

**Business newsletter**

Every Monday and Thursday, we'll share which stories are shaping Charleston and SC.



# HOME & REAL ESTATE

Sunday, February 23, 2025

C9

Contact: Kalyn Oyer, koyer@postandcourier.com

**Real Estate newsletter**

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**INTERIOR DESIGN**



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW J. WHITAKER/STAFF

Megan Molten recently won an award for her interior design work. Here, she poses for a photo on Feb. 5 in Mount Pleasant.

## Eye for design reaps rewards

Interior designer wins national award after starting business on social media



Patterns and fabrics are placed on a table for clients at Megan Molten's interior design studio in Mount Pleasant.

BY KENNA COE  
kcoe@postandcourier.com

**MOUNT PLEASANT** — When Megan Molten started selling home décor and furniture out of a storage unit, she didn't know her eye for design would evolve into a full-time business. Seven years later, her interior design studio is now nationally recognized.

Megan Molten Design + Shop won best Interior Design Studio at the 35th ARTS Awards, standing out against larger, more established brands across the country. The peer-nominated awards, hosted by Dallas Market Center and non-profit ART, recognize home industry professionals across nearly 30

categories.

"I do feel like the award has given us a different level of recognition," Molten said. "It sets us apart that we're not just a Charleston designer."

Molten describes the studio's style as Lowcountry Luxe — an elevated, modern version of pelicans and palm trees. The style is clean, bright and minimal with pops of pastels that mimic Charleston's Rainbow Row.

"The Lowcountry plays such a role in our designs," Molten said.

The studio offers full-service interior design from start to finish for clients renovating or building homes.

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**GARDENING**

## Turn your garden into a showstopper with Japanese dogwoods

BY BETTY MONTGOMERY  
Special to The Post and Courier

As I strolled through my yard recently, I was delighted to witness the early signs of spring, with buds swelling and daffodil foliage emerging from the earth.

My eyes scanned the garden, and I gathered a handful of branches and stems to create a small bouquet for my home. Among the selections was a branch from the Japanese dogwood, scientifically

known as Cornus mas or Cornelian cherry.

This unique member of the dogwood family stands apart from the other varieties I cultivate, distinguished by its exfoliating bark and uniquely shaped flowers.

My first introduction to this remarkable tree, which can also be categorized as a large shrub, occurred during a trip to New York City. There was a charming Japanese department store I frequented, renowned for its extraordinary florist on the first floor. The florist

showcased breathtaking arrangements in large containers, each more captivating than the last.

It was there that I spotted a large display of branches adorned with small, star-shaped yellow blooms tightly hugging the stems. While I was familiar with forsythia and kerria, this particular plant was new to me.

Curiosity piqued, I approached a nearby sales associate and inquired about the name of the

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Among the selections was a branch from the Japanese dogwood, scientifically known as Cornus mas or Cornelian cherry.

BETTY MONTGOMERY/PROVIDED



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# Mt. Pleasant interior designer wins national award

DESIGNER, from C9

The designers curate paint colors and wallpaper, tiles and flooring, furniture and small details like coffee table accessories. Molten sources a lot of the artwork from local artists.

Inside the Mount Pleasant studio off Long Point Road, large tables sit in the middle of the open office concept, allowing clients to view textile samples and color schemes. Vertical design mood boards pinned with pattern and color selections and theme inspirations line the office walls.

Next door to the design studio is Molten's retail shop, which offers a curated selection of furniture, mirrors, lighting, wallpaper and accessories for customers to pick out items that match their space. She collaborates with various brands on one-of-a-kind collections, such as a palm-tree themed wallpaper with Mitchell Black, Cooper Classics mirrors and Mitzi lighting.

Molten said the retail customers differ from interior design clients because they are more comfortable picking out their own items and are likely updating a few pieces instead of their whole home.

The retail shop offers a free concierge service where stylists help customers shop either virtually or in person.

The retail component of



ANDREW J. WHITAKER/STAFF

Kate Eleanore (from left), Isabelle Partain and Halldora Thorsdottir look over patterns at Megan Molten's interior design studio on Feb. 5 in Mount Pleasant.

the business started on day one, Molten said.

