall, with a railing on two sides. What do we need to know when hiring a contractor? What should we be on the lookout for? We'd like to build it as affordably as possible.

First, you should check with your city about any permits you might need. You may have to submit a blueprint or drawing. Usually, it depends on how tall the structure will be. Once it's over a certain height, you will have to show some specifications, particularly relating to the foundation and support.

They might also want to know about safety issues, like railings. A contractor would prepare these drawings for you.

You'll want to talk to several builders before hiring one. Ask friends and family for their recommendations. The cost of building your deck — and the cost and time involved in caring for it — will vary a lot depending on the materials you choose (treated wood, composite materials, imported hardwoods), so talk to potential builders about your options. Ask them to show you work they have done before, including photos and plans/drawings. They should provide references. You want them to be licensed and insured.

Most of all, choose someone you feel comfortable with and who has experience building something like what you want.

Gary Sanderson is a carpenter and owner of Sanderson Construction & Remodeling in Kansas City.

Send questions to home@kcstar.com or Handyman, House + Home, FYI, The Kansas City Star, 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, Mo. 64108.



Q & A

JOE MUNSON, LEAWOOD

JOB DESCRIPTION: Furniture designer, joemunson.com, 816-682-7230, and head of metalworking for Make Studios, a furniture design and fabrication business in Westport.

How did you get into furniture design?

I lived for 10 years in New York City. I was a carpenter doing loft beds, shelving and kitchen cabinets, anything to make small space in apartments on the Lower East Side more efficient. I also made furniture for restaurants, which had the same space issues.

Growing up did you know that you wanted to design furniture?

No, but I've always liked to build things. I made complicated adult-level model airplanes when I was 5 or 6. I fabricated different go-carts. I think a lot of it comes from my dad, who's a craftsman interested in precision and detail.

Tell us about your furniture line.

When I moved back to Kansas City I started Sukhoi furniture company in 2006. The line is called Series One. I was interested in making high-end furniture. It's made of machined billet aluminum. The side members are pulled together — there are no visible fasteners. The leather cushions click into place because there are internal magnets. I showed the line at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York City, which includes a lounge chair and love seat. The magnets give them a silent, hidden magical quality.

What's your favorite piece in your own home?

A bar stool from my days in New York. It's an extra one that I made for a restaurant. It's so small it seems like a joke because it was made to fit in such a small space. The seat is timber. I use it as my shop stool.

What inspires you?

Car design. Think about it: Thousands of parts go together, and you don't see nuts or bolts anywhere. It's amazing.

What's your next home project?

A picture wall with integrated lighting. My wife, Lindsay, and I had our first child this year, Calder. We're going to do a collage of pictures of him. He's a gift.

| Stacy Downs, sdowns@kcstar.com



RICH SUGG | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Furniture designer Joe Munson stands in the downtown condo of Stephen and Sarah Hopkins. Munson fabricated the bar out of a 1,000-pound sheet of steel finished in high-gloss automotive paint. Micro-fluorescent lights like those you'd find inside laptop computers illuminate the bar. There's a removable wave-formed acrylic vase in the middle.



Munson designed and fabricated sliding metal-frame doors for the Hopkins residence that move in front of the bathroom openings. The graphics are by a local artist. Munson also designed and made the coffee table; the base is a recycled Chevrolet V8-engine block painted glossy white.



Munson's Sukhoi Series One furniture line includes a sofa, \$16,650, and a chair, \$8,250.



STAFF PICK

KC'S GREEN CABINETS

Affordable, environmentally friendly kitchen cabinets? Sounds like an oxymoron.

But Stuart Brown of Tudor Woodworks in Kansas City (along with several other local cabinetmakers) has introduced a new line of cabinetry called 2bg, or "to be green."

The typical kitchen features 13 boxes of cabinets. The 2bg cabinets sell for between \$3,500 and \$5,000, comparable to prices for cabinets found at home warehouses.

"The difference is that these are premium cabinets," Brown said. "Not builder grade."

The boxes are made of a Forest Stewardship Council-certified material that is recycled wood coated in melamine. Doors are made from a choice of:

■ **Wheat board**, similar to particle board, small fibers glued together to make a larger board. It's made from straw, the stalk of a cereal plant after the grain or seed has been removed. Recycling this unwanted agricultural byproduct into building materials increases the useful yield from the crop and reduces the pollution created when it is burned to clear the fields.

■ **Plyboo**, bamboo plywood mixed with resin. Moso bamboo is harvested from a forest that requires no irrigation, fertilizers or pesticides. Each year, only 20 percent of the plantation's bamboo — or only the five-year growth — is cut, ensuring the forest canopy remains intact and the ecosystem is not disturbed.

Materials, including finishes, are free of formaldehyde and volatile organic com-



FROM STUART BROWN

2bg is available at Elements of Green, 1919 Wyandotte St., www.elements-of-green.com, 816-842-0500.

pounds. Customers have their choice of painted or stained, or to save costs, unfinished. Door hinges are soft-closing and drawers are self-closing.

| Stacy Downs, sdowns@kcstar.com

CALENDAR

FLORAL DESIGN

DESERT TREASURES AND WINTER BLOOMS

Through March 5: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. See exotic cacti and other succulents and cool-season flowers such as fuchsia and gloxinia. Powell Gardens, regular admission. 816-697-2600, www.powellgardens.org

SHADE GARDENING

March 1: 7 p.m. Presentation by Prudence True, Greater Kansas City Gardeners of America. Refreshments at 6:30. Loose Park Garden Center, 5200 Pennsylvania. Free. 913-541-0499

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: TILING 101
March 1 and 8: 6-9 p.m. K2Workshops, 7393 W. 97th St., Overland Park. Registration required, \$135. 913-439-1581, www.k2workshops.org.

SPRING FLORAL DESIGN

March 3-31: Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m. (no class March 17). Registration required, \$40. 913-288-7660, www.kckcc.edu

THE VINTAGE MARKET

March 4: 5-9 p.m. Girl's Night Out at the Vintage Market in Zona Rosa. Refreshments, giveaways and tips on how to create your own "Home Sweet Vintage Style Home." Free. 816-505-0500, www.vintagemarketkc.com

CROWN MOLDING WORKSHOP

March 6: 9 a.m.-noon. K2Workshops, 7393 W. 97th St., Overland Park. Registration required, \$75. 913-439-1581, www.k2workshops.org

Are you hosting classes, lectures or house or garden tours? E-mail photos and information to home@kcstar.com.



Next week in House + Home
Give your stairs a visual lift.

HOW TO REACH US

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