

FOOD **FASHION**

DECOR

BEAUTY

CITY LIFE

TRAVEL

IN PRINT

Search

MY MTL

Home / Decor / KRÖMM Design: Custom, Handmade Wood Furniture



July 7, 2014

☐ Like 498

Tweet 3

KRÖMM Design: Custom, **Handmade Wood Furniture**

by Katia Jean Paul

"All the objects around us, sidewalks, buildings, windows, are square, rectangular or have angles," says Slav Balt, but "nature is all curves." Mother Nature in all her curvaceous beauty is ever-present in the Montreal woodworker's creations.

KRÖMM, which is Breton for "curve," is the name for Balt's functional furniture and accessories label. Launched in April 2013, the small business he runs with his wife, Marina, offers hardwood coffee tables and nightstands of varying sizes that share one overarching quality: a circular shape.

"I want to do something different... but that remains affordable," says Balt. A methods agent for Bombardier by day, he immigrated to Canada with Marina from Belarus in 2009 to pursue woodworking studies.

The artisan, like many in his field, sells his wares exclusively online, which without the huge markup of retail stores, keeps the price of his



Slav and Marina Balt of custom furniture label KRÖMM Design. (Photo by Elena Yurchenko)

handcrafted goods relatively low. Equally concerned with his ecological footprint, Balt operates a sustainable business to the best of his abilities, using local wood, waterbased glue and a health-safe and eco-friendly natural oil finish. "I try to use types of wood from Canada and the United States to ensure they were produced intelligently and with respect for the environment," he says.

The pair work out of a small workshop in Rosemont, where Balt sketches, designs and crafts the tables while Marina takes care of the finishing touches: sanding and packaging, as well as the financial and marketing end of things. "I do make a lot of comments and suggestions on the sketch and once the prototype is ready," she says. KRÖMM offers free delivery and mounting (if needed) to Montreal residents. The Balts have clients across Canada and the United States, and exhibit their wares at the Paragon Surfacing showroom in Vancouver, B.C., a countertop company where designer Iryna Shyroka commissioned a table from the duo after discovering them online.

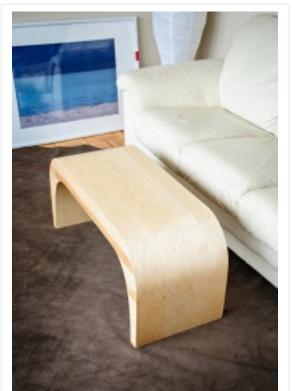
They plan to open a Montreal showroom, get on the expo and trade-show circuit, and expand their product line. Already, the couple has launched a range of smaller objects-including business card holders and iPhone stands made out of exotic Wenge lumber and aluminum, starting at

\$25.



Business card holders made of Wenge wood and aluminum. (Photo by Marina Balt)

KRÖMM is a part-time vocation for Balt, whose job at Bombardier—where he completed a brief internship before becoming a full-time methods agent informs his design process. "I get a kick out of having to find the most effective way to produce something, remove useless details and keep only the essential, and not spend a minute on a task that can be avoided," he explains.



Maple coffee table. (Photo by Marina Balt)

The other clear influences in his work, besides nature, are Irish designer and furniture maker Joseph Walsh and, particularly, '60s design icons Charles and Ray Eames. "I really like their style," says Balt. "I'm not only inspired by the aesthetic of their objects, but also their approach: furniture that is out of the ordinary but produced in mass quantities."

The idea for smooth, non-linear furniture took seed during his woodworking studies. "Everything started in college, when I was thinking about my final project," says Balt. "I decided to create something without any straight lines." The result was a one-of-a-kind dresser, the final product of a three-year program that earned

the student cabinetmaker a grant at the end of his DEC at the École nationale du meuble et de l'ébenisterie.

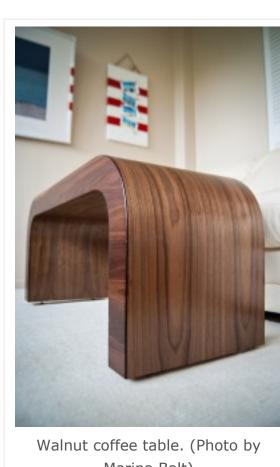
When he and Marina decided to move to Canada, he realized that a change of scenery wasn't the only thing he sought. "I decided to rethink what I should do for a living because it was a good opportunity to start from scratch since we were changing continents and changing lives altogether," says Balt. He decided to change paths, away from marketing, which was his career in Belarus.

"I began to think that I would like to make something that people would enjoy and keep for years and, I would hope, pass down to their children, and their children to theirs." Balt inherited this affinity for DIY from his engineer father, who was also a woodworking hobbyist.

