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LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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AROUND THE HOUSE



Make your lawn a masterpiece

NOVELTY • Just when you thought it was safe to lug out the mower and haphazardly mow your lawn, along comes a book to inspire you to mow the pattern of an eagle or Botticelli's Venus onto your green space instead. I'm not making this up.

Lawnscape: Mowing Patterns to Make Your Yard a Work of Art, by David Parfitt (quirkbooks.com), goes far beyond basic lawn stripes, curves or the classic checkerboard pattern.

The book covers equipment, design planning and guide marking (you'll never be able to mow a sunburst without small stakes looped with string to guide the mower along). It then provides detailed instructions for mowing basic, intermediate, advanced and masterpiece designs.

"When you've mastered striping, don't stop there," writes Parfitt. "Imagine the effects that swirls, diamonds, a maze or an eagle will create."

OK, let's imagine the effects. Since it takes the better part of a day to mow grass into the word ELVIS, I'm guessing your neighbours will think: A. you're weird, B. you've got too much time on your hands, or C. they can hire you to mow a Spiderman pattern for their son's birthday party.

— Lisa Kadane, Calgary Herald

Swap some seeds of inspiration

EVENT • The 2007 Calgary Seedy Saturday exchange is March 24. Billed as an opportunity for local gardeners to buy, sell or trade seeds and gardening tips, the event promotes awareness of saving seeds, buying and growing non-hybridized open-pollinated varieties, and preserving the prairie's genetic diversity.

Calgary Seedy Saturday will feature seed sellers, conservation groups, presenters, a seed exchange table and kids' corner. Event hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Montgomery Community Centre (5003 16 Ave. N.W.). Admission is \$2. Go to uofc-garden.ca for more info.

— Calgary Herald

Baking soda does triple duty

TIP • Baking soda is practically a do-anything, do-everything wonder, with a bonanza of uses.

Here are just a few:

- In your dishwasher, it deodorizes and cleans the inside.
- As a paste, it cleans smudges on wallpaper and shines porcelain, jewelry and coins.
- For pets, use two tablespoons in the bath water as a shampoo. In cold weather, use it in powder form as a dry shampoo. Either way, it adds softness and lustre to their coats.
- Three parts baking soda in one part water foams away acid buildup on battery terminals.

— The Associated Press

How do you decorate your first home away from Mom and Dad? It's a question we posed in our Ultimate Starter Home contest, and young Calgarians answered. We picked three winners whose pads prove it's possible to set up house in style on a budget.

March 3: Vanessa's retro condo • March 10: Vanessa's contemporary home • Today: Mary's boutique chic condo

Style file

Name: Mary Cummings
Age: 27
Profession: High school teacher
Condo details: A 989-square-foot, two-bedroom in Connaught, purchased in late 2005
Cost: Under \$200,000
Amount spent decorating: About \$2,000

Where she shopped: At auctions, garage sales, Superstore, Ikea, Winners, HomeSense, Linens 'n Things
Tips for fellow Calgarians leaving the nest:
■ "Your family will probably offer you items, but don't be greedy: "Only take it if you really like it."
■ "Buy things gradually — there are so many deals to be had if you take your time."
■ Don't buy inexpensive "junk" just to fill the space, her dad advised. "If you buy good quality stuff, it will last."



Finders keepers

Mary Cummings' credo for decorating her condo is 'slow interiors'. Nearly every piece has a story behind it.

LISA KADANE
CALGARY HERALD

Even though Mary Cummings belongs to a culture where instant gratification is the norm, she's taken a decidedly old-school approach to decorating her Connaught condo.

Call it "slow interiors." Instead of hitting Ikea with a flat-bed shopping trolley and piling it with everything from bookshelves to bath towels on the first Saturday after moving in, the high school teacher took her time accumulating furnishings and art. But more than that, if there's not a story behind it, you won't find it taking up space in her new pad. The stylish and vivacious 27-year-old chose items that told a tale or had a history, a strategy that adds depth and interest to her far-from-ordinary abode.

