

SUMMIT HILL

A Social Magazine for
the residents of Cathedral,
Crocus, Ramsey and Summit Hill

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living



MEET RESIDENT BUSINESS OWNER

Gary Moore

Photo by Amy Wurdock Photography



meet
Gary Moore
 Gary Moore Custom Furniture

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Gary Moore, eco-conscious, award-winning, British designer/maker, gives us the skinny on what inspires his designs, why "green" practices are important to him, and how not to be intimidated by commissioning a piece of furniture.

What piqued your interest in woodworking, and why did you choose Minnesota?

My interest in woodworking and furniture design was sparked at school in England and stoked by a grandfather with a make-do-and-mend attitude who was into sustainability and eco-consciousness long before "green" was a thing. But, I thought my future lay elsewhere and became a printer. At age 37, I finally decided to pursue my passion: going to design school and apprenticing with furniture makers in Great Britain.

In 2011, I moved here with my Minnesotan wife, Carrie (who is in charge of our marketing and made me do this article), and Oliver, our now-6-year-old boy, and set up a design workshop on Selby Avenue in St. Paul.

How do you come up with your designs?

My designs are drawn from the natural world and inspired by

great architecture. I love the hexagons of a honeycomb and use them frequently in my designs.

I try to use sustainably-sourced wood and seek out eco-friendly wood finishes. With the offcuts of the large furniture commissions, I make smaller pieces (candlesticks, cutting boards, iPad stands, frames). Like my grandfather, I hate to see anything wasted. Even our sawdust has a second life: it is traded to a chicken farmer for fresh eggs.

What was your first-ever design commission?

It was a coffee table commissioned as a wedding present by a group of secondary school teachers in England for their design-loving colleague. The table was entered in a design festival in Cardiff and won an award, and the business was launched.

Commissioning a piece of furniture seems daunting. Where do I start?

Start by looking at the space in your house where the piece will live and think about what would look good—size, style, color. Gather photos of furniture you like. That will help me understand your design aesthetic. Once you have an idea of what you want, shoot me an email or give me a call to let me know what you would like to have made, along with an idea of your budget. I will come up with a design for you and a quote for the design and build. We work together to ensure you are getting exactly what you want.



resident business beat

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Isn't it really expensive?

Having a piece of furniture designed and made isn't much more expensive than buying furniture from a place like Room and Board. You will have a real connection with a piece you have specially made. Imagine having a unique dining table or credenza—no one else has one exactly like it, it was designed for your space, and it will give you many years of pleasure.

Plus, you get the added benefit of knowing your heirloom-quality piece was made by a local maker using sustainable practices rather than in a factory in a foreign land. You are welcome to come to the workshop to see your piece in development.

Do you only do custom work, or do you have pieces that you'd designed that I can just buy?

In October, we are launching a range of furniture and home décor that you can buy from an online shop. I'm busy designing and building those pieces now. The idea is to fill the gap between high-end, high-cost wood furniture and low-quality, low-cost furniture you assemble yourself. Everyone is invited to the launch party at the workshop. There will probably be wine involved.

Right now, I mostly do custom work or work with architects to build their designs for commercial projects, but I do have a few things in the Minneapolis Institute of Art gift shop and the Carnegie Art Center in Mankato.

Of course, I can build anything you see right now on my website, Facebook, or Instagram, or a modification of one of those designs. Everything is made to order.

Where can I see your work in the Summit Hill area?

Go to J. Selby's vegan restaurant on the corner of Selby and Victoria to see some of my work and to eat their delicious food. I partnered with another local woodshop to make all the booths, benches, and tables there. I am increasingly doing work for our neighbors in the local community who want individual pieces designed for their homes. For reviews of my work, check out Houzz.com, CustomMade.com, Google, and Facebook.

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