

The Post & Courier wrote an article on Vintage Porch Swings in the Home and Real Estate section, which featured our Joshua and Emerson swings.

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Bobby Huff makes bed swings such as this one for Lowcountry residents, a business he and his wife started.

# Bed swings, easy living go hand and hand

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Sandy Plemmons had seen hanging beds in magazines over the years and was always a bit intrigued by them. When she moved to Wild Dunes, her sunroom in the new home offered a perfect space for a swing bed. She contacted Steve Heyward at Bulls Bay Bed Swing Collection and had him make it. "I had to have it for the grandkids," Plemmons says. "And I wanted it for my nap-time. I like to read my book and take a little nap when it's raining. The bed swing with the twin mattress is perfect for that. It swings if you want it to swing, and it's stable if you want it to be stable."

She says her visitors never fail to notice it. "Everybody who comes says they have to have one," she says. "Everybody is like gaga

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LEROY BURNELL/STAFF

Several workshops in the Lowcountry have sprung up making swing beds in the past few years. Here is one on Middle Street, Sullivan's Island.



LEROY BU

Vann Cochran of Vintage Porch Swings of Charleston is working on the framing for a swing.

## Bed Swings

The popularity of bed swings seems to be growing. Yet, some of those who began making them in the past few years say their businesses are growing. Those in this story are:

- [bullsbaybedswing.com](http://bullsbaybedswing.com)
- <https://www.facebook.com/LowcountrySwing>
- [www.vintageporchswings.com](http://www.vintageporchswings.com)

# Bed swings, easy living go hand in hand

over it. Everybody wants to sit on it.  
"I keep it made up all the time and we have a throw over it."

Bed swings typically are hung from the rafters of a porch roof by ropes or chains, but they can be hung from trees and/or used inside, as well.

## Two bed swings, please

When Steve Heyward built his home, he designed a space for two bed swings. After living in the house for a couple of years, his wife, Janet, asked: Where are my bed swings?

Heyward, a contractor of 30 years, was about to get a new way to use his skills.

His wife showed him a magazine picture of what she wanted, Heyward says. But he decided to try his own design. The next week he built his first bed swing and visitors to his home began asking him to make one for them.

That was about 3 1/2 years ago. Today Heyward makes and sells, on average, one custom bed swing a week to those contacting him through his website.

His Bulls Bay Bed Swing Collection has styles with names of well-known Low-country areas, including White Banks and Cape Romain.

He and a helper make the bed swings in his cabinet shop in Awendaw. Bed swings from there have been shipped to buyers as far away as Japan.

All of the beds end up being custom.

"They are made of clear



One of the models by Vintage Porch Swings of Charleston.

cypress," Heyward says. "We are getting away from painting and we're doing hand-rubbed surfaces. We still will do semi-transparent stains. Mattresses, pillows and bolsters are covered in Sunbrella fabric to withstand the elements."

The bed swings start at \$800 and go as high \$2,900, Heyward says.

Some people buy the mattress box and add the back and sides later. Others buy a complete bed swing.

"I have two of them hanging from trees," Heyward says.

"The greatest thing about these beds is they literally will lullaby you to sleep."

## The vintage look

"Every now and then you need to take time to relax and enjoy yourself on the porch," says Vann Cochran, co-owner of Vintage Porch Swings, which gives new wood a retro finish. "Life is so busy, you want to just slow down and do nothing sometimes."

Cochran's partner, Brent

McHenry, started their business in 2008. Cochran, a former custom horse builder, saw one of McHenry's bed swings and bought half of the business almost two years ago.

McHenry says after making his first bed swing for his wife, Krista, his neighbors began requesting them.

The business has grown much larger than he ever anticipated, McHenry says.

"It's been fun to watch it grow. We put our heart and soul into every swing. We sell a lifestyle. Our customers get to have a sanctuary within their house.

"If we sell one, people's relatives and neighbors all want one," he says. "So we now have clusters of bed swings all over the country."

Each of the company's designs is named for one of McHenry's children: Avari, Brynn, Emerson, Eliza, Hayden, Joshua and Noah, he says.

"We have a guy in the shop that has made all of them,"

Cochran says. "He builds them and there's the lady who paints them and the guy who packs them and ships them out."

"We make one hand-crafted bed swing a day. We literally spend hours painting and sanding them. There is a lot of hand work that goes in to taking a piece of lumber off the shelf and turning it into a piece of furniture that will last a lifetime.

Most are made of Southern pine. The cypress bed swings are an upgrade.

The beds typically are twin-size and weigh about 120 pounds, but they can be made larger or smaller, Cochran says.

The mattresses have a nylon shell, then are covered in Sunbrella fabrics, so that they dry right away, Cochran says.

The beds are built to last forever.

"Everything is over-glued, over-screwed. If you called

me five years from now and say my bed swing broke, we'd come out there and see how that happened and fix it.

Their prices range from \$1,399 to \$1,699. Then mattress, pillow and cushion package costs \$1250.

## One for guest room

"We bought a house and my wife's boss had one (a bed swing) and she thought it would be cool to put it in our guest bedroom," says Bobby Huff of Lowcountry Swing Beds.

That was three years ago. Family and friends came to visit, liked them and started having Huff make bed swings for them.

After a year, it became a part-time business for he and wife Claire, who handles the marketing.

Their bed swing styles bear the names of Charleston communities such as West Ashley and Daniel Island.

"We kind of do this after

work," Huff says. His day job is to deliver medical equipment and he's in planning production for a manufacturer.

We are online and ship all over the country, Huff says.

The bed swings are especially sought by people in coastal towns where there are bigger porches, he says.

Like those of others, the mattresses are covered in a Sunbrella fabric to withstand the weather.

But now some people have replaced their living room sofas with bed swings, he says.

Huff says he builds the bed swings in his home workshop. Most are made of pressure-treated pine.

"We recommend having them professionally installed by a contractor."

Their prices start at about \$600 to \$700.

Wivonneda Minis at 937-5705.

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