The woodworker is now looking to incorporate metal into his made-toorder tables and experiment with steam-bending, a woodworking technique that makes the wood more pliable, with endless possibilities.

KRÖMM Design furniture and accessories, available at

http://krommdesign.com.



Marina Balt)

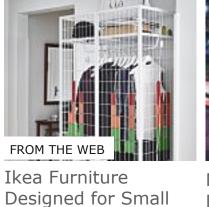
Tags: home decor, local, made in Montreal, Montreal designer In: Decor

You Might Also Like



Spaces

Dwell





Marché des Possibles: 4 Best Furniture New Open-Air Market Pieces for Small in Mile End | Urban **Apartments** BuildDirect Blog ExpressionsUrban Expressions



Recommended by



The Gazette

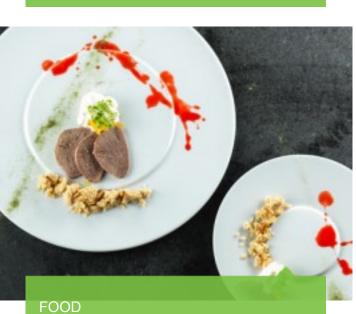


SINGER JERI BROWN

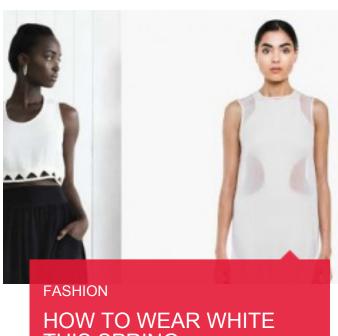


FASHION LOUE 1 ROBE **CELEBRATES ONE YEAR**

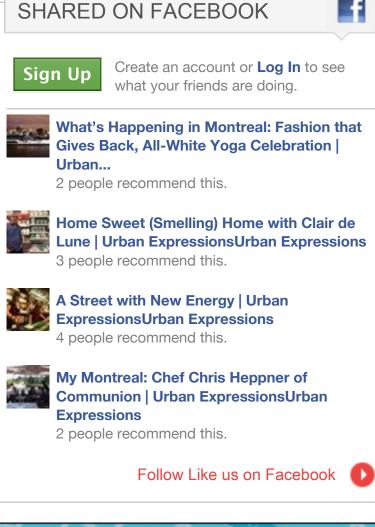


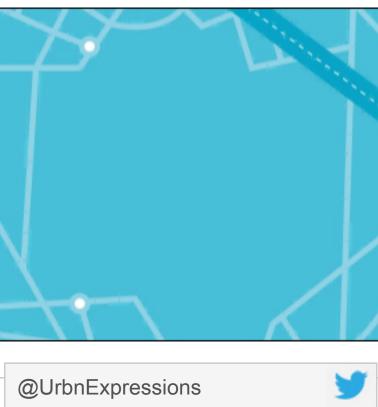


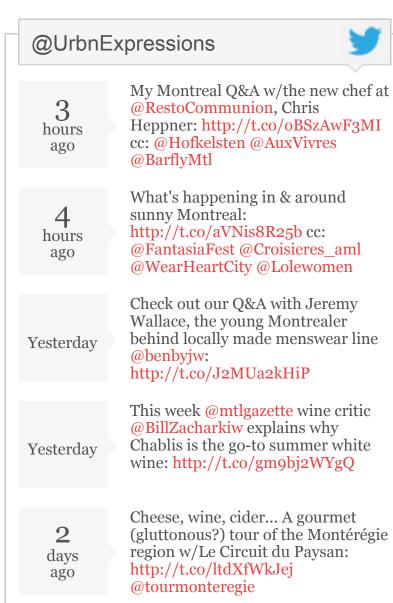
RESTAURANT ARËM OPENS IN GRIFFINTOWN



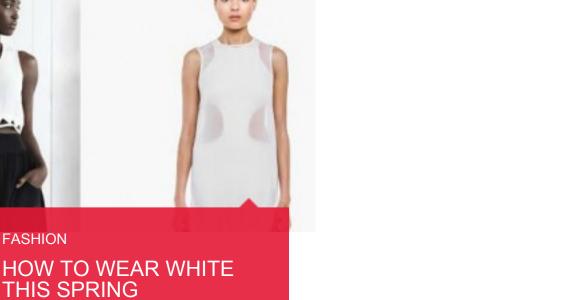
BEAUTY & HEALTH LIP GLOSS MAKES A







Follow @UrbnExpressions



MA DOUCE MOITIÉ