She worked in pharmaceutical sales for over a decade after college. During her career, she moved to Charleston and bought a house in West Ashley. She started decorating her cottage in her own personal style and posted updates on social media. Before she

knew it, friends and family were asking her to help design their homes or pick out furnishings.

She decided to open an online retail shop to start selling items she styled and posted on Instagram. Her intention was to keep the business online-only.

She kept the furnishings and décor in a nearby stor-

age unit. Customers started asking if they could see the items in person, so she set up times to meet them at the unit. Then, she started opening the storage unit regularly for a few hours two days a week. Despite the small space, customers showed up to shop her collection.

"It would be so packed,"

Molten said.

When Molten decided to quit her job and pursue interior design, she realized she was finally doing a job she loved, she said.

"The minute I made that switch, it's like I was doing exactly what I was meant to be doing," Molten said.

She said the last year has been challenging for the

business after an overhaul of the entire team. But the award serves as a reminder that hard work pays off, she said. She quoted Kelly Clarkson: "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

Creating the presentation and application materials for the ARTS award was a three-month long process. The packet included a company introduction, merchandising, display and interior design projects, marketing and examples of positive company culture.

"We really went in-depth for every single part of, like how we are as a company, our work environment and culture," Thorsdottir said.

Megan Molten and her husband, Hugh Molten, flew to Dallas for the awards ceremony in January. She said the upscale awards ceremony reminded her of the Grammys. Many of the industry's top professionals attended the awards, she said. As a first-time finalist, she wasn't expecting to win the award.

When the host announced Megan Molten as the winner, she walked up to the stage wearing a sparkly light pink dress with feather sleeves.

"I was not expecting this," she said to the crowd once she got to the podium. "I'm from Charleston, South Carolina, and I started my business seven years ago. I had a big dream, I had a really big dream."

# Turn your garden into a showstopper with Japanese dogwoods

GARDENING, from C9

intriguing branches. Although she was initially unsure, she enthusiastically promised to find out. When she returned, she informed me that they were dogwoods. Hailing from a state where our native dogwoods flourish in the wild, I found it hard to believe that this was indeed a dogwood. After all, native dogwoods are celebrated for their stunning white flowers, and these branches bore little resemblance.

I must confess, I doubted the associate's knowledge at the time. However, as I reflect on that moment, I can't help but chuckle at my earlier skepticism. Indeed,

she was correct, and I now fondly recall my initial encounter with this remarkable plant as I observe it budding each year.

Cornus mas is indeed distinct from other dogwoods in my garden. While it is deciduous like our native varieties, its flowers and bark offer a different spectacle. In early February, before the leaves unfurl, golden yellow clusters of blooms emerge along the bare branches, serving as a radiant beacon on chilly winter days.

The medium-green leaves make their appearance in late spring, followed by dark red fruits that ripen from mid- to late-summer. These fruits are edible and have culinary uses in Europe,

where they are transformed into drinks, syrups, preserves, jams and sauces. While they can be eaten fresh or dried, they need to be fully ripe in order to lose some of their bitterness.

The fall foliage is usually only a mix of green and yellow colors, and occasionally you will see some reddish-purple, though the display is not as notable as the fall color of our native dogwood, Cornus florida. The bark is also quite different and distinct. The peeling, brown bark adds winter interest to the garden and stands out, since no leaves are present to hide the exfoliation. The wood of the tree is said to be very hard; because of this, it was used in ancient

times for spears and other weapons.

I have only seen Cornus mas grown as a small tree but have read that some people keep it cut back as a shrub, showing multi-stems that emerge from the ground. It is a fairly slow-growing species that will take up to 10 years to achieve 15 feet in height.

Cornus mas is a winner of the Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society, an honor given in England. This dogwood has been recognized for its landscape appeal, winter hardiness, and pest resistance by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

There are several different cultivated varieties that are

available and worth growing. I happen to grow two different ones and I love them both. "Golden Glory" blooms first, and about the time it finishes flowering Cornus officinalis blooms. "Golden Glory" is my favorite only because it, along with prunus "First Lady," a cherry, are the first trees to bloom in my garden.

