



BUILDING BETTER PLANTERS

DEEPSTREAM DESIGNS MAKES ROOFTOP INSTALLATIONS EASIER WITH THEIR MODULAR PLANTER SYSTEM.

BY JULIA STONE

When **Tom** and **Sheila Boyce** couldn't find durable, freestanding planters for their condominium project in Miami, Florida, Tom took matters into his own hands—he designed his own.

"We were sitting at a sidewalk cafe, and Tom saw there were rotting wooden planters all around us, wasting valuable hardwood from tropical rainforests," Sheila says. "Taking his experience in yacht design, he started sketching on a napkin because he had an idea, a design that would last longer. He wanted to do away with problems of traditional carpenter-built wood-on-wood construction." And with that, **DeepStream Designs** was born. The small company grew organically—from the basement of their condo project to a 17,000-square-foot manufacturing facility.

DeepStream is making rooftop installations simpler and more cost-effective with their two customizable, modular planter systems, **Mariner** and **Audubon**, which are part of an integrated system that also includes re-

cycling and trash bins, wall systems, and hotel and restaurant fixtures.

As professional yacht captains, Tom and Sheila have decades of experience with durable materials that can withstand marine environments. Tom says, "I use the principles of sustainable design to ensure our products have the lowest cost of ownership over time."

DeepStream uses recycled materials, like recycled plastic lumber, wherever possible. In fact, products made with recycled plastic lumber made up 62% of DeepStream's sales in 2017. "Sustainability as a business is important, and our customers want it," Sheila says. "We value the natural world and understand how everything is connected." For every product they produce, DeepStream plants trees through the nonprofit **Trees for the Future** in their customers' honor. To date, DeepStream has planted 370,000 trees through the program.

"One of the reasons I designed the planter system like I did is that they last," Tom says. Expected to last for decades, the planters are also easy to repair and refurbish, so you won't have to redo your project every few years. All it takes is sanding off a little of the planks' exterior and cleaning the aluminum to make the planters look like new.

"If builders don't do something that's going to last, then their customers will be starting over in three to five years," Sheila says. And rather than throwing away damaged planters, DeepStream offers a low-cost core replacement parts program that allows customers to replace damaged pieces.

Wood-on-wood planters gradually tear themselves apart as time goes on. Wooden planks expand, contract, and warp at different rates when they get wet because each part is cut from a different section of the tree, or from different types of trees. DeepStream uses marine-anodized aluminum legs and stainless steel fasteners to clamp the wood so it can expand and contract at different rates without damaging the structure. And the planter's legs are protected from the wet ground by using HDPE plastic feet.

DeepStream's products are manufactured using yacht-building techniques—copper treatment of closed

holes in the wood helps prevent wood rot. Also, by installing the soil-filled plastic liners on an independent aluminum frame, DeepStream prevents rotting caused by contact between the soil and the wood. Unlike fiberglass or ceramic planters, the planter-within-a-planter design keeps plants from overheating because the liner is never exposed to direct sunlight. The void between the liner and outer wall prevents the roots from steaming and hides drip irrigation and drain lines.

DeepStream Designs provides flexibility when it comes to design and installation. They build planters based on the initial dimensions, but the planters can easily be resized if needed. "Things change through-



PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE, COURTESY OF MCCAMY DEVELOPMENT; ASR KALIMIAN; HALVORSON DESIGN



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DeepStream's planter-within-a-planter design keeps plants from overheating.

out a project,” Sheila says. “That’s why our design and planters are easily adjusted. Concrete and fiberglass are not as flexible. For us, it’s a quick fix.” And Sheila and Tom can send replacement parts in a day or two.

“Because DeepStream is a small company, they’re super responsive. Sheila works well with us, the clients, and the contractors to provide accurate estimates, and her shop drawings are always clear,” says **Rob Adams**, principal at **Halvorson Design Partnership**. Adams and his team have worked with DeepStream on several projects so far, including **53 State Street** in Boston. “Their modular quality really stands out and there is no up-charge for the customization,” Adams says. “A masonry wall can be problematic. But with DeepStream, you can easily wheel a grill into the modular structure.”

The planters can be assembled by anyone, meaning

lower labor costs—DeepStream even provides the tools, and the plastic liners can be planted ahead of time by a nursery. The planters can be added to the rooftop later on in the project, which also allows for more flexibility than built-in concrete planters.

“Generally, everything that goes to the roof after the building is built has to come through elevators and lobbies. So it’s a big disruption if something on the roof goes wrong,” Tom says. “Just imagine having to redo a rooftop project in Manhattan. That’d involve a crane, and a crane would require a city permit, closing streets, and so on.”

It’s simple to bring DeepStream’s planter systems up to the roof because you can break them down. They’re easy to fit inside elevators and stairwells. Tom and Sheila regularly get calls from condo associations who want



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DeepStream Designs uses recycled materials wherever possible.
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PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE, COURTESY OF HALVORSON DESIGN; TOM BOYCE, COURTESY OF MATRIX HOTEL

to do things differently, having grown tired of having to refinish and reseal massive concrete planters on their rooftops every five years. “It’s those built-in concrete designs that builders are moving away from,” Tom says. “Now building owners are coming to us and asking, ‘How do we replace legacy planters?’ It’s more cost-effective if they can avoid repetitive structural repairs.”

If a carpenter constructs rooftop planters, they have to bring machinery and wood up to the roof, which creates a huge mess. Because DeepStream’s products are delivered already complete, there is no waste at the site. “With thousands of installations and our background as developers and general contractors, we focus on making projects simple and efficient for the GC and landscape installer, and the best value for money for the building owners,” Tom says. **gb&d**

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