After using leftover paint from family members to colour select walls chocolate brown and peanut butter (she kept the cream hue on the living room walls), the native Calgarian started her furniture search at auctions. There she picked up a like-new, off-white microfibre sofa — previously in a show home — for \$200. She scored that sweet deal because she was the auction's only patron.

The gorgeous red leather chair was purchased from Last Chance Trading Company for \$50 off — simply because she asked for a discount.

Since her roommate is a student at ACAD, Cummings purchased a couple of her prints, which now hang in the living room and in Cummings' bedroom. Another of her roommate's art projects — a frosted mylar lamp with comic strip graphics — sits on a retro chrome-and-glass wheeled bar cart that Cummings uses as a side table. Her sister-in-law gave her that piece after picking it up at a garage sale for \$20 and having new glass cut to fit the shelves, for \$30.

Cummings commissioned students from the trade high school where she teaches to make the low-profile, walnut-stained maple TV stand (the TV was a gift from her dad). She only had to pay for the lumber, and the sleek stand looks like it was purchased at one of the contemporary decor stores lining 11th Avenue S.W.

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Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald
Mary Cummings transformed her Connaught condo from drab to fab on a shoestring budget. She negotiated \$50 off this red leather chair.



NOVELTY



Wally Skali, Los Angeles Times
Moto Art makes furniture, like this unique looking coffee table, out of vintage airplane jet parts.

This furniture company is taking flight

DAVID COLKER
LOS ANGELES TIMES
TORRANCE, CALIF.

Donovan Fell is like an aviation hobbyist who turns vintage airplane parts into coffee tables.

Except it's not a hobby. Fell is co-owner of Moto Art, which last year sold \$1.5 million worth of furniture fashioned out of items that once flew across the skies. Among them: coffee tables made of landing gear doors, desks fashioned from wings and aquariums from deactivated bombs.

None of it comes cheap. It's hard to find anything in Moto Art's spacious Torrance shop for less than \$1,000, and a conference table can be as much as \$35,000.

This is recycling for the wealthy.

"Rich guys come down here, and their eyes light up," said co-owner Dave Hall, 39. "We envy them, and they envy us."

"Then we make a little trade," said Fell, 57.

Although the business took off faster than either salesman Hall and designer Fell imagined when they started it as a sideline in a garage five years ago, it's their next flight plan that could be the most daunting.

They want to take Moto Art, an artisan business with 13 employees, and turn it into a mass marketer with factories and showrooms around the world.

"We make everything here, right now," said Fell, standing in their 12,000-square-foot workshop next to Torrance Municipal Airport. "What we need to do is knock ourselves off."

The showroom area, upstairs from the shop, has been outfitted in aviation-fantasy, bachelor-pad decor.

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166 Sierra Nevada Green, SW \$525,000

Quiet, family oriented cres. close to the park/tot lot, trim 1600 sq. ft., 3 bdrm home with developed basement, white island kitchen, corner windows, living room with hardwood floors, lower level family room with 2nd gas f/p.



138 Strathridge Place, SW \$650,000

4 bedroom home with developed basement in key-hole cul-de-sac, formal dining, great room, island kitchen w/ oak cabinets, stainless steel appliances, den, basement developed w/ 5th bdrm, bath & games room.



120 Sierra Madre Crescent, SW \$650,000

Much sought after location, quiet crescent, backing west onto a greenbelt, near a tot-lot! This well laid out 1964 sq. ft. 2-storey has 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms & developed basement with 4th bedroom & media room w/ built-ins.



10 Patterson Green, SW \$889,000

The owners never intended to sell when they put in this new high-end kitchen with solid oak cabinets, huge island & restaurant style appliances. 3 + 1 bdrms, walkout bsmt, nanny suite, heated triple garage backing greenbelt!