Cornus mas is easy to grow. They like full sun to part shade, requiring a bit more sun than most dogwoods. If it gets too little sun, the flowering and fruit production will be reduced. It is happy in well-drained soil that is rich in humus that is slightly acidic. It will not do well in soil that remains constantly wet. And,

like most dogwoods, Cornus mas is best fertilized in the early spring.

I have rarely needed to prune my small trees. I do remove branches that are crossing over each other or ones that are too low, since I grow mine as trees. If I need to remove a branch, I do it in the winter, knowing that I am removing the flowers as well. I do bring these colorful flowers into the house and enjoy them in a vase of water.

I have never had any issues with either of mine, and I enjoy the wonderful display of flowers produced in the winter. It is a plant worth seeking, planting and enjoying. If you do grow one, people will be asking you the name.

TRANSACTIONS, from C10

■ Starlight Homes South Carolina LLC sold 116 Forbes Road, Pender Woods to Allen K. Benian for \$309,990.  
 ■ Starlight Homes South Carolina LLC sold 248 Phoenix Drive, Pender Woods to Christian C. Bolocon for \$370,000.  
 ■ Mungo Homes Coastal Division Properties LLC sold 415 Rowley Lane, Lochton to Beau Lawrence Bowers and Romina Isabel Bowers for \$592,000.  
 ■ DFH Crescent LLC sold 380 Wap-poo Trace Lane, Levi Lakes to Taylor and Daniel Mackenzie Bowman for \$684,412.  
 ■ DFH Crescent LLC sold 372 Wap-poo Trace Lane, Levi Lakes to Carlos Sanchez for \$700,136.  
 ■ DFH Crescent LLC sold 462 Green Fern Drive, Hampton Woods to Robin Harrison for \$317,061.  
 ■ DFH Crescent LLC sold 418 Green Fern Drive, Hampton Woods to Hanna Valentina Camacho Pardo, Alejandro Rincon Gonzalez and Carlos Andres Leon for \$280,792.  
 ■ DFH Crescent LLC sold 499 Green Fern Drive, Hampton Woods to Karen T. Kelly for \$266,673.  
 ■ DFH Crescent LLC sold 459 Green Fern Drive, Hampton Woods to Stephen Robert Wilhelm for \$336,600.  
 ■ D.R. Horton Inc. sold 403 Broad Elm, Pine Hills to David Ira Kallish and Trudy Ann Kallish for \$349,900.  
 ■ D.R. Horton Inc. sold 185 Ivory Shadow Road, Pine Hills to Kelsie Nicole Maddox for \$345,000.  
 ■ D.R. Horton Inc. sold 249 Ivory Shadow Road, Pine Hills to Steven Michael Leary and Carrie Ellen Feeney for \$325,000.  
 ■ D.R. Horton Inc. sold 126 Hillsford Lane, Pine Hills to Lauren Cristi Young for \$400,000.

■ D.R. Horton Inc. sold 627 Sweet Ramble Way, Pine Hills to Matthew William Kipple Jr. for \$365,000.  
 ■ DRB Group South Carolina LLC sold 164 Summerwind Drive, Summerwind Crossing to Cheryl J. Wooten for \$569,643.  
 ■ DRB Group South Carolina LLC sold 447 Evening Glow Lane, Summerwind Crossing to Patrick and Margaret Geho for \$419,411.  
 ■ DRB Group South Carolina LLC sold 166 Summerwind Drive, Summerwind Crossing to Yvette Wooten for \$555,935.  
 ■ Keith and Carla A. Warren sold 212 Calm Water Way, Covets to Jordan and Rachel Dufrane for \$575,000.  
 ■ Mallikarjuna Bagewadi Ellur and Jyothsna Meda sold 585 Dunsell Drive, Lochton to Darryl and Juliette Mayers for \$605,000.  
 ■ Valli B. Sottile sold 513 Marsh Cove Circle, Four Seasons to Glenn C. Smith and Marie Everett-Smith for \$460,000.  
 ■ Lance and Janine Leonhardt sold 154 Granton Edge Lane, W. Lake at Cane Bay to Kevin Friel and Melissa Modesti for \$490,000.  
 ■ Starlight Homes South Carolina LLC sold 107 Forbes Road, Pender Woods to Travis A. Grass for \$365,990.  
 ■ Cody C. and Celeste C. Hudson sold 250 Saxony Loop, Saxony Lake at Cane Bay to Bobbie-Jean W. Simpson and William Lee Simpson Jr. for \$550,000.  
 ■ Lennar Carolinas LLC sold 218 Or-wel St., Carnes Crossroads to Mitul Ashok Patel for \$430,145.  
 ■ Starlight Homes South Carolina LLC sold 241 Phoenix Drive, Pender Woods to Domonick Mack for \$359,990.  
 ■ Opendoor Property Trust I sold

128 Shadybrook Drive, Sanctuary Cove at Cane Bay to LaToya President-Scott for \$405,000.  
 ■ Stephanie and Michael Shaun Pauley sold 614 Chigwell Springs Lane, W. Lake at Cane Bay to Roy E. Whaley III for \$364,798.  
 ■ Theodore Edward Prahlow sold 333 Fish Creek Court, Four Seasons to James and Linda Steavpack for \$555,000.  
 ■ True Homes LLC sold 220 Night Heron St., N. Creek Village to Harry Villacis Salazar for \$410,000.  
 ■ Timothy Thanh Vu sold 573 Yellow Leaf Lane, Linderia Expansion at Wildcat to Thomas and Jeannine Schueller for \$439,000.  
 ■ Starlight Homes South Carolina LLC sold 108 Forbes Road, Pender Woods to Tory Michael Wesley and Aimee Marie Wesley for \$365,000.  
 ■ Starlight Homes South Carolina LLC sold 1504 Scarlett Maple St., Dawson Branch Townhomes to Shiloh Kallie Walker for \$274,990.

Wando

■ Kelly Loughery sold 110 Wando Reach Road, Wando Point to Faith Marie Rummelsburg, Steen Jonathan Rummelsburg and Armando Barrera for \$850,000.

Dorchester County

The transactions listed below include properties sold for \$250,000 or more and recorded between Dec. 2-6.

Dorchester

■ Brian L. Guy sold 592 Powder Horn Road to Daniel B. and Crystal L. Orrick for \$365,000.

Harleyville

■ Hunter Quinn Homes LLC sold 116 Braxton Road, Dantzler Farms

to Alejandro Rivera Lorenzo and Maria Guadalupe Espinoza for \$488,000.  
 ■ Hunter Quinn Homes LLC sold 113 Braxton Road, Dantzler Farms to Rodger Jess Thacker II for \$484,900.

Ladson

■ Steve W. Cooper sold 206 Finch St., Tranquil Estates to Kelly Cooper for \$310,000.  
 ■ Brian N. Kirby sold 9759 Trans-planter Circle, McKewn Plantation North to Ashley Caudle for \$331,000.  
 ■ Brian Owen Sutphin sold 9854 English Elm St., Coosaw Preserve to Alexandra M. and Jose Francisco Diaz Elizalde for \$460,000.  
 ■ Tracy and James Lucas Wood sold 9828 English Elm St., Coosaw Preserve to Brandon S. and Lisa Marie Guingrich for \$440,000.

Ridgeville

■ John W. Carter sold 5054 U.S. Highway 17-A, Jellico to Matthew David Porter for \$400,000.  
 ■ Rodney L. and Emily Garrison Stalker sold 845 Hill Branch Road, Givhans to Lance F. and Barbara Knight for \$757,500.

North Charleston

■ Hunter Quinn Homes LLC sold 111 Broadmarsh Court, Archdale Patio Homes to Bella Thi Nguyen and Thi Ngoc Thanh Huynh for \$439,900.

Summerville

■ Ashton Charleston Residential LLC sold 5154 Double Eagle Loop, Fairways at Wescott to John Paul Greider Jr. for \$344,990.  
 ■ Ashton Charleston Residential LLC sold 5158 Double Eagle Loop, Fairways at Wescott to Cade K.

Kloster for \$360,000.  
 ■ Kylie M. and Joshua Aaron Burke sold 5005 Shelbourne Court, Victoria Pointe to Kaycee Rae Clune and Ryan Thomas Murray for \$429,990.  
 ■ William Howard Campbell Jr. and Kerry Campbell sold 421 Woodgate Way, Summers Corner to Justin Carroll Pierce and Marissa Lee Pierce for \$620,000.  
 ■ Brett Charpia sold 298 Embassy Drive, Belmont to Ruth Robertson for \$275,000.  
 ■ Christine Lee Cook sold 223 Bainsbury Lane, Quail Arbor Estates to Homer Thomas Mills and Monica Hills for \$297,000.  
 ■ Josh and Laura Gerber sold 109 Summercourt Drive, Briarwood to Kristopher and Kasey Graham for \$399,000.  
 ■ Stephen George Kmetz sold 308 Mayfield St., Ashborough to Matthew Ray Crim Jr. and Virginia Cox Crim for \$486,000.  
 ■ Clifford Joseph Lemieux and Lauren Malachy Lemieux sold 5021 Thornton Drive, Woodlands at Wescott Plantation to Brandon Douglas Sklute and Alyssa New-pher Sklute for \$340,000.  
 ■ Carl A. Lowery sold 126 Hazeltine Bend, Linkside Village at Pine Forest Country Club to Barbara George Benne, Douglas Mark Benne, Megan Huckaby and Erin Benne for \$570,000.  
 ■ Mary Elizabeth Manucy sold 100 Maple Drive, Sprucewood to Joseph S. Greene and Katherine Way for \$285,000.  
 ■ Morgan Creek Investors 3 LLC sold 314 W. 4th N. St. to DBLB LLC for \$499,000.  
 ■ Opendoor Property Trust I sold 121 Cozy Nest Way, Mallard Cross-

ing to Michael Paul Wilt and Li Wang for \$277,000.  
 ■ Opendoor Property Trust I sold 140 Malibu Road, Brookwood to Dianna M. Newton for \$302,000.  
 ■ Eric Scott Poulakis sold 207 Bumble Way, E. Edisto Summers Corner to John and Debra North for \$378,000.  
 ■ The Estate of William Walter Smith sold 1016 Cider Court, Pine Forest Country Club to Clifford and Lauren Lemieux for \$445,000.  
 ■ Mary Ritter sold 101 High Bridge Road, The Bridges of Summerville to Ai H. Yu for \$445,000.  
 ■ Rolina Homes LLC sold 547 Gaha-gan Road, Garbon Townhomes to Lenworth Styles and Jeremy Swaby for \$323,400.  
 ■ Rooted Down South LLC sold 920 Simmons Ave., Germantown to JoAnne Rutherford for \$425,000.  
 ■ The Estate of Lamar A. Sallee sold 5009 Springdale Drive, Sweetbriar Woodlands at Wescott to Janet Marie Cole for \$365,000.  
 ■ Timothy and Katrina Schumacher sold 102 Roadster Row, Reminisce to Melissa Lorraine Doyle for \$345,000.  
 ■ Michael Albert Spillman and Lynda Dian Spillman sold 9250 N. Moreto Circle, Ashley Ridge to Kienan J. Brady for \$445,000.  
 ■ The Unsinger Living Trust sold 214 Sweetbriar Road, Quail Arbor Estates to Ashley and John Graves for \$415,000.  
 ■ Kim M. Wickman sold 5403 Barns-ley Drive, Whitehall South to Steven and Lisa Love for \$369,995.  
 ■ Richard A. and Carol A. Wilson sold 507 Pointe of Oaks Road, Legend Oaks Plantation to Oliver W. and Kelly Bennett for \$410,